



Collaboration Helps Clear Marine Debris from the Channel Islands

During a day-long cleanup effort at Santa Cruz Island on May 4, a group of hard-working individuals cleared approximately 775 pounds of trash and fishing gear from Chinese Harbor. Participants included volunteers and representatives from Santa Barbara Channelkeeper, Island Packers, Santa Barbara Adventure Company, Commercial Fishermen of Santa Barbara, Tidy Seas, the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation, and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

The group removed trash such as mylar balloons, plastic bottles, shoes, irrigation tubing, and large metal boat pieces from the remote shoreline. They ferried the trash from shore using kayaks and a skiff and loaded it onto boats that brought it back to the mainland for proper disposal.

Debris from land-based sources is a significant source of marine debris at the Channel Islands. 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 a 2023 award from the [NOAA Marine Debris Program](#). This is the fifth coordinated island cleanup we have undertaken since 2024.

Channelkeeper is pleased to collaborate with these groups to help keep the waters of the Santa Barbara Channel clean and to protect the delicate ecosystems of the Channel Islands.



Community Members Paddle Out to Protect Our Coast

Environmental advocates, students, Tribal leaders, and community members gathered at Refugio Beach on May 17 to commemorate the 11th anniversary of the Plains All American Oil Spill and stand up for our coastline. Together, over 150 people paddled out with a clear message: no new offshore drilling in California waters, especially Sable's restart of oil development along the Gaviota Coast.

We would like to thank the organizational partners who joined us to help make the event happen: Surfrider Foundation (Santa Barbara County Chapter and UCSB Student Club), Environmental Defense Center, Center for Biological Diversity, Sierra Club, Fearless Grandmothers, UCSB Environmental Affairs Board, Oceana, Climate First: Replacing Oil and Gas, and Get Oil Out!



Cruise Ship Program Review Reveals Progress as well as Incomplete Directives

On May 21, the Santa Barbara Harbor Commission received an Annual Cruise Ship Program Review from the Waterfront Department. Staff provided an update on implementation of the City's revised cruise ship policies adopted by City Council in April 2024, after a two-year public process.

The report included data about current cruise ship activity in Santa Barbara, with 12 cruise ship visits during the 2025–26 season, carrying more than 31,000 passengers. Eleven cruise ship visits are currently scheduled for the 2026–27 season.

Waterfront staff highlighted improvements that have been implemented under the updated program, including requiring visiting ships to be equipped with Advanced Wastewater Treatment Systems, maintaining seasonal restrictions that limit cruise ship visits during the summer, continuing vessel speed reduction requirements, and creating a publicly accessible cruise ship database that tracks vessel technology and operational data. In addition, City staff highlighted the recent alignment of the City of Santa Barbara's cruise ship program with the Blue Whales Blue Skies program, in an effort to reduce whale strikes and underwater noise along the California coast.

While these measures represent progress, several key elements of the revised program remain incomplete. Notably, the Waterfront Department has yet to coordinate with the Harbor Commission in developing a package of environmental best practices and minimum environmental performance standards to apply to visiting vessels.

Additional directives still awaiting implementation include evaluating cleaner fuel technologies and opportunities to prioritize smaller ships, assessing the

environmental impacts of exhaust gas cleaning systems, commonly known as “scrubbers,” and developing stronger environmental performance criteria for participating vessels.

As the City continues implementing the revised program, Channelkeeper will be monitoring the program in order to prioritize ocean health, marine wildlife protection, clean air, and community accountability.



Planning the Future of Santa Barbara’s Waterfront

From Leadbetter Beach and the Harbor to Mission Creek, East Beach, and the nearshore ocean, the interconnected coastal systems of Santa Barbara's waterfront shape how residents and visitors experience Santa Barbara's shoreline every day.

The City has begun developing a 30-year Waterfront Adaptation Plan to address sea level rise, coastal flooding, and climate change. Channelkeeper is urging decision-makers to prioritize nature-based solutions that protect water quality, restore habitat, strengthen coastal resilience, and enhance public access and recreation. A few examples of nature-based solutions that we fully support include dune restoration, estuary/lagoon improvements, and other actions to restore or enhance naturally occurring coastal ecosystems.

City staff recently conducted outreach on potential adaptation options that could be included in the Draft Waterfront Plan and administered a survey, which generated 1,404 responses, in addition to verbal and written comments. Thank you to all the community members who attended open houses and/or took the survey to share their thoughts about the importance of using nature-based approaches and provide other insights that will help inform the plan for the City's Waterfront future.

