



Santa Barbara **CHANNELKEEPER®**

Keeping watch for clean water

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Santa Barbara CHANNELKEEPER®

Our mission is to protect and restore the Santa Barbara Channel and its watersheds through science-based advocacy, education, field work and enforcement

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FROM THE HELM

We all breathed a collective sigh of relief this past winter when the skies unleashed a lot more rain than we've seen in nearly a decade and public officials declared the record-breaking drought was finally over. We felt the worst of it here on the South Coast, which remained in extreme drought for most of the past nine years while other parts of California had some relief a few winters back. And it's been a game-changer for our community in many ways.

For one, it prompted the City of Santa Barbara to make a difficult, expensive, and, in Channelkeeper's view, imprudent decision to reactivate its long-mothballed desalination plant. Now we find ourselves in precisely the same place we were 30 years ago, on the other side of a long drought, stuck with an extremely expensive, energy-intensive, environmentally harmful facility producing water that is economically impractical now that cheaper surface water supplies are readily available.

Yes, measures needed to be taken to ensure we had sufficient supplies to meet our community's needs during the drought. But desalination was by no means our only option, nor was it the best one. Now that we have some respite from drought, we have the opportunity to learn from this costly mistake we've made not once now but twice. We can't get back the \$100+ million we've already poured into it or the massive amounts of energy we've used (and greenhouse gases we've emitted) to operate it, nor can we bring back to life the astronomical numbers of marine organisms we've killed in the process. But we can pursue a different path toward a more sustainable water future. We can ratchet down the volume of water produced by the desal plant while we invest in more environmentally sound, drought-resilient sources of supply like stormwater capture and recycled wastewater for both potable and non-potable reuse. And we can continue to implement the water conservation and efficiency measures that our community so heroically stepped up with during the drought.

One wet winter isn't going to solve our water woes. Our groundwater aquifers will take years to refill, and a series of dry winters could come again sooner than later and deplete the surface water supplies that are replenished for now. We need to make conservation a way of life, all the time, not just in times of drought. And we need to make wiser decisions now about where our water will come from in the future. Please continue to do all the conscientious and creative things you've been doing to conserve water, and please join Channelkeeper in urging our elected officials to maintain conservation and efficiency policies and to shift away from desalination and toward more sustainable water supplies that better reflect our community's commitment to environmental protection and sustainability. Thank you!



KIRA REDMOND | Executive Director



Kira

Progress on Plastics

Single-use plastics are a major source of pollution to our creeks, beaches, and ocean. In addition to leading frequent clean-ups to remove plastic and other trash from local beaches, Channelkeeper has for many years been a vocal advocate for policies that reduce single-use plastic. The City of Carpinteria has been a leader on the plastic policy front, and we were thrilled when their City Council unanimously adopted one of the most progressive single-use plastic reduction ordinances in California earlier this spring. Carpinteria's new ordinance, which enters into effect on January 1, 2020, bans plastic straws, cutlery and stirrers, with an Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) exemption for those who need straws for medical reasons. The ordinance also directs local restaurants to offer plastic lids and condiments for take-out only upon request, and mandates that take-out food containers be marine-degradable, compostable or recyclable.



Students from Adams Elementary School Ocean Guardian program helping to sort film plastic for Ablitt's Fine Cleaners' film plastic recycling initiative. Photo by Claire Fackler.

Channelkeeper also championed the City of Santa Barbara's recent adoption of a Styrofoam ban ordinance, which went into effect on January 1st, as well as a plastic straw and stirrer ban ordinance, which becomes effective

on July 1st of this year. We continue to work with Goleta and Santa Barbara County to advocate that they adopt Styrofoam bans and consider including other single-use plastic items like straws and stirrers as well.

Recycling Film Plastic

In addition to advocacy, we are also working to educate and help our community reduce, reuse and recycle plastic. This fall, we joined an effort spearheaded by Ablitt's Fine Cleaners to recycle film plastics (bubble wrap, plastic shopping bags and bags used for bread, produce and newspapers), which Santa Barbara's waste collection service is currently unable to recycle. You can drop off clean, dry film plastic at our office (714 Bond Avenue), the Community Environmental Council's office (26 W.

