



## *October eNewsletter*

### **ADVOCATING TO PROTECT SENSITIVE AREAS, SPECIES, AND IMPORTANT CULTURAL AREAS**

Lisamu', or Morro Rock, is considered one of the most notable sacred sites on the north Central Coast. It is a place where indigenous peoples have gathered in ceremony over centuries and is revered as a Sacred Heritage Site for the Northern Chumash Tribal Council.

However, Lisamu' and the waters from Hazard Canyon in the south, to Cambria in the north, would not be protected under the boundaries recently proposed by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) for the designation of the Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary.

The Northern Chumash Tribal Council is leading regional efforts to protect important cultural areas like Lisamu' and close to 7,500 square miles of critical marine habitat for whales, sea turtles, sea birds, and other marine life.

On Wednesday, September 19th, the Northern Chumash Tribal Council held the "Rally at The Rock" to advocate for the proposed Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary to include the area from Hazard Canyon in Montano De Oro State Park to Cambria. Channelkeeper was honored to attend this important event and show our support for the designation of the Chumash Heritage

National Marine Sanctuary.

During the rally, the Northern Chumash Tribal Council signed two resolutions that demonstrated its support of the High Seas Treaty and the inclusion of Lisamu' and all the waters from Cambria to Hazard Canyon.

### WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

In August, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) released a draft Sanctuary designation proposal. In this draft designation proposal, NOAA is suggesting the omission of 2,000 square miles of the originally proposed offshore area -- from Montaña de Oro State Park to Cambria-- in order to allow for offshore wind power transmission cables to come to shore without transiting through Sanctuary waters. Keeping the initially proposed area in the Sanctuary boundary does not prevent offshore wind farms off of Morro Bay, but would lead to more careful planning to ensure they avoid and mitigate impacts to sensitive marine areas, species, and important cultural areas.

NOAA's current proposal would also remove contiguous protection of offshore waters between Monterey Bay and Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuaries, abandoning a critical opportunity to connect the three areas and maximize conservation of marine waters, wildlife, and habitats.

The Northern Chumash Tribal Council and environmental groups like Channelkeeper are asking NOAA to designate the largest sanctuary possible, as originally proposed by the Northern Chumash Tribal Council, in addition to the Gaviota Coast extension. (see map below). This would provide full protection for these waters and establish important connectivity between two existing National Marine Sanctuaries in Monterey Bay and the Channel Islands.

Channelkeeper invites members of the community to show support for the inclusion of all areas in the Initial Boundary Alternative of the Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary, as well as the Gaviota Coast extension. The comment period ends on October 25th.