For twenty-three years, Channelkeeper's Student Art Show has celebrated the connection between young people and the ocean. Every spring, high school students from Carpinteria to Goleta are invited to create and submit their interpretations of what the Santa Barbara Channel means to them. With its colorful array of shapes, textures, and patterns, the artwork produced by these young artists celebrates the remarkable beauty and biodiversity of the Santa Barbara Channel, and it also inspires our community to protect it.

Artist, Associate Professor of Art, and Art Department Chair at Westmont College, [Meagan Stirling](#) juried the show and selected the award-winning pieces. She was impressed by the caliber of the artwork and by the students' meaningful artist statements. Of 120 pieces submitted, fifty were selected for the show.

First place was awarded to Aricin Marshall for his stunning ceramic sculpture titled, *Tide Bound - Hollister Ranch*. Second place went to Josefa Olivio for *Channel Islands Fox*, a beautiful scratchboard. Jocabed Carranza's *After the Tide* painting of a lone mussel earned third place, while the Chris Potter Environmental Ethic Award went to Maria Rojo for *Insufferable Freedom*, a ceramic turtle caught in plastic. The Juror's Choice Award was given to Madeline Adler for her hermit crab sculptures depicting *Sea Life vs. Pollution: The Ongoing Battle*. Honorable mentions were given to Sophia Lam for her print *Garibaldi Fish*, Alejandro Miranda for his piece *For Cod's Sake*, and Camila Sandoval for *Mugshots*.

Over the past two decades, more than 4,120 students have submitted art to Channelkeeper's Student Art Show.

The show is sponsored by Trillium Enterprise, Inc. and the Goleta City Grant Program and received in-kind support from Frame Up.

[View Artwork](#)



Share Your Vision for Santa Barbara County's Open Spaces

Santa Barbara County is updating the Open Space Element (OSE) of its Comprehensive Plan, and community input is essential. The Open Space Element helps guide how land throughout the county is developed, protected, and preserved for future generations.

The County is inviting residents to complete a short, seven-question survey to help identify community values and priorities related to open space. Topics include outdoor recreation, land conservation, wildfire resilience, agricultural lands, protection of natural resources, and preservation of Native American cultural places.

Open spaces shape our quality of life here on the Central Coast—from trails, parks, and beaches to working lands and wildlife habitat. Your feedback will help ensure that future planning reflects the needs and perspectives of the people who live here.

Take a few minutes to share your voice and help shape the future of Santa Barbara County's landscapes.

[Complete Survey](#)



World Oceans Day Celebration
Saturday, June 6
10:00 a.m.– 4 p.m.

World Oceans Day Celebration
Saturday, June 6
10:00 a.m.– 4 p.m.
Sea Center on Stearns Wharf

In celebration of World Oceans Day 2026, the Museum of Natural History Sea Center on Stearns Wharf will be free of charge on June 6th, thanks to the generous support of the Moeller Lab.

Enjoy a day filled with oceanic wonder and stewardship. Meet an array of community partners dedicated to ocean conservation and celebration, including Santa Barbara Channelkeeper, The Nature Conservancy CA Oceans Team, NOAA Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary, Commercial Fishermen of Santa Barbara, UCSB MSI and UCSB LTER Groups, CSULB Shark Lab, Sunflower Star Lab, Surfrider SB, CICRU, Cultured Abalone Farm and the Moeller Lab. We hope to see you there!



World Oceans Day 2026 Asks Us to Reimagine Our Relationship with the Ocean

Every year on June 8, people around the globe come together to celebrate World Oceans Day—a moment to recognize the beauty, power, and importance of our blue planet. This year’s theme, “*Reimagine*,” invites us to rethink our relationship with the ocean and our shared responsibility to protect it.

Real change begins in our communities, in our daily choices, and in the ways we reconnect with the waters that sustain us. The ocean is not distant from our lives—it shapes the air we breathe, regulates our climate, supports marine wildlife, and nourishes coastal economies and cultures. Here on the Central Coast, we experience that connection every day.

Channelkeeper believes that reimagining our future means becoming active guardians of the places we love. It means protecting clean water, restoring habitats, advocating for strong environmental policies, and empowering community members to take action for the Santa Barbara Channel and beyond.

This World Oceans Day, we invite you to reimagine what ocean stewardship can look like by:

- Choosing reusable products that reduce plastic pollution
- Participating in local beach and creek cleanups
- Supporting science-based ocean protections
- Conserving water and reducing runoff pollution
- Speaking up for policies that protect marine ecosystems
- Sharing your love of the ocean with the next generation

The challenges facing our oceans can feel overwhelming, but collective action matters. Around the world and right here at home, people are stepping forward

with creativity, collaboration, and hope. Together, we can build a future where healthy oceans, abundant wildlife, and thriving communities go hand in hand.

