

## July 2020 E-Newsletter



### **Take The Pledge Go Plastic Free This July!**

Plastic Free July is a global movement that empowers each of us to create a future with cleaner communities and oceans by refusing single-use plastics. This global campaign challenges us to commit to one month of doing our best to avoid

disposable plastic, while providing an opportunity to think and talk about plastic pollution as well as the alternatives and solutions we must advocate for.

Please join Channelkeeper, the [Community Environmental Council](#) (CEC), and partners around the world in the challenge to 'Choose to Refuse' single-use plastic during the month of July. Post about your experiences on social media using the #PlasticFreeJuly hashtag and share your favorite plastic reduction ideas.

The challenge is simple, and you can choose from different levels of participation.

- **Pick one disposable plastic item to avoid using for the month;**
- **Refuse the big 4: plastic bags, water bottles, takeaway coffee cups, and straws; or**
- **Commit to avoid ALL single-use plastic.**

Channelkeeper and the CEC have worked in partnership to reduce single-use plastic for over a decade. Our organizations first championed a reduction in the use of single-use plastic grocery bags by advocating for local bag ban ordinances, giving away thousands of free reusable bags, and supporting the statewide bag ban as well. Channelkeeper and CEC have also been supporting local Styrofoam bans and efforts to reduce the use of plastic straws, including through the Skip the Straw campaign that we launched in 2018, all while raising public awareness about the impacts of single-use plastics on wildlife and our oceans.

We hope you'll join our plastic-reduction efforts and take the challenge! Connect with us on social media for #PlasticFreeJuly resources, plastic swap ideas, and stories from our experiences as we 'Choose to Refuse' single-use plastics this month.





## **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. Currently, new regulations (named "Ag Order 4.0") are being developed to address decades of agricultural pollution from farms across the Central Coast region of California.

Channelkeeper is working with a coalition of environmental justice and conservation partners to weigh in on and influence the direction of the Ag Order, and we need your help to show broad public support for one of the most important pieces of the proposal - setting reasonable limits on fertilizer use. This is one of the most effective ways that we can improve groundwater quality. Basically, we're asking that the new rules 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. Click [here](#) to show your support for setting common sense limits on fertilizer application on farms!

[Sign the Petition!](#)

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### Volunteers Needed!

This 4th of July, celebrate Independence Day while honoring the Earth by joining Channelkeeper's Watershed Brigade! Our local beaches, creeks, trails, and rivers will be visited by many outdoor adventurers over the holiday weekend. Many of these outdoor areas are fragile environments so we're looking for volunteers to join our Watershed Brigade, an enthusiastic group of environmental stewards that help clean up our trails, creeks, and river access areas and spread awareness about the need to prevent littering.

While adhering to all COVID-19 public health guidelines, Watershed Brigade volunteers collect litter and hand out trash bags and gloves to outdoor adventurers each weekend in an effort to keep our community and our waterways clean and trash-free. So grab your mask and glove up! [Email](#) us to join our Watershed Brigade today!



## Santa Barbara and Montecito Water Supply Agreement Saddles South Coast with Dirty Desal for Next 50 Years

Over the past two weeks, the Santa Barbara City Council and the Montecito Water District (MWD) both voted to proceed with a 50-year Water Supply Agreement under which Santa Barbara will supply MWD with 1,430 acre feet per year (AFY) of water for the next 50 years. While the agreement allows Santa Barbara to meet this obligation with “excess” water from any supply source, it effectively locks in the ongoing operation of Santa Barbara’s desalination plant at full capacity for the next 50 years and likely will require a further expansion of the plant in the near future, regardless of whether the extremely expensive desalinated water is needed or makes economic sense.

This decision defies promises the Santa Barbara City Council made to the public and regulatory agencies when it hastily decided to reactivate its mothballed desal plant five years ago, which was that desal was a temporary, emergency measure to get us through the drought and that the long-term role of desal would be revisited once the drought was over, with full public and environmental review. This Water Supply Agreement will have significant adverse impacts on the environment by killing massive amounts of marine life and requiring a huge amount of energy to operate, thus causing significant greenhouse gas emissions. However, neither agency has completed an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) to analyze and mitigate these impacts, as required by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Channelkeeper will continue to press for completion of an EIR so all agencies and the public have current and accurate information about the environmental impacts of this agreement and Santa Barbara’s desalination plant more broadly, and so the impacts can be appropriately mitigated. Click [here](#) to learn more about the environmental impacts of desalination.



