



March E-Newsletter

Clean Water for California

In 1972 Congress passed the Clean Water Act, setting a goal to restore and maintain clean water in all of the nation's rivers, lakes, wetlands, and waterways by 1985. But today roughly 95% of all waterways in California are considered too polluted to safely swim, fish, and drink.

Our partners at California Coastkeeper Alliance and Assemblymember Robert Rivas recently introduced the [California Clean Water Act](#) (Assembly Bill 377) to put the state on track to eliminate impaired waterways and make all California waters drinkable, swimmable, and fishable by 2050. Channelkeeper is pleased to support AB 377.

The bill will require the State and Regional Water Boards to close permit loopholes, ensure that all dischargers are in compliance with water quality standards, and direct a larger proportion of existing funding toward cleaning up impaired waterways. The effects of this bill will be especially significant in underserved communities, where water is disproportionately likely to be polluted or even undrinkable. Click [here](#) to learn more.



EDUCATION



ADVOCACY



FIELD WORK



ENFORCEMENT



Sustainable Water Supplies: Reducing Reliance on Desalination and State Water

On March 2nd, Channelkeeper helped advocate for sustainable water supplies by weighing in at the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisor's hearing to discuss whether local municipalities should be able to temporarily sell their State Water Project allocations, when the water is not needed locally, to entities outside of Santa Barbara County.

Cities throughout southern California depend on the State Water Project to meet their water supply needs, though this source has environmental impacts and is unreliable depending on year-to-year climate fluctuations. The City of Santa Barbara is poised to be less reliant on the State Water Project because of its desalination facility, although desalination comes with its own set of environmental impacts. Leases of State Water Project allocations can increase efficiency and generate revenue, however environmental impacts occur if such transactions prolong unsustainable water usage from impactful sources.

In the hearing, Channelkeeper recommended that the Board of Supervisors condition any potential lease of State Water allocations so that revenues must be

used to offset reliance on desalination and the State Water project. By utilizing this revenue to invest in conservation infrastructure, advanced recycling, and other sustainable water sources, water transactions could result in net-positive benefits for our community and the State. The Board of Supervisors voted to postpone a decision on the matter and directed staff to explore options that would condition lease revenues for environmentally beneficial purposes.



Microfibers in the Ocean and Fast Fashion

Microfibers, tiny strands of plastic less than 5mm in length, shed from synthetic materials and clothing made of polyester, rayon, and acrylics. Hundreds of thousands of microfibers can be released from clothing and textiles with each load of laundry. Wastewater treatment facilities do not filter particles of this size, leaving trillions of microfibers to be discharged into our oceans, rivers, and lakes each year. Once in our ocean and waterways, fish, mammals, and other wildlife can ingest the microfibers, causing starvation and reproductive issues. These synthetic microfibers do not biodegrade. They can bind with chemical pollutants in our waterways before making their way up the food chain and be ingested by people.

Last week, Channelkeeper spoke to a group of nearly 50 students from **El Camino High School** in Ventura about microplastic and microfibers in the ocean as part of an educational event hosted by the El Camino High School environmental club, **4 Our Planet**. We were so impressed with the students' preparation, organization, and depth of coverage and conversation about the environmental impacts of fast fashion and the fashion/apparel industry and how students can make more sustainable choices. A recent study estimated that each household in the US releases more than 500 million fibers per year from their laundry and that of fibers found in the ocean 73% were polyester — a common fiber in many of our synthetic clothing pieces.

Channelkeeper is pleased to support [Assembly Bill 622](#), which is sponsored by California Coastkeeper Alliance and will require all new commercial washing machines sold in California to include a microfiber filtration device by 2024. These filters are affordable and have demonstrated their efficacy to capture 90 percent

of microfibers. AB 622 represents an important step to improve water quality as we continue to tackle microplastic pollution.



World Water Day

A growing global population, increasing demands of agriculture and industry, and the impacts of climate change continue to threaten our water resources. World Water Day is March 22, and Channelkeeper is joining organizations around the world in raising awareness about the value of water.

