



*Photos by Nell Campbell*

### **The 23rd Blue Water Ball Makes a Splash**

Santa Barbara Channelkeeper's 2025 Blue Water Ball was a wonderful celebration! This year's event—which opened with a heartfelt welcome by Chumash leaders Art Cisneros and Mia Lopez and remarks from Channelkeeper board president Jeff Phillips—featured a presentation by acclaimed filmmakers Howard and Michele Hall, who specialize in underwater natural history productions that raise awareness of and increase appreciation for the marine environment.

Executive director Ted Morton delivered an address highlighting Channelkeeper's work to protect coastal waters and habitats, engage the community in environmental action, and inspire young people to learn more about their connection to the ocean, explaining that this work is more important than ever before. He outlined Channelkeeper's plans to work with others advocate for strong environmental safeguards at national, state, and local levels.

With lively storytelling, emcee Geoff Green inspired attendees to bid on the curated selection of auction items. The auction included works by local artists, dining experiences, ocean-adventures from local operators, and nature-based travel opportunities to Alaska and the Galápagos; as well as adventure gear from Fletcher Chouinard Designs, Rad Power Bikes, and Patagonia.

In addition to its success as a community-building event, the Blue Water Ball raised more than \$170,000 to support Channelkeeper's current and future priorities, including monitoring creeks and coastal waters, organizing volunteers for community cleanups, providing educational experiences for local students about water quality and habitats, and advocating for strong policies to protect the Channel and its watersheds.

We are grateful for the community's ongoing support and would like to extend thanks to event sponsors The Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians Foundation, Montecito Bank & Trust, MarBorg Industries, and Santa Barbara Channel Whale Heritage Area, and the many individual sponsors, underwriters, and honorary committee members, artists, auction donors, and guests, who made the evening so special. We would also like to acknowledge and thank the John C. Mithun Foundation for generously matching \$30,000 in donations made during the paddle raise.

[View Photo Gallery](#)



**Stand Up for Our Coast – Join us on Thursday, April 10, for the California Coastal Commission's Public Hearing on Sable Offshore's Violations**

On Thursday, April 10, the California Coastal Commission—one of the eight state agencies with oversight of Sable Offshore's efforts to restart the Santa Ynez Unit along the Gaviota Coast—will meet in Santa Barbara. This is a critical moment for our community to show opposition to Sable Offshore's plans to restart oil production along the Gaviota Coast and to support holding the company accountable for its violations of the Coastal Act. We hope you will join us and make your voices heard.

During the meeting, the Commissioners will receive an enforcement update from Commission staff and will vote on recommended enforcement actions to protect and restore the coastal environment from damage caused by pipeline construction work conducted by Sable Offshore in recent months. They will also consider nearly \$15 million in administrative civil penalties.

In September 2024, the Coastal Commission became aware of unpermitted construction work being conducted by Sable Offshore. Since that time, the Coastal Commission staff has made several efforts to stop the work until required permits are applied for and approved. The Commission issued a Notice of Violation followed by two Cease and Desist Orders, one in November and a second in February, after the Texas oil company continued its work on the pipelines.

According to Coastal Commission staff, this is the only time in the history of the Commission that an entity has so blatantly refused to comply with a Cease and Desist Order it has issued.

