



SANTA BARBARA CHANNELKEEPER

20 YEAR
IMPACT REPORT

MAKING WAVES FOR TWO DECADES

A message from Executive Director Kira Redmond

For the past twenty years, Santa Barbara Channelkeeper has served as a vigilant watchdog and tenacious advocate for the Santa Barbara Channel and its watersheds. Our motivation is a love for the extraordinary beauty of this place and a reverence for how truly special it is, not just to us personally, but to our community, to the whales, dolphins, and innumerable other critters, to our economy, and to our planet. We're also driven by the urgency of knowing this special place is under threat and needs an advocate to speak and act on its behalf so that our kids and their kids can love and enjoy it like we do.

Reflecting back on our first two decades, there's no doubt we've moved the needle in a big way. We've successfully championed stronger policies that better protect our water resources, stopped scores of illegal discharges into the Santa Barbara Channel and its tributaries, removed tons of trash from local beaches and creeks, collected and leveraged much-needed scientific data on the health of our streams, beaches, and ocean, engaged 4,500 volunteers, provided environmental education and exploration for 36,000 youth, and so much more.

None of these environmental achievements would have happened without the many people in our community who have been there for us, either by donating their money, volunteering their time, spreading the word, partnering with us, or lending their voice to support our work. We are deeply grateful, inspired, and energized by the support and trust our community has invested in Channelkeeper over the past two decades to help us become such a powerful and effective force for clean water.

Read on to learn more about the incredible impact we've made together over the past twenty years. And please stay engaged as we set out to accomplish even more in the decades to come, because we're just getting started!

With gratitude,



Kira Redmond, Executive Director



Photo credit by Gary Moss

OUR IMPACT BY THE NUMBERS

20 YEARS OF KEEPING WATCH FOR CLEAN WATER

Santa Barbara Channelkeeper's mission is to protect and restore the Santa Barbara Channel and its watersheds. Through science-based advocacy, education, field work, and enforcement, we defend our community's right to clean water and inform, inspire, and empower people to speak and act for our waterways. With boots on the ground, a boat on the water, an unwavering commitment to grassroots activism, and the trust and support of our community at our back, we make a big impact for a small organization.



4,500
volunteers

engaged in citizen science monitoring programs, clean-ups, and community outreach



36,000
kids

educated about watersheds, marine science, and environmental stewardship



10,000
pounds of trash

removed from beaches and creeks



100,000
water quality measurements

collected from 45 sites in 15 creeks by Stream Team



16
polluted streams

targeted for clean-up based on Channelkeeper data



4,400
surveys of marine protected areas

conducted by Channelkeeper and our MPA Watch volunteers



300
divers and paddlers

learned about and recreated in marine protected areas (MPAs) on Channelkeeper-hosted excursions, which generated \$30,000 in revenue for local businesses



2.9
acres of eelgrass

restored at Anacapa Island



100
60-gallon wine or beer barrels

repurposed into rain barrels for rainwater harvesting and reuse



Dozens
of illegal pollution sources

identified and eliminated



\$20+ million

invested to repair and replace 34 miles of sewer pipes in the City of Santa Barbara, resulting in a 91% reduction in raw sewage overflows

EDUCATING THE NEXT GENERATION

Today's youth are the decision-makers of tomorrow. Channelkeeper understands that the environmental ethics of the next generation are critical to our planet's future, so fostering environmental awareness and stewardship amongst young people has always been a major focus of our work.

In the modern world of pavement, organized play, and technology, kids spend more and more time indoors, so they often lack a strong connection to nature. Channelkeeper sparks kids' interest in the natural world by taking them outdoors to learn about aquatic science at a creek or beach near their school or on the ocean on our boat, and by bringing the creek and ocean to the classroom through hands-on lessons and experiments. These interactive educational experiences provide direct exposure to nature, fostering a bond and sense of stewardship for the environment while also building critical science and math skills.