Anapamu St., 2nd Floor), or Ablitt's (14 W. Gutierrez St.). Ablitt's then bales the film plastic and sends it to manufacturers that turn it into pellets to be repurposed for decking and other household materials.



Graphic provided by CEC

At the state level, Channelkeeper is supporting Assembly Bill 1080 (Gonzalez) and Senate Bill 54 (Allen), which would drastically reduce plastic pollution statewide. The bills, which are currently making their way through the legislative process, set goals for the reduction of single-use disposable products and packaging, including a long-term goal of reducing, recycling or composting 75 percent of all single-use plastic packaging and products sold or distributed in California by 2030.

Thank you for joining us in the movement for plastic-free seas by supporting local and state plastic reduction policies and doing all you can to reduce your own use of single-use plastic!

[Visit sbck.org/plastic to learn more](http://sbck.org/plastic-to-learn-more)

Channelkeeper Improves Oil Spill Prevention and Response

Four years after the Plains All American Oil Spill, Channelkeeper remains engaged in oil spill prevention and response planning on a number of fronts. For one, we participated in the County of Santa Barbara's process to update its Operational Area Oil Contingency Plan, which the Board of Supervisors adopted on April 9th. The much-needed update incorporates many valuable lessons learned from the 2015 oil spill, including measures that Channelkeeper actively lobbied for to improve sampling protocols and to ensure transparency and better communication with the public.

In addition, Channelkeeper recently submitted comments on the draft



regulations to implement Assembly Bill 864, which mandates the use of best available technology on pipelines located near environmentally and ecologically sensitive areas in the coastal zone. We're tracking Plains' application

to replace Lines 901 and 903, which have been shut down since the 2015 spill, and submitted comments on the scope of the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) for the project. In addition, Channelkeeper served on the steering committee to plan a day-long symposium on Improving Oil Spill Preparedness and Response in Santa Barbara on April 5th. The symposium convened practitioners and stakeholders to address social and economic dimensions of oil spills, public health, public communication, spill prevention, and identification of research needs for future oil spill response. Ben Pitterle, Channelkeeper's Science & Policy Director, served on the symposium's panel on spill response.

Finally, Channelkeeper also continues to participate in meetings of the LA/Long Beach Area Committee for spill prevention and response, to conduct quarterly tarball surveys on 14 beaches from Ventura to Gaviota, and to maintain the necessary training certifications for our staff and equipment on our boat so we are fully prepared to support the response to any future oil spills in our region.

Strengthening Agricultural Pollution Regulations

The Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board has known for decades that conventional farming is a major source of pollution to our rivers, wetlands, and groundwater supplies. However, the Board has as yet not managed to enact an effective regulatory program to limit agricultural pollution. Channelkeeper has worked for many years with a broad coalition of partners, including Monterey Coastkeeper and various environmental justice and fishing groups, to petition the Regional and State Water Boards to fulfill their

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Bringing Water Back to the Ventura River



For the first time ever, State and local officials are working together with Channelkeeper to negotiate a binding agreement that will ensure enough water will be left in the Ventura River to sustain steelhead and other aquatic life. These negotiations are a direct result of Channelkeeper's lawsuit against the City of Ventura and State Water Board for failing to protect the river and its wildlife from excessive pumping and water diversions.

The City of Ventura pumps hundreds of millions of gallons of water from the Ventura River every year, at times completely drying up parts of the river. In an attempt to restore flows to the river, Channelkeeper filed a lawsuit in 2015 that challenges the City's over-pumping as well as the State Water Board's failure to address it.

Since Channelkeeper filed our lawsuit, the State Water Board and Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) began developing standards that define how much water needs to be in the river to protect endangered steelhead and

other wildlife. The City of Ventura, meanwhile, filed cross-complaints against hundreds of smaller water users in the watershed and initiated an adjudication of water rights.

Channelkeeper has repeatedly called upon the City and State Water Board to engage in settlement discussions with us to develop reasonable limits on how much water the City extracts from the river through its wells at Foster Park in order to prevent dewatering of the river. They finally agreed to come to the table, and just last month, we entered into a formal mediation process to develop interim requirements to maintain sufficient flows in the river for fish until the Water Board and DFW finalize their in-stream flow standards.