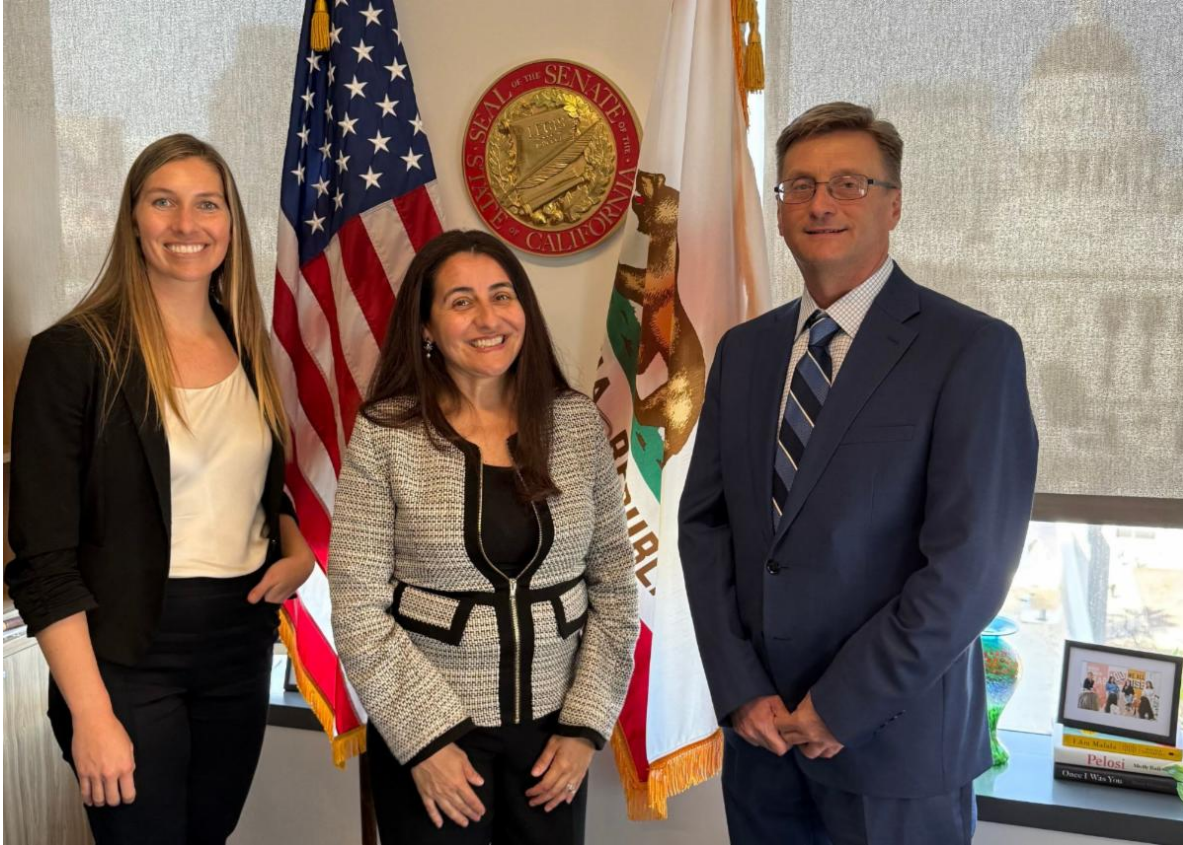
The Coastal Commission's April 10 meeting is an important opportunity to stand up for our coast. By attending *en masse*, our community can convey the importance of this issue.

Channelkeeper and others will be supporting staff recommendations to the Commission including to 1) issue a Cease and Desist Order to remain in effect until Sable submits applications for past and future activities associated with the pipelines, 2) order Sable to address the impacts of its past, unpermitted work, and 3) issue a civil administrative penalty as recommended by Commission staff. We will also encourage the Commission to require a Coastal Development Permit for all aspects of the pipeline restart.

### **We hope you will join us (and wear RED) on April 10.**

- **Time:** Arrive by 8 am to get t-shirts and signs and find seats.
  - **Location:** Hilton Santa Barbara Beachfront Resort, 633 E Cabrillo Blvd, Santa Barbara, CA 93103.
  - **Speaker Sign-up:** Find the agenda and speaker info [here](#).
    - Online: Complete a Speaker Request Form by 5:00 pm on April 9th. Select "A specific agenda item" on the first page and item number "Th8" from the dropdown menu on the second page.
    - In Person: Fill out a speaker slip form at the meeting.
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### **Advocacy in Action: Channelkeeper Meets with Lawmakers in Sacramento about The Right to Clean Water Act**

Channelkeeper executive director Ted Morton joined members of the California Coastkeeper Alliance in Sacramento on March 18th to build support for The Right to Clean Water Act, SB 601. This bill, sponsored by State Senator Ben Allen, aims to maintain federal Clean Water Act protections that are being weakened or under threat by the U.S. Supreme Court and the Trump Administration. The bill would embed these protections into state clean water law.

Two years ago, the U.S. Supreme Court issued a decision (*Sackett v. EPA*) that narrowed the definition of waters protected by the federal Clean Water Act. Its decision leaves wetlands and other waters more vulnerable to pollution and destruction. The Trump Administration could seek to further erode the Clean Water Act and or pursue other regulatory rollbacks to hinder California's ability to protect its waters.

