



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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#### **SANTA BARBARA CHANNELKEEPER REMOVES DERELICT LOBSTER TRAPS FROM LOCAL BEACHES**

*Santa Barbara, CA* — On Saturday, June 19<sup>th</sup>, volunteers from Santa Barbara Channelkeeper and members of the commercial fishing community will remove derelict lobster traps from the sand along Santa Barbara's coastline. Channelkeeper's Lobster Trap Cleanup Event will begin at Ellwood Beach at 9:00 am and move north toward Haskell's Beach. Volunteers will dig out partially buried traps and prepare them to be loaded onto a commercial fishing vessel for proper disposal.

In May, the organization launched a Watershed Brigade initiative to mobilize community volunteers to clear marine debris from local beaches. Last month, Watershed Brigade volunteers surveyed the coast for derelict lobster traps and identified 44 traps along the coastline. Channelkeeper reviewed the data and determined that the highest concentration of traps (38) is located on the stretch of sand between Haskell's and Ellwood Beaches. On Saturday, the organization plans to remove as many of those traps as possible.

Derelict lobster traps are a serious environmental problem globally and locally. Each winter, storms that bring heavy swells dislodge lobster traps. While in the ocean, ghost traps can continue to trap wildlife. As ghost traps drift, they can entangle marine organisms, release microplastics, and pose safety hazards to both vessels and beachgoers. Ultimately, they wash up on local beaches as pollution.

The U.S. Department of Fish & Wildlife calls marine debris "one of the most pervasive threats to the health of the world's coastal areas, oceans, and waterways," and explains that "derelict fishing gear can injure or kill marine and coastal wildlife, damage and degrade habitats, interfere with navigational safety, cause economic loss to fishing and maritime industries, and threaten human health and safety."

"Our Watershed Brigade was designed for exactly this kind of project," said Ben Pitterle, Channelkeeper's Interim Executive Director. "Our community is full of individuals who want to make a difference and help keep our beaches, creeks, and backcountry free of litter. By working together, we

can help remove thousands of pounds of derelict fishing gear that would otherwise have persisted on this beach for years and years.”

Santa Barbara Channelkeeper invites the public to join in the effort at Ellwood Beach on June 19 between 9 and 1:30 pm. Volunteers should bring work gloves, sunhats, and water, and wear long-sleeves, pants, and closed-toe shoes since lobster traps can be challenging to dislodge. To sign up, please visit the Watershed Brigade’s [event page](https://www.sbck.org/brigade/watershed-brigade-event/) [https://www.sbck.org/brigade/watershed-brigade-event/]

### **About Santa Barbara Channelkeeper**

Santa Barbara Channelkeeper was founded in 1999 as a program of the Environmental Defense Center and became an independent 501(c)(3) non-profit organization in 2001. The organization has worked to protect water quality, restore aquatic ecosystems, advocate for clean water, enforce environmental laws, and educate and engage citizens in implementing solutions to water pollution and aquatic habitat degradation.

Santa Barbara Channelkeeper is a member of [Waterkeeper Alliance](#), a coalition of more than 300 grassroots Waterkeeper groups on six continents collectively patrolling and protecting more than 2.7 million square miles of watersheds and defending their communities’ right to clean water. It is also a member of the [California Coastkeeper Alliance](#), a coalition of California Waterkeepers working to strengthen water quality and marine habitat protections at the state level. To learn more, please visit [www.sbck.org](http://www.sbck.org).