The curriculum we teach satisfies many of the Next Generation Science Standards and addresses the Ocean Literacy Principles and California's Environmental Principles and Concepts, making the program particularly beneficial for teachers.

Over the past 20 years, Channelkeeper has provided interactive environmental science education and enrichment opportunities to 36,000 students in Santa Barbara and Ventura counties. Even though we live on the coast, many of our students have never been to the beach or on the ocean or seen the creek in their own backyard. Our education programs can therefore have a huge impact on students' lives.



OF ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDS



SEAFARIS

Since 2014, Channelkeeper has provided nearly 100 free, educational “Seafari” cruises on our boat for 700 underserved and at-risk kids so they can experience the ocean firsthand, often for the first time. Our passengers explore a kelp forest through our use of a diver-operated camera that provides live-feed video of the underwater world to a monitor on our boat.



MARINE SCIENCE CLASSROOM CURRICULUM

Channelkeeper has worked with science teachers to deliver interactive lessons to more than 10,000 kids in 307 classrooms, teaching the students about kelp forests and eelgrass beds in the Santa Barbara Channel and the importance of water quality to the health of these habitats. The students examine kelp and eelgrass under a microscope, conduct a sea urchin fertilization lab, and learn about marine debris and pollution prevention.



WATERSHED FIELD TRIPS

In partnership with the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History, Ventura Land Trust, Once Upon a Watershed, and many other partners, Channelkeeper has led nearly 15,000 students on field trips to explore their local creeks and beaches, conduct experiments to measure water quality, and learn about how pollution can affect wildlife as it travels through a watershed to the ocean.



STUDENT ART SHOW

Since 2004, Channelkeeper has hosted an annual ocean-themed art show for local high school students. The goal of the show is to inspire our youth to create art that celebrates the natural beauty and biodiversity of the Santa Barbara Channel, and for their art to inspire others. Every year we hang the students’ artwork in a local gallery and host a public exhibit, reception, and awards ceremony where we reward the winning students with cash prizes.

MONITORING WATER QUALITY AND

With boots on the ground and a boat on the water, Channelkeeper maintains a vigilant watch for clean water in our creeks, wetlands, beaches, and ocean. We patrol the Santa Barbara Channel and its tributaries to identify, track, and deter pollution. We conduct scientific research to investigate critical threats facing our waters, and collect scientifically sound data to help decision-makers protect and restore local waterways, as well as to raise community awareness and involvement in protecting our water resources.



Photo credit by Udi Goren

Regulatory agencies regularly utilize the data we collect to inform and prioritize their pollution prevention and restoration efforts, and our watchdog patrols have identified and helped clean up numerous water pollution problems.

Our field work and near-constant presence on the water and in our watersheds sets Channelkeeper apart from other environmental groups. We've developed an intimate, in-depth knowledge of our local waterways and produce hard data to back up our advocacy, which lends us exceptional credibility amongst both policy-makers and the public.

HABITAT HEALTH



STREAM TEAM

Through our Stream Team citizen science program, Channelkeeper has trained and engaged 1,500 volunteers to help us conduct monthly water quality sampling at 45 stream sites in 15 creeks across the Goleta Valley, Carpinteria Valley, and Ventura River watersheds. We routinely submit our data to the State Water Board, leading them to prioritize regulations to clean up our most polluted streams. Stream Team also provides a fun, educational, and rewarding community service opportunity.



MPA WATCH

Since 2011, Channelkeeper's MPA Watch Program has trained and engaged 400 volunteers to conduct 4,400 surveys of human uses of marine protected areas (MPAs) in the Santa Barbara Channel. The data complements other research underway to monitor changes in fish populations, while also documenting the social and economic benefits of MPAs and helping agencies ensure that MPA regulations are followed.



BEACH WATER QUALITY

Channelkeeper tests water quality at local beaches to determine whether they are safe for public recreation. We share our results online and through the Swim Guide app immediately so that surfers, swimmers, and other ocean users can avoid putting their health at risk when they get in the water.