The value of water is about much more than its price - water has enormous and complex value for our households, culture, health, education, economics, and the integrity of our natural environment.

What does water mean to you? We believe that by celebrating the many ways water benefits our lives, we will value water properly and safeguard it effectively for everyone. Comment on our **#WorldWaterDay** social media posts this month and tell us your stories and feelings about water.



Watershed Brigade Resumes Cleanup Challenge in March!

Our Watershed Brigade Challenges have been on hold since January, but we've been amazed by the community's willingness to conduct independent and Covid-safe cleanups! Throughout February, a total of **33 individuals** spent **109 hours** picking up over **440 pounds** of trash from 19 different locations between Gaviota and the Ventura River! What a tremendous effort, thank you!

We are excited to relaunch the Brigade Monthly Challenges in March! This month we will be giving away a \$100 gift card to [Bluewater Grill](#) and a \$50 gift card to [Salty Brother's Soap Co.](#) Although we encourage Brigadiers to clean up anywhere that is needed, our focus area this month is East Beach from Stearn's Warf to Chase Palm Park. This area of the waterfront is highly visited and is the connection point of Mission Creek to the ocean, so there is always trash in this area. Make sure to share your clean-up results on our Channelkeeper's Watershed Brigade public [Facebook page](#) or by [email](#) to be entered in the prize drawing at the end of the month!

- March 22 is [World Water Day](#), and in recognition of this important day, we are hosting an independent clean-up event in which we plan to remove litter from all beaches between Gaviota to Ventura on March 20 and 21. Stay tuned for more details in the coming weeks!
 - Now your company can make a difference with the Watershed Brigade's [Corporate Challenge](#). Learn more on our [website](#)!
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18th Annual Student Art Show April 22nd

Channelkeeper is thrilled to host our 18th annual ocean-inspired Student Art Show, **"What the Channel Means to Me."**

While this year the student reception and awards ceremony will take place virtually as part of the [Santa Barbara Earth Day Festival's Youth Leadership Day](#), hosted by the Community Environmental Council, the theme of the show remains the same and we couldn't be more excited to host a show celebrating local students, their incredible art skills, and the natural beauty and biodiversity of the Santa Barbara Channel.

The goal of the show, which features artwork by high school students from across the South Coast, is to inspire local youth to create art that celebrates the Santa Barbara Channel, and for their art to inspire others in our community. Please save the date for the virtual reception on Thursday, April 22nd- you won't want to miss this opportunity to view incredible ocean-inspired art created by local teens! Click [here](#) for more information or send us an [email](#).



Former Ocean Guardian student Valentina and her mom brought their film plastic to the Channelkeeper office. This was all of their plastic saved from an entire year – not much!

Ablitt's Film Plastic Collection Project Reopens!

During the stay-at-home orders, the film plastic collection was temporarily suspended, but it has now re-opened. We greatly appreciate everyone's efforts to divert this plastic from the landfill and patience as we re-open collection events. This new collection process has significantly reduced contamination which makes the project run much smoother. A huge thanks to all who help make this opportunity available to our community — especially Ablitt's Fine Cleaners and all of the wonderful volunteers that help sort plastic.

For those new to the project, here's little background information: lightweight polyethylene packaging, also known as film plastic, is everywhere. It's used for all kinds of plastic bags, product wrappers, and dry cleaning. Many recyclers don't accept film plastics because the material tends to jam up sorting conveyor belts at recycling facilities and often loses its value when it's contaminated or torn in the recycling bin.

Santa Barbara has a vibrant community film plastics collection program created by Ablitt's Fine Cleaners, with support from Channelkeeper and the Community Environmental Council as additional drop-off locations. Community members sign up to attend a collection event at Ablitt's or make appointments at SBCK or CEC and sort their own film plastic with a trained volunteer or staff person taking home any plastic waste that is not accepted.

Click [here](#) to join the Ablitt's email list to stay up to date about collection events or click [here](#) to set up an appointment to sort your film plastic at Channelkeeper's office.



