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March 2015 E-Newsletter

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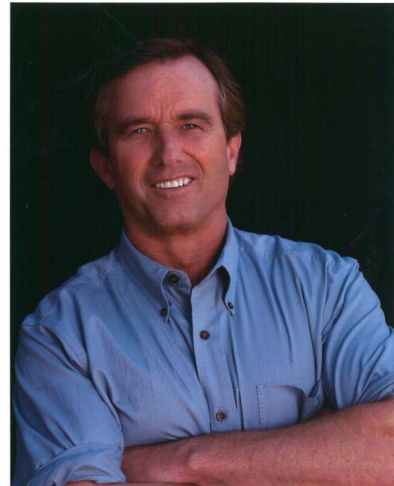
### We're Social!



**Did You Know?**

## Robert F. Kennedy Jr. to be Keynote Speaker at our Blue Water Ball Saturday, May 2nd

Channelkeeper is thrilled to announce that Robert F. Kennedy Jr. will be the keynote speaker at our 15th Annual Blue Water Ball on Saturday, May 2nd at Deckers Outdoor Corp's LEED-certified headquarters in Goleta. Mr. Kennedy is a world-renowned defender of the environment and was named one of *Time* magazine's "Heroes for the Planet" for his success in helping Riverkeeper lead the fight to restore the Hudson River. He is the founder and President of Waterkeeper Alliance, which has spawned a network of more than 240 local Waterkeeper organizations protecting 1.5 million square miles of watersheds across the globe.



Current Channelkeeper members will receive a mailed invitation to the event in April. Sponsorship opportunities are still available, and these key partners receive event tickets, advertising and the satisfaction that comes from contributing to a healthy ocean. For more information, to donate an auction item, or to reserve your tickets or table today (we WILL sell out!), [email](#) or call Morgan at 805.563.3377 ext. 2.

## Channelkeeper Takes Action to Protect Public Health from Fracking

On February 13th, Channelkeeper petitioned two government agencies - the Ventura County Environmental Health Division and the California Division of Oil, Gas and Geothermal Resources - to take action to protect public health and the environment from contamination emanating from oil fields along the north coast of Ventura County. Citing a recent [scientific study](#), Channelkeeper highlighted findings that indicate fracking and enhanced recovery activities by nearby oil producers may be contaminating coastal streams and beaches. Our [letters](#) urged these agencies

## We are still very much in a DROUGHT!

Despite the few rain storms that have hit the Santa Barbara County coastline this winter, Lake Cachuma - the main water supply for the SB area - is still only at 28% capacity and serious water conservation efforts must be continued. Commit to making changes that conserve water, including updating to a more sustainable landscape, installing a greywater system, watering only when plants need water, fixing leaks, and replacing appliances with energy and water efficient models. Visit [www.waterwisesb.org](http://www.waterwisesb.org) to learn more.



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to heed the study's recommendations by installing signage to warn the public to stay out of the water where the contaminated creeks flow to the beach. We also called for a moratorium on further fracking and injection activities in the area until the appropriate government agencies can conduct tracer tests to verify that operations aren't polluting the water.

## Desalination Water Rate Increase Hearing March 10



Next Tuesday, March 10th at 2:00 pm, the Santa Barbara City Council will hold a public hearing on its proposal to raise water rates to pay for the reactivation of the City's mothballed desalination plant. A typical household with moderate monthly water usage of 12 Hundred Cubic Feet (HCF) - or approximately 9,000 gallons - will face a 38% rate hike, or nearly \$30/month. This means that the average household in Santa Barbara will pay approximately \$3,600 over the next decade to reactivate the desalination plant, even if the rains return and desalinated water is no longer needed. The rate increase could potentially be less if the City secures a lower interest loan, or much more if the drought continues and the plant's capacity is expanded. If you want to weigh in on the rate increase or get more information, please attend the City Council hearing on March 10th. After considering public input received on that date, City Council will decide whether to adopt the higher rates on Tuesday, March 17th at 2:00 pm. Then, depending on the amount of rain we get in the next few months, City Council will decide whether or not to proceed with reactivating the desalination plant in June, and if they do, the higher rates will go into effect on July 1, 2015 and the plant will deliver water in fall 2016.