During his time in the state's capital, Ted met with Senator Monique Limon, Assemblymember Steve Bennett, and Assemblymember Gregg Hart's staff to build support for the Right to Clean Water Act and share a letter, signed by more than 125 groups in support of the bill. Representatives of other California Coastkeeper Alliance groups met with their elected officials in support of the legislation, which is expected to be considered by Senate committees this spring.

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## **Support Creek Buffers**

Protect Our Creeks, Community, and Wildlife

### **Voice Your Opinions on the Proposed Creek Buffer Ordinance**

Creeks make up the liquid fabric of our watersheds, channeling rain from the Santa Ynez Mountains to the ocean, while shaping and nourishing the land, and supporting diverse ecosystems. Our creeks sustain wildlife and play a crucial role in keeping our community healthy and safe. Providing creeks with space to meander and interact with their surroundings by providing protective buffers between them and development structures will facilitate their functionality and maximize their benefits.

The City of Santa Barbara has released a draft ordinance proposing clear and consistent minimum buffers between development and city creeks. These buffers aim to keep our creeks healthy and our community safe by reducing flood risks, preventing erosion, protecting riparian habitats, and improving water quality. City staff have held several public information meetings and are likely to make some changes to the draft ordinance based on feedback and recommendations they have received. Santa Barbara Channelkeeper joined with 18 other local groups in a letter to the City's Creek Division supporting creek buffers.

The current draft ordinance establishes a minimum 50-foot buffer area from new or substantially redeveloped structures along major creeks and smaller buffers along flood control project reaches and minor creeks, a promising step toward ensuring our creeks function effectively, providing essential ecosystem services for the community, vital habitat for wildlife, and greater public safety.

Find more information on the Creek Buffer Ordinance [here](#).

**Share Your Opinions by April 7:**

Email: [CreekBuffers@SantaBarbaraCA.gov](mailto:CreekBuffers@SantaBarbaraCA.gov)

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### **Another Domoic Acid Event Harming Wildlife Along Our Shore**

The California coast is currently experiencing a domoic acid event, stretching from Santa Barbara County south to San Diego County. Over the past 20 years, scientists have documented interannual fluctuations in the scale of harmful algal blooms, but this is the fourth consecutive year of large-scale blooms that have sickened or killed alarming numbers of marine wildlife. In Santa Barbara County, more than 200 animals have died since February 2025.

Domoic acid is a potent neurotoxin produced in phytoplankton (tiny floating plants) by the algal diatom genus *Pseudo-nitzschia*. Sometimes an overabundance of this phytoplankton is referred to as “red tide.”

Extreme growth of this marine algae can threaten the health of marine mammals and seabirds and can affect humans through exposure via the food web. When wildlife consumes filter-feeding bivalves or fish that feed on the toxic algae, domoic acid transfers to larger marine creatures up the food web.

The clinical signs of domoic acid toxicity in marine life can include disorientation, agitation, head bobbing and weaving, swaying body, foaming at the mouth, bulging eyes, muscle spasms, seizures, inability to move out of the water, unresponsiveness, and potentially death.

After treatment, some marine mammals are able to return to the wild and survive depending on the dose and their long-term exposure to domoic acid. Symptoms typically subside after 72 hours as the toxin is flushed from the body through urine.

During domoic acid events such as these, Channelkeeper gathers offshore water samples to help scientists at the Southern California Coastal Water Research Project better understand the causes, geographic extent, and impacts of algal

blooms. This week, we collected samples at six sites in the Santa Barbara Channel to support their research on why the Santa Barbara Channel is experiencing significant interannual variations in bloom magnitude. The last several years have been notable for their detrimental effects on the marine mammal population.

If you encounter a live marine mammal in distress, please keep your distance (at least 50 feet), keep your dog on a leash, and report the animal to Channel Islands Marine and Wildlife Institute (CIMWI) by completing the rescue form. CIMWI is a marine mammal stranding nonprofit agency in Ventura and Santa Barbara Counties that is federally licensed to respond to, assess, rescue, and rehab sick or injured sea mammals. If you find a dead whale, dolphin, or porpoise, call or text the Channel Islands Cetacean Research Unit's Stranding Hotline: 805-500-6220.

