



ACTION ALERT!

Help Us 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 supplies and many of our rivers, streams, and wetlands. At this very moment, a new proposal (named Ag Order 4.0) is being developed to establish rules for Central Coast farmers to follow to address decades of agricultural pollution.

Channelkeeper is working with a coalition of environmental partners to weigh-in on and influence the direction of the Ag Order, and we're looking to you to help us support one of the most important pieces of the proposal.

[Follow this link](#) to show your support for setting common sense limits on fertilizer application on farms!

Setting reasonable limits on fertilizer use is one of the most effective ways that

our region can improve groundwater quality. Basically, we're asking state regulators to allow only as much fertilizer as crops can realistically use based on the best available farming knowledge. That's a win-win for both farming and the environment.

It may seem like common sense, but 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 levels that are safe for drinking water and protective of the environment.** The Regional Board has issued findings that "groundwater nitrate (fertilizer) contamination is widespread and severe, and degradation is increasing in many areas." Nitrates leaching from fields into aquifers have left **over 100,000 square miles of groundwater contaminated with nitrates throughout California resulting in toxic drinking water supplies.**

With your help, we can tackle this problem with a solution that meets the needs of our region's farmers, the greater community, and the environment.

[Sign the Petition](#)



Refugio Oil Spill Draft Damage Assessment and Restoration Plan Released

Since the Plains All American pipeline ruptured and spilled an estimated 123,228 gallons near Refugio State Beach in May 2015, natural resource trustee agencies have been assessing the impacts of the spill on birds, marine mammals, subtidal and shoreline habitats, and human uses. The trustee agencies have also solicited and reviewed proposals for projects intended to restore the environmental damages caused by the spill and compensate the public for those damages. The results of this process have been summarized in a [Draft Damage Assessment and Restoration Plan](#), which was released on April 22, 2020.

The public can review and provide written comments on the [draft plan](#) through June 8th. The Trustee Council is also hosting a [virtual open house webinar](#) to present the plan and answer questions from the public on May 13th from 1-3 pm and again from 6-8 pm. Channelkeeper has reviewed the plan and will participate in the webinar, and we encourage you to do the same!

Channelkeeper Conducts Tarball Surveys on South Coast Beaches



Early morning low tides provided ideal conditions for conducting our spring tarball surveys while adhering to the social distancing directive. Last month Channelkeeper staff walked 200-meter transects along the low tide, mid tide, high tide, and super upper high tide on 12 beaches across the South Coast to collect data on various characteristics of tarballs we encountered, including size, number, spacing, location, and condition.

Channelkeeper developed this quarterly tarball monitoring program in consultation with the Department of Fish and Wildlife in the aftermath of the Refugio Oil Spill in 2015 in an effort to fill an

identified gap in baseline data on what constitutes “normal” tarball coverage on local beaches caused by natural seeps. The dataset we are creating will be useful to differentiate oil from spills and from natural seeps as well as to help identify new spills in the future.



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 20 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.

Mylar Mistake Raises Plastic Pollution Awareness

Every year, thousands of Mylar balloons blow from the mainland into the Santa Barbara Channel where



they pose a threat to marine life. Dori (Dori) Larbig, a junior at San Marcos High School, is tackling this problem with her Girl Scout Gold Award Community Service Project, which she's called "Mylar Mistake."

Channelkeeper is honored to support Dori as her mentor on this project. Dori's inspiration for the project came after a kayak trip at the Channel Islands with her Girl Scout Troop last summer, when she was shocked at how many Mylar balloons they picked up during the paddle. With the current health pandemic, she has had to adapt her project to be primarily online, but you can support her by visiting her website, www.MylarMistake.com, and taking the pledge to be Mylar free!



Using Reusable Bags Safely

Many California grocery stores have discouraged people from bringing reusable bags due to concerns about spreading the Coronavirus. At this time, there is no scientific evidence that a reusable item is more likely to spread COVID-19 than a single-use plastic item. In fact, studies have shown that the virus can remain viable on plastic surfaces for up to three days. Unfortunately, the plastic industry is exploiting fears and pushing for rollbacks of plastic bag bans across the country. Governor Newsom signed an executive order on April 23 that suspends the state's voter-approved single-use plastic bag ban for 60 days.

Channelkeeper encourages people to continue using their reusable bags safely and to follow specific store policies. While some local stores have asked customers not to use reusable shopping bags for the time being, many are still allowing their use provided that customers bag their groceries themselves and do not place their reusable bags on the counter. Another alternative is to load groceries back into the cart, take the cart out to your car, and place your groceries into your reusable bags at the car. We also recommend washing your bags after each use. And don't forget that the local Farmers' Markets are still open (please wear your mask) and are a great place to get sustainable, healthy, and tasty produce (with less single-use plastic)!



for Students and Teachers

Channelkeeper was recently invited to give an online presentation about our clean water work for a local school's environmental club, and we enjoyed it so much we thought we'd offer it to other teachers and classes as well. Please [email](#) our Education Director Penny Owens to learn more.



Ventura River Webinar

Channelkeeper is excited to present a webinar on our work to restore flows to the Ventura River at 11:00 am on Thursday, June 11th. 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 us](#) to register.



WSL One Ocean Podcast

Channelkeeper's Executive Director Kira Redmond was recently interviewed on a special episode of WSL's One Ocean podcast along with local pro surfers Conner Coffin and Lakey

Peterson. The podcast honored the 50th anniversary of Earth Day by looking back at the event's Santa Barbara origins and highlighting the positive impact Earth Day has had on environmental activism and legislative policy. Click [here](#) to check it out today!



Spring 2020 Newsletter

Channelkeeper's Spring 2020 newsletter is now available online [here](#)! Learn about our latest efforts to restore flows to the Ventura River, prevent agricultural pollution, reduce single-use plastics, promote Marine Protected Areas, and more! [Email](#) us if you'd like to receive future editions in your mailbox.



Giving Thanks For Giving Tuesday

As part of the special Giving Tuesday launched on May 5th to help non-profit organizations weather the storm of the COVID-19 pandemic, Channelkeeper asked our community for their much-needed support, and many responded and gave generously. We'd like to express our heartfelt appreciation to all those who stood with us and supported our team and our work by making a donation. And, if you missed out on Giving Tuesday but would still like to support our clean water education, monitoring and advocacy programs, it's not too late! Click [here](#) to take your stake in our claim for clean water. Every dollar donated makes a difference and is deeply appreciated!

Support Clean Water Now

Santa Barbara Channelkeeper