Blue Water Ball

For over 20 years, Springtime for Channelkeeper has been synonymous with Blue Water Ball. Each year our crew looks forward to gathering with our community to share in the year's successes and provide updates on our current work to protect the Santa Barbara Channel and its watersheds. This year's 2021 Blue Water Ball schedule is being modified due to continued COVID-related circumstances. Please stay tuned for updates on our Blue Water Ball. In the meantime, if you have any questions or concerns, please contact debra@sbck.org.

We are so grateful for our community of supporters and allies and wish you good health, safety, and peace during these trying times.



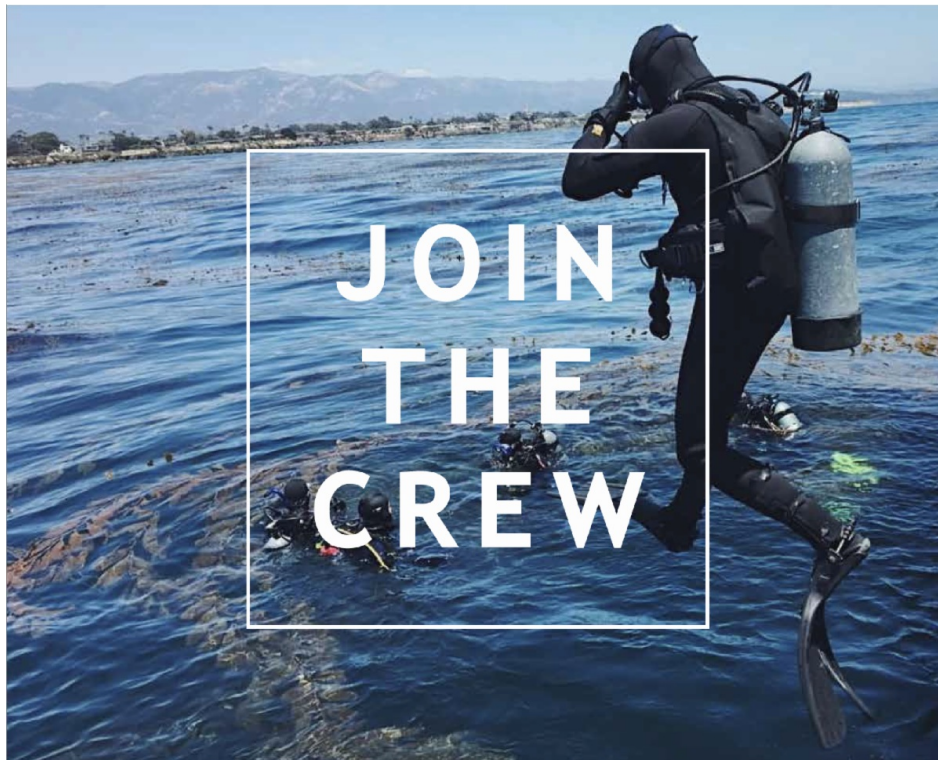
Supporting Steelhead with Art

Nathan Irwin is passionate about saving Southern Steelhead. He's written [articles](#) in support of creating a fish passage over Bradbury Dam and published a [petition](#). Today he's making apparel and prints with his father, artist Michael Irwin, to bring attention to the endangered Southern Steelhead. They are contributing 40% of the

proceeds to local environmental organizations including Santa Barbara Channelkeeper.

Southern Steelhead have been unable to reach their spawning ground in the Santa Ynez River for 70 years since the construction of the Bradbury Dam to retain water in Lake Cachuma. The inability of fish to overcome this barrier has severely diminished the once flourishing population. A fish passage over Bradbury Dam would provide Southern Steelhead with a way to reach their spawning grounds and repopulate their home waters.

Visit Nathan's [Illuminate Conservation](#) website to check out the merchandise and support Channelkeeper.



**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](#). Become a member today!

BECOME A MEMBER



Including Santa Barbara Channelkeeper in your estate planning will provide the funds needed to protect water quality, fight pollution, and educate our community about the Santa Barbara Channel and its watersheds for years to come. Contact Development Director Debra McCarty to learn more.

KEEPING WATCH FOR CLEAN WATER
SINCE 1999



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