



# *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

I hope you and your loved ones are safe and healthy and finding ways to stay positive during this difficult time. I know you care deeply about the state of our environment and are invested in our work to protect it, so I thought you'd like to hear how the Channelkeeper crew is adapting to our strange new reality while continuing to work hard to defend your right to clean water.

The Channelkeeper staff has been working remotely since March 12th, and after some on-the-fly learning, we're running smoothly with online work and collaboration tools. We've suspended all group field work and volunteer activities and in-person meetings and events, but most of our other work continues apace. Our staff is currently focused on reviewing and developing recommendations on new rules to address agricultural pollution on the Central Coast; advising the City of Santa Barbara on its future water supply portfolio; negotiating with the City of Ventura and state agencies to establish in-stream flow standards for the Ventura River sufficient to sustain fish, wildlife and people; helping the City of Goleta develop a creek and watershed management plan; monitoring the County's dumping of mud on Goleta Beach; and analyzing our Stream Team and MPA Watch monitoring data. We're also developing all kinds of exciting content to share with you in celebration of our 20th anniversary, so please stay tuned for these.

Channelkeeper is also tracking how the pandemic is affecting environmental compliance, and it's not good. The agricultural industry is seeking to delay the adoption of new pollution reduction rules. The plastic industry is pushing to roll back hard-won bans on plastic bags. And most alarmingly, the Trump Administration has ordered the US EPA to suspend enforcement of environmental laws. We're voicing our opposition to these ill-advised rollbacks and urging Gov. Newsom not to succumb to industry pressure to follow suit here in California.

This suspension of environmental enforcement is deeply troubling, but it also underscores the critical importance of watchdog organizations like Channelkeeper who are willing to hold our government and polluters accountable, including, when necessary, by exercising our right to enforce environmental laws ourselves. Our work to keep watch and defend your right to a healthy environment has never been more important. And your support for our work is more important than ever now too.

Like everyone, Channelkeeper is doing the best we can to navigate these uncharted waters. Rest assured that we will continue to fight for clean water, because the threats to our environment continue to mount, and we know you're counting on us. But we need your support to do so. If you are able, please consider making a tax-deductible contribution to Channelkeeper today. And if you're not able right now, we understand and are here for you just the same. We're in this together, and we're grateful for you. Thank you, take care, and be well!



KIRA REDMOND | Executive Director



*Kira*



# It's Not About a Fish



**W**e arrived at the Channelkeeper office one recent morning to find a voicemail from a very angry caller. “I’m 67-years old, and I’ve worked in there [Thatcher Creek] since my late teens. I’ve never seen one,” shouted the caller, referring to the endangered steelhead trout. “We’re lucky if we even have water in Thatcher Creek.”

Various expletives ensued about Channelkeeper’s Ventura River lawsuit, which we filed in 2014. The specific goal of our suit was to compel the State Water Resources Control Board to analyze the City of Ventura’s use of water from the Ventura River and to intervene to stop the City from completely drying up the river by pumping too much water from its well field at Foster Park.

It’s worth noting that various government agencies brought this problem to the City’s attention decades ago, but the City chose to ignore, or worse, deliberately evade remedies. Channelkeeper’s lawsuit focused solely on the City’s water use because of its disproportionate impact on the

river, but the City decided to pull every other water right holder in the watershed into our lawsuit to protect and prioritize its own water right.

Some community members, including our angry caller, are frustrated because the City opted to challenge their water rights, and view Channelkeeper’s efforts as misguidedly focused on a single species of fish, the endangered steelhead trout, which is currently struggling for survival in the Ojai and Ventura River valleys.

Channelkeeper’s efforts in the Ventura River watershed are about protecting much more than steelhead, but it’s easy to understand why so much attention is placed on the beleaguered species. One reason steelhead are endangered is that they require high quality habitat, which is hard to find these days. That means that if a river is good enough for steelhead, it’s probably good enough for everything else that lives there too. So, when you protect steelhead, you protect an entire ecosystem.

Another reason steelhead are so famous is that many of our environmental laws are designed to prioritize protection of endangered species. Many of our protected open spaces were established to protect sensitive keystone species like steelhead. But the Ventura River is much more than a haven for an endangered fish.

The Ventura River is the wilderness in our own backyard. It’s an entire interdependent ecosystem of birds, fish, mammals, plants and more that existed for millions of years before humans inhabited the area. That is something worth protecting. To the first humans that lived here, the Ventura River was a sacred source of life and abundance. It remains so to those people today, and that too is worth protecting.