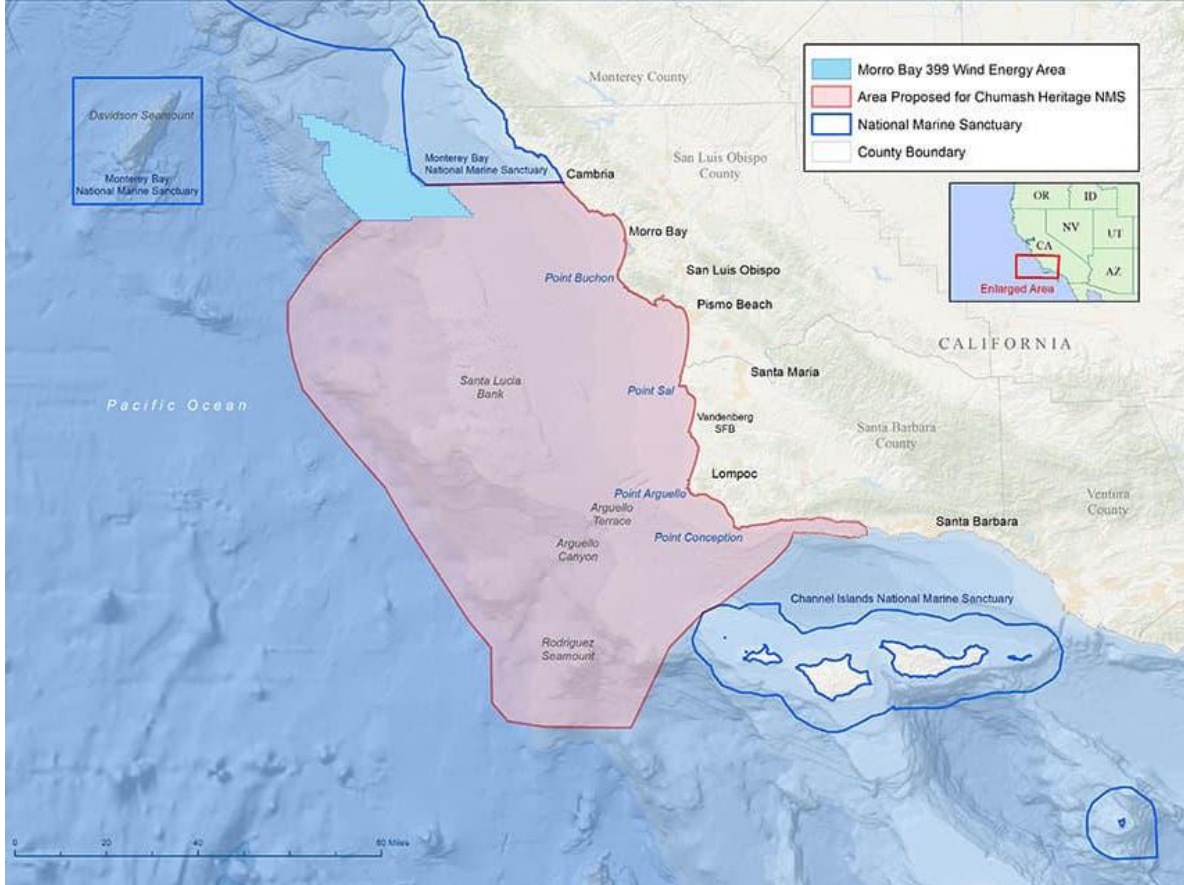
### MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD

#### Provide Verbal Public Comments at a Meeting:

- **THURSDAY, OCT 12, 1 PM:** Online only. To register, [click here](#).

#### Write a Letter to Show Your Support:

- **BEFORE OCTOBER 25:** Submit a written comment [here](#) or mail your comments to: Paul Michel, NOAA Sanctuaries West Coast Regional Office, 99 Pacific Street, Building 100F, Monterey, CA 93940.



## STATE WATER BOARD WEAKENS CENTRAL COAST AG ORDER

Channelkeeper has been working to reduce nitrogen and pesticide pollution from irrigated agricultural lands along the Central Coast for many years. On September 20, the State Water Resources Control Board issued an order that would significantly set back and further delay efforts to reduce nitrate fertilizer

pollution discharges into groundwater supplies and surface waters in the Central Coast Region, which includes most of Santa Barbara County and all of San Luis Obispo and Monterey Counties.

A few years ago, the Central Coast Regional Water Board issued its Ag Order 4.0, which included several measures to protect drinking water sources from nitrate contamination. Many Central Coast communities' drinking water supplies are too contaminated for use, leading to serious public health risks for farmworkers and residents.

At the State Board meeting, Channelkeeper staff joined representatives of several environmental, environmental justice, and fishing organizations, in addition to affected community members, to urge the State Board to protect public health and water quality.

The State Board voted to remove Ag Order 4.0's limits on nitrogen application and discharge, which would have improved accountability among growers by restricting how much nitrate could be put into the region's waters. The State Board provided a pathway to extend already lengthy timelines for meeting water quality improvements if growers provide alternative water to impacted communities, forcing these communities to trade access to reliable, safe drinking water for additional years of contamination. The State Board failed to require use of vegetated buffer areas between agricultural lands and creeks to minimize pollution reaching surface waters.

Finally, the State Board directed the Central Coast Water Board to take up its Ag Order once again. Channelkeeper will continue advocating with our partners for strong protections in the Central Coast Ag Order.



CHANNELKEEPER VOLUNTEERS MAKE A DIFFERENCE ON COASTAL CLEANUP

## DAY

Tens of thousands of Californians turned out on September 23rd to take part in California Coastal Cleanup Day, the state's largest annual volunteer cleanup event, organized by the California Coastal Commission.

