



November eNewsletter

CHANNELKEEPER SETTLES UTILITY POLE STORAGE LAWSUIT TO PROTECT THE GOLETA SLOUGH FROM TOXIC POLLUTION

Photo: Goleta Slough

Santa Barbara Channelkeeper and the Ecological Rights Foundation recently reached a settlement agreement with Hot Line Construction in a lawsuit concerning a contaminated utility pole storage facility site in Goleta.

Between 2014 and 2019, Hot Line Construction stored wooden utility poles treated with the toxic chemical pentachlorophenol at a site near the Santa Barbara Airport without using appropriate protective measures to prevent or control water pollution. Through the settlement agreement, Hot Line Construction has committed to cleaning up the site.

Pentachlorophenol is a wood preservative used since the 1930s that contains substantial quantities of chemicals known as dioxins and furans, which are toxic to wildlife. Many countries have banned its use because of its harmful effects on humans and the environment.

Monitoring at the Goleta utility pole storage site showed elevated levels of dioxins and furans and significant contamination of the soil. Channelkeeper staff took samples of stormwater runoff from the site, which also revealed high levels of these contaminants. The runoff from the site ultimately drains into

the Goleta Slough through the area's storm sewer system.

Under the terms of the settlement, Hot Line Construction will clean up the contaminated area to standards that protect human health and the environment. It agreed to take initial steps to prevent contaminated runoff from leaving the site during the upcoming rainy season.



INTRODUCING CHANNELKEEPER'S NEW STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

As Channelkeeper continues to build upon its legacy of clean water work, we are pleased to present our new Strategic Framework, an outline that will guide our conservation work for the next five years.

This document represents the distillation of a year's worth of discussions, research, stakeholder analysis, and planning into five strategic goals. It was finalized by our staff and Board of Directors earlier this year.

The Strategic Framework reflects both the organization's commitment to the core values that have driven our work for the past twenty years and forward-thinking goals that will allow us to build upon our legacy of effective clean water work and address present-day and future threats to the Santa Barbara Channel.

[Read Strategic Framework](#)



CHANNELKEEPER JOINS LAWSUIT TO PROTECT COMMUNITIES AND WATERS FROM AGRICULTURAL POLLUTION

On September 20th, the State Water Resources Control Board issued an order that overturned 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.

Nitrate contamination is widespread and increasing along the Central Coast. Nitrates can cause serious health problems including cancer, thyroid disease, and methemoglobinemia, or "blue baby syndrome." Drinking water supplies and rivers in many communities of color in the Central Coast region are heavily contaminated.

In 2021, the Central Coast Regional Water Board approved a regulatory order (Ag Order 4.0) that would have established limits on nitrogen use among growers that excessively applied chemical nitrate fertilizers. This order would have improved accountability among growers by restricting how much nitrate could be put into the region's waters. However, the State Board's decision struck down these limits and required that the Regional Board approve a new order without enforceable limits.

The State Board also upheld a portion of the Regional Board's Ag Order 4.0 that failed to take additional measures to establish more vegetated buffer areas between agricultural fields and nearby streams, rivers, and wetlands despite finding that these efforts would be important to protect water quality.

On October 27th, Channelkeeper joined a coalition of environmental organizations, Latino and farmworker community groups, and fishing organizations in filing a lawsuit against the Water Boards, challenging their decisions on enforceable limits and buffer areas.



Whale Heritage Area

SANTA BARBARA CHANNEL IS NOW THE SECOND WHALE HERITAGE AREA DESIGNATED IN THE UNITED STATES, NINTH IN THE WORLD

In October, the Santa Barbara Channel Whale Heritage Area was officially designated by the World Cetacean Alliance and the World Animal Protection.

This designation highlights our region's commitment to promoting responsible ecotourism, providing more ocean educational opportunities, supporting ongoing research and conservation efforts, and honoring the timeless cultural connection we have to whales, dolphins, and porpoises.

Whales and dolphins are some of the most loved animals in the world. By highlighting these iconic species through the Santa Barbara Channel Whale Heritage Area, groups hope the public will better understand the modern threats whales endure and learn how we can all be better ocean protectors.

Channelkeeper was honored to support this special designation as a partner organization by writing a comment letter of support.

Click below to learn more about the Santa Barbara Channel Whale Heritage Area.

[Learn More](#)



CHANNELKEEPER RECEIVES SANTA BARBARA BEAUTIFUL AWARD

We are honored to announce that Channelkeeper was awarded the Playa de Santa Barbara Award for environmental stewardship at this year's 59th Annual Santa Barbara Beautiful awards ceremony on October 1st.

Channelkeeper's Ted Morton accepted the award during a ceremony and reception at the Music Academy of the West, which includes a plaque and commemorative tree, to be planted in downtown Santa Barbara.



Maria Ygnacio Creek Cleanup

November 18

9:00 am to 11:30 am

HELP CLEAN UP MARIA YGNACIO CREEK

November 18

9:00 am to 11:30 am

Channelkeeper's Watershed Brigade is excited to partner with the Environmental Defense Center, the City of Goleta, and Santa Barbara County Project Clean Water to clean up Maria Ygnacio Creek this month.

We hope you will join us on Saturday, November 18th, 2023, from 9:00 am to 11:30 am to clear the creek of trash before winter rains can wash it out to the ocean.

Volunteers should bring a hat, sunscreen, drinking water, and sturdy, closed-toe shoes. We will meet at the corner of Ribera Drive and Matorral Way (where the Maria Ygnacio Bike Path crosses under Highway 101). We hope you will join us to help keep this waterway healthy and clean!

[Sign Up](#)

Channelkeeper Board Walk

December 2

Stevens Park & San Roque Canyon

10:00 am



CHANNELKEEPER BOARD WALK

DECEMBER 2

Stevens Park

10:00 am

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 next Board Walk will be a one-mile plus hike up San Roque Canyon. We will begin at Stevens Park at 10:00 am and walk to a debris dam below the trail's junction with Jesusita Trail. This short hike will be led by board member Ken Falstrom, who will share information about the natural history of the canyon.

The trail crosses a creek, is on uneven ground, and is of slight to moderate difficulty. Participants should wear sturdy shoes and bring a hat, water, and sunscreen.

We look forward to seeing you on Saturday, December 2nd, at 10:00 am.



SUPPORT CLEAN WATER ON GIVING TUESDAY

GivingTuesday takes place on November 28, and Santa Barbara Channelkeeper is pleased to be a part of this global celebration of giving. GivingTuesday is an opportunity to do good in our community by sharing time, making a donation, or raising our voices for important causes.

We hope you will consider supporting Santa Barbara Channelkeeper in honor of GivingTuesday with a tax-deductible donation that will help us protect local beaches, creeks, rivers, and coastal waters for future generations.

[Donate](#)

KEEPING WATCH FOR CLEAN WATER
SINCE 1999



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