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Fleet of foot-long robots analyze Sacramento River

The Associated Press Posted: 05/10/2012 05:16:14 AM PDT Updated: 05/10/2012 05:16:14 AM PDT

SACRAMENTO, Calif.—A fleet of foot-long robots has floated down the Sacramento River to measure delta water flow, detect pollutants and monitor fish.

The 100 GPS-equipped devices, 40 of them fitted with propellers, were let loose from Walnut Grove on Wednesday for a two-mile journey to demonstrate the Floating Sensor Network.

The project is led by University of California environmental engineer Alexandre Bayen and graduate student Andrew Tinka.

The San Francisco Chronicle (<http://bit.ly/1IME3v>) says the sensors are designed to detect pollutants, measure changes in salinity, monitor fish life and warn of levee breaks, oil spills or other hazards.

Mini-computers in each robot are programmed with a map that allows them to avoid riverbanks and obstacles.

GPS-enabled cellphones allow the devices to transmit information to the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory.

Information from: San Francisco Chronicle, <http://www.sfgate.com>

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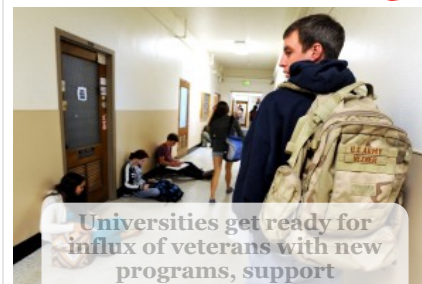
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