Swim Guide app for real-time water quality data at local beaches

Visit Website



## Speaking out in Sacramento to Protect Rivers and Water Quality



As a member of the [California Coastkeeper Alliance](#) (CCKA), Santa Barbara Channelkeeper is fortunate to have strong representation in Sacramento on state water policy processes. In February, Channelkeeper teamed up with CCKA to represent the interests of citizen water quality monitoring groups at a hearing before the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB). Channelkeeper's Stream Team Program is one of the most robust and longest running citizen monitoring efforts in the entire state, and we leveraged our expertise to help ensure that citizen monitoring data is utilized by the SWRCB to assess the health of our waterways, as required by

law. Channelkeeper also submitted a [40-page comment letter](#) to the SWRCB in February in response to their recent proposal to declassify the Ventura River as impaired by over-pumping and water diversions. Available data clearly demonstrate that over-pumping and diversions are negatively impacting water quality and aquatic habitat in the River, and numerous regulatory agencies have adopted similar findings. Channelkeeper is currently engaged in [legal proceedings](#) against the SWRCB and City of Ventura to prevent over-pumping in the Ventura River. Channelkeeper will travel to Sacramento again on April 7th to testify before the SWRCB and urge them to retain the impairment classification, which carries with it specific requirements to address the impairment.

## Channelkeeper and Our Partners Cleanup 1,300 Pounds of Trash!

Channelkeeper, Santa Barbara Adventure Company and Island Packers teamed up with several other local environmental organizations, businesses, and government agencies to remove over 1,300 pounds of trash from Santa Cruz Island and to raise awareness about the growing problem of trash accumulating in our oceans. Nearly 40 volunteers scoured a two-mile stretch of beach



on the southeast side of Santa Cruz Island, where we found derelict fishing gear washed ashore from heavy winter swells scattered everywhere. Plastic garbage was the next most common type of trash we encountered. The trash was shuttled by kayak and zodiac raft and then transported back to the mainland by Island Packers, where it was weighed and disposed of by the National Park Service. An estimated one ton of additional derelict fishing gear had to be left on the beach for lack of space on the return trip.

## California Bans the Bag, But Bag Makers Fight Back





Last fall, the California Legislature enacted Senate Bill 270, making California the first state in the nation to adopt a law to ban plastic bags at grocery retailers statewide effective July 1, 2015. However, the plastic bag industry spent \$3.1 million (almost all from out-of-state sources) to collect signatures to try and overturn the bag ban. Enough signatures were gathered and certified at the end of February, so implementation of the bag ban will be delayed and a referendum will be placed

on the November 2016 ballot asking California voters to decide whether to overturn the ban. Meanwhile, Channelkeeper and our bag partners have resumed our advocacy efforts for other local municipalities along the South Coast to join the cities of Santa Barbara and Carpinteria in enacting local bag ordinances. If you live in Goleta or unincorporated areas of Santa Barbara County, please let your elected officials know that you support a plastic bag ban, and stay tuned for opportunities to get involved.

## Channelkeeper Student Art Show Opening Exhibit, Reception & Awards Ceremony Thursday, March 5th



Channelkeeper is proud to host our 12th annual ocean-inspired Student Art Show, "What the Channel Means to Me." Please join us for the opening exhibit, public reception and awards ceremony on Thursday, March 5th (*1st Thursday*) from 5-8 pm at the Jodi House Gallery at 625 Chapala Street in Santa Barbara. The goal of the show, which is open to high school students from Carpinteria to Goleta, is to inspire local youth to create art that celebrates the natural beauty and biodiversity of the Santa Barbara Channel, and for their art to inspire others in our community. This year's show was juried by local artist Erika Carter, and is sponsored by [Trillium Enterprises, Inc.](#) At the event, Senator Hannah-Beth Jackson will announce the winners, who will receive cash prizes that they can invest in their education. The entire show will remain on display at the Jodi House Gallery for two weeks following the opening, and the winning pieces will also be featured at Channelkeeper's Blue Water Ball on May 2nd.

## Stream Team - March 7 & 8

Stream Team is Channelkeeper's volunteer-based water quality monitoring program. Every month, volunteers join Channelkeeper staff to test for common water quality parameters at numerous sites in the Ventura River and Goleta Valley watersheds. Come join us to help protect our local waterways. Stream Team in Ventura will meet at 9am on Saturday, March 7th and Goleta Stream Team will meet at 10am on Sunday, March 8th. For more information, visit our [website](#), [email](#) us or call 805.563.3377 ext. 5.



## Become a Channelkeeper Member!

Your support for Channelkeeper's efforts is needed now more than ever. Become a member of the Channelkeeper crew today with your tax-deductible donation. You'll be investing in clean water and healthy communities along the Santa Barbara Channel today and for future generations. With your membership, you will receive our regular newsletters, news updates and action alerts, invitations to special Channelkeeper events and fun volunteer opportunities, and a free Channelkeeper sticker. All new donors contributing \$50 or more can also receive a Channelkeeper t-shirt, and for donations of \$250 or more, bi-annual issues of *Waterkeeper* magazine. Sign up today by calling 805.563.3377 ext. 2, [emailing](#) us, or clicking [here](#).



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