



## Ten Years After the Plains All-American Oil Spill, the Fight Continues

May 19, 2025, marked a somber milestone for the Gaviota Coast—ten years since the Plains All-American Oil Spill at Refugio State Beach blackened its shores, killed and injured wildlife, and closed businesses. The community came together on Sunday, May 18, to remember the day with a powerful show of unity and resistance: a memorial “paddle out” at the site of the 2015 disaster that led to more than 120,000 gallons of heavy crude oil polluting beaches and the Channel.

Channelkeeper participated, along with over 100 community members, by joining hands—both figuratively and literally—on the water, reflecting on the damage caused by the spill and voicing opposition to the proposed restart of offshore oil and gas drilling using the same pipeline that failed a decade ago.

Sable Offshore Corporation continues to aggressively push to restart the onshore pipeline, despite notices of violation and cease and desist orders from several state agencies and outcry from city officials and environmental organizations. The company was recently fined by the California Coastal Commission a record-breaking \$18 million for violating the Coastal Act, but it continues to push ahead.

On the anniversary of the Plains All-American Oil Spill, Sable Offshore announced that it had resumed drilling and was pumping 6,000 barrels of oil per

day from offshore wells to the Las Flores Canyon processing facility. However, a letter issued four days later from the chair of the California State Lands Commission disputed Sable's claims, stating that the oil produced from offshore wells was from well testing activities, not commercial operations.

While Sable Offshore continues to be opaque to regulators and the public about their activities, there remain several steps and authorizations before the onshore pipeline can restart and offshore production can fully commence.

There are also several legal challenges. On May 28, Judge Anderle of the California Superior Court ruled that Sable violated the Coastal Act by conducting significant work on the pipeline without updated coastal development permits from the California Coastal Commission.

In addition, Channelkeeper, Environmental Defense Center, Santa Barbara County Action Network, Get Oil Out!, and Sierra Club have challenged the State Office of Fire Marshal's decision last December to waive certain federal pipeline safety requirements to prevent corrosion in the onshore pipelines. On June 3, Judge Geck of the Superior Court of California granted a temporary restraining order that our groups sought. This order blocks any action by the Office of the State Fire Marshal and Sable in support of restarting the failed pipeline until a follow-up court hearing on the matter is held in six weeks.

One action item you can take this month is to reach out to Governor Newsom to share your concerns about restarting offshore oil and gas development on the sensitive Gaviota Coast and request his leadership in opposing Sable's risky project. Channelkeeper and other environmental groups are calling on Governor Newsom to stop the restart of oil production along our coast and to require a full Environmental Impact Report before Sable gets the green light to move forward. If you would like to take action by calling or emailing Governor Newsom, you can find contact info and key points [here](#).

We are grateful to the hundreds of community members who have joined us in opposing the restart of oil production in the Santa Barbara Channel. Your voices are vital in holding Sable accountable and protecting California's coast.

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## Help Protect Santa Barbara's Coast from New Oil and Gas Drilling

The U.S Department of the Interior has begun the development of the 2025-2030 Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) Leasing Program and is seeking public input. This proposal, part of the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management's leasing program, could allow new oil drilling in federal waters off the continental U.S., including off the coast of Santa Barbara County.

On Tuesday, June 10, the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors will consider Item A-29, an updated resolution opposing new offshore oil leases off the California coast. This follows the County's 2018 resolution opposing similar leasing efforts and affirming the importance of protecting our coast.

Your voice is needed. Santa Barbara County's coastal waters support incredible biodiversity, fuel our local economy, and are central to our community identity. This resolution is an important step in reaffirming our values and sends a powerful message to Washington: our community stands united in defense of our coast.

### Take Action:

- **Write a letter of support** for the Board's resolution. Please submit your comment to the Clerk of the Board at: [sbcob@countyofsb.org](mailto:sbcob@countyofsb.org)
  - **Attend the June 10 Board meeting** (in person or via Zoom) to give public comment. Details for participating on Zoom will be available when the full agenda is published by June 6.
  - **Submit comments directly to BOEM** before the June 16 federal deadline
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### Collaborating to Clear Marine Debris from the Channel Islands

On May 29, a team of volunteers and organizational partners came together to clear approximately **1,400 pounds of trash and fishing gear** from the remote shores of the Channel Islands. This collaborative cleanup effort, co-led by Channelkeeper, Island Packers, Santa Barbara Adventure Company, the Commercial Fishermen of Santa Barbara, California Lobster & Trap Fishermen's Association, and the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation, focused on Yellowbanks Beach on Santa Cruz Island and Driftwood Cove on Anacapa Island.

