



Cruise Ship Program Review Reveals Progress and More Work Ahead

On Tuesday, July 22, the City of Santa Barbara's Waterfront Department staff delivered its annual Cruise Ship Program Review to the Harbor Commission, presenting key findings from the 2024–2025 cruise season and evaluating progress on the twenty program improvements adopted by City Council in April 2024.

Since the City's updated Cruise Ship Program took effect in spring 2024, eleven cruise ships have visited Santa Barbara. Seven ships called on Santa Barbara in fall 2024, and four arrived in spring 2025. Looking ahead, twelve ship visits are scheduled across the upcoming fall 2025 and spring 2026 seasons. These figures fall below the annual cap of twenty ships—a policy change designed to limit environmental and community impacts.

The review highlighted the successful implementation of several foundational measures:

- All visiting ships are now equipped with Advanced Wastewater Treatment Systems (AWTS)
- Discharges remain prohibited within twelve nautical miles of shore
- No ships are scheduled between Memorial Day and Labor Day, or on

weekends.

- A revised fee structure is in place
- A publicly accessible cruise ship database has launched, offering greater transparency on vessel size and technology, and revenues to the City's Waterfront Department.

These actions reflect meaningful strides in improving public knowledge and minimizing environmental harm from cruise ship operations.

Channelkeeper staff attended the meeting and thanked the staff, the Harbor Commission, and City for the progress to date. We also reminded the staff that further work is needed to make sure **all** ships visiting Santa Barbara meet the environmental standards approved by the City Council. We raised concerns that the following recommendations need greater attention:

- Review each vessel's environmental compliance records and prioritize them accordingly
- Prioritize cruise ships without scrubber technology or with closed-loop scrubber technology
- Prioritize ships with shore power capability
- Investigate the advantages of welcoming smaller ships

Waterfront staff have pointed to lower cruise ship volume as a reason for not fully analyzing or implementing certain environmental recommendations. While there has been a reduction in visitation, the directives of the Harbor Commission and the City Council were to apply consistent environmental standards to all cruise ships that visit our city.

As next steps in establishing a more transparent, environmentally protective program, Channelkeeper encourages the City to:

- Expand the cruise ship database by incorporating comprehensive environmental performance metrics
- Develop and apply a clear, consistent vessel prioritization framework so that all ships visiting Santa Barbara align with the city's environmental values and policy goals in the updated Cruise Ship Program.

We remain committed to supporting the City's leadership on this issue and look forward to continued collaboration in ensuring that the Cruise Ship Program protects Santa Barbara's marine ecosystems, coastal health, and community well-being.



Take Action: Tell Governor Newsom and California State Parks to Protect Gaviota Coast

Sable Offshore continues to move forward with its plan to restart offshore oil production using the same corroded pipeline infrastructure that was responsible for the catastrophic 2015 Refugio Oil Spill, despite clear agency directives and strong community opposition.

The Texas-based oil company has been issued several notices of violations of key environmental safeguards from California state agencies and repeatedly ignored cease-and-desist orders. On several occasions, Sable continued to work despite orders to stop. Since last summer, it has undertaken significant pipeline work along the Gaviota Coast without permits and environmental impact review, and is pushing an aggressive timeline to bring the damaged pipeline back online.

In a troubling development back in May, California State Parks granted Sable a Notice of Exemption, which entailed granting a right-of-entry into Gaviota State Park that allowed Sable to excavate and repair eighteen sites along the pipeline without environmental review. Since then, Sable has submitted an application to State Parks for an easement to restart, operate, and maintain the portion of the pipeline that passes through Gaviota State Park. Channelkeeper and our partners are concerned that State Parks will grant the company the requested easement without public notice, environmental review, or tribal consultation.

Channelkeeper and other environmental groups assert that State Parks should conduct an environmental review of Sable's application for an easement through Gaviota State Park, and thus, we are calling on Governor Gavin Newsom and California State Parks to require a full environmental impact review before any action on this easement is taken.

It is vital to show strong community support for environmental review before this

project continues forward. We are asking community members to call Governor Newsom and California State Parks director Armando Quintero to tell them that our State Parks are for people, not oil pipelines. Restarting oil production and conveyance through the corroded pipeline system that was responsible for the 2015 Plains All-American Oil Spill at Refugio Beach would endanger some of California's most ecologically sensitive coastline.

Click below for more info and call Governor Newsom and California State Parks today!

[Call Newsom and State Parks](#)



Channelkeeper Honors National Water Quality Month

August is National Water Quality Month, a longstanding initiative of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to promote awareness around the value of our water resources and what we can do to protect them. Throughout the month, Channelkeeper is working to inspire conversations and awareness around actions that our community can help us take to ensure that we all have access to safe, clean water for generations to come.

Protecting water quality in the Santa Barbara Channel is at the core of Channelkeeper's work to ensure that our community has access to clean, drinkable, swimmable, fishable water. To that effect, Channelkeeper monitors and advocates to protect water quality in the Santa Barbara Channel and surrounding watersheds.

Our team gathers and shares water quality data to help decision-makers protect and restore local waterways and to foster wider community awareness and

involvement in protecting water quality. We collect plankton samples in coastal waters to monitor harmful algal blooms, respond to community member reports of pollution, and take action to advance the enforcement of fundamental environmental laws. We also help educate the next generation of environmental scientists by teaching students water quality monitoring skills and the importance of individual actions to keep our waters clean.

You can help us keep local waters clean by reporting possible sources of pollution and/or volunteering with the Watershed Brigade to remove trash from beaches, creeks, rivers, and urban areas.

Read more about water pollution and how you can help address it on our [blog](#).



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On the cover: Former water quality intern Aaron Garcia collects samples from Lower Glen Annie Creek.