CLEAN-UPS

Channelkeeper has organized more than 200 clean-ups, mobilizing nearly 2,600 volunteers to remove approximately 10,000 pounds of trash from our beaches and creeks and prevent it from polluting the Santa Barbara Channel. We officially adopted West Beach in 2007 and host frequent clean-ups for local community groups and businesses who want to make a difference.

ADVOCATING FOR SOUND WATER

Santa Barbara Channelkeeper speaks for the waterways, wildlife, and communities we defend. We educate and lobby policy-makers to enforce existing environmental laws or to enact stronger laws when necessary to better protect our precious water resources. Over the past two decades, we've helped enact countless policy changes that have improved protections for water quality, aquatic habitats, wildlife, and the health of everyone who plays or fishes in the water. Our advocacy is firmly rooted in science. We closely review scientific data and research – or

collect our own where it's lacking – before formulating our positions, and our staff has extensive scientific training and expertise. As a result, when we speak out on a policy issue, decision-makers listen.

In addition to influencing policy at the local level, Channelkeeper also coordinates closely with the California Coastkeeper Alliance, Waterkeeper Alliance, and other Waterkeepers and partners to strengthen water policies at the state and federal levels.



POLICIES

SINGLE-USE PLASTICS

Channelkeeper has led the charge, in partnership with the Community Environmental Council, to convince municipalities across our region to adopt ordinances banning the distribution of plastic grocery bags, Styrofoam takeout containers, and plastic straws, stirrers, and cutlery. These bans have made a huge dent in the volume of plastic that our community uses and discards, much of which ends up in the ocean.

URBAN RUNOFF

Channelkeeper's advocacy was instrumental in shaping the Storm Water Management Programs that municipalities across Santa Barbara County were required to develop to comply with California's municipal stormwater permit. These programs continue to guide how our communities address and reduce polluted runoff, the single biggest source of water pollution in our region.

WATER SUPPLIES

Channelkeeper has been championing a shift to a climate-smart water supply portfolio that includes recycled water, rainwater capture and reuse, and increased conservation and water use efficiency. We have educated policy-makers about the substantial environmental impacts of desalination and convinced them to investigate the feasibility of less harmful technologies and alternatives.

OIL AND GAS

Channelkeeper has been a vocal advocate for policies that protect our waters, wildlife, and communities from expanded oil and gas drilling. We helped protect Carpinteria from Venoco's proposed Paredon Project, opposed the Trump administration's effort to expand drilling off our coast, and helped pass legislation to inventory and cap leaking legacy oil wells and to improve oil spill prevention and response, among many others.



ENFORCING ENVIRONMENTAL

Environmental laws are the most important tools we have to protect our natural resources, ecosystems, wildlife, and people from pollution. However, these laws are only effective when they are complied with and enforced, and unfortunately, government agencies often lack the resources – and, at times, political will – to make sure the laws are followed.

Since our inception, Channelkeeper has staunchly defended our community's right to clean water, and on rare occasions we've done so by using

legal tools available to private citizen groups when environmental laws are violated and the government fails to act.

Channelkeeper only uses legal action when the environmental violations are egregious, the environmental harm is significant, and attempts at communication and advocacy have not yielded sufficient improvements. We view litigation as a last resort, but it has proven to be a very effective tool in stopping pollution at its source when other avenues failed to correct it.



