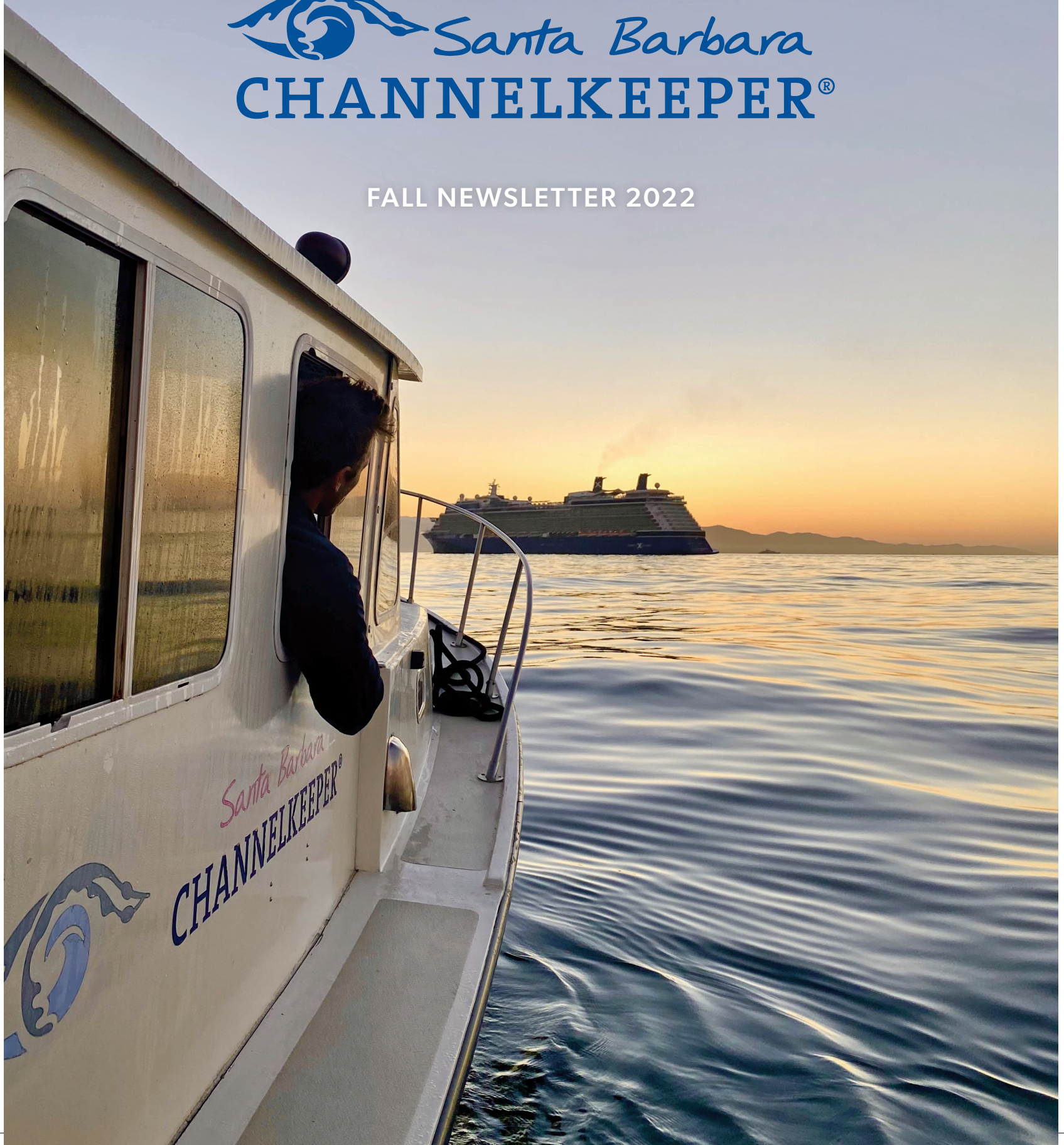




FALL NEWSLETTER 2022



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On the cover: Channelkeeper staff hail the *Celebrity Solstice* on September 22.



