



### Collaborating to Clean Up Lobster Traps

Channelkeeper volunteers and members of the local commercial fishing community worked together on April 19th to remove more than thirty lobster traps that had washed ashore in two locations: between Mesa Lane and Shoreline Park and between Goleta Beach and Blackrock Beach.

During the cleanup, twenty-three volunteers pulled traps from the rocks along the shore and carried them to collection points on the beach. The traps were loaded onto a kayak and hauled through the surf to the F/V Bella B, owned by fisherman Chris Voss, and transported to the Santa Barbara Harbor for proper disposal.

In addition to the lobster traps, our team cleared metal rebar, rope, trash, and construction materials from the beach. We noticed that there were fewer traps onshore than in years past, thanks to the ongoing efforts of fishermen to recover lost traps and community cleanup events such as this one.

This is the fifth year of shoreline cleanup collaboration between Channelkeeper and the Commercial Fishermen of Santa Barbara. Over the years, we have been able to successfully remove more than 205 lobster traps from beaches along our coast.



### **Channelkeeper and other Environmental Groups Sue the Office of State Fire Marshal for Issuing Waivers for Sable Offshore to Operate a Defective Pipeline Without Corrosion Protection**

In April, Channelkeeper joined the Environmental Defense Center, Sierra Club, Get Oil Out!, and the Santa Barbara County Action Network in filing a lawsuit challenging waivers granted to Sable Offshore by the Office of the State Fire Marshal. The waivers advance the Texas oil company's plan to restart the defective onshore oil pipeline that ruptured near Refugio Beach in 2015 and caused one of the worst oil spills in California history.

Our lawsuit challenges the decision by the Office of the State Fire Marshal to grant waivers allowing the pipeline to operate without effective protection against corrosion, which was the major cause of the 2015 spill. When the Office of the State Fire Marshal approved the waivers in December, it did so without any public engagement, environmental review, or published rationale for granting the waiver. Our groups assert that these activities are required by law. Restarting oil development along the Gaviota coast will put coastal waters ecosystems and communities at greater risk for future oil spills.

The Environmental Defense Center is representing Channelkeeper and the other groups in this lawsuit. Click below to read the official press release.

[Read More](#)





### **Enforcement Action Against Sable Offshore Corporation Fails to Stop Unpermitted Work**

As Sable Offshore Corporation continues its push to restart oil production along the Refugio coast and conveyance through the corroded pipeline responsible for the devastating 2015 oil spill, the company has faced scrutiny from state agencies with oversight over aspects of the pipeline. In April, the California Coastal Commission and the Central Coast Regional Water Board both held hearings related to the extensive and ongoing violations being conducted by Sable.

On April 10th, in an enforcement report, California Coastal Commission staff outlined Sable's ongoing violations (dating back to September 2024) and efforts made to stop Sable from conducting unpermitted work in the Coastal Zone. Following the report, the Coastal Commission voted to issue a third Cease and Desist Order, a restoration order to address the impacts of unpermitted work, and administrative penalties of over \$18 million.