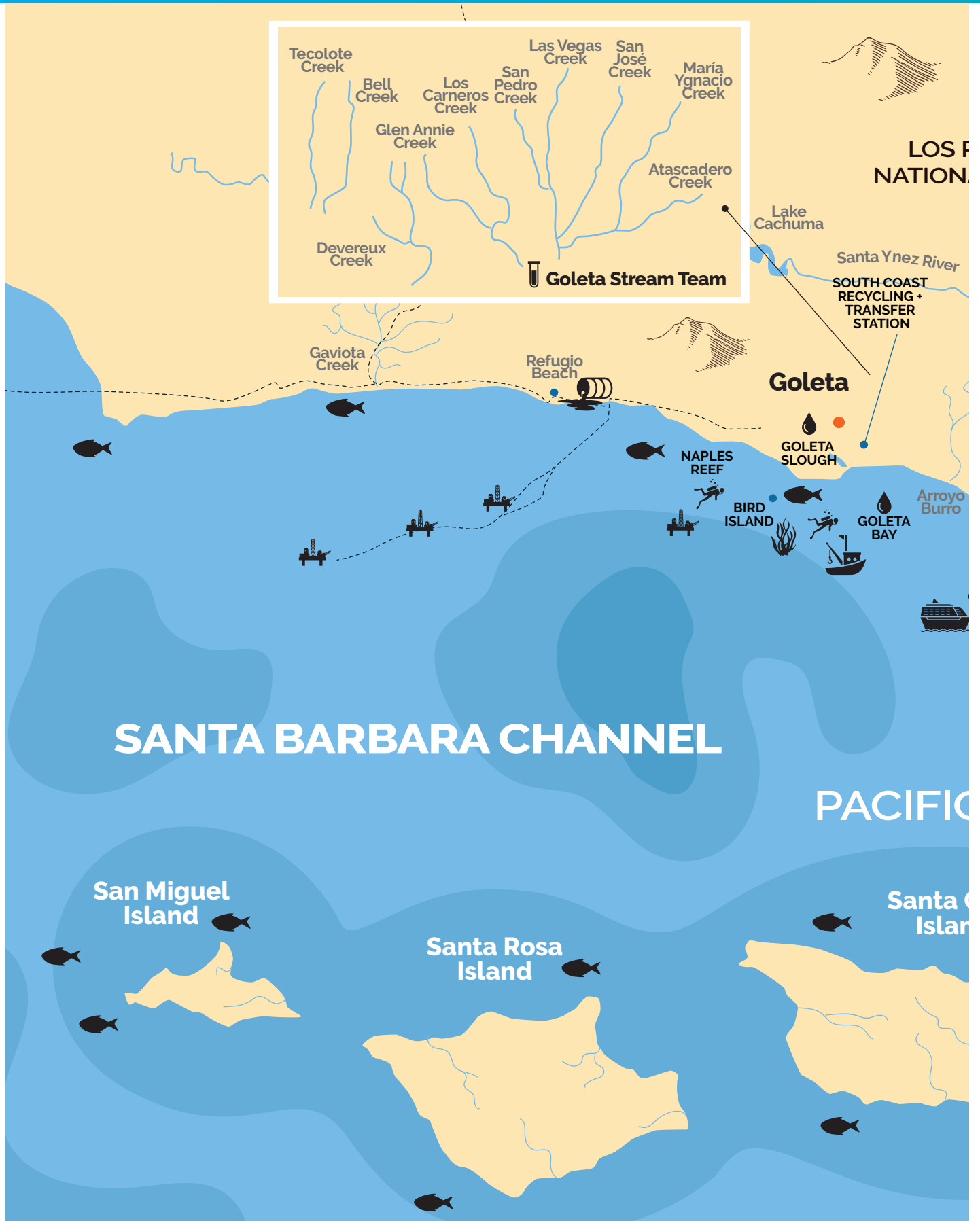
LAWS

Over the past 20 years, our enforcement efforts have reduced or eliminated several major sources of pollution and resulted in significant improvements in water quality in our creeks, beaches, and Channel. Here are some highlights of that impact:

- 💧 The City of Santa Barbara invested an additional \$20 million to repair and replace 34 miles of leaky sewer pipes, resulting in a 91% reduction in raw sewage overflows.
- 💧 Santa Barbara County eliminated polluted industrial runoff from the South Coast Recycling and Transfer Station, formerly the #1 violator of California's industrial pollution permit on the entire Central Coast.
- 💧 Federal agencies are prohibited from issuing any new permits for fracking at offshore oil platforms in the Santa Barbara Channel until potential impacts on endangered species are fully analyzed and addressed.
- 💧 The City of Ventura was forced to curtail its pumping of water from the Ventura River to ensure sufficient flow remains in the river to sustain steelhead and other wildlife.
- 💧 The Regional Water Board was ordered to develop and implement stronger regulations to reduce toxic agricultural runoff throughout California's Central Coast.
- 💧 The Santa Barbara Polo Club stopped discharging water polluted with horse waste to storm drains that empty onto Padaro Beach.
- 💧 The Ojai Quarry reduced erosion and polluted runoff from its facility and ensured that large rocks don't fall into and block fish passage in North Fork Matilija Creek, a pristine upper tributary of the Ventura River.
- 💧 The US Environmental Protection Agency strengthened the permit regulating discharges from offshore oil platforms.
- 💧 The federal government was prohibited from renewing 36 undeveloped oil leases off the California coast without full environmental review, ultimately leading to the termination of the leases.
- 💧 Halaco Engineering Company was forced to clean up its metal smelting factory on Ormond Beach and ultimately had to shut down the facility, which is now designated as a Superfund site to be cleaned up by the US EPA.



KEEPING WATCH



FOR CLEAN WATER



TIMELINE



2001

Ventura Stream Team
Citizen science monitoring program launched in partnership with Ventura Surfrider



2004

EPA issues stringent
permit for discharges from offshore oil platforms



2000

Santa Barbara Channelkeeper
is founded

2003

Eelgrass bed
restored at Frenchy's Cove

2004

Halaco Engineering Company
forced to shut down noxious metal smelting factory on Ormond Beach

OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS

2006

Santa Barbara Polo Club ceases discharging runoff polluted with horse waste to Padaro Beach

2008

Channelkeeper fills gap in winter beach water quality sampling when funding is cut for Santa Barbara County's beach sampling program

2012

LA Regional Water Board adopts regulatory program to reduce algae in the Ventura River based on Channelkeeper data and advocacy

2008

Regional Water Board orders remediation plan for DDT- contaminated soils at Carpinteria Oil & Gas Facility, with clean-up levels more stringent than at any DDT waste-impacted site in entire US



2011

Network of 36 new Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) created along southern California coast. Channelkeeper creates new MPA Watch citizen science monitoring program





Print by Leslie Herman

2014

Ojai Quarry implements best management practices to control erosion, reduce polluted runoff, and prevent blockages to fish migration in Matilija Creek



2015

Court rules that agricultural pollution regulations for Central Coast farms fail to protect public health and the environment and directs Water Board to develop stronger rules



2013

City of Santa Barbara bans plastic grocery bags

2015

Channelkeeper engages in response to Refugio Oil Spill and launches tarball monitoring program to aid future spill detection and response

2016

LA Regional Water Board adopts the strongest regulations to reduce agricultural pollution in California

2017

Senate Bill 44 is enacted, providing state funding to inventory and cap leaking "legacy" oil wells like the Becker Well on Summerland Beach

2018

Court issues injunction prohibiting federal government from permitting fracking from California offshore oil platforms until US Fish & Wildlife addresses impacts to threatened and endangered species

2019

City of Santa Barbara bans plastic straws and Styrofoam food and drink containers



2018

Santa Barbara County eliminates discharge of polluted runoff from South Coast Recycling and Transfer Station, formerly the Central Coast's worst violator of industrial stormwater permit



2019

City of Santa Barbara achieves 91% reduction in sewage spills and fulfills 8-year settlement agreement commitment to repair or replace 34 miles of leaky sewer pipes



CONTINUING OUR CLEAN WATER

Thanks to the support of our many volunteers, donors, advocates, and partners, Santa Barbara Channelkeeper has accomplished a lot and made a big impact that has improved the quality of our beaches, creeks, wetlands, ocean, and community over the past twenty years. But our work is far from done.