FROM THE HELM

Dear Channelkeeper Family,

Providing insightful and fun educational activities for our community's youth is a priority of Santa Barbara Channelkeeper. We engage local students in the classrooms, on the beach, along our creeks, and aboard our boat with science lessons and hands-on learning experiences. Since 2001, we have provided educational opportunities to more than 37,000 students in Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties.

We make this a priority because we believe these efforts build awareness of the Channel's splendor and foster a sense of stewardship for local waters, wildlife, and habitats.

In September, I joined twelve Ventura High School seniors as they took a data monitoring applications exam in the Ventura estuary. In pairs, the students used scientific instruments to gather data on water temperature, turbidity, and pH levels and noted other environmental conditions. This exam was the culmination of six weekly water monitoring lessons along the lower six miles of the Ventura River that Penny Owens, our Education and Community Outreach Director, co-led with teacher, Mr. Jared McEntyre. I was impressed. The students were serious about their work, which should not be a surprise. Jared mentioned that several former students who took these monitoring lessons as part of his class are now working in the environmental science field.

One of our longstanding programs connects art and the marine environment. Each spring, we organize a juried art show for local high school students. Our goal is for students to share art that celebrates the natural beauty and biodiversity of the Channel. This year we received 150 submitted pieces for our 19th Annual Student Art Show. Forty were selected to be displayed at Earth Day 2022. I was in awe of the creativity, along with the variety of subject matter and media, of the artwork. I am already looking forward to the 20th Art Show next spring.

I would like to thank the teachers who partner with Channelkeeper. They do so much more than complete the necessary paperwork and invite us into their classrooms. They help fulfill their students' enthusiasm for learning, further new experiences, and spark interests that can last a lifetime.

Finally, everyone on the Channelkeeper team participates in our educational efforts. But, at the heart of our efforts is Penny Owens, who is outstanding at sharing her knowledge and passion with students. Thank you, Penny!

Best,
Ted

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**Our mission is to protect and restore the
Santa Barbara Channel and its watersheds
through science-based advocacy,
education, field work and enforcement**

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ACTION TO REDUCE TRASH POLLUTION

Watershed Brigade

Did you know that globally up to 12.7 million metric tons of plastic enter the ocean each year? This staggering statistic—along with the dangers of plastic pollution to both wildlife and humans—underscores the importance of picking up trash and building awareness around plastic pollution.



The Watershed Brigade, Channelkeeper's litter-fighting community program empowers volunteers to take action to tackle plastic pollution in their neighborhood and favorite places. Volunteers conduct cleanups along creeks, city streets, trails, and beaches. The goal to make a difference becomes personal.

"I feel a sense of urgency when I see trash on the beach and it's seconds away from being washed into the ocean," explains volunteer Sue Sadler-Paré. "It's become an issue of 'if not me, who?' The climate crisis and ocean pollution are not going to get better if we don't take action, and I choose to be part of the solution."

Volunteers post photos of their trash collection on the Watershed Brigade's social media channels. Sharing cleanup results not only helps volunteers collaborate to cover more area, but it also magnifies the impact of individual volunteers by building momentum and inspiring others to participate. In 2022 alone, volunteers have removed 5,628 pounds of trash from areas along the South Coast.



Each month brings a new themed cleanup. In August, volunteers picked up 250 pounds of trash at Foster Park, a community space along the Ventura River. In September, on Coastal Cleanup Day, the Watershed Brigade sifted through sand at West Beach to collect 101 pounds of microtrash, tiny particles of debris that can be ingested by wildlife and enter the food chain. In October, volunteers removed trash and debris from sites along Mission Creek in honor of the Clean Water Act's 50th anniversary.

To be part of this movement, grab some cleanup supplies and visit our webpage (sbck.org/brigade), join our Facebook Group (Channelkeeper's Watershed Brigade), or follow us on Instagram (@Watershedbrigade).



16,388 lbs.
of Trash Removed



815
Volunteers Engaged



579
Sites Cleaned

Cumulative statistics since May 2020.