After a boat ride across the Channel, the team began the day on Santa Cruz Island, removing old fishing gear entangled in the rocky shoreline. The group later moved to Anacapa Island, where we collected a wide array of trash, including plastic bottles, shoes, Styrofoam, and other refuse. Using kayaks and a skiff, the team ferried the collected debris back to a larger vessel for transport to the mainland, where it will be disposed of responsibly. This is the sixth year of collaborative cleanups at the Channel Islands for Channelkeeper and other local organizations and businesses.

In the Santa Barbara Channel, trash from the mainland is carried out from shore into coastal waters and beyond. Lost fishing gear and trash from marine sources are also transported by currents. Some of this debris washes up on the remote shores of the Channel Islands, while other persists in the Pacific Ocean.

This event is part of the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation's larger effort to remove marine debris from five different marine sanctuaries across California, Washington, and the Gulf of Mexico, a project supported by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Marine Debris Program.

We're grateful to all of the volunteers and partner organizations for their work to



## **Federal Court Strikes Down Nationwide Permit for Industrial Fish Farms**

In a significant ruling, the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Washington has vacated Nationwide Permit 56 (NWP 56), deeming it unlawful and halting the first federal effort to greenlight industrial finfish aquaculture in U.S. ocean waters.

Originally issued in 2021 by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, NWP 56 authorized the construction of industrial aquaculture facilities—offshore net pens and cages designed to raise large volumes of finfish like salmon and sea bass—using general, fast-tracked permits off both U.S. coasts, presenting threats to marine biodiversity, coastal ecosystems, endangered species, and local wild fisheries.

In 2023, Channelkeeper joined the Center for Food Safety, other environmental organizations, fishing groups, and the Quinault Indian Nation in suing the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers over its issuance of NWP 56. We challenged that the permit was approved without a thorough analysis of its potential detrimental impacts on our ocean ecosystems, water quality, public health, fishing communities, and endangered and threatened species.

The federal court found that the Corps violated key environmental statutes in its approval of the permit. Specifically, the court ruled that the Corps' actions were in violation of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the Rivers and Harbors Act, and the Administrative Procedure Act. The court's October 2024 opinion concluded that the Corps failed to adequately analyze the significant environmental risks associated with industrial fish farming, even as it acknowledged the potential for "high risk" adverse impacts. The court officially

declared the permit unlawful in March of 2025 and provided time for the federal agencies to appeal. The government did not file a notice of appeal within the time period, so the ruling stands.

This ruling does not directly stop the proposed Aquaculture Opportunity Areas in the Santa Barbara Channel. We continue to monitor the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's plans for its proposal of up to eight local sites.



### **Protecting Santa Barbara's Creeks with Buffers**

In January, the City of Santa Barbara released a draft ordinance aimed at protecting our local creeks through the establishment of consistent minimum buffer zones. These buffers are essential for maintaining the health of our waterways and the safety of our community. By creating distance between development and creeks, the ordinance helps reduce flood risks, prevent erosion, safeguard riparian habitats, and improve water quality.

City staffers are reviewing comments and will likely issue an updated version for public input in the upcoming months. A key feature of the original proposal is a minimum 50-foot buffer from new or substantially redeveloped structures along major creeks. Smaller buffers are also outlined for flood control areas and minor creeks. This proactive measure ensures that our creeks can continue to provide vital ecosystem services, habitat for wildlife, and greater public safety.

Channelkeeper, along with fifteen other environmental organizations—including the Environmental Defense Center, Sierra Club Santa Barbara and Ventura, Heal the Ocean, and Santa Barbara Audubon—has launched an online petition to rally public support for strong creek buffers in the City of Santa Barbara.

Now is the time to speak up for our creeks. Click below to sign the petition and

help ensure Santa Barbara adopts strong creek buffer protections for a healthier, safer future.

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

[Sign Petition](#)



**Please Vote for Channelkeeper!**

Channelkeeper is grateful to be a recipient of Lazy Acres' Envirotokens program over the past year. We have a wonderful opportunity to participate again this year. We need your help!