The ocean has always connected us. Join us this World Oceans Day as we reimagine a healthier future for our ocean, and our planet.



Romero Canyon with Biologist Ian Jackson
Sunday, June 14, 2026
9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.
Romero Canyon Trailhead

Romero Canyon Watershed Walk with Biologist Ian Jackson
Sunday, June 14, 2026
9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.

Join us for an exploration of the Romero Canyon with local biologist and environmental educator, Ian Jackson. The hike will focus on identifying the plants and animals that call this watershed home. We'll be walking the first mile or so of the trail at a leisurely pace, stopping along the way to investigate anything that catches our eyes or ears. The morning will bring beautiful scenery, abundant wildlife (birds, butterflies, lizards, frogs), wildflowers, tall trees, an opportunity to see the Sonoran maiden fern (a rare plant that reaches its northern range limit here in Santa Barbara). If we're lucky, we'll hear the beautiful song of the resident canyon wrens, and possibly, a glimpse of a spectacularly colorful (though completely harmless!) coast mountain kingsnake. Regardless, we will enjoy the soothing sounds of Romero Creek flowing downstream to the ocean and the lovely scenery of steep, sandstone canyon walls rising above a rich riparian and oak woodland habitat.

The trail terrain is moderately steep and often uneven and loose, so this will be a leisurely-paced hike with many stops. There will be two or three creek crossings that require some rock hopping. This walk will be about 2.5 miles round trip.

Free parking at the trailhead or at pullouts to the east and west of the trailhead. Please arrive early to find the meeting location and sign a participant waiver. We will begin promptly at 9:00 a.m. with introductions before hitting the trail.

Participants should wear comfortable walking shoes, a hat and/or sunscreen, and layers in case it gets windy or chilly. Bring a water bottle and binoculars (if you have them!). Hiking poles may be useful for creek crossings. There are no bathrooms at the trailhead. Dogs are welcome to join if they are well behaved and on a leash. Please consider carpooling to reduce your carbon footprint and ensure easier parking on a Sunday morning. In the event of rain, the event will be rescheduled.

Please register in advance for this free event. Space is limited to 15. Registration will also allow us to send you timely updates about the event.

Meeting Location: Romero Canyon Trailhead. ([Google Maps](#))

From the 101 Freeway driving south, take exit 92 toward Sheffield Drive. Turn left toward N. Jameson Lane and then turn right onto N. Jameson Lane. Then turn left onto Sheffield Drive, then Left onto E. Valley Road, then right onto Romero Canyon Road, then right onto Bella Vista Drive. The trailhead will be on the right side of the road around a hair pin turn that crosses over Romero Creek.

[Sign Up](#)



**Plastic-Free
Expo**

**Thursday, June 25
6:30 - 8:00 p.m.
CEC Environmental Hub, 1219 State St.**

Community Environmental Council
Bold Climate Action
Acción Climática Audaz

Santa Barbara
CHANNELKEEPER®

**Plastic-Free Expo
Thursday, 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 5th 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.

[RSVP](#)



Ventura State Beach Cleanup with NatureTrack

Channelkeeper is excited to team up with [NatureTrack](#) for a community beach cleanup on Saturday, June 27 at 10 a.m. at Ventura State Beach! Thanks to NatureTrack, Freedom Trax will be available for use, allowing wheelchair users and others with mobility challenges to join in the cleanup fun. Freedom Trax is a wheelchair accessory that enables access to sandy and uneven outdoor spaces, helping everyone experience and enjoy nature. We hope you can join this inclusive, community-driven event!

[Sign Up](#)



July 5th Cleanup

Sunday, July 5
9:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.
East Beach, West Beach,
Leadbetter Beach



July 5th Cleanup
Sunday, July 5
9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.
East Beach, West Beach, Leadbetter Beach

Each year, local July 4th festivities leave behind trash on our beaches and throughout the waterfront area. Without additional resources to pick it up, this extra trash can end up in the ocean and harm wildlife. The City of Santa Barbara, Santa Barbara Channelkeeper, and Tidy Seas are collaborating on July 5th to address this issue.

Join us between 9:00 a.m - 11:00 a.m at one of four locations: East Beach at Cabrillo Pavillion, East Beach, Skate Park, West Beach, and Leadbetter Beach

Cleanup supplies and parking passes will be provided.

[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**](#)



CONNECT WITH US



Santa Barbara Channelkeeper | 714 Bond Avenue | Santa Barbara, CA 93103 US

[Unsubscribe](#) | [Update Profile](#) | [Constant Contact Data Notice](#)