



NEWS RELEASE

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Santa Barbara Channelkeeper and Santa Barbara County Settle Lawsuit to Clean Up Pollution from County's South Coast Recycling and Transfer Station

September 13, 2016 (Santa Barbara, California) – Fish in Goleta's Atascadero Creek will breathe easier now that Santa Barbara County has committed to cleaning up water pollution from its South Coast Recycling and Transfer Station, according to Santa Barbara Channelkeeper, a local environmental watchdog group.

In late July, Santa Barbara County signed a settlement agreement with Channelkeeper to prevent the discharge of polluted stormwater runoff from the Transfer Station, a seven-acre waste and recycling facility located at 4430 Calle Real in Santa Barbara. The agreement settles a lawsuit Channelkeeper filed against the County in late 2015 for violations of the California General Industrial Stormwater Permit and the federal Clean Water Act at the Transfer Station. The settlement agreement became effective yesterday, when the 45-day period for comment by the US Environmental Protection Agency and Department of Justice expired.

Sampling conducted by Channelkeeper as well as by the County itself revealed that runoff from the Transfer Station during rain storms frequently exceeded water quality standards for several pollutants, including fecal indicator bacteria, sediment, and various metals. This polluted runoff flows to Atascadero Creek, which is officially designated by the State as impaired by a variety of pollutants. Atascadero Creek also has the third highest amount of total steelhead habitat (in miles), and has been ranked the fourth highest priority creek for steelhead recovery in a regional analysis of 24 stream reaches along the Conception Coast.

After reviewing the sampling results and doing a comparative analysis of monitoring data from other industrial facilities in the area, Channelkeeper discovered that the Transfer Station in fact had the highest number of violations of the industrial stormwater permit of any industrial facility in the entire Central Coast region in the preceding five years, which prompted Channelkeeper to file a citizen enforcement action under the Clean Water Act.

“The goals of Channelkeeper’s lawsuit were to prevent the discharge of pollutants from the facility to Atascadero Creek, ensure compliance with the industrial stormwater permit, and establish the standard for pollution control at all industrial facilities owned and operated by the County,” explains Channelkeeper’s Executive Director, Kira Redmond.

“Fortunately, the County was extremely cooperative, coming to the table immediately and working with us in good faith to craft a timely and comprehensive program to fix the problem. Channelkeeper appreciates and commends the County for its commitment to doing the right thing to protect our environment,” said Redmond.

The court-enforceable settlement agreement between Channelkeeper and the County requires the County to implement a suite of Best Management Practices to prevent the exposure of pollution sources to stormwater, and eliminate the discharge of polluted stormwater from the facility or meet water quality standards. As part of the settlement, the County will also contribute \$43,000 to South Coast Habitat Restoration for a Supplemental Environmental Project to restore steelhead habitat in Atascadero Creek.

“Channelkeeper is thrilled to have reached this landmark agreement with the County, which will result in cleaner water and healthier aquatic habitat in Atascadero Creek, as well as the Goleta Slough and Goleta Beach downstream,” concluded Ms. Redmond.

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Santa Barbara Channelkeeper’s mission is to protect and restore the Santa Barbara Channel and its watersheds through science-based advocacy, education, field work and enforcement. To learn more about Channelkeeper, visit www.sbck.org.