This year there were more than 600 organized cleanup sites along the California coast. Statewide, 25,570 volunteers picked up 126,605 pounds of trash and an additional 7,041 pounds of recyclable materials, for a total of 133,646 pounds or 67 tons.

In Santa Barbara County, 1,273 volunteers turned out for Coastal Cleanup Day and collected 5,735 pounds of trash and recyclable materials. Local efforts were organized by Explore Ecology.

This year, Channelkeeper was a site captain at two beaches: West Beach and Tajiguas Beach!

We'd like to thank the **60-plus volunteers** who came to West Beach to participate in Channelkeeper's Watershed Brigade's Microtrash Challenge! These volunteers combed the sand from the Santa Barbara Harbor to Stearn's Wharf and collected 83 pounds of trash, including hundreds of tiny pieces of styrofoam, cigarette butts, plastic water bottle caps, drinking straws, fiber bits, and wrappers that we were able to keep out of the ocean and the food chain!

We would also like to thank the **19 volunteers** who helped clean up Tajiguas Beach by removing 197 pounds of trash from this beautiful stretch of coastline.



## SUPPORT THE BREAK FREE FROM PLASTIC POLLUTION ACT

The Break Free From Plastic Pollution Act, which was first introduced in 2020 and updated in 2021, will soon be reintroduced in both the U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate. This bill represents the most earnest commitment on behalf of the federal government to ending the plastic pollution crisis. That is why we are urging Congress to protect our waterways and communities from plastic pollution.

If passed, the Break Free From Plastic Pollution Act would control the discharge of plastic production chemicals and plastic pellets, such as nurdles and other pre-plastic materials entering waterways. It would also compel the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to conduct a full review of the toxic chemical and solid waste pollution potential for discharges to waterways from plastic production facilities, in order to better protect communities that are currently bearing the brunt of the toxic impacts and environmental injustice of plastic manufacturing. EPA would be directed to revise effluent limitation guidelines and ensure that the best available technology applies to existing plastic production facilities.

Channelkeeper is a member of Waterkeeper Alliance, a coalition of more than 300 independent grassroots organizations. We are working together to demand that Congress take action! We hope you'll join us in urging Congress to sponsor this crucial bill using this convenient [online form](#). Your support can help advance this legislation and turn greater plastic pollution reduction into a reality.

[Show Your Support](#)

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### GIRLS IN OCEAN SCIENCE CONFERENCE 2023

Channelkeeper was honored to participate in the Santa Barbara Maritime Museum's Girls in Ocean Science Conference 2023! The conference took place on September 24th aboard the NOAA *Shearwater* for high school students and on September 30th for junior high students with time on the *Double Dolphin* and in the labs. Education and Outreach Director Penny Owens shared her experiences with marine science and technology and offered guidance to 37 young women exploring their own career paths in ocean science.

Throughout the program, young scientists learned about all kinds of ocean science in labs led by female researchers and graduate students. Some of the topics covered included plankton and all the larval stages of many sea creatures, underwater remote operated vehicles, bioluminescent bacteria and plastic-degrading bacteria, kelp forest ecology and steps to conduct a survey transect, and efforts to prevent ship strikes to whales in the Channel with practice identifying whale songs.

We believe that connecting students with powerful women in this field will inspire the next generation of female scientists and empower them to solve some of the environment's most pressing issues.

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## MEET THE NEWEST MEMBER OF THE CHANNELKEEPER CREW!

We're thrilled to welcome Nate Irwin to the Channelkeeper team! Nate Irwin came onboard in October as a Policy Associate. In addition to his passion for environmental science and profound local knowledge, Nate brings extensive policy development and community organizing experience and ebullient positive energy. He will be leading the charge on many of Channelkeeper's advocacy campaigns and environmental policy programs. We asked Nate about his interests and experiences for a recent blog post. Click below to read about Nate, his deep appreciation for the ocean, and what inspires his work to protect the Santa Barbara Channel and its watersheds.