Please consider voting for Channelkeeper by scanning the QR code in any Lazy Acres store or visiting [lazyacres.com/vote](https://lazyacres.com/vote) to select the Santa Barbara store and up to five local organizations on the ballot! The voting, which takes place from May 21 through June 17, 2025, will select nonprofits that will be the program's next beneficiaries.

Lazy Acres Envirotokens program rewards customers who make the sustainable

choice to reuse bags and keep single-use items out of local landfills. When you shop at Lazy Acres and bring your own reusable bags, the store will give you a 10¢ Envirotoken per bag. The customer then pays it forward to one of six local nonprofits that have been hand-selected for doing important work in our area, with a focus on K-12 education efforts, hunger relief, and environmental stewardship. Thank you for promoting Channelkeeper in this year's vote!



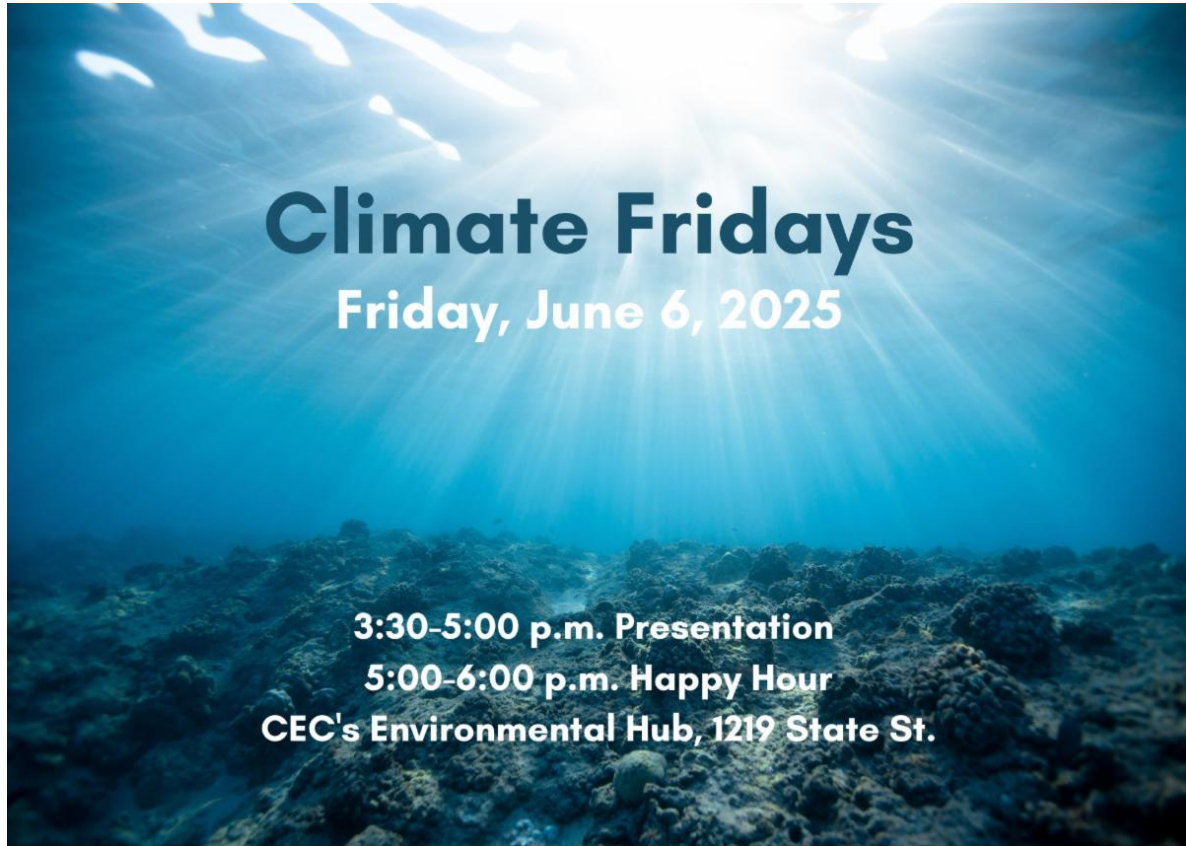
### Visit Tidepools and Help Collect Data This Month

Our colleagues at the California Academy of Sciences are looking for volunteers throughout California to join the **2025 Snapshot Cal Coast** event from **June 1 to June 30**. You can help document California's incredible coastal biodiversity!

