



OFFSHORE OIL SPILL CAUSES AN ENVIRONMENTAL DISASTER OFF ORANGE COUNTY'S COAST

Our hearts are heavy with the news of the major oil spill that occurred off the coast of Orange County and we stand in solidarity with all of the communities impacted. Based on initial estimates, approximately 126,000 gallons of crude oil were spilled directly into the Pacific Ocean. If history repeats itself, we can expect that number to grow as additional information becomes available. The spill has already resulted in a 13-mile-wide oil slick off the coast of Huntington Beach and Newport Beach, which is causing devastating impacts to wildlife, the marine environment, and the coastline. We know it will also trigger significant economic and community impacts.

Santa Barbara's waters and wildlife have also been blackened by an oil spill in recent years. Only six years ago, the Plains All American Pipeline ruptured, officially spilling an estimated 123,000 gallons of heavy crude oil onto the pristine Gaviota Coast (though some estimates remain far greater), with as much as 53,000 gallons reaching the Santa Barbara Channel. These tragic events are a reminder of why we continue to push for policy reforms to help prevent disasters like this from ever happening again.

Channelkeeper is actively working to address the impacts of oil and gas development in the Santa Barbara Channel. In fact, Channelkeeper and the Environmental Defense Center are currently suing the federal government for permitting fracking from offshore oil platforms without conducting the legally required review of potential impacts on the environment. As you read on, you'll learn about recent developments in this lawsuit, as well as our opposition to the ExxonMobil trucking project recently denied by the Santa Barbara County Planning Commission.



MEMBERS OF CONGRESS SUPPORT LAWSUIT TO PROTECT AGAINST OFFSHORE FRACKING

On September 24th, nine members of the U.S. House of Representatives, including Congressman Salud Carbajal, filed a brief in support of appeals filed by the Environmental Defense Center, Channelkeeper, the State of California, and other environmental groups, in their case challenging the approval of offshore fracking and acidizing by federal government agencies.

Acidizing and fracking are both potentially dangerous oil production processes involving the injection of large amounts of water and chemicals below the seafloor in order to fracture or dissolve rock. Much of the fracking and acidizing that has been conducted offshore California has been done in the Santa Barbara Channel.

In June 2019, EDC and SBCK appealed to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit to defend their November 2018 court victory that currently prohibits the use of fracking and acidizing offshore California and to seek full environmental review of the impacts of these dangerous practices on the local environment, including harm to wildlife and air and water quality.

Members of the U.S. House of Representatives weighed in to register concerns about the impacts of these dangerous practices and the failure of federal

government agencies to conduct a full environmental review before issuing permits to companies like ExxonMobil, Venoco, Inc, and others.

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EDUCATION



ADVOCACY



FIELD WORK



ENFORCEMENT



Credit: Capt. Daniel Bertucelli/SBCFD

SANTA BARBARA COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION RECOMMENDS DENIAL OF EXXONMOBIL TRUCKING PROJECT

After an all-day hearing, the Santa Barbara County Planning Commission voted 3-2 to recommend denial of ExxonMobil's plan to restart three aging offshore platforms and truck oil produced from them to processing stations in Santa Maria

and Pentland in Kern County.

Channelkeeper attended the hearing and spoke in opposition to this project along with nearly 100 other community members and groups. The Planning Commission is set to formally recommend denial of this project at the November 3rd Planning Commission hearing. The project will then be heard at a Board of Supervisors meeting at a future date. We would like to thank everyone who sent in comments, spoke at the hearing, and helped spread the word about the project. Our community's response made a difference.



SETTLEMENT WITH FEMA HELPS PROTECT ENDANGERED SPECIES IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

Channelkeeper and five other environmental groups recently reached a settlement agreement with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) in which FEMA has agreed to conduct environmental reviews of the impacts of its National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) on all endangered species in California.

Until now, FEMA has not been required to consider the impacts that its Flood Insurance Program has on endangered species. In fact, in the past, FEMA's policies have incentivized infilling of critical endangered species habitat. Landowners seeking to construct buildings in flood plains (i.e., low-lying areas near waterways) are required to purchase flood insurance. To exempt themselves from flood insurance requirements, landowners were able to petition FEMA for revisions of the official flood plain maps. To move a property out of the floodplain, landowners could propose adding layers of fill to the land to artificially raise the elevation of the property. In doing so, critical endangered species habitat was sometimes destroyed.