Looking to the future, the water resources in our region continue to face serious threats. Climate change is upon us, bringing rising sea levels, acidification of our oceans, species extinction, more frequent droughts, diminished water supplies, unpredictable weather, devastating storms, and other unprecedented impacts. Plastic is choking our oceans, while fossil fuel extraction, industrial agriculture, urban runoff, and toxic chemicals are polluting our waterways and harming wildlife and human health. Meanwhile, the federal government is systematically dismantling the vital environmental laws meant to protect us from these threats.

These challenges are indeed formidable, but Channelkeeper is undaunted and at the ready. We know that together we can continue to move the needle, and we know what we need to do and how to do it. In the coming years, our focus will be on the biggest challenges facing our water resources, including:

- Eliminating single-use plastics
- Advancing climate-smart water supplies
- Combatting expanded oil and gas drilling
- Upholding Marine Protected Areas
- Holding government and polluters accountable
- Using innovative technologies to monitor aquatic health
- Connecting our community with their waterways
- Fostering environmental stewardship in the next generation

Santa Barbara Channelkeeper has a solid 20-year track record of catalyzing positive change at the grassroots level, and we're more determined than ever to fight environmental injustice and defend our collective right to clean water. Channelkeeper intends to be here for the long haul so we can continue to deliver clean water and healthy aquatic habitats for our community long into the future.

But we can't do it without you. I ask you to please stand with us and help ensure a legacy of healthy oceans and watersheds for our community and for future generations. With your support, we can build on two decades of environmental leadership and make an even bigger impact in the years to come. Thank you for joining us and making a difference!



LEGACY

JOIN US

You can make a difference by helping Santa Barbara Channelkeeper protect and restore the world-class beaches, creeks, wetlands, and ocean that make this special stretch of the California coast so magnificent.



DONATE

Make a tax-deductible donation to support Channelkeeper's clean water programs.



ADVOCATE

Lend your voice to support a water policy that Channelkeeper is lobbying for.



VOLUNTEER

Volunteer your time to collect data with our Stream Team or MPA Watch citizen science programs, pick up trash at a beach or creek clean-up, or help man our booth at community outreach events.



LEARN

Stay informed about current issues facing our water resources and how you can be part of the solution by attending a Channelkeeper event, subscribing to our newsletters, and following us on social media.



SPONSOR

Partner your company with Channelkeeper to advance shared environmental goals and to reach broader audiences with important environmental messages.



SPREAD THE WORD

Tell your friends and family about Channelkeeper and urge them to get involved too!

OUR VISION

Clean beaches, healthy, flowing streams, and a teeming, resilient ocean support a thriving economy, offer healthy habitat for fish and wildlife, and provide clean water and safe places for recreation for all people and for future generations.

THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS

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Once Upon a Watershed
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Adams Elementary School
 Aliso Elementary School
 Anacapa Middle School
 Anacapa School
 Aqua Sports
 Beckmen Vineyards
 Below The Surface
 Blackstock Junior High
 Blue Tomorrow
 Brandon Elementary School
 Bren School of Environmental Science & Management
 Briggs School
 Buena High School
 Buttonwood Farm Winery & Vineyard
 Cabrillo Middle School
 Cal State Channel Islands
 Cal State Long Beach
 California Coastal Protection Network
 California Coastkeeper Alliance
 California Department of Fish and Wildlife
 California Grocers Association
 California King Tides Initiative
 California Lost Fishing Gear Recovery Project
 California Sportfishing Protection Alliance
 Canalino Elementary School
 Carpinteria Family School
 Carpinteria High School
 Carpinteria Middle School
 Casa de la Raza
 Cate School
 Channel Islands High School
 Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary
 Channel Islands Outfitters
 Channel Islands Research Program
 Choose to Reuse
 Citrix
 City of Carpinteria
 City of Goleta
 City of Santa Barbara
 Cleveland Elementary School
 Coastal Ranches Conservancy
 Community Environmental Council

