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**CHANNELKEEPER'S BLUE WATER BALL BRINGS COMMUNITY TOGETHER TO SUPPORT CLEAN WATER AND CELEBRATE A MILESTONE ANNIVERSARY**

*Santa Barbara, CA*— On Saturday, March 14, more than 185 community members gathered for Santa Barbara Channelkeeper's Blue Water Ball, a fundraising event and special celebration of the organization's twenty-five years of protecting and restoring the Santa Barbara Channel and its watersheds.

This year's event opened with a beautiful welcome song sung by Chumash leader Mia Lopez. Dr. Jane Lubchenco was unfortunately unable to attend and provide remarks due to illness. In her place, Assemblymember Gregg Hart spoke about the importance of ocean leadership at the state level and the value of gathering researchers, organizations, and government agencies to strengthen impact and catalyze ocean-protective policies.

During the pre-dinner reception, guests viewed water-inspired artwork donated for the auction by fourteen local artists. They also enjoyed wines provided by Clementine Carter Wines, Dierberg Star Lane Vineyard, and Visit the Santa Ynez Valley, beer from 805 Beer and Rincon Brewery, and other local libations while listening to music by Tony Ybarra.

Emcee Geoff Green guided the evening with lively storytelling and inspired attendees to bid on the curated selection of auction items. The online auction included works by local artists Benjamin Andersen, Sarita Reynolds, Morgan Maassen, Michael Irwin, Kara Crisp, and others; local dining experiences and sustainable seafood subscriptions, VIP Passes to the Wild & Free Film Festival, ocean-adventures from local operators including Island Packers and Stardust Sportfishing, and nature-based travel opportunities to explore the Pacific Northwest and Galapagos; as well as a surfboard from Fletcher Chouinard Designs.

The live auction featured unique experiences to visit the Channel Islands, a private tour of Sedgwick Reserve, and Platinum passes to the Santa Barbara International Film Festival.

After Solera & Co. served an elegant multicourse meal and Assemblymember Hart shared his remarks, Channelkeeper's executive director, Ted Morton, reflected on Channelkeeper's legacy and its efforts to connect people with nature, science with action, and ideas with policies—all for a better future.

“For twenty-five years, Channelkeeper has been deeply committed to science-based advocacy, empowering our community to safeguard its beloved coast,” said Morton. “We are grateful for moments like this one in which we can gather together in support of our vision for clean water, healthy habitats, abundant wildlife, and thriving communities.”

Throughout the evening, impact stories and archival photos celebrating the organization's environmental achievements helped mark a quarter century of science-based environmental advocacy, education, fieldwork, community engagement, and enforcement to protect the Santa Barbara Channel and its watersheds. This includes working closely with other groups to challenge a growing wave of plans to open the central California coast to new offshore oil drilling and voicing opposition to the Trump Administration's recent decision to force the restart of oil production along the Gaviota Coast.

In addition to its success as a community-building event, the Blue Water Ball raised more than \$190,000 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.

The organization is grateful for the community's ongoing support and would like to extend special thanks to event sponsors The Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians Foundation, Montecito Bank & Trust, Open Water, Santa Barbara Adventure Co., Wild & Free Film Festival, and the many individual sponsors, underwriters, and honorary committee members, artists, auction donors, and guests, who made the evening so special.

“This year's Blue Water Ball was a wonderful celebration,” said Morton. “We are grateful for the community of supporters who believe in Channelkeeper and make it possible for our work to have such a positive impact in our communities.”