CRUISE SHIPS

Evaluating their Environmental Impacts



This fall, as the first of sixteen cruise ships scheduled to visit Santa Barbara arrived, Channelkeeper was on the water to hail the captain and confirm the ship's compliance with the City's twelve-mile, voluntary no-discharge agreement.

The City of Santa Barbara requires ship captains to sign a commitment to not dump waste within twelve miles of shore. So as ships transit the no-discharge zone, Channelkeeper staff reminds the crew of this pledge and lets them know that we will observe for discharges. Our presence on the water, when conditions and staffing allow, provides a deterrent effect and an important layer of accountability.

"Cruise ships can generate enormous volumes of waste," explains Ben Pitterle, Channelkeeper's Science and Policy Director. "Every day a typical cruise ship generates 30,000 gallons of sewage, 250,000 gallons of greywater, 5,000 gallons of oily bilge water."

However, wastewater makes up only a fraction of the environmental impact produced by cruise ships. Air pollution and, in many areas outside of California,

scrubber waste are also problems. In a single day, an average cruise ship produces fifteen gallons of toxic scrubber waste chemicals, seven tons of solid waste, and air pollution equal to that of 12,000 cars.

In fact, according to a recent draft report by Santa Barbara County Air Pollution Control District, one average cruise ship visit can produce over 80 tons of carbon dioxide just while sitting at anchor at Santa Barbara. These emissions are incongruent with Santa Barbara's commitment to achieve carbon neutrality by 2035 and will be important for the City to address.

Earlier this year, Channelkeeper urged the City of Santa Barbara's Harbor Commission to establish a public process to gather input on the City's cruise ship program.

Channelkeeper is asking the City of Santa Barbara to closely examine the environmental impacts of the cruise ship industry and to better align its program with the City's environmental goals and commitments. We will be urging the City to reduce the number of cruise ship visits based on factors like size, advanced technologies, and legal compliance history.

CALIFORNIA'S NEW PLASTIC LEGISLATION

Plastic Policy

California recently took groundbreaking steps to cut plastic pollution and hold the plastics industry accountable for plastic waste, setting the nation's toughest rules for reducing plastic waste.

Senate Bill 54, signed into law by Governor Gavin Newsom on June 30, 2022, represents the most significant overhaul of California's plastics and packaging recycling policy in state

The bill sets a twenty-five percent source reduction goal for single-use package production by 2032.

history and surpasses other states' efforts to reduce plastic production at the source. It also advances work to build a circular economy, necessary to mitigate the effects of climate change, and provides funding to support communities disproportionately impacted by the effects of plastic waste.

"The legislation shifts the burden of plastic pollution from consumers to the plastics industry," explains Channelkeeper's Education and Community Outreach Director Penny Owens. The bill sets a twenty-five percent source reduction goal for

single-use packaging production by 2032. In that same year, it requires that at least sixty-five percent of plastic items sold, distributed, or imported into the state be recyclable. The bill also requires the plastic industry to contribute \$5 billion of environmental mitigation funding to go toward environmental restoration and cleanup.

Ensuring industry accountability and preventing the adoption of harmful alternative disposal methods such as chemical recycling will be essential to the success of these measures.



GOLETA'S NEW PLASTIC ORDINANCE

Local Advocacy

Local policies can have a big impact in creating a world with less plastic waste. This fall, the City of Goleta took a major step with the passage of one of the region's most comprehensive and progressive single-use plastic reduction ordinances.

The ordinance bans all EPS (Styrofoam) products within the city. It requires that foodware accessories like straws and cutlery be 'non-plastic,' restricts distribution of plastic water bottles at city events, and limits the sale and use of Mylar balloons when it goes into effect in June of 2023.

"Local efforts like this not only reduce waste and litter that can



make its way into our waters, but they also help build support for statewide plastic reduction policies," explains Education and Community Outreach Director Penny Owens, who addressed the Goleta City Council twice in support of the new law.

For more than a decade, Channelkeeper and our partners at the Community Environmental Council have led local advocacy efforts for plastic reduction policies which has contributed to the enactment of eight regional laws. Channelkeeper is pleased to see the City of Goleta taking such progressive action to reduce single-use plastic and looks forward to continuing to educate the community about solutions to plastic pollution.