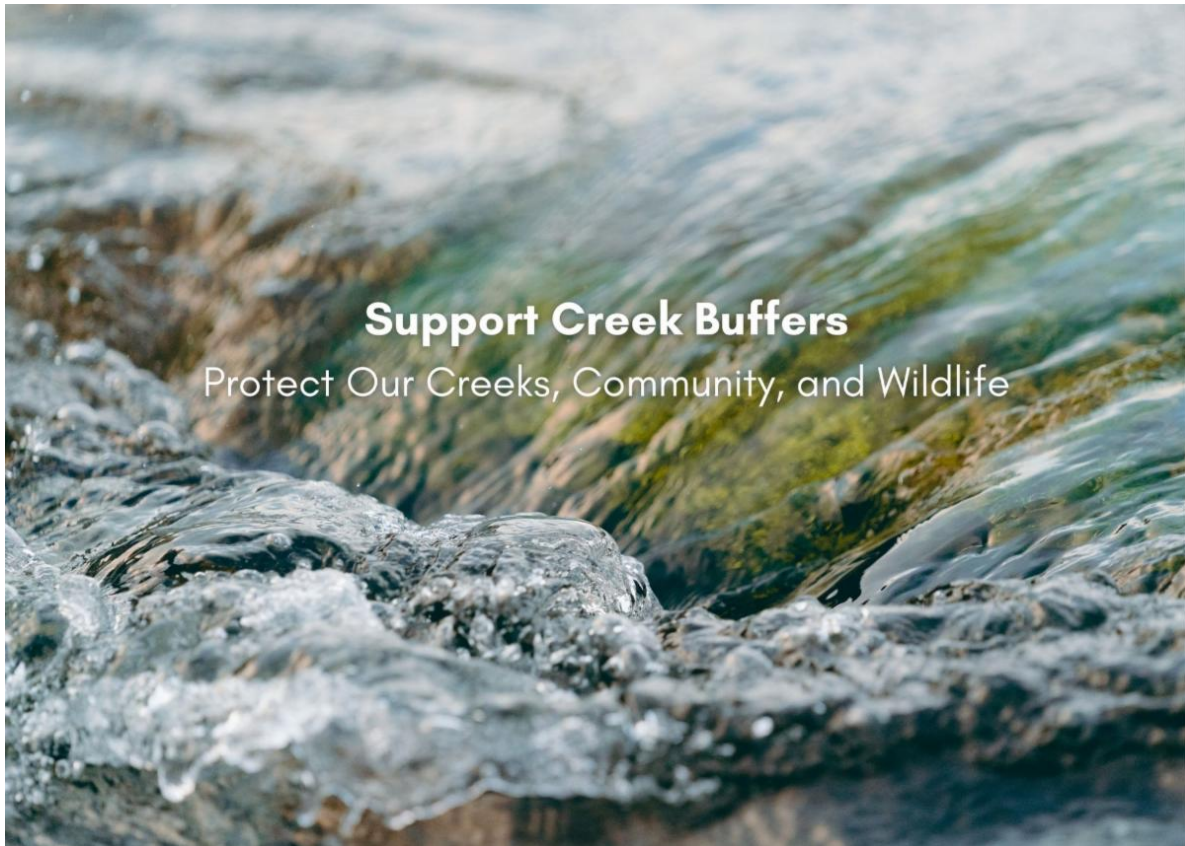
Sable has continued to conduct work despite the issuance of the third Cease and Desist order by the California Coastal Commission. As a result, on April 17th, California Attorney General Rob Bonta requested a temporary restraining order, which would have compelled Sable to stop work. However, Judge Thomas Anderle decided not to grant the temporary restraining order. The next step in this process will be a preliminary injunction hearing, which is scheduled for May 14th.

The Central Coast Water Board held a hearing on April 17th to consider enforcement action against Sable for violations of the state's water code that it has committed while conducting unpermitted pipeline work, which includes discharging waste into waterways. Channelkeeper and several other community members and environmental groups spoke in support of enforcement action. The Board voted unanimously to request enforcement assistance from the California Attorney General. Referring this case to the California Attorney General will allow

the State to pursue an injunction and monetary penalties against Sable for its violations.

Channelkeeper would like to thank the hundreds of community members who joined us at these hearings and demonstrated their overwhelming support for upholding the laws that protect our communities and the environment.

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## Support Creek Buffers

Protect Our Creeks, Community, and Wildlife

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

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. The 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.

Channelkeeper and fifteen other groups, including Environmental Defense Center, Sierra Club Santa Barbara and Ventura, Heal The Ocean, and Santa Barbara Audubon, have started an online petition campaign to build support for protective creek buffers. Please sign the petition and join in supporting strong creek buffers in Santa Barbara.

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

[Sign Petition](#)

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## 22nd Annual Student Art Show Celebrates Students' Connection to the Santa Barbara Channel

This year's 22nd annual Student Art Show filled our hearts with hope and sparked our imaginations. A reception honoring the young artists and showcasing their exceptional work took place on May 1st at Jodi House Gallery.

Fifty-five works of art, ranging from vibrant acrylic, watercolor, and oil paintings to intricate scratchboard pieces, paper collages, and ceramics, were selected to be in the show by juror, local artist Solange Aguilar. Local high school students submitted 110 pieces for consideration. We would like to congratulate all of the participants and their teachers!