For several generations in the not so distant past, the Ventura River was a cherished source of sustenance and recreation. Each street off Ventura Avenue had its own dirt trail leading down to the river, where the community accessed swimming holes and fishing spots, each with its own name, names now largely forgotten. But the river still provides recreational opportunities and local access to nature for thousands of people today, and that too is worth protecting.

The Ventura River is a source of drinking water, which we also need to protect. Whether diverted from the surface or pumped from just beneath it, the river and its groundwater basins provide all the water used in the Ojai Basin and the Ventura River valley. When the river goes dry, it’s a canary in the coal mine telling us that

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# Help Protect Our Water Supplies from Agricultural Pollution!

Farming is an essential aspect of California's economy and way of life, but it's also the number one source of pollution to groundwater and many of our rivers and wetlands. Channelkeeper has been working diligently for more than a decade with a coalition of environmental justice, fishing and other Waterkeeper groups to push for stronger regulations to address this egregious pollution problem, because to date they have been largely ineffective.

Currently, new rules are being developed to control pollution from irrigated agricultural lands across the Central Coast region. These rules, aka "Ag Order 4.0," would differ from their ineffectual predecessors in one critical and precedent-setting way – by setting reasonable limits on the amount of fertilizer that can be applied to crops. This is one of the most effective ways to protect our precious groundwater supplies, which serve as the primary source of drinking water for hundreds of thousands of people across the region.

Records show that the vast majority of farms egregiously over-apply fertilizer. According to the Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board, over half the nitrogen applied as fertilizer ends up as harmful pollution to the environment. Currently, farms discharge nitrogen at levels ten times higher than those deemed safe for drinking water. The Water Board has found that "groundwater nitrate (fertilizer) contamination is widespread and severe, and degradation is increasing in many areas." Nitrates leaching from farms into aquifers have left over 100,000 square miles of groundwater contaminated with nitrates throughout California, rendering critical potable water supplies too toxic to drink.



Channelkeeper and our allies are urging the Water Board to allow only as much fertilizer as crops can realistically use based on the best available science. That's a win-win for both farming and the environment. Yet the agricultural industry lobby is fighting it tooth and nail. So we need your help!

You can help protect our streams and groundwater supplies by telling the Water Board you support common sense limits on fertilizer application on farms through our petition at [www.sbck.org/action-alerts](http://www.sbck.org/action-alerts). Please sign it today, and thank you for lending your voice to this important cause!

## Guiding Santa Barbara's Future Water Supply Portfolio



Channelkeeper's Executive Director Kira Redmond has been tapped to serve on the City of Santa Barbara's "Water Vision Santa Barbara," a new stakeholder

group tasked with helping set the direction of the City's water supply for the next 30 years. With 25 other community leaders, Kira will contribute her expertise through a series of workshops throughout 2020 to inform the development an equitable, resilient, cost-effective water supply portfolio for the City that supports its economic vitality, livability, resilience, and environmental health.



# Tackling Plastic

Researchers continue to find plastics wherever they look, including in the deepest parts of our oceans, in arctic ice, in rainwater, and even in drinking water. Some predict that, by 2050, there will be more plastic than fish (by weight) in our oceans. That's why reducing single-use plastic continues to be a major focus of Channelkeeper's work.

Currently, we're working with the Community Environmental Council (CEC) to develop a pilot reusable take-out container program with UCSB students and food service establishments in Isla Vista. We also continue to partner with Ablitt's Fine Cleaners on its film plastic recycling initiative, which has been enthusiastically embraced by our community (though it is currently suspended due to COVID-19). In the first 14 months since Ablitt's began accepting film plastic from the public, 13,600 pounds have been collected and sent to Trex to be recycled into home and garden materials!

Channelkeeper is also advocating for plastic reduction policies at the local, state, and national levels. We continue to lobby Santa Barbara County and the City of Goleta to enact bans on plastic straws, Styrofoam, and other single-use plastic items. We're supporting two state bills, Senate Bill 54 and Assembly Bill 1080, together called the California Plastic Pollution Reduction Act, which would set statewide targets to reduce waste from single-use plastic products and packaging by 75% by 2030, thereby requiring manufacturers to make less of it in the first place and ensuring that the rest can actually be recycled or composted. Congress is also currently considering federal



legislation to tackle plastic pollution nation-wide. The Break Free from Plastic Pollution Act includes source reductions for single-use plastic items, producer responsibility requirements, including targets for collection, reuse and recycling, and more.