THE IMPACTS OF AQUACULTURE

Protecting the Channel

The Santa Barbara Channel is one of the most biologically productive ecosystems found on Earth, with expansive kelp forests, nutrient-rich waters, and unparalleled species density and diversity, including endangered, threatened, and sensitive marine species. A portion of this vital marine area was recently selected by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration as one of the first areas to assess for future aquaculture development—a process that could result in harmful finfish aquaculture projects in the Santa Barbara Channel.

Certain types of aquaculture projects, such as those for shellfish and seaweed, may produce benefits that outweigh the drawbacks. However, offshore finfish aquaculture operations that produce species like tuna or tilapia in offshore nets, pods, and cages present more significant risks to the environment.

Potential impacts to the marine ecosystem include water quality impairment from fish feed, dead fish, fecal waste, chemicals, antibiotics, and marine debris; the spread

of diseases that can affect populations of wild fish; the escape of farmed fish into the natural environment, risking the genetic integrity of wild populations; and the depletion of small fish populations that are used as feed for farmed fish and therefore, less available for wild fish, birds, and marine life.

In addition, there is currently no adequate permit program in place to regulate aquaculture operations in federal waters or strong standards to protect the marine environment from the impacts of finfish aquaculture.

Channelkeeper is closely monitoring these federal efforts to permit aquaculture operations in the Channel. We are urging the federal agencies to thoroughly research the ecological, social, and economic risks and benefits of new aquaculture projects in the Channel. In addition, we are advocating for a robust regulatory framework to be put in place that includes standards and compliance measures to minimize environmental impacts on both water quality and marine life.

THE FIGHT'S NOT OVER

Fracking in the Santa Barbara Channel



Oil companies have used hydraulic fracturing and acid well stimulation—also called fracking and acidizing—to extract oil and gas along the California coast. These techniques, which involve injecting chemicals down well bores to dissolve rock and access oil and gas, present significant risks to the marine environment.

In 2016, Channelkeeper and the Environmental Defense Center filed a lawsuit against the federal government for issuing permits for fracking on offshore oil platforms without conducting a thorough review of potential impacts on the environment and endangered species.

Last June, the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals decided in our favor, ruling that the federal government had indeed violated environmental protection laws by not completing

an environmental impact statement and consulting with state and other federal agencies about potential impacts to the marine environment, including threatened and endangered species. The decision continued a ban on fracking and acidizing offshore California's coast until these reviews are satisfactorily completed.

Not to be deterred, in August the Interior Department requested an *en banc* (full-court) review of the decision in an attempt to overturn the ruling and allow offshore fracking to resume. However, the federal appeals court subsequently rejected the request.

Channelkeeper will continue to engage on this important issue to protect our coast and marine life from these harmful activities.

MONITORING DISSOLVED OXYGEN LEVELS

Ventura River

Tiny fish scatter as Channelkeeper's Science and Policy Director Benjamin Pitterle steps into the Ventura River to retrieve data from a submerged logger, a tube-shaped device equipped with a sensor and microprocessor.

Channelkeeper monitors the response of dissolved oxygen levels to flow in the Ventura River with sensors placed in the streambed. Our team uploads and evaluates the data from these sensors as part of our ongoing effort to protect flows in the Ventura River and conserve the biological richness of this precious waterway.

Aquatic organisms such as fish, insects, amphibians, and invertebrates rely on water for their oxygen. They can asphyxiate without sufficient flows, triggering a cascade of events that can damage ecosystem health.

For decades, unlimited pumping at Foster Park removed substantial amounts of water from the Ventura River, leaving many areas completely dry, destroying vital habitat, and eliminating an important community resource.

Channelkeeper filed a lawsuit challenging the City of Ventura's over pumping of water from the Ventura River in 2015. After years of legal proceedings, both parties reached an interim agreement that established minimum



river-flow thresholds that trigger the city to stop pumping. The river has reached this threshold twice—first in August of 2021 and more recently in August of 2022. On both occasions, pumping was halted to allow flows to rebound. Channelkeeper is part of a process to secure a more comprehensive solution to allocate water supplies among water rights holders in the watershed. With that underway, our work is helping keep the Ventura River flowing and its natural ecosystems healthy.