Council on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse
 County of Santa Barbara
 Cox Communications
 Deckers Brands
 Don's Net Café, Santa Barbara High School
 Dos Pueblos High School
 E.O. Green Jr. High School
 Ecological Rights Foundation
 El Camino Middle School
 Environmental Defense Center
 Environmental Justice Coalition for Clean Water
 EP Foster Elementary
 Explore Ecology
 Figueroa Mountain Brewing Co.
 Franklin Elementary School
 Fremont Intermediate School
 Friendship Paddle
 Get Oil Out!
 Girls Inc. of Goleta
 Girls Inc. of Santa Barbara
 Goleta Boys & Girls Club
 Goleta Family School
 Grey Whales Count
 Harding Elementary School
 Haydock Intermediate
 Heal the Bay
 Heal the Ocean
 Hillside Middle School
 Howard School
 Imagine Wines
 Institute for Fisheries Research
 Island Brewing Company
 Island Packers
 Jodi House
 Kellogg Elementary School
 Kim Kieler Gallery
 La Colina Junior High School
 La Cumbre Junior High School
 La Patera Elementary School
 Laguna Blanca School
 Lompoc Boys & Girls Club
 Los Angeles Waterkeeper
 Marymount School

Matilija Coalition
 McAuliffe Elementary School
 Melville Winery
 Mira Monte Elementary School
 Monroe Elementary School
 Monte Vista Elementary School
 Monterey Coastkeeper
 Mound Elementary School
 National Marine Fisheries Service
 National Park Service
 Natural Resources Defense Council
 Nordhoff High School
 Ocean Conservancy
 Ocean Futures Society
 Ocean Sports Private Charters
 Ocean View Jr. High School
 Ojai Valley School
 Once Upon a Watershed
 Open Alternative School
 Orange County Coastkeeper
 Our Children's Earth
 Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen's Associations
 Paddlesports of Santa Barbara
 Parkview Elementary School
 Partnership for Interdisciplinary Studies of Coastal Oceans
 Patagonia
 Peabody Charter School
 Peoples' Self Help Housing
 Pepperdine University
 Pierpont Elementary School
 REI
 Richard Bard Elementary School
 Rio del Valle Middle School
 Rio Mesa High School
 San Diego Coastkeeper
 San Luis Obispo Coastkeeper
 San Marcos High School
 San Roque School
 Santa Barbara Adventure Company
 Santa Barbara Audubon Society
 Santa Barbara Channel MPA Collaborative
 Santa Barbara City College
 Santa Barbara High School
 Santa Barbara Junior High School

Santa Barbara Maritime Museum
 Santa Barbara Museum of Art
 Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History
 Santa Barbara School of Squash
 Santa Paula High School
 Save the Mermaids
 Sea Grant
 SeaVeas
 Sheridan Way Elementary
 Sierra Linda Elementary School
 Solvang Elementary School
 South Coast Habitat Restoration
 Southern California Coastal Ocean Observing System
 Summerland Elementary School
 Sunset Elementary School
 Surfers without Borders
 Surfriider Foundation
 The Nature Conservancy
 The Ocean Channel
 The Otter Project
 Toad&Co
 Topa Topa Elementary School
 Truth Aquatics
 Turner Foundation
 UCSB Excursion Club
 UCSB Marine Science Institute
 UCSB's Research Experience and Education Facility (REEF)
 University Charter Middle School
 University of California Berkeley
 University of California Cooperative Extension
 Vandenberg Middle School
 Ventura Coastkeeper
 Ventura High School
 Ventura Land Trust
 Vieja Valley Elementary School
 Washington Elementary
 Waterkeeper Alliance
 Wavewalker Charters
 WildCoast
 Woods Hole Institute of Oceanography
 Youth Interactive



20 YEARS: DEFENDING CLEAN WATER

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Santa Barbara Channelkeeper is a grassroots non-profit organization whose mission is to protect and restore the Santa Barbara Channel and its watersheds through science-based advocacy, education, field work, and enforcement.