### Webinar: Eating, Drinking, and Breathing Plastic

## July 8th

Plastic trash is invading every corner of our planet – impacting our waterways, oceans, soil, and even our air. This informative webinar, taking place Wednesday, **July 8<sup>th</sup> from 11:30 am-12:30 pm**, will focus on the connection between our health and plastic at a time when the industry is using the pandemic crisis to roll back regulations on plastic bags and the fossil fuel industry works to triple its production by 2025.

Santa Barbara Channelkeeper and the [Community Environmental Council](#) (CEC) have been working to reduce the Central Coast's dependence on single-use plastic for over a decade. We hope you'll join Penny Owens, Channelkeeper's Education and Community Outreach Director; Kathi King, Director of Outreach and Education at CEC; and Toni Marietti, Plastic-Free Seas Campaign Coordinator for CALPIRG, UCSB Chapter for a fascinating presentation. Advanced registration required.

[Register Here](#)

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## Is the Water Clean and Safe to Swim In? Get the Skinny Before You Dip with Swim Guide!



With the 4th of July weekend and warm summer days ahead, you may be planning some much-needed fun in the sun and water. To ensure a safe swimming experience, Channelkeeper invites you to stay in the know about water quality conditions at local beaches and swimming holes with the [Waterkeeper Swim Guide App](#).

The free Swim Guide App helps you determine if the water at your favorite beach or swimming hole is safe for swimming, surfing, or other recreation with up-to-date information about water quality conditions at more than 7,000 beaches, coves, rivers, parks, piers, and creeks. The Swim Guide App also helps users get directions to nearby beaches, view photos, learn what beaches are best for children, or report pollution to the nearest Waterkeeper group.

Channelkeeper has been sampling water quality at beaches across Santa Barbara County periodically and uploading our and the County's beach sampling data to the Swim Guide App for more than a decade. We believe that the public has a right to timely, accurate information about whether the water is clean and safe

before they dive in so they can avoid the risks associated with playing in polluted water. So download the [SwimGuide App](#) today to get the skinny before you dip.

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KEEP CA SWIMMABLE



## SWIMMABLE CALIFORNIA DAY is JULY 25th!

Channelkeeper works hard to protect the Santa Barbara Channel and its watersheds and ensure that they're clean and safe for everyone to enjoy. We monitor water quality throughout Santa Barbara County and update the [SwimGuide App](#) with current information each week to keep our community healthy. In 2013, the California Legislature passed a resolution to officially commemorate July 25th as "Swimmable California Day," recognizing Californians' right to waters that are clean and safe for swimming.

This July, we invite you to take a socially distant dip and snap a photo of yourself enjoying your favorite swimming spot. Use the #SwimmableCA hashtag for a chance to be highlighted on our social media! Here's to clean, swimmable water!

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## Celebrate Swimmable CA Day July 25

Channelkeeper works hard to protect the Santa Barbara Channel and its watersheds and ensure that they're clean and safe for everyone to enjoy. We monitor water quality throughout Santa Barbara County and update the [SwimGuide App](#) with current information each week to keep our community healthy. In 2013, the California Legislature passed a resolution to officially commemorate July 25th as "Swimmable California Day," recognizing Californians' right to waters that are clean and safe for swimming.