Thank you for your help to keep wildlife healthy and safe.

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**MPA Watch Training**  
**Thursday, April 10**  
**5:30 to 6:30 pm**

Are you interested in becoming an MPA Watch volunteer? Sign up for Channelkeeper's Virtual Training on April 10th, from 5:30 to 6:30 pm.

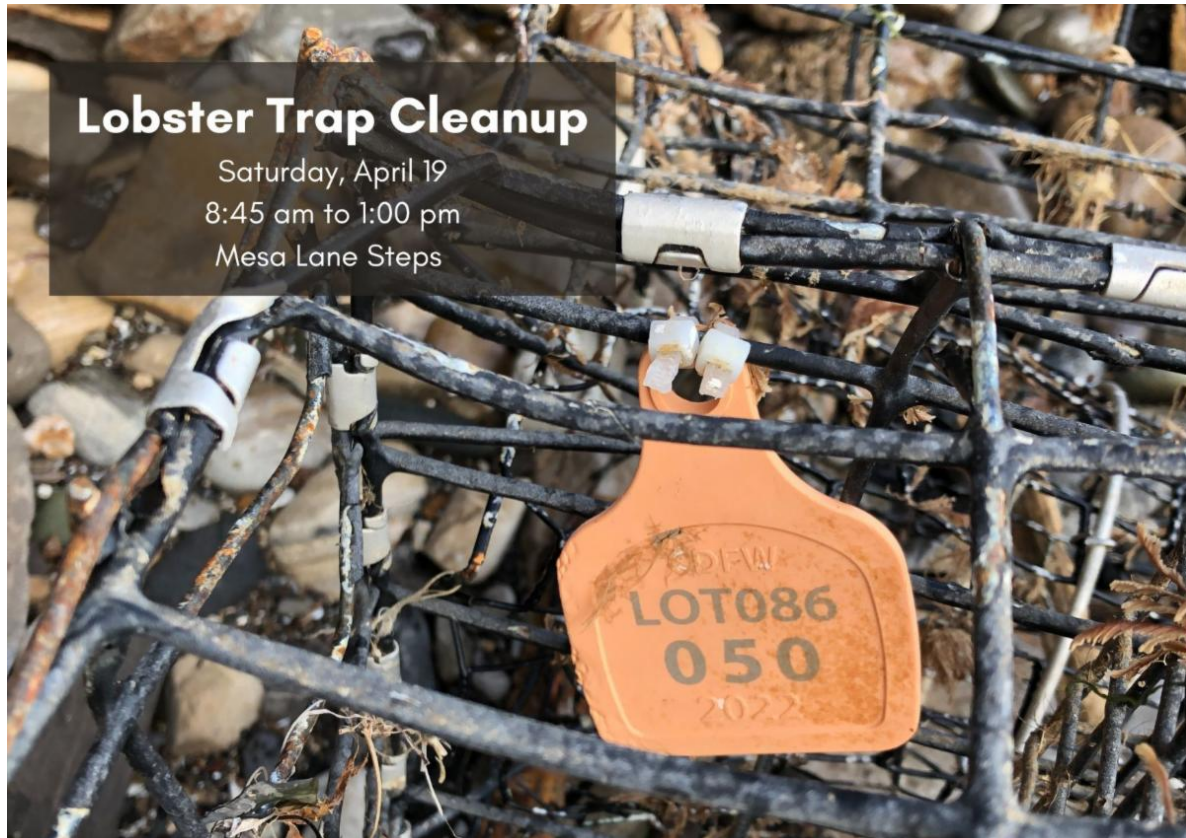
Channelkeeper's MPA Watch program conducts surveys of human use activities in our local marine protected areas (MPAs) at Campus Point MPA (IV/Goleta), Naples MPA, and Kashtayit MPA (Gaviota State Beach). The data collected helps to inform MPA monitoring and enforcement efforts. Surveys involve walking 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 three surveys per month.



The volunteer training workshop will take place virtually on Thursday, April 10th 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 the Campus Point MPA.

Click below to sign up for the volunteer training workshop.