In a troubling turn of events, the plastic industry has been exploiting the COVID-19 pandemic by lobbying for rollbacks of hard-won single-use plastic reduction policies across the nation, citing misinformation and fomenting fear around reusable bags and other alternatives, despite legitimate research showing that the virus can survive longer on plastic than many other surfaces. Their political pressure has stalled efforts to advance plastic reduction policies in the short term, but Channelkeeper will not be deterred!

Please join us in the movement for plastic-free seas, and stay tuned for opportunities to voice your support for local, state, and federal policies to rein in plastic pollution.

## PLASTIC MICROFIBERS IN LAUNDRY

Did you know that one synthetic fleece jacket releases up to 250,000 plastic microfibers when machine washed? Washing machines are the primary means by which microfibers are transported to and pollute our waterways. You can capture microfibers by installing an after-market filter on your washing machine or using a special laundry bag that captures fibers during the wash.

# Mud on the Beach



The repeated dumping of sediment on Carpinteria and Goleta Beaches by Santa Barbara County Flood Control has drawn the attention and concern of many people in our community, and Channelkeeper shares and is responding to those concerns.

The County dredges debris basins and wetlands in an effort to reduce the risk of flooding. Historically, it disposed of dredged material (which can range in size from fine silt to boulders) in upland locations, but in the aftermath of the 2018 Montecito debris flows, it began dumping dredged material truckload after truckload into the surf zone at Carpinteria and Goleta Beaches.

The community understandably fears another mudslide and therefore values the protection provided by flood control activities, and the County argues that its beach dumping operations enhance local beaches by adding sand and cobble that may have eventually reached the ocean in the absence of the debris basins. However, repeated,

prolonged and intensive disposal operations such as those currently conducted by the County can also negatively impact beaches, water quality, ecosystems and the public. While the County insists that it conducts monitoring to avoid such impacts, the results aren't typically available until after the dumping is over, some relevant pollutants are not even measured, and existing monitoring data indicates that water quality does in fact decline, impacting wildlife and the public's use and enjoyment of local beaches for prolonged periods of time.

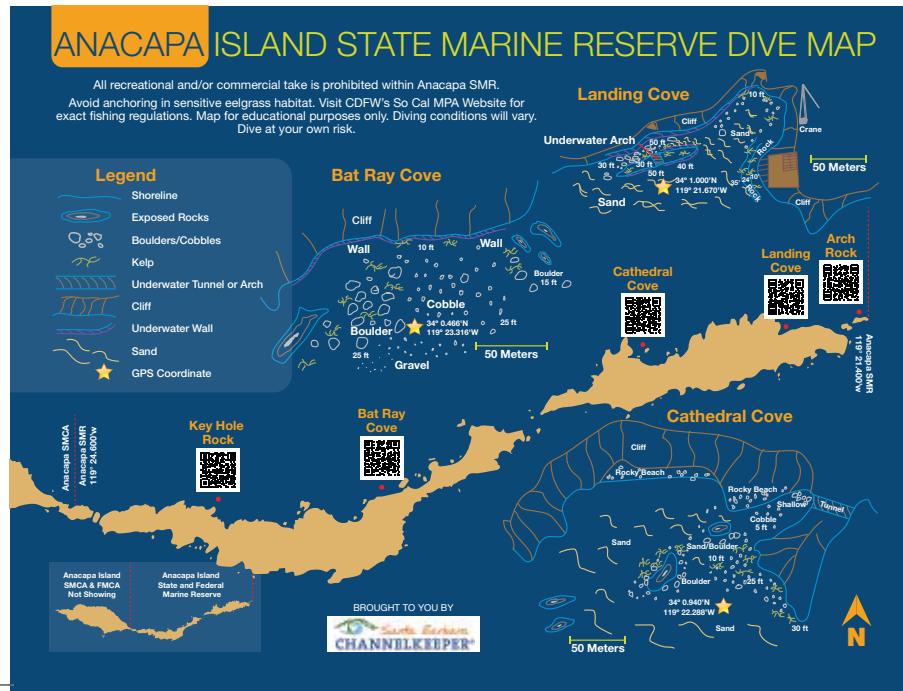
Beach sediment disposal is typically more heavily regulated to prevent undesirable impacts, but the County continues its operations under emergency permits obtained in the immediate aftermath of the 2018 debris flows, which lack comprehensive monitoring and mitigation measures to limit such impacts.