[Read More](#)

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### **WATER QUALITY FIELDWORK WITH STUDENTS FROM VENTURA HIGH SCHOOL**

Science comes to life for students from Ventura High School's Field Studies Class every fall, when Channelkeeper joins them at sites along the Ventura River on Thursdays for two hours of fieldwork and training in water quality monitoring.

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 young scientists to educate and inspire the next generation of environmental stewards is an important part of Channelkeeper's education program.



**CHANNELKEEPER BOARD WALK  
OCTOBER 11  
Arroyo Burro Beach  
5:00 pm**

Channelkeeper Board Walks are occasional walks and talks around town to explore water from different perspectives. They are designed for the whole community to understand our place in nature, especially with respect to life-giving water. Each is led by a Channelkeeper board member, drawing upon their expertise as naturalists, hydrologists, nature film producers, native plant gardeners, and more.

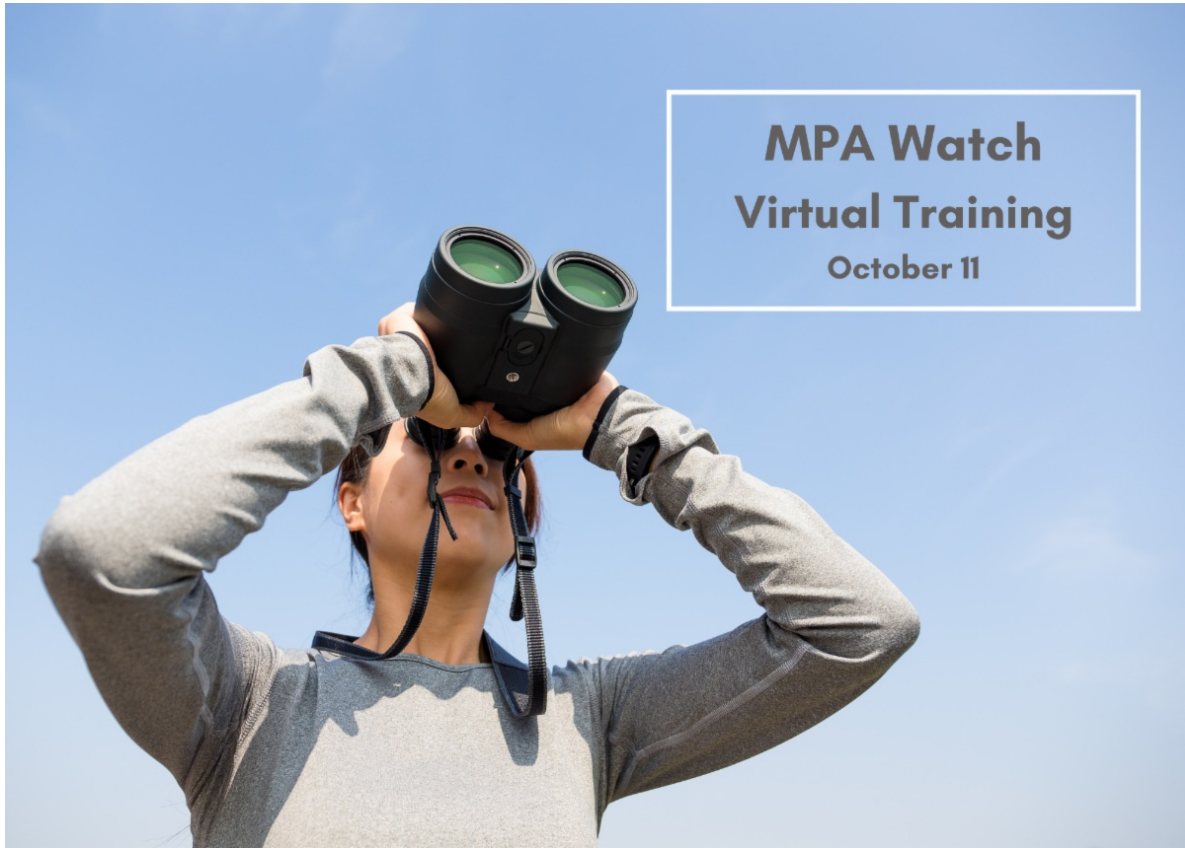
Our October walk will be led by board member Jeff Phillips, Senior Fish and Wildlife Biologist with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and will take place at Arroyo Burro Beach. We'll begin at the east end (towards downtown/the mesa) of the parking lot, exploring the recent habitat restoration. This project daylighted Mesa Creek over its course down from the Mesa, installed a pedestrian bridge, replaced invasive Arundo grass with native plants, and made other improvements to the upper lagoon.