[Sign Up](#)



**Join the Watershed Brigade's Lobster Trap Cleanup**  
**Saturday, April 19**  
**8:45 am to 1:00 pm**  
**Mesa Lane Steps**

For the past four years, after the conclusion of the lobster fishing season, Santa Barbara Channelkeeper has surveyed local beaches and partnered with the Commercial Fishermen of Santa Barbara to remove derelict traps from targeted shorelines. This year, we have identified an onshore lobster trap debris hotspot between Mesa Lane and Shoreline Park.

On April 19th, from 8:45 am to 1:00 pm, community members are invited to help dig out buried lobster traps and place them at collection points along the beach where they will be loaded onto a commercial fishing vessel and transported to the Santa Barbara Harbor for reuse or proper disposal.

In addition to cluttering up our beaches, derelict lobster traps can entangle marine wildlife, release microplastics, and create safety hazards for vessels and beachgoers. The Commercial Fishermen of Santa Barbara have been actively working to remove traps throughout the season. Our cleanup effort on April 19th



will provide additional support. We hope you'll join us and help get these traps off of the beach!

Volunteers will gather at the Mesa Lane Steps and will walk down the beach towards Shoreline Park to remove traps. Protective clothing and closed-toe shoes are required as traps can have sharp edges.

Volunteers will use shovels, bolt cutters, and pry bars to dig out buried traps, remove rocks and debris, and stage traps in piles for removal offshore to a commercial fishing boat. Fishermen will provide vessel support to load traps from the beach onto their boats and transport them to the Santa Barbara Harbor.

This is the fifth year of shoreline cleanup collaborations with the Commercial Fishermen of Santa Barbara. Over the years, we've collaborated to remove more than 170 traps between Leadbetter and Haskells beach with the help of volunteers. We're excited to work together on this community event, and we hope you'll join us. Sign up below!

[Sign Up](#)



**2025 Earth Day Festival**  
**Saturday and Sunday, April 26 & 27**  
**11:00 am to 7:00 pm**  
**Alameda Park**

We're excited to participate in this year's Earth Day Festival hosted by the Community Environmental Council!

We hope you'll join us on April 26 and 27 in Alameda Park for two days of

inspiring events focused on the environment, live music performances, great speakers, a green car show, and the Environmental Hero Awards presentation. Stop by Channelkeeper's booth to say hello, learn more about our work, and for the kids, spin a trivia wheel to win a cool marine life sticker!

This year's theme is Our Power, Our Planet, which inspires us to rally support for the widespread adoption of renewable energy.

## **Santa Barbara Channelkeeper's 2025 Student Art Show**

*In Celebration of the Santa Barbara Channel*



Opening Exhibit, Public Reception & Award Ceremony

May 1st, from 5 pm to 8 pm

Jodi House Gallery, 625 Chapala St., Santa Barbara

### **Channelkeeper's 2025 Student Art Show Thursday, May 1 5 to 8 pm**

With its colorful array of shapes, textures, contours, and patterns, the artwork produced by local teens for Channelkeeper's Student Art Show honors the remarkable beauty and biodiversity of the Santa Barbara Channel, and it also inspires our community to protect it. For over twenty years, high school students from Carpinteria to Goleta have been invited to create and submit their interpretations of what the Santa Barbara Channel means to them. This year, local artist Solange Aguilar will jury the show.

We hope you'll join us in celebrating the artists and the show's twenty-year legacy at a student reception on Thursday, May 1st, from 5:00 pm to 8:00 pm at the Jodi House Gallery at 625 Chapala Street in Santa Barbara.

We would like to thank the show's sponsors, Trillium Enterprise, Inc. and the City of Goleta Grant Program for their generous support.





### **Operation Clean Sweep**

Saturday, May 3  
8:00 am to 12:00 pm

### **Operation Clean Sweep Saturday, May 3 8 am to 12 pm**

Santa Barbara Harbor's Operation Clean Sweep, a seafloor debris cleanup program organized by the City's Waterfront Department, will hold its 17th annual event on Saturday, May 3rd. A team of volunteer divers, supported by volunteers on the docks, will remove junk from beneath the Marina. Divers will locate the junk and bring it to the surface. Dock volunteers will cart it off for disposal.

During past events, volunteers removed over twenty tons of debris from Santa Barbara Harbor, including bicycles, plastic barrels, boat propellers, outboard engines, phones, and marine batteries.

The event begins at 8:00 a.m. with a briefing on the Travel Lift Pier beneath the Harbormaster's Office.

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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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