To fill this gap, Channelkeeper has been monitoring water quality in Goleta Bay before, during, and

after disposal operations. In January, we reviewed and commented on a draft Environmental Impact Report analyzing the County's plan to expand dredging and beach disposal activities at the Carpinteria Salt Marsh. We've called upon the County to produce monitoring data validating its assertions that these activities will not significantly impair water quality. We've also asked the County to outline specific actions it will take to mitigate any impacts in order to protect our beaches and wetlands and the wildlife and people that use them.

Beach sediment disposal is a complicated issue that requires a careful weighing of costs and benefits. Channelkeeper believes the County should do more to accurately assess and minimize the impacts of its operations and be more transparent with the public about it. We will continue to hold the County accountable by conducting our own water quality monitoring, sharing our findings with the public, the County, and regulatory agencies, and advocating for protections for our beaches and coastal ecosystems.

# Anacapa Island Dive Portal Now Available Online



Channelkeeper is pleased to offer a new resource for local SCUBA divers and others who want to learn more about the Santa Barbara Channel's awesome network of Marine

Protected Areas (MPAs). Our new Anacapa Island MPA Dive Map is now available both on our website and in print at local dive shops. The map highlights special

locations with unique terrain and interesting marine life and includes links to videos so divers and non-divers alike can explore what this awesome underwater park has to offer.

The new map is part of Channelkeeper's ongoing work to promote public access and enjoyment of the Santa Barbara Channel's many MPAs. MPAs provide safe havens for marine wildlife to reproduce, grow and replenish adjacent areas, leading to stronger and more resilient marine ecosystems overall, but they also offer recreational and economic benefits for people and businesses.

We invite you to discover the amazing underwater wonders in our MPAs by exploring this and other maps we've created in our growing MPA Dive Atlas, and share them with your friends!

## Channelkeeper Data At Work

Over the past eighteen years, Channelkeeper has collected scientifically robust water quality data at 22 sites in 11 creeks across the Goleta Valley every single month with the help of 630 volunteers. This long-term dataset provides an invaluable baseline and comprehensive picture of the health of these waterways and serves many important functions in keeping them clean. For one, our data has enabled us to identify and resolve numerous sources of pollution throughout the Goleta Valley. It also informs the work of local and state agencies to protect and restore these creeks. We regularly submit our data to the State Water Resources

Control Board, who uses it and other available data to prepare their biennial List of Impaired Waterbodies pursuant to the federal Clean Water Act. The Water Board is required to develop regulatory limits on the amount of offending pollutants to all waterways on this list, and our data has led the Water Board to add 13 stream segments in Goleta to the list.

Our data is also used to inform local land use and development policies. The City of Goleta is currently using our dataset to guide the development of a Creek and Watershed Management Plan,

which will provide standards for protecting the ecological function, water quality, and drainage and flood control functions of Goleta's creeks and watersheds. Channelkeeper is serving on the Technical Advisory Committee to advise City staff on technical aspects of the plan and to review and make recommendations before it is finalized later this year.

We're proud of the fact that our Stream Team data is used to help government agencies protect and restore our waterways while also providing a fun, educational, and rewarding volunteer opportunity for our community.



# Take Action for the Environment While Social Distancing



It's been a struggle for all of us to adjust to the strange new reality of social distancing and quarantine, but there have been some silver linings inside the dark cloud of COVID-19. One positive is the gift of time – time with family, time for backlogged home improvements, time for learning and creativity. We'd love for everyone to also use this time to take action for the environment, so we put together a list of easy ways for you to do just that while also practicing social distancing and keeping yourself and others safe.