First place was awarded to Amber Ross for her stunning ceramic sculpture titled *The Ocean's Jellyfish*. Second place went to Victoria Martinez for *Where the Waves Live*, a study of the texture and light of the ocean's surface. April Harper's colorful *Egrets on the Lakeside* earned third place, while the Chris Potter Environmental Ethic Award went to Naomi Pearl for *The Broken Octopus*, a beautiful mosaic with a brilliant backstory. Two Juror's Choice Award recipients were selected: Camila Lucero Godory's *Whispers of the Island Fox* and Kalea Ellinwood *The Spiny Lobster*. Honorable mentions were given to Kassia Shive-Hamilton and Miriam Volgenau.

The show is sponsored by Trillium Enterprise, Inc., and the Goleta City Grant Program.

Click below to view the artwork and young artists!

[View Photo Gallery](#)



### **Channelkeeper Supports the State-Wide Ban on Polystyrene**

Despite a statewide polystyrene ban that went into effect on January 1, 2025, styrofoam products are still widely abundant throughout California. The de facto ban on expanded polystyrene, the soft, white, foamy material commonly used for takeout food service items, is part of a single-use plastic law (Senate Bill 54) that Governor Gavin Newsom signed into law in 2022.

Under Senate Bill 54, producers of polystyrene products were required to demonstrate that the material they sold met a 25 percent recycling rate by the end of 2024. The producers were unable to prove 25 percent recyclability, so the polystyrene foam ban is now in effect statewide. However, it has not been enforced.

California's Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery, also known as CalRecycle, has the authority to implement and enforce the polystyrene foam ban and can fine companies that sell or distribute these products. However, CalRecycle has taken steps to uphold SB 54.

Channelkeeper is pleased to join our colleagues at Beyond Plastics, The Last Plastic Straw, and the Plastic Pollution Coalition in signing a letter asking Governor Newsom to direct CalRecycle to enforce this critical ban.

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## Share Your Perspective on Proposed Changes to the Endangered Species Act

In April, the Trump administration proposed a rule change that would significantly limit the Endangered Species Act's ability to protect crucial habitats. At issue is the definition of the word "harm."

Under the Endangered Species Act, it is illegal to "take" (harass, harm, or kill) a listed species. For decades, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and National Marine Fisheries Service have interpreted the word "harm" to include actions that modify or degrade habitats in ways that impair the species' ability to feed, breed, or find shelter. The U.S. Supreme Court upheld the agencies' regulatory definition.

Habitat loss is the leading cause of species decline. The proposed rule change would roll back long-standing safeguards that protect important wildlife habitats from damage or loss. If finalized, the change could make it easier to log, mine, and develop lands that species need to recover.

Channelkeeper does not support the Administration's proposed revisions and is encouraging our supporters to weigh in with comments. The public can comment on the proposed rule change before May 19th.

### Ways to Submit Comments

**Electronically:** Visit the Federal eRulemaking Portal:

<https://www.regulations.gov>. In the Search box, enter FWS-HQ-ES-2025-0034, which is the docket number for this rulemaking. Then, click on the search button. On the resulting page, in the panel on the left side of the screen, under the Document Type heading, check the Proposed Rule box to locate this document. You may submit a comment by clicking on "Comment."



**U.S. Mail:** Submit via mail to: Public Comments Processing, Attn: FWS-HQ-ES-2025-0034, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, MS: PRB/3W, 5275 Leesburg Pike, Falls Church, VA 22041-3803.

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### **The Right to Clean Water Act Passes California Senate Judiciary Committee**

The federal Clean Water Act has provided protections for state waters through water quality standards, discharge permits, and citizen enforcement since it was passed in 1972. However, the 2023 U.S. Supreme Court decision *Sackett v. EPA* overturned decades of federal protections for streams and wetlands, leaving state waters highly vulnerable to pollution and destruction. It ruled that the Clean Water Act's definition of "waters of the United States" is limited to wetlands that are



directly connected to navigable waters, which narrows the scope of the Clean Water Act for many waters in the western United States.

