



## OUTLINING CHANNELKEEPER'S PRIORITIES FOR THE YEAR AHEAD

Dear Friends,

Santa Barbara Channelkeeper completed 2021 and began 2022 with a lot of great work, some of which is captured in this newsletter. We are more excited than ever about our work ahead in 2022 and we are grateful for our community's continued support.

Here are four of our top priorities for the year:

**Watershed Brigade** - We will continue to build our primary community cleanup program, which we adapted in response to public health concerns. I hope you will consider participating in the engaging and "spread out" monthly events we have in store, and when conditions allow, in the more traditional group trash and marine debris cleanups.

**Ventura River** - We will be deeply involved in developing a comprehensive, science-based solution to ensure water flows in the Ventura River are sufficient to protect wildlife populations and local communities' recreational access in the

lower reaches of the river. The legal process will ramp up this year. Channelkeeper is the lead not-for-profit organization working to protect public resources in this ground-breaking process.

**MPA Decadal Review** - For many years, hundreds of Channelkeeper MPA Watch volunteers and staff have recorded information about how our area's marine protected areas are used. We will be using this data and other information to support the California Fish and Wildlife Commission's decadal review of the state's Marine Protected Area Network. We will also be making recommendations for ensuring a strong, effective network.

**Strategic Planning** - In 2022, Channelkeeper's Board and Staff will develop a new three-to-five-year plan to guide the future of our work. Protecting waterways and aquatic habitats will remain central. We will consider what more we can do to ensure the ecologically rich Channel and its watersheds thrive in the future. If you have thoughts that might help our plan development, please don't hesitate to reach out and share them at [ted@sbck.org](mailto:ted@sbck.org).

Best,

Ted



EDUCATION



ADVOCACY



FIELD WORK



ENFORCEMENT





## CONNECTING STUDENTS WITH THE VENTURA RIVER

In addition to Channelkeeper's longstanding education programs connecting students with the Ventura River, this year we are pleased to partner with the Merito Foundation to provide hands-on water quality monitoring activities for students on the Ventura River. The program is modeled after Channelkeeper's 20-plus-year-old community science monitoring program, Ventura Stream Team, which trains volunteers to conduct water quality monitoring at 15 sites throughout the Ventura River watershed.

In the fall, Channelkeeper staff provided Stream Team monitoring training for the participating teachers. Now we are hosting student education field trips to the Ventura River that allow students to test water samples themselves using many of the same water quality parameters as our Stream Team program, but with more student-friendly equipment.

Students learn how to test the river for temperature, pH, dissolved oxygen, salinity, and turbidity. They compare their results to what southern California Steelhead Trout would need to survive in the river. Students also learn about the history of the watershed and the story of the Matilija Dam, and are encouraged to come back with their friends and family to explore the river at the places they visit on the field trip.

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## IDENTIFYING WAYS TO REDUCE OCEAN PLASTIC POLLUTION

A new report published by the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (NAS), titled [Reckoning with the U.S. Role in Global Ocean Plastic Waste](#), offers an assessment of the United States' contribution to plastic production and waste generation, and it also provides actionable recommendations for reducing the amount of plastic that makes its way to the ocean.

The NAS study, required by the bipartisan Save Our Seas 2.0 Act of 2020, recommends that multiple interventions be implemented across various stages of plastic's path from source to ocean. Some of the methods outlined are:

- Reduce Plastic Production
- Innovate Material & Product Design
- Decrease Waste Generation
- Improve Waste Management
- Capture Plastic Waste and Remove it from the Environment
- Minimize Ocean Disposal

Read a complete synopsis of the NAS report on Channelkeeper's blog.

[Blog](#)

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*Image Credit: elEconomista.es*

## VOICE YOUR CONCERNS ABOUT THE EXXON MOBIL TRUCKING PROJECT

On March 8th, the Board of Supervisors is slated to either approve or deny Exxon Mobil's proposal to restart three aging offshore platforms and truck crude oil produced at the platforms to Santa Maria and Kern County at the Board of Supervisors Hearing. The hearing, originally set for February 8th, was postponed.

As was demonstrated at the Planning Commission's September 2021 meeting, it will be important for the community to voice their concerns about this project either by submitting a comment letter prior to the March 8th meeting or giving public testimony at the meeting.

If the proposal is approved, up to 70 trucks a day would transport crude oil, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, for up to seven years. The Board of Supervisors hearing is the next major step in this project.

Back in November of 2021, the County Planning Commission voted 3 to 2 to recommend the Board of Supervisors to deny the project. Channelkeeper and nearly 100 other community members and groups spoke in opposition to this project due to many concerns including the significant and unavoidable impacts from oil spills and concerns with trucking hazards.

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## *Keeping Our Community Clean!* WATERSHED BRIGADE

### A LOOK BACK AT THE WATERSHED BRIGADE'S CUMULATIVE IMPACT IN 2021

In its first year, Channelkeeper's Watershed Brigade has successfully created a space that motivates, connects, and celebrates hundreds of volunteers in our community. Volunteers have removed thousands of pounds of trash from local neighborhoods, creeks, and beaches before the trash can pollute the natural environment.

Our community's willingness to take individual local action has produced a large positive environmental impact in our own backyard and an even wider ripple effect.

In 2021:

- 561 people volunteered with the Watershed Brigade.
- 2,013 hours were dedicated to cleaning up trash.
- 9,210 pounds of trash were removed from local areas.

Volunteers participated in monthly challenges, group and dispersed events, a fun corporate challenge, and even fulfilled their community service credit requirements. Throughout the year, Channelkeeper rewarded Brigade participants through monthly drawings that included gift certificates to the Farmer's Market, ocean-friendly restaurants, whale watching excursions, and much more.

We're grateful for those who joined us in 2021 to do good things for the environment and we are excited to see this community reach new heights in 2022.

If you haven't already, check out our [program webpage](#) to learn more about the work we're doing. Make sure to check out our [Facebook Group](#) and [Instagram pages](#) to be inspired by what the Watershed Brigade is accomplishing and check out our [event page](#) to join our next volunteer effort!





## EVERY DROP COUNTS!

Despite December storms that brought significant rainfall to Santa Barbara County, water agencies report that water levels at local lakes and reservoirs have not increased significantly. Cachuma Lake is currently at 48.3% capacity, up from 47.6% before the rains in December. Jameson Reservoir rose from 57.1% capacity to its current 67.8% capacity. Gibraltar Reservoir, however, has filled to 53.2% capacity from 4% in December.

January's dry conditions are a powerful reminder of the importance of conserving water every day. Even the simplest changes to our daily routines can have a significant impact. By making conservation a way of life, we're able to save water, minimize water waste, help rebuild our underground aquifers, and prepare for the uncertainties of climate change.

Here are a few conservation tips to help you embrace wise water practices as a daily habit.

### Indoor Conservation

- Fix leaks, including leaky toilets
- Install high-efficiency toilets, aerators on bathroom faucets, and water-efficient showerheads
- Take shorter (5-minute) showers
- Track your water bill and meter to curtail water use
- Turn off water when brushing teeth or shaving
- Use dishwashers and washing machines with full loads only

### Outdoor Conservation

- Plant drought-tolerant/resistant plants and trees
- Recycle indoor water to use on plants
- Refrain from watering your home landscape when it rains
- Replace your grass/turf with water-wise plants
- Use a broom to clean driveways, patios, and sidewalks instead of water from a hose
- Water your outdoor landscape earlier in the day when temperatures are cooler

**When it comes to water conservation, small, everyday changes can produce great results!**

KEEPING WATCH FOR CLEAN WATER  
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