Snapshot Cal Coast is an annual statewide community science effort that encourages people to make and share observations of plants, animals, and seaweeds along the California coast using the **iNaturalist** app. The goal is to create a valuable snapshot in time of where species are located along our coast.

Participants are asked to visit a local beach or tidepool and, using the **iNaturalist** app, take photos and make observations of seaweeds, plants, and animals. Local areas of particular interest include Coal Oil Point in the Campus Point Marine Protected Area and the Carpinteria Tar Pits.

Be sure to follow the **Snapshot Cal Coast 2025** project on iNaturalist and use the #SnapshotCalCoast hashtag when recording your observations. Enjoy the tidepools, and please remember to follow tidepooling best practices for your safety and the protection of wildlife. Never remove any animals or seaweeds, take care to step on bare rock wherever possible, never move animals from place to place, and leave the tidepools as you found them. Check the **NOAA tide**



**Friday, June 6**  
**3:30-5:00 p.m. Meeting, 5:00-6:00 p.m. Happy Hour**  
**CEC's Environmental Hub, 1219 State St.**

On the first Friday of every month, climate activists, students, community partners, and friends gather for Climate Fridays at the Community Environmental Council's Environmental Hub to learn about regional climate change issues and how to take collective action to protect our planet.

June's gathering will focus on actions for a healthy ocean in preparation for World Oceans Day on June 8. Channelkeeper will join representatives from other local ocean protection groups for an insightful panel starting at 3:30 pm. After the meeting, the group will host its quarterly happy hour with complimentary refreshments and community networking. Learn more and register [here](#).

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## Ocean-Positive Actions for World Oceans Day Sunday, June 8

This year's United Nations World Oceans Day celebrates the second year of a multi-year action theme, Catalyzing Action for Our Ocean & Climate, to build transformative collaboration and create a healthy blue planet, and a more just, equitable, and sustainable society.

In honor of **World Oceans Day** and this action-oriented theme, we invite you to perform one (or more!) ocean-positive actions this month. Spend an hour **picking up trash** in your watershed, learn more about **ocean science and governance** or **donate** to an organization focused on marine conservation.

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4th ANNUAL  
**Plastic Free**  
**EXPO**



**Wednesday, June 25th**  
**6:30 to 8:00 pm**  
**CEC Environmental Hub, 1219 State St.**

**Plastic-Free Expo**  
**Wednesday, June 25**  
**6:30 - 8:00 p.m.**  
**CEC Environmental Hub, 1219 State St.**

Community Environmental Council and Santa Barbara Channelkeeper invite you to join us for the 4th annual Plastic-Free Expo featuring local organizations, businesses, and government agencies offering information and resources for eliminating single-use plastic. Learn more about plastic-free initiatives in our community and how you can get involved!

Activities for all ages will be offered, with chances to win exciting plastic-free prizes. Light refreshments will be served. This fun community event is free, and we ask that you please RSVP [here](#).

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## July 5<sup>th</sup> Cleanup

9:00 am to 11:00 am

Four Waterfront Locations

### July 5th Cleanup Collaboration Saturday, July 5 9:00 am - 11:00 am

Channelkeeper's Watershed Brigade is collaborating with the City of Santa Barbara's Waterfront Department to help clean local beaches after the July 4th festivities.

Following a celebratory kickoff to summer, we see trash on our beaches and waterfront areas. Without additional resources to pick it up, this extra trash will end up in the ocean, where it can harm wildlife. Channelkeeper is pleased to partner with the City of Santa Barbara Waterfront Department on July 5th to address this issue.

Join us from 9 am to 11 am at one of four locations along the Santa Barbara Waterfront. Cleanup supplies and parking passes will be provided.

**East Beach, Cabrillo Pavilion:** Beach entrance at the **Cabrillo West Parking Lot**

**East Beach, Skate Park:** Beach entrance at the **Palm Park Parking Lot**

**West Beach:** Beach entrance near the **Harbor Parking Lot**

**Leadbetter Beach:** Beach entrance at the **Leadbetter Parking Lot**

Please sign up below! Thank you for helping keep local beaches clean.

[Sign up!](#)



### **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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