Santa Barbara Channelkeeper acknowledges that the creeks, rivers, estuaries, coast, and ocean that we work to protect and restore are unceded lands and waters of the Chumash people and Indigenous people. We recognize the traumatic history of colonization and ensure that has disappeared the Chumash from their homelands and waters. We strive to care for these vibrant and meaningful places alongside the Chumash and Indigenous communities, to deepen our relationships, and work together to protect and restore the Santa Barbara Channel and its watersheds for generations to come.

2 | CHANNELKEEPER SPRING/SUMMER 2025 NEWSLETTER

Dive Into the Spring/Summer 2025 Newsletter

We're excited to share the latest edition of our newsletter—packed with inspiring stories, important updates, and community-driven victories for our coast and creeks.

In this issue, you will learn how Channelkeeper is standing strong against Sable Offshore's proposed oil development plan to defend our coastline from expanded offshore drilling. You'll also get an inside look at our ongoing water quality monitoring efforts throughout the Goleta watershed—work that helps protect both people and ecosystems.

We're also spotlighting our recent collaboration with People's Self-Help Housing, bringing students out on the water for unforgettable environmental education experiences. And don't miss our article about Watershed Brigade's major milestone: 50,000 pounds of trash removed, thanks to your dedication and

action.

Click below to read the full newsletter!

[Read the Newsletter](#)



Increased Rebates Now Available for Sustainable Storm Water Projects

The City of Santa Barbara's Creeks Division has announced increased rebate amounts through the Sustainable Storm Water Rebate Program, offering even more incentive for local residents and businesses to take action for cleaner water and a healthier environment.

This program helps fund the installation of storm water capture features like rain barrels, rain gardens, downspout disconnections, and pavement removal. These projects are designed to slow down and spread out rainwater, reducing flooding, recharging groundwater, and protecting our creeks and ocean from pollution.

The maximum rebate amounts have been significantly increased:

- Up to \$5,000 for Single Family and Small Multi-Family Residential properties (1–4 units)
- Up to \$15,000 for Commercial and Large Multi-Family Residential properties (5+ units)

Now is a great time to invest in sustainable landscaping and drainage improvements that benefit your property and the environment.

Click [here](#) to learn more and apply today.

Coal Oil Point Tide Pools Board Walk

Saturday, August 16 @ 12:00 pm

Devereux Beach, Isla Vista



Coal Oil Point Tide Pools Board Walk

Saturday, August 16

12:00 pm

Join Channelkeeper board member, Benjamin Bhutani Goedert, for a fun visit to the Coal Oil Point Tide Pools at Devereux Beach on August 16 at 12:00 pm! Learn about the different indicator species and tidal zones, and explore the many different life-filled crevices of these local pools. Find out about the delicate systems that make up our Channel and the many reasons why we must protect (and celebrate!) the marine areas in our community.

The group will meet at the southern end of Camino Majorca Road and West Del Playa Drive in Isla Vista near the beach entrance. Parking is available in the neighborhood. Please wear comfortable, beach-friendly shoes.

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.

TOAST TO THE COAST '25

*Join us in raising a glass to
clean water and healthy habitats.*

Wednesday, August 20
5:30 to 7:30 pm
Rincon Brewery Santa Barbara

**Toast to the Coast • Happy Hour Fundraiser
Wednesday, August 20
5:30 to 7:30 pm**

Get your tickets today for Toast to the Coast! We're looking forward to gathering with our community to raise a glass in support of clean water and healthy habitats on August 20, from 5:30 to 7:30! We hope you'll join us at Rincon Brewery's Santa Barbara location (205 Santa Barbara Street) to enjoy live music, refreshments, and a raffle with great prizes!

Tickets are \$30 prior to the event, or you can purchase tickets at the door for \$35. Each ticket includes one drink (tap beer, house wine, or nonalcoholic beverage), appetizers, and one raffle ticket. Click below to buy your tickets. Sliding scale tickets are available by contacting events@sbck.org.

We're grateful for support from our event sponsors Sharkbanz, Rincon Brewery, and Trader Joe's, as well as raffle prize donors Patagonia, Sharkbanz, Avasol, Revly Sport, Waterlust, Fleks Footwear, Salty Gold Uni, and more.

[Buy Tickets](#)



**Watershed Brigade Clean Up
with NatureTrack & Freedom Trax**

Saturday, August 23 @ 10:00 am

Goleta Beach

Beach Access for ALL!



**Watershed Brigade Beach Cleanup with NatureTrack
Saturday, August 23
10:00 am
Goleta Beach**

Channelkeeper is excited to team up with [NatureTrack](#) for a community beach cleanup on Friday, August 23 at 10 a.m. at Goleta Beach!

This special event isn't just about cleaning up our coastline—it's about making a difference together. Thanks to NatureTrack, [Freedom Trax](#) will be available for use, allowing wheelchair users and others with mobility challenges to join in the cleanup. Freedom Trax is a wheelchair accessory that enables access to sandy and uneven outdoor spaces, helping everyone experience and enjoy nature.

Whether you're a longtime volunteer or it's your first time at a cleanup, we'd love for you to be part of this inclusive, community-driven event. Let's protect our coast and make Goleta Beach shine! We hope to see you there!

[Sign Up!](#)

MPA Watch Virtual Training

Tuesday, August 26

5:30 to 6:30 pm



MPA Watch Volunteer Training

Tuesday, August 26

5:30 to 6:30 pm

Are you interested in becoming an MPA Watch volunteer? Sign up for Channelkeeper's Virtual Training on August 26 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 and surveys are conducted independently.

The volunteer training workshop will take place virtually and will be followed on a later date by 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](#)



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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