INSPIRING YOUNG MINDS

On-the-Water Education

Something extraordinary happens when young people first step into a river, paddle a kayak away from shore, or gaze back at the coast from a vessel at sea. These are transformative experiences that provide valuable perspective.

Channelkeeper leads a variety of on-the-water programs for students. On Seafari Cruises, our team hosts students aboard Channelkeeper's boat to experience a kelp forest via a live, televised dive. For our Field Studies program in the Ventura River, high school students don waders to take nutrient and bacteria samples and assess water quality. Channelkeeper's Sea and Shore program combines classroom watershed education with an outdoor experience, such as a kayaking adventure in the Santa Barbara Harbor, that introduces students to the land-sea connection. The impact of these programs is profound.

"These on-the-water experiences have been program highlights for our students," explains Robert Graham, executive director of the Santa Barbara School of Squash. "They have handled sea creatures, collected plankton samples, examined sea water under microscopes, and communicated with scuba divers exploring the reef below the boat. Most of our students would likely rarely visit the harbor or the beach if we did not take them on these outings, and certainly would not take a boat trip."

Time spent on the water connects young people intimately with the natural world. It helps orient them within their watershed and allows them to interact with it. Students can see and touch some of the organisms that rely on clean water and trace the path that water takes through their community to the ocean. This brings awareness to the impacts of their everyday actions on water quality. It also brings science to life.

"It's one thing to read about water quality in a textbook. It's another thing entirely to get your feet wet, gather data from the rivers in our backyard, and make inferences about the world around us," explains Jared McEntyre, a Ventura High School environmental and biological sciences teacher.

Channelkeeper provides meaningful experiences on the water with the understanding that today's youth are the decision-makers of tomorrow and that their environmental ethics are critical to our planet's future. By introducing young people to water science in their own backyard, we hope to inspire interest in protecting the environment.



SUPPORTER APPRECIATION

October 1, 2021 to September 30, 2022

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(\$10,000 and Up)

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MEET OUR NEWEST BOARD MEMBER



Sarah Sikich is the Senior Director of Development for Ecological & Environmental Sciences and a member of the Principal & Leadership Gifts team at the University of California, Santa Barbara. Sarah brings over fifteen years of experience in marine and coastal resources protection, public policy, government relations, education and outreach, organizational management, and fundraising in the environmental nonprofit and education sectors. She was previously Vice President of Heal the Bay, and also has worked for the Monterey Bay Aquarium, National Center for Ecological Analysis and Synthesis, and Catalina Island Marine Institute.

SUNSET CRUISE '22

We would like to thank everyone who participated in Channelkeeper's Sunset Cruise '22, a festive fundraiser aboard the *Condor Express*. As we cruised along the coast on October 2nd, guests took in the stunning scenery, talked with Channelkeeper staff, enjoyed delicious food, and won great prizes! We are grateful for the generous support of our community and we can't wait to celebrate with you again soon!





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KEEPING WATCH FOR CLEAN WATER

THE BLUE WATER BALL IS BACK



Please save the date for Channelkeeper's Blue Water Ball on March 23, 2023, at the Cabrillo Pavillion. The Blue Water Ball is Channelkeeper's most important fundraising event of the year, gathering support for the protection and restoration of the Santa Barbara Channel and its watersheds. The gala brings together a dynamic community of ocean lovers, scientists, surfers, sailors, swimmers, stream walkers, and other water-conscious individuals who care about the waterways and beaches that make this one of the most beautiful coastal communities on earth.

VOLUNTEER WITH US



Channelkeeper relies on the generous gift of time and support from volunteers to help achieve our mission. Join the Watershed Brigade to help keep local watersheds and beaches clean or become an MPA Watch volunteer and help monitor marine protected areas along our coast. <https://bit.ly/3TJGJmk>