This will be a complex process, but it presents an unprecedented opportunity to secure binding commitments to keep the Ventura River alive and flowing in the future.

To learn more about our work to #ResurrectTheRiver, visit www.sbck.org/rtr



The lower Ventura River historically flowed year-round to the ocean, but the City's excessive pumping can at times cause it to dry up completely.

Channelkeeper Enforcement Cases Yield Big Gains for Clean Water

The primary tools that Channelkeeper uses to protect the Santa Barbara Channel and its watersheds are outreach and education, scientific research and monitoring, and policy advocacy. On rare occasions, however, we do resort to litigation to enforce compliance with the Clean Water Act and other environmental laws when the threat to our waters is particularly egregious and advocacy has not yielded sufficient improvements. Lawsuits are expensive, time-consuming and contentious, so we're very selective about who and when we sue, but the 12 cases we have filed in our nearly 20 years of existence have provided significant improvements in water quality on the South Coast.

For example, as a result of our lawsuit against the City of Santa Barbara for having an unacceptably high rate of sewage spills, the City has invested an additional

\$20 million since 2012 to improve its spill response and reporting protocols, enhance its sewer pipe inspection and cleaning efforts, and repair or replace 34 miles of sewer pipe, including 10 miles of pipes that we identified as having a high risk of leaking to storm drains, creeks and the ocean.

That investment has paid off in spades, and last year the City achieved the lowest number of sewage spills we've seen in 20 years. The number of spills has continued to drop since we settled, but this past year the City achieved compliance with the strict limits of our settlement agreement and had only 7 spills – down from 44 when we first commenced legal action 10 years ago. This represents a spill rate achieved by only the most well-managed, top-performing sewer systems, and it directly translates into less pollution in our creeks, beaches and ocean.

This past winter we also saw the County of Santa Barbara complete major improvements to the South Coast Transfer & Recycling Station, which had the highest number of stormwater permit violations of any industrial facility on the entire Central Coast – until Channelkeeper came along. In response to a lawsuit we filed in 2015, the County committed to redesigning the Transfer Station to capture and divert all its runoff to Goleta's sewage plant for treatment. The connection to the sewer was completed this past fall, and now, what used to be the most polluting industrial site in our region has completely eliminated its discharge of pollutants to storm drains, Atascadero Creek and the ocean!

While litigation isn't the most agreeable way to get things done, at times it is necessary, and it is one highly effective tool in our toolbox to accomplish our ultimate goal of defending your right to clean water.



Mud on the Beach - Again



In early 2019, the Santa Barbara County Flood Control District dredged the debris basins in the foothills of Montecito and Carpinteria in attempt to reduce the risk of flooding, and they deposited the dredged material onto Carpinteria and Goleta Beaches utilizing the same emergency permits they received from state and federal agencies in the immediate aftermath of the Montecito debris flows a year prior.

The County's network of debris basins are many decades old and require ongoing clearing to function properly. The County argues that the beach is the appropriate place to dispose of the excavated material, and while flood control is the primary purpose, the County has repeatedly stated that "nourishment" of beaches with local sand and cobble is a secondary benefit.

Debris basins block the natural transport of sediment from headwaters to the ocean and beaches during storms, and the artificial transport and dumping of excavated basin material over a period of weeks or months can create conditions that are significantly different than when storms transport sediment naturally. The differences may result in prolonged impacts on water quality, recreation, fishing and aquatic life in creeks, beaches, and ocean ecosystems.

Channelkeeper did not oppose the disposal of mud on the beach after the debris flows when it was indeed an emergency situation, but County officials have indicated they plan to continue (and potentially augment) beach mud disposal operations in

the future, and we do not believe such operations should continue to be undertaken indefinitely under emergency permits with minimal controls. Therefore, we have called upon the County to obtain programmatic permits for such activities so that the environmental impacts can be properly analyzed, avoided and mitigated.