- ◆ Do a thorough audit of your indoor water use to see where you can cut back and conserve. Turn the faucet off while you scrub those hands!
- ◆ Tour your yard to find opportunities to reduce your outdoor water use. Check your sprinkler system for leaks. Where you can capture or infiltrate rain, disconnect downspouts, reduce imperviousness, replace water-hungry plants with drought-tolerant ones?
- ◆ Clean up your beach or creek. There's a lot of trash out there after the recent rains. Protect the ocean while also enjoying a healthy dose of fresh air.
- ◆ Survey your kitchen, refrigerator, and pantry for single-use plastics and find ways you can replace them with reusable alternatives.
- ◆ Educate yourself about important water issues facing our community. Read up on oil platform decommissioning or Channelkeeper's efforts to restore flow to the Ventura River. Learn about ocean acidification, desalination, or other relevant local water topics on our awesome new website at [www.sbck.org](http://www.sbck.org).
- ◆ Sign a petition or email a policy-maker to voice your support for strong environmental policies. Visit the Action Alerts page on our website to find out how.
- ◆ Connect and engage with Channelkeeper on social media. Watch our videos on YouTube and talk with us on Facebook and Instagram. We want to hear about how you're keeping your spirits up, working for the environment, and finding community while social distancing.
- ◆ Peruse an ocean-inspired classic book like *The Sea Around Us*, *Blue Hope: Exploring and Caring for the Earth's Magnificent Ocean*, or *Log from the Sea of Cortez*. Enjoy ocean poetry paired with paintings in Santa Barbara artist Mary Heebner's *On the Blue Shore of Silence*.
- ◆ Check out Channelkeeper's MPA Dive Maps to explore the wonders beneath the ocean's surface without getting wet.
- ◆ Shop on Amazon Smile and select Santa Barbara Channelkeeper as your beneficiary of choice.
- ◆ Start a Facebook Fundraiser for Channelkeeper. Ask your friends to join you in supporting clean water! Whether they donate \$5 or \$500, every contribution makes an impact.



## 17th Annual Art Show a Great Success!

This past winter Channelkeeper hosted our 17th 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, Dos Pueblos, San Marcos, and Santa Barbara High Schools submitted more than 300 works of art to vie for the chance to be featured in this year's show. Our juror, local artist Jeremy Harper, selected 67 awe-inspiring pieces to be in the show as well as several award winners. We hung the show for a public exhibit and celebrated our young



Left: First place winner, Claire Whicker with Senator Hannah Beth Jackson. Right: Claire's first-place painting, "Argo."



artists at a reception and awards ceremony on March 5th at the Jodi House Gallery, where Senator Hannah-Beth Jackson presented the winners with cash prizes made possible by our show sponsors, Trillium Enterprises and the City of Goleta. Check out photos of the students' art on our Facebook page – we promise you'll be amazed and inspired!



## Check Out Our New Website!

Channelkeeper is thrilled to announce the launch of our new website! It's got a fresh, new look with dynamic content about all things water-related in the Santa Barbara Channel and its watersheds. Dive in and gain in-depth insights about our education, monitoring, advocacy and enforcement efforts through informative narratives and videos. Discover inspiring stories in our blog. Explore our stream and beach

water quality data. Or choose from an array of opportunities to engage with Channelkeeper by participating in our volunteer programs, joining us at events, reporting pollution, lending your voice to support strong environmental policies through our Action Alerts, or making a financial contribution to support our work. Visit [www.sbck.org](http://www.sbck.org) to check it out!

### ART SHOW AWARD WINNERS

**1st Place**  
Claire Whicker  
Dos Pueblos High School

**2nd Place**  
Cassandra Ortiz  
San Marcos High School

**3rd Place**  
Diego Delgadillo  
Dos Pueblos High School

**Jurors' Choice**  
Meiya Sidney  
San Marcos High School

**Environmental Ethic**  
Kailey Compton  
Dos Pueblos High School

**Honorable Mentions**  
Aliza Neal  
San Marcos High School

Olivia Purcell  
San Marcos High School

Celine Wagner  
San Marcos High School

# 20th Annual Blue Water Ball Rescheduled

While we were devastated to have to postpone our 20th Annual Blue Water Ball just two days before our originally scheduled date of March 14th, Channelkeeper is pleased to announce that we've rescheduled the event for Saturday, September 12, 2020 at Deckers, so mark your calendars!

The Blue Water Ball is Channelkeeper's most important event of the year, raising critical unrestricted funds that enable us to protect our precious beaches, creeks, and coast and defend your right to clean water. This year's Blue Water Ball will be extra special as we celebrate our 20th anniversary, and we're thrilled that Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. is confirmed to join and inspire us as our keynote speaker.

Come September, we'll likely all need an occasion for celebration, community and fun, so we really look forward to bringing our wonderful family of supporters together to celebrate the incredible environmental impact we've made together over the past two decades. All tickets and sponsorships for our originally scheduled date will be honored, but we still have a limited number of tickets available, so



please visit [www.BlueWaterBall.org](http://www.BlueWaterBall.org) or email [debra@sbck.org](mailto:debra@sbck.org) to get yours today!

