

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
CONTACT: Sevda Eris
415-553-2835 / seris@kqed.org

www.kqed.org/press
www.kqed.org/quest

KQED's QUEST

New Season of Northern California Science and Environment Stories Premieres April 1 Groundbreaking Multimedia Project and Model for Distributing Television

"An oasis of smart television in a desert of banality," Joe Garofoli, *San Francisco Chronicle*

"Reinvigorating science and environment in the broadcast media," Mike Antonucci, *San Jose Mercury News*

"Pioneering ways to use digital technology to smartly cover hard science for a ...mainstream audience," Eric Simmons, *Columbia Journalism Review*

San Francisco, Ca, March 4, 2008 - [QUEST](http://www.kqed.org/quest), KQED's multimedia science and environment series, starts its second television season on Tuesday, April 1 at 7:30pm on KQED 9 and KQED HD (Comcast 709), with adventures and investigations into the innovative science happening in Northern California. Breaking new ground in distributing video on the web, *QUEST* has become a model for PBS stations around the country with the success of its online audience growth. It continues to raise science literacy in the Bay Area with its integrated approach to reporting on science and environmental issues on television, radio, and the web. *QUEST* also produces education guides that correlate to California science teaching standards and participates in community partnerships with renowned science research centers, museums and parks.

"*QUEST* has become a 21st century byword in public television circles and much talked about even in cutting-edge arenas such as MacWorld, as an innovative and successful new model for multimedia distribution," said Jeff Clarke, President and CEO of Northern California Public Broadcasting, KQED's parent company.

QUEST Television

In its half-hour, **premiere television episode on April 1**, *QUEST* joins the **search for extraterrestrial life** with a new space-age radio telescope. Of special note, the "SETI: Listening for ET" story is *QUEST*'s first collaboration with **the signature PBS science series, NOVA**, and will be airing nationally on *NOVA* scienceNOW later this summer. And, *QUEST* tracks down the ravenous, 7 foot-long **Humboldt squid** that are invading the ocean waters off the Northern California coast by the thousands. Plus, in other stories this spring, *QUEST* explores the latest breakthroughs that San Francisco scientists are finding in their search for a **cure for Alzheimer's disease**; the next generation of **green fuel alternatives**; the **world's largest laser beam**; the secrets of San Francisco Bay's least known predators -- **sharks**, and much more. (See attached list of April episodes for more details.)

New Distribution Model

Besides producing new, cutting-edge, local science and environment stories, *QUEST* is fast becoming a national leader in exploring new ways to distribute TV and radio content online. "*QUEST* in its short run has proven that there is a new and younger audience there for PBS content that we have not been tapping into," says Sue Ellen McCann, *QUEST*'s Executive Producer. "Our strategy is to go where the audience is."

By exploring new ways to deliver its content besides traditional television, *QUEST* has created an impressive online audience in its first season (February – December 2007). Of *QUEST*'s approximately 3.3 million viewers in 2007, about twenty-four percent watched *QUEST* not on TV, but through web streaming or podcasts. Currently, the online audience is growing at a rate of two percent a month and is expected to grow even more when new episodes start in April. It is possible that within a few years, more people will be watching *QUEST* on computers than on TV sets.

QUEST's TV stories can be found on the following online distribution platforms: Adobe Player, iTunes (including a new partnership with iTunesU), Miro, OMN, YouTube, and even as a Facebook application. For each of its video segments, *QUEST* provides code on its website that allows anyone to easily embed a *QUEST* video player onto their website free of charge and show *QUEST* TV stories. *QUEST* is also developing a similar player for its radio stories. Leading blogs, newspapers and for-profit companies have taken advantage so far. Notably, during the Mavericks surf contest off of Half Moon Bay in January, *QUEST*'s ten-minute short story, *Science of Big Waves*, was embedded on the websites of the *San Jose Mercury News*, the *Oakland Tribune*, KTVU, and the *Santa Cruz Sentinel*'s surfer blog, to name a few.

Largest Multimedia Project

Launched in February 2007, *QUEST* is KQED's largest multimedia project. Going beyond its weekly [television](#) broadcast, *QUEST* features weekly [radio reports](#), free [educator resources](#) and a dynamic [website](#) that includes: exclusive web extras, [flickr photos](#), local science-based hikes called [Explorations](#), and a daily [science blog](#) written by Northern California scientists. *QUEST* also works with [15 community partners](#), including the California Academy of Sciences, the Chabot Space and Science Center and the Monterey Bay Aquarium, to bring audiences closer to the Bay Area's world-class science centers, museums and the natural beauty of its open spaces. *QUEST* aims to inspire audiences to get out and explore beyond *QUEST*'s television and radio broadcasts, and beyond their computer and iPod screens.

QUEST produces **20 half-hour television shows per season** with three segments in each for a total of 60 segments a season. *QUEST* Radio produces approximately **48 radio reports** that run 5-6 minutes each on KQED FM. *QUEST* also will produce at least **20 educator guides** to accompany select stories that complement California state curriculum standards for teaching science. *QUEST*'s **geographic coverage** spans from Mendocino to Monterey and from Sacramento to Santa Clara, and **focuses on nine content areas**: astronomy, biology, chemistry, engineering, environment, geology, health, physics and weather.

KQED received an unprecedented **\$7.7 million** from the National Science Foundation, Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation and other donors for the local production of *QUEST*. Funding is currently slated to run through 2009 with additional resources being sought for more seasons. For more background information about the *QUEST* project visit www.kqed.org/quest/about or see attached info.

KQED (www.kqed.org) is a service of Northern California Public Broadcasting, Inc. (NCPB). **KQED Public Television 9**, one of the nation's most-watched public television stations, is the producer of local and national series such as *QUEST*; *Check, Please! Bay Area*; *Jacques Pepin: Fast Food My Way*, and *Jean-Michel Cousteau: Ocean Adventures*. KQED's digital television channels include KQED HD, KQED Life-Encore, KQED World, KQED Kids and KQED V-me, and are available 24/7 on Comcast. **KQED Public Radio**, home of *Forum with Michael Krasny* and *The California Report*, is the most-listened-to public radio station in the nation with an award-winning news and public affairs program service (88.5 FM in San Francisco and 89.3 FM in Sacramento). **KQED Education Network** brings the impact of KQED to thousands of teachers, students, parents and the general public through workshops, community screenings and multimedia resources. **KQED Interactive** offers video and audio podcasts and live radio streaming at www.kqed.org, featuring unique content on one of the most-visited station sites in public broadcasting.