Meanwhile, we have also continued to monitor and assess the impacts of beach dumping by coordinating with scientists, conducting offshore monitoring from our boat, and testing fecal bacteria levels in the surf zone. We plan to continue these monitoring and advocacy efforts moving forward with the goal of minimizing the environmental impacts to the highest degree possible.



Channelkeeper Launches Post-Debris Flow Monitoring in Montecito Streams

In an effort to document conditions in creeks impacted by the Thomas Fire and Montecito debris flows, Channelkeeper recently launched an initiative to conduct monthly water quality sampling in San Ysidro, Romero and Montecito Creeks. Our initial round of sampling indicated elevated turbidity levels (murky water) at sites below debris basins, whereas sites above debris basins exhibited low turbidity levels. We will continue to share our findings with the community, governmental agencies, restoration groups, and others working to assess and restore impacts from the fire and debris flows.

High Tide at the 19th Annual Blue Water Ball!

Channelkeeper's Blue Water Ball rose to new heights in its 19th year, raising a record \$227,000 to support our work to protect and restore the Santa Barbara Channel and its watersheds!

At the gala, which took place on March 16, 2019 at Deckers LEED-certified headquarters, 250 revelers sipped fine local wines, shopped at an extensive auction, savored a fresh gourmet dinner, and swayed to tunes by the Santa Barbara Ukelele Club and DJ Darla Bea, all while celebrating Channelkeeper's many recent victories for clean water. Guests were also treated to gorgeous Turkish towels embroidered with our logo, courtesy of Riviera Towel Company.

The event was seamlessly orchestrated by legendary Master of Ceremonies Andrew Firestone, and featured an inspiring keynote address by Rick Ridgeway, Vice President of Public Engagement for Patagonia. After a side-splitting introduction by Patagonia founder



Yvon Chouinard, Rick brought his audience to their feet with moving tales of his epic mountaineering adventures with Chouinard and founding Channelkeeper Board member Dan Emmett as well as his pioneering work with Patagonia to advance a business model of sustainability and provide substantial support to grassroots environmental groups while also running a highly successful company.

We are deeply moved and grateful for the incredible generosity of the many individuals and businesses who helped make our event so successful. We hope you'll join us at next year's Blue Water Ball, which will feature a special celebration of Channelkeeper's 20th anniversary!

THREE CHEERS FOR OUR EVENT COMMITTEE & VOLUNTEERS!

Kristin Larsen, *Chair*
 Lynda Blue
 Charla Brown
 Katharine Gerhardt
 Nancy Hussey
 Lyndsey Kenefick
 Terry Kleid
 Sam Macks
 Janet Velarde Loubet
 Carla Tomson

Rick Ridgeway
Keynote Speaker
 Andrew Firestone
Master of Ceremonies

Debra Artz
 Meghan Bowen
 Mario Colon
 Anthony DiGrandi
 Laura Gray
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 Coco LaForge
 Keith Masnec
 Paul McCarty
 Molly Morse
 Ben Morse
 Sarah Palladino
 Nicol Parker
 Haley Perry
 Chris Schmuckal
 Karen Thornton
 Eric Vandenberg
 Molly Williams
 Bankers from
 Montecito Bank & Trust



Clockwise from top left: Event Committee Chair Kristin Larsen and Master of Ceremonies Andrew Firestone; Board Members Jack Stapelmann and Sherry Madsen, Kathy Kalp, and Craig Madsen; Board Member and Event Committee Member Carla Tomson and Shaun Tomson; Advisory Council Member Dan Emmett, Ted and Cameron Tambakis, Yvon Chouinard, Keynote Speaker Rick Ridgeway, and Executive Director Kira Redmond. Photos by: Branden Aroyen/Low Tide Photography