We will continue exploring along the boardwalk to Hendry's Beach, checking out the newly installed interpretive signs along the way. If there is time, we

can then walk or drive up to the Arroyo Burro Open Space at the top of Alan Road to view the extensive creek habitat improvements.

We look forward to seeing you on Wednesday, October 11th, at 5:00 pm.

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**BECOME AN MPA WATCH VOLUNTEER**  
October 11

Channelkeeper's MPA Watch program conducts surveys of human use activities in our local marine protected areas (MPAs) at Campus Point MPA (IV/Goleta), Naples MPA, and Kashtayit MPA (Gaviota State Beach). The data collected helps to inform MPA monitoring and enforcement efforts. Surveys involve walking a designated transect along the beach at the MPAs mentioned above and recording all human use activities observed on the beach or just offshore. Volunteers are asked to conduct just 3 surveys per month.

The fall volunteer training workshop will take place virtually on October 11th, from 5:30 to 6:30 pm. Following the online workshop, there will be several opportunities to join a one-hour field training session at Campus Point in the Campus Point MPA. Click below to sign up for the volunteer training workshop.

[Sign Up](#)

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*Photo Courtesy of the Environmental Defense Center*

**ENVIRONMENTAL DEFENSE CENTER'S TGIF EVENT**  
**October 13**  
**5:30 pm to 7:30 pm**  
**906 Garden Street in Santa Barbara**

Please join us on October 13th for the Environmental Defense Center's TGIF, a lively community gathering that brings together regional nonprofit and environmental organizations and good people. Channelkeeper will be there, along with other organizations, to speak with the audience about our current work.

Enjoy live music, refreshing beverages, and local food trucks in the EDC Courtyard at 906 Garden Street in Santa Barbara. The event takes place from 5:30 pm to 7:30 pm. **Please bring your own reusable cup.**

Tickets cost \$20 and include 2 drink tickets and a \$5 food voucher. Advance purchase requested. Sliding scale tickets are available by calling Venessa Hutchins at 805.963.1622 x 100.

This is the final TGIF event of the season and environmentally themed Halloween costumes are encouraged!

[Purchase Tickets](#)