In February of 2025, California Senator Ben Allen (D-Los Angeles) introduced The Right to Clean Water Act (Senate Bill 601) to ensure federal water quality protections are restored and embedded in state law. By codifying 50 years of federal protections in state law, the bill sets out to ensure that California's clean water laws are not threatened by rollbacks from Washington, DC.

On April 29th, the California Senate Judiciary Committee passed the Right to Clean Water Act by a vote of ten to three. Now that it has been approved by all relevant Senate policy committees, the Right to Clean Water Act will move on to the Appropriations Committee.

The legislation was developed by the California Coastkeeper Alliance in partnership with Defenders of Wildlife. As a member of the California Coastkeeper Alliance, Channelkeeper continues to work with our colleagues to advance this important bill.



**Paddle Out to Remember the 10th Anniversary of the Refugio Oil Spill**  
**Sunday, May 18**  
**8:30 am**  
**Refugio State Beach**

On Sunday, May 18th, the community is invited to gather to reflect on the tenth anniversary of the devastating Refugio Oil Spill with a paddle out at Refugio State Beach. The ceremony will begin at 9:00 am with a Chumash blessing and speakers who will address the oil spill's devastating impacts and the importance of standing united against current efforts to resume conveyance through the corroded pipeline that caused one of the worst oil spills in California's history.

Participants are encouraged to wear red and bring any type of human-powered paddle craft, or attend without paddling. Food will be provided, and free parking is limited, so carpooling is advised.

[Register](#)



### **Explore Local Wetlands This Month**

May is American Wetlands Month and a perfect time to take a moment to appreciate these beautiful habitats and all that they offer to wildlife and our communities.

From providing habitat for forty percent of the Earth's plant and animal species to helping clean water, and storing carbon, wetlands are vital ecosystems. This month, we invite you to explore a wetland near you, such as the Goleta Slough, the Carpinteria Salt Marsh, or North Campus Open Space. Observe the incredible biodiversity, enjoy the natural tranquility, and reflect upon the importance of preserving and restoring our remaining wetland habitats for the species that rely on them and the communities that they enrich.



# Explore the Carpinteria Salt Marsh Reserve

Thursday, May 22, 2025

12pm – 2pm



**Join board member and UCSB Research Professor  
of Marine Biology Bob Warner and Carpinteria  
Salt Marsh Reserve Director Andrew Brooks.**

## **Board Walk in the Carpinteria Salt Marsh Reserve**

**Thursday, May 22**

**12:00 pm to 2:00 pm**

The Carpinteria Salt Marsh Reserve, a part of the University of California's Natural Reserve System, supports many sensitive plant and animal species. The ecologically important site includes wetlands, subtidal channels, and emergent upland habitats. The Reserve is adjacent to a sandy beach, subtidal rocky reef, and kelp beds.

The reserve provides habitat for migratory waterfowl along with several species of plants and animals listed as endangered, threatened, or of special concern, such as salt marsh bird's-beak, light-footed clapper rail, and Belding's savannah sparrow. It is also an important regional nursery for California halibut and other species of marine and estuarine fish.

On May 22nd, join Channelkeeper board member and UCSB Research Professor of Marine Biology Bob Warner and Carpinteria Salt Marsh Reserve Director Andrew Brooks for an exploratory afternoon walk.

Channelkeeper Board Walks set out 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.

We look forward to seeing you on Thursday, May 22, from 12 pm to 2 pm.

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### **Enjoy Eco-Friendly Celebrations**

With graduation season upon us, we would like to ask our community to avoid using balloons. Thousands of Mylar balloons like the one in the photo above blow from the mainland each year and litter our ocean, where they can be mistaken as food by sea creatures or entangle wildlife.

Instead, we encourage you to choose eco-friendly balloon alternatives like paper decorations, flowers, or natural garlands. We also invite you to take the pledge to be Mylar-free at [MylarMistake.com](https://mylarmistake.com).

If you choose to use balloons, please do so responsibly by securing them well and disposing of deflated remnants in the trash. Deflated Mylar balloons can be dropped off at the Channelkeeper office to be recycled.

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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\*\*](#)

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