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Botanik

The Brewhouse

Bureo

Buttonwood Farm

Winery

& Vineyards

California Wine

Festival

Calla Gold Jewelry

Camerata Pacifica

Carpinteria Dory

Company

Casa Dumetz Wines

Channel Islands

Surfboards

Charla Brown &

Rob Burnett

Chef Coco LaForge

Chris Burkard Studio

Chris Potter

Chuck's Waterfront

Grill

Cold Spring Tavern

Condor Express

Core Power Yoga

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Company

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Ben

Dan Merkel

Daniel Gibbings

David Anderson

Santa Barbara Dog

Jog

Drishiti

El Capitan Canyon

El Rancho

Carpintero

Emilie Lee

Ensemble Theater

Company

Finney's Crafthouse

& Kitchen

Firewire Surfboards

Fitness Impact

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Designs

FLOAT Luxury Spa

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Biltmore

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Seafood

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Infuse Spirits

Island Packers

Jack Johnson

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Jaffurs Wine Cellars

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REI

Riverbend Vineyard

& Winery

Roblar Winery

Santa Barbara

Adventure

Company

Santa Barbara Airbus

Santa Barbara Home

Improvement

Center

Santa Barbara

International Film

Festival

Santa Barbara

Museum of Art

Santa Barbara Polo

& Racquet Club

Santa Barbara

Rock Gym

Santa Barbara

Sailing Center

Santa Barbara

Symphony

Santa Barbara Zoo

Santa Ynez Band of

Chumash Indians

Foundation

Sarah Rebstock

Message Therapy

Scott Soens

Scruffy Dog Studio

Truth Aquatics

Sean Bolis

Shalhoob Meat

Company

Sirena Home

Stagecoach Music

Festival

Summerland Winery

Surf Happens

Surf 'n Suds Beer

Festival

The Bikini Factory

Santa Barbara

FisHouse

The Garden Market

The Lark

The Shopkeepers

Theresa Borgatello

Things By K.Ing

Third Window

Brewing Co.

Tidepools

Toad&Co.

Toscana

Travis Lee

The Upham Hotel

Villa Wine Bar and

Kitchen

Vissla

Walden Surfboards

Waxing Poetic

Jewelry

Whitcraft Winery

World Surf League

Yellow Belly Tap and

Restaurant

Yoga Soup

YOGAqua

Zodos

Master of Ceremonies Andrew Firestone getting the crowd fired up during the paddle raise.



16th Annual Student Art Show

This past winter, Channelkeeper hosted our 16th annual ocean-themed juried student art show, "What the Channel Means to Me." 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.

Art students from Bishop Diego, Carpinteria, Dos Pueblos, San Marcos, and Santa Barbara High Schools submitted more than 325 works of art to vie for the chance to be featured in this year's show. Our juror, local artist



First place winner James Serrano with his ceramic piece, "Saltwater Creep."

Nicole Strasburg, selected 63 awe-inspiring pieces to be in the show, which was exhibited at the Jodi House Gallery for four weeks, as well as several award winners (see right). We celebrated the students and their incredible artwork at a public reception and awards ceremony on March 7th, where the winners received cash prizes made possible by Trillium Enterprises and the City of Goleta Community Grants Program.

Special thanks to Trillium enterprises for their many years of support for the student art show!

ART SHOW AWARD WINNERS

1st Place: James Serrano
Dos Pueblos High School

2nd Place: Eliana Bohn
Dos Pueblos High School

3rd Place: Haley Hoidal
Bishop Diego High School

Jurors' Choice: Natali Clark-Ruiz
San Marcos High School

Environmental Ethic: Connor Platt
Dos Pueblos High School

Honorable Mentions:

Harrison Del Bonis
San Marcos High School

Jacob Grossi
Dos Pueblos High School

Nicole Borden
Bishop Diego High School



Strengthening Agricultural Pollution Regulations (cont.)

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legal duty to protect water quality and public health from agricultural pollution, and despite legal appeals by agricultural industry lobby groups and the State Water Board, we have prevailed in court time and again, including most recently last fall.

As a result, the Regional Water Board is presently working to update and strengthen its agricultural pollution regulations. The current draft includes provisions designed to protect groundwater supplies by, for the first time ever, requiring farms to limit the amount of fertilizer they apply to their crops. Records of fertilizer application from farms overlaying contaminated groundwater basins show that the vast majority of these farms egregiously over-apply fertilizer. The

Regional Board has issued findings that "groundwater nitrate (fertilizer) contamination is widespread and severe, and degradation is increasing in many areas." Many streams that drain into the Santa Barbara Channel are contaminated with fertilizer from surrounding agriculture. Even in areas without runoff, contamination from excessively applied fertilizer moves through the soil and seeps into our spring-fed streams.