## **Santa Barbara Harbor & Seafood Festival**

Saturday, October 21

10:00 am to 5:00 pm



### **SANTA BARBARA HARBOR AND SEAFOOD FESTIVAL**

**October 21**

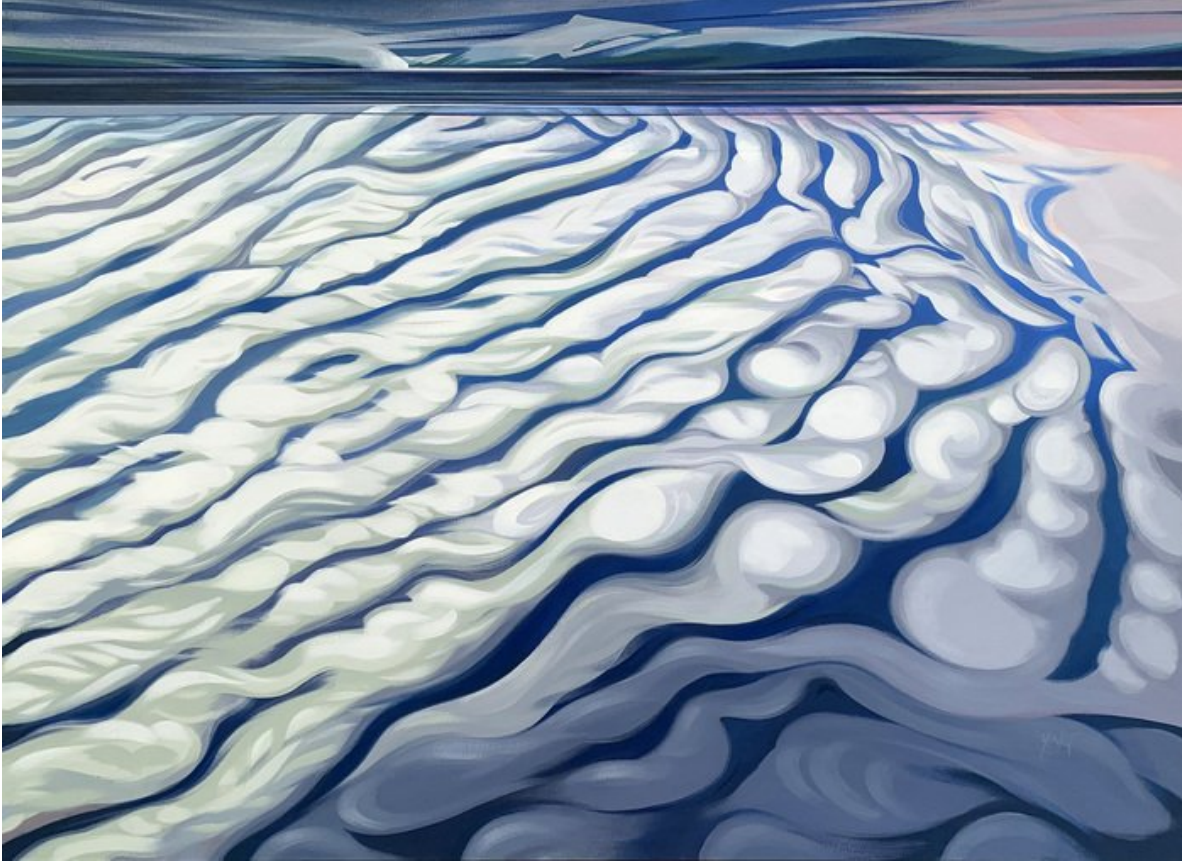
**10:00 am to 5:00 pm**

The Harbor and Seafood Festival is a fun, interactive day that celebrates Santa Barbara's maritime community and the abundance of the Santa Barbara Channel.

The Harbor and Seafood Festival began decades ago as a boat parade and annual "Blessing of the Fleet." Today, the free, family friendly event provides an opportunity for our community to meet fishermen, learn about ocean-related topics, and enjoy an array of freshly caught seafood. Channelkeeper will be on site with information and ocean-inspired games. Be sure to stop by our table and learn more about our work. For more information, visit [harborfestival.org](http://harborfestival.org).

We're looking for volunteers to help out at the Harbor & Seafood Festival on Saturday, October 21st between 10 am and 5 pm with our community outreach. Volunteer shifts are approximately two to three hours each. Please email [penny@sbck.org](mailto:penny@sbck.org) if you are interested in volunteering.

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*1st place winner, Nancy Yaki, Holding Stratus Pose, Tenaya Lake (Yosemite), 2023, Acrylic on canvas, Courtesy the Artist*

**CALIFORNIA NATIONAL PARKS: STORIES OF WATER**  
**Wildling Museum of Art and Nature**  
**September 23, 2023 to February 19, 2024**

The Wildling Museum of Art and Nature presents California National Parks: Stories of Water on display in the main gallery through February 19, 2024. The exhibition explores various impacts of water – or its lack – in California’s national parks through a wide range of media and techniques, from acrylic, oil, and watercolor paintings to photography, mixed media, and textile art.

The show will feature 37 artists and 39 selected artworks juried from a pool of more than 240 submissions by artists across the U.S. The Wildling Museum of Art and Nature is located at 1511-B Mission Drive, Solvang.

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## SUPPORT CLEAN WATER

Want to make a difference for the environment and your community? Making a tax-deductible contribution to Santa Barbara Channelkeeper today is an investment in clean beaches, healthy watersheds, and a more sustainable future. Thank you for your support!

[Donate](#)

KEEPING WATCH FOR CLEAN WATER  
SINCE 1999



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