In February 2020, a coalition of environmental groups filed a lawsuit against FEMA over concern that the agency was violating the requirements of the federal Endangered Species Act by failing to consult with wildlife agencies to

ensure that the implementation of the National Flood Insurance Plan--specifically infilling of land in floodplains for mapping reclassification--does not jeopardize or destroy endangered species habitat.

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HOLDING AGRICULTURAL POLLUTERS ACCOUNTABLE

In California, irrigated agriculture is the number one source of pollution to rivers, streams, and groundwater supplies. Despite this fact, discharges from irrigated agriculture are not regulated by the Federal Clean Water Act.

Agricultural pollution in Santa Barbara County is regulated by the Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board through a program previously known as the Ag Waiver. In April 2021, the Regional Board reviewed and approved Ag Order 4.0, the latest iteration of the regional program that is supposed to protect our waterways from fertilizer and pesticide pollution.

California Coastkeeper Alliance, Santa Barbara Channelkeeper, Monterey Coastkeeper, and other allies have worked for many years to advocate for common-sense rules that would require the agricultural industry to protect both surface water and groundwater.

Together we are working with stakeholders and the Regional Board to make sure the existing rules of Ag Order 4.0 are implemented in a timely, fair, and effective manner and we are demanding that Ag Order 4.0 be improved.

Read our latest [blog post](#) to learn about the specific improvements to Ag Order 4.0 we seek.



WATER QUALITY FIELDWORK WITH STUDENTS FROM VENTURA HIGH SCHOOL

This fall, Channelkeeper is working with students from Ventura High School's Field Studies class, training them in water quality monitoring at sites along the Ventura River. We meet once a week for two hours of early morning fieldwork before the students head to campus for the rest of their school day.

Ventura High School Field Studies students are learning practical skills, such as how to calibrate water quality meters. They are setting up and deploying data loggers that collect continuous dissolved oxygen and temperature data. They are also learning about the parameters of their data collection for dissolved oxygen, pH, conductivity, turbidity, bacteria, and flow rate insights.

Following our in-the-field data collection, the students will analyze the data to see if the different sites meet the water quality objectives for the Ventura River.

Working with these students to educate and inspire the next generation of environmental stewards is an important part of Channelkeeper's education program.



THE WATERSHED BRIGADE MADE A DIFFERENCE ON COASTAL CLEANUP DAY

We'd like to thank the 35 Watershed Brigade volunteers who joined us on West Beach for Coastal Cleanup Day on September 18th. Volunteers collected 73 pounds of trash, paying special attention to microtrash, tiny pieces of plastic and litter that can cause harm to wildlife and enter the food chain.

Using kitchen sifters and patience, volunteers sifted 1.5 pounds of these small pieces of plastic from the sand at West Beach. We were honored to do our part on Coastal Cleanup Day!

This month, we hope you'll join the Watershed Brigade to help clean up Mission Creek. Mission Creek is an essential Santa Barbara waterway. It winds its way from the mountains, through the city, past neighborhoods, parks, and the downtown urban landscape, before emptying into the ocean at East Beach. Along its course through Santa Barbara, the creek collects litter and debris that is ultimately deposited into the Channel. Our goal this month is to clear Mission Creek of trash.

For this dispersed, COVID-safe event, participants will sign up for different segments of the creek and will head out individually or in small teams to remove as much litter as possible from each designated area. Sign up below!

[Sign Up](#)



MPA WATCH VOLUNTEER VIRTUAL TRAINING WORKSHOP
October 14th at 5:30 pm

Channelkeeper is looking for dedicated volunteers to help us record and track human activities in and adjacent to Santa Barbara's Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) through our MPA Watch program.

We currently monitor the MPAs at Campus Point in Goleta and Naples and Kashtayit MPAs on the Gaviota Coast. The data we collect provides important information to understand how people are using MPAs and also helps inform MPA management.

Becoming an MPA Watch volunteer is easy and fun! Our next volunteer training workshop will take place virtually on **Thursday, October 14th from 5:30 to 6:30 pm**. Email penny@sbck.org to RSVP.



JOIN OUR POD!

Channelkeeper is looking for a Development Director. This individual will serve as the organization's principal fundraising strategist and will be responsible for planning, managing, and implementing all fundraising programs, including the annual fund, major gifts, planned giving, fundraising events, institutional grants, and capital/special gifts campaigns. Candidates should be passionate about the mission and work of Santa Barbara Channelkeeper, enthusiastic about fundraising, and experienced in asking for financial support from a diversity of sources. Find the full job description and application guidelines [here](#).



Your support for Channelkeeper's efforts

is needed now more than ever.

Become part 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 support, 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 supporter today!

Support Channelkeeper



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 us](#) to learn more.

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