Channelkeeper is extremely grateful to all our supporters who have purchased tickets to the event as well as our volunteers, auction donors, underwriters, and sponsors. Thank you for hanging in there with us while we wait for a safer time to celebrate together!

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## It's Not About a Fish (continued)

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we are exceeding the capacity of our resources, living beyond our means in ways that are detrimental and unsustainable. A thriving river means a sustainable future, and that is worthy of protection.

The Ventura River is also our legacy. It's the home we will pass on to our children. It's our own backyard. In this day and age, for all the attention placed on global

environmental problems we have no means to control, we can control what we do in our own backyard. We can choose to protect it. If we don't, who will?

That's why Channelkeeper is taking a stand for the Ventura River. It's not just about a fish.



# Changes to Our Team



Amanda Kelley

In December, Channelkeeper bid a fond farewell to our Communications Coordinator **Amanda Kelley**, who accepted a position as development coordinator for the Environmental Market Solutions Lab (emLAB), a research group at UCSB. We're grateful to Amanda for all her hard work and commitment to our organization and wish her the best of luck in her new endeavors.

We were thrilled to welcome **Laura Sanchez** to our staff in January to take over the critical role of overseeing our communications. Laura has worked in publishing and digital media for more than 15 years and brings an abundance of strategic leadership and content development expertise to our team. She most recently led a global marketing team in the renewable energy sector and has written extensively about water quality and resource conservation issues, including as the former editor of *Water Efficiency* and *Distributed Energy* magazines.



Laura Sanchez

Channelkeeper is also very excited to welcome **Mimi Armstrong deGruy** to our Board of Directors. Mimi is a renowned documentary filmmaker who has worked for CNN, Turner Broadcasting's series Portrait of America, and the PBS series The Infinite Voyage, and, with her late husband Mike deGruy, produced award-winning television for National Geographic Television, the BBC, and other broadcasters. Her latest project, Diving Deep, is an award-winning and incredibly inspiring documentary celebrating her late husband and his mission to save our oceans. Welcome aboard, Mimi and Laura!



Mimi deGruy

Channelkeeper extends our deepest gratitude to **Scott Carrington**, **Katharine Gerhardt**, **Blaine Lando**, **Jack Stapelmann**, and **Carla Tomson** (pictured left to right below), who recently stepped down from our Board of Directors. They all remain involved and committed to our mission and will always be part of the Channelkeeper family, and we're forever grateful to these exceptional individuals for all they have contributed to our organization!



## Charitable Giving Incentives

Did you know that the recently enacted CARES Act includes enhanced charitable giving incentives, including a new deduction for charitable contributions of up to \$300 for individuals or \$600 for a couple filing jointly? The incentive applies to cash contributions made in 2020 and can be claimed whether you take the standard deduction or itemize. Please note this does NOT apply to donor-advised fund giving - gifts must go straight to a non-profit. Please consider making a tax-deductible donation to Santa Barbara Channelkeeper today so we can continue to defend your right to clean water in this challenging and uncertain time. Every penny donated is a direct investment in a healthier environment and a more sustainable future!



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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. Our next Goleta Stream Team events are currently scheduled for May 5, June 2, July 14, August 4, September 8, and October 6, and Ventura Stream Team on May 4 and August 3. (Schedules subject to change pending COVID-19 health and safety directives.) Email [molly@sbck.org](mailto:molly@sbck.org) or call 805.563.3377 ext. 5 for more information.



### Restoring Flows in the Ventura River Webinar

Channelkeeper is excited to present a webinar on our work to restore flows to the Ventura River at 12:00 pm PT on Thursday, June 4th. Our Science and Policy Director Ben Pitterle will discuss Channelkeeper's lawsuit to prevent the City of Ventura from pumping the river dry and our role in the City-initiated adjudication of water rights in the Ventura River watershed. The webinar will also include a virtual tour of the Ventura River and time for Q&A. Email [laura@sbck.org](mailto:laura@sbck.org) or visit [www.sbck.org](http://www.sbck.org) for the link to join the webinar.

### 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 on October 17th at UCSB. Email [penny@sbck.org](mailto:penny@sbck.org) for more information and future training opportunities.



**SAVE THE DATE! The 20th Annual Blue Water Ball is September 12, 2020!**