## Say Goodbye to Plastic Bags (Again)!

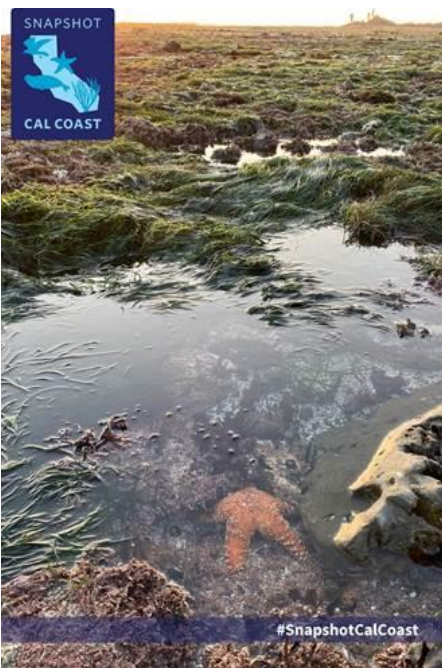
Good news, Santa Barbara! We've officially come to the end of Governor Newsom's temporary suspension of the plastic bag ban!

During the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic, some retailers discouraged consumers from bringing their own reusable bags, and Governor Newsom authorized the temporary use of plastic shopping bags. But from now on shoppers will be able to use

their reusable bags as long as they bag their own merchandise.

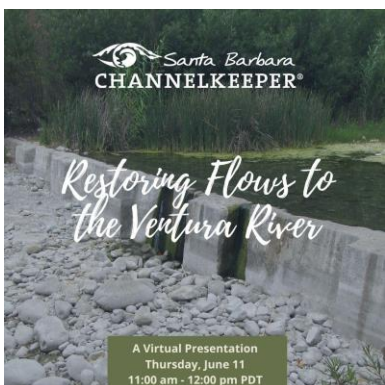
Experts estimate that as many as one billion single-use plastic bags were distributed in California in April and May alone, costing consumers more than \$20 million in higher grocery costs. We hope that the quick return to using reusable bags will reduce an unnecessary source of plastic pollution. For more information about how plastic policies have changed during the pandemic, read our latest blog post [here](#) .

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## Visit Tidepools & Help Collect Data!

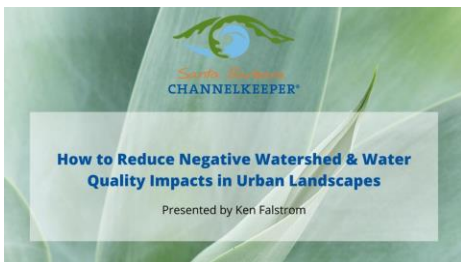
Our friends at California Academy of Sciences are recruiting volunteers throughout California to 'adopt a tidepool or coastal spot' near them this summer and fall and visit on every low tide series to collect data from now through November 16th. Using the [iNaturalist](#) app (for iPhone or Android) visit a local beach, tidepool, or coastal trail that you can access legally and safely, and take photos and make observation of seaweeds, plants, and animals. Be sure to follow the [Snapshot Cal Coast Summer & Fall 2020 project](#) in iNaturalist and use the #SnapshotCalCoast hashtag. Good low tides for tidepooling in July are July 4-11 and July 19-26. Areas of particular interest in collecting citizen science data include Coal Oil Point in the Campus Point MPA and Tar Pits.



## Restoring Flows to the Ventura River Virtual Discussion

Channelkeeper's Science and Policy Director Ben Pitterle hosted a fascinating webinar in June outlining our work to restore flows to the Ventura River. He shared in-depth information about Channelkeeper's lawsuit to prevent the City of Ventura from pumping the river dry, as well as the organization's role in the City-initiated adjudication of water rights in the Ventura River watershed. The

webinar was well-attended by Ventura residents, landowners, government officials, and organizational leaders who, after the presentation, engaged in a thoughtful question and answer session. Check out a video recording of the webinar [here](#) if you missed the live event.



## Eco-Consciousness in Urban Landscapes Webinar

Master Gardener and Santa Barbara Channelkeeper Board Member Ken Falstrom presented an insightful webinar on June 24th about environmentally sensitive gardening and



integrated pest management. Ken offered in-depth advice on balanced, water-conscious gardening as well as soil-enhancement strategies and solutions for keeping trouble-making pests at bay. His experience as a life-long gardener provided the framework for a fascinating discussion. A video recording of the webinar is available [here](#) .



## Become a 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 emailing us or clicking here .

Santa Barbara Channelkeeper