Channelkeeper is actively participating in the development of the updated agricultural pollution regulations, countering robust opposition from the agricultural industry, and we will do all we can to ensure that fertilizer limits, along with other protective measures, are included in the final regulations to be adopted later this year.



Changes to Our Team

Channelkeeper is thrilled to introduce you to the newest member of our crew, Molly Troup, who signed on as our new Science and Policy Associate late last year. Molly holds a Master's in Environmental Science and Management from UCSB's Bren School and a BA in Biology from Wheaton College and brings a wealth of experience from her prior work as a coastal planner and enforcement analyst with the California Coastal Commission and as a consultant helping coastal municipalities develop plans to deal with sea level rise. When she's not out in the field leading our Stream Team and tidepool monitoring programs or working on other Channelkeeper monitoring, advocacy, and education projects, Molly enjoys trail running, backpacking, biking and exploring the wilderness. Welcome aboard, Molly!



Molly Troup

This spring, Channelkeeper bid a fond farewell to Nancy Hussey, who stepped down from our Board of Directors after nearly 3 years of service. We greatly appreciate all that Nancy contributed to our organization, including serving



Nancy Hussey

on our development and Blue Water Ball committees and introducing new people and fresh ideas to our fundraising activities and events, and we wish her all the best moving forward.

Channelkeeper Attends Waterkeeper Alliance Pacific Regional Summit



The entire Channelkeeper staff traveled to the Bay Area in March to attend the 2019 Waterkeeper Alliance Pacific Regional Summit. We joined staff from Waterkeeper Alliance and other Waterkeeper organizations across the West to learn and share strategies and best practices for ensuring swimmable, fishable, drinkable water for our communities, including how we can work together to help strengthen and protect federal environmental laws like the Clean Water Act. We were inspired, learned a lot and had a blast with our fellow Waterkeeper warriors fighting the good fight for clean water in the West!

Intern Spotlight



Alexander Aldern



Brandon Hopper

Channelkeeper provides valuable work experience and mentorship to college students through our internship program, and we are extremely grateful for the support they provide to our programs.

Alexander Aldern and Brandon Hopper have been MPA Watch interns with Channelkeeper since August 2018. They conduct weekly surveys of our Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) to provide data on how these areas are being used to help inform MPA management and enforcement.

Alexander is a second year environmental studies major at UCSB and is an avid surfer and musician. Brandon is a fourth year environmental studies major at UCSB, plays on the UCSB volleyball team, and grew up diving along the California coast.

In addition to conducting weekly MPA Watch surveys, Brandon and Alexander also assist with MPA Watch data entry, volunteer training, and outreach. We are thrilled to have them on our team!



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Upcoming Events

Stream Team

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 monitor and protect our local waterways. Upcoming Goleta Stream Team events will take place at 10 am on May 5, June 2, July 14, August 4, September 8, and October 6. Upcoming Ventura Stream Team events will take place at 9 am on May 4 and August 3. Email molly@sbck.org or call 805.563.3377 ext. 5 for more information.



Third Window Charity Tap

Third Window Brewing Co. is supporting Channelkeeper for the entire month of June! When you order a specialty draught beer, Third Window will donate \$1 to us for every pint sold. Stop by the brewery in The Mill at 406 E Haley St #3 in Santa Barbara any time during the month of June to participate. Drinking hand-crafted brew in support of clean water and a healthy ocean? We'll toast to that!

Volunteer with MPA Watch!

Are you into marine conservation AND long walks on the beach? Learn how to collect valuable data on our local Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) while walking along the beautiful beaches of Campus Point, Naples and Gaviota through Channelkeeper's MPA Watch program. MPA Watch is a citizen science initiative to monitor human uses of coastal MPAs and collect data to help inform the management, enforcement and science of California's MPAs. Our next MPA Watch volunteer training workshop will take place over the summer. Email penny@sbck.org for more information and future training opportunities.



Know before you go! Download the Swim Guide app to check up on beach water quality before you take a dip this summer.

