



*November eNewsletter*

### **The Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary Achieves Designation**

On October 11, the Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary (CHNMS) was officially designated by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. Channelkeeper is pleased that the sacred cultural sites and marine ecosystems within its boundaries will be protected.

The CHNMS will safeguard 4,543 square miles of coastal and offshore waters between the Gaviota Coast and just south of the Diablo Canyon Power Plant. These waters are vital habitats for thousands of species like whales, otters, sea turtles, and birds, and include important cultural areas. The new marine sanctuary will help build resilience to climate change, protect delicate ecological systems, and support the sustainable management of marine resources.

Channelkeeper would like to recognize and honor the tremendous efforts of the Northern Chumash Tribal Council to lead and guide the process over more than a decade. Channelkeeper would also like to acknowledge the significant efforts of NOAA's Office of National Marine Sanctuaries.

As the first Tribally nominated marine sanctuary, the CHNMS, which will be co-managed by Tribal and Indigenous community leaders and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, (NOAA) represents a meaningful advancement

in the conservation of California's Central Coast. The new sanctuary not only preserves critical marine habitats and biodiversity but also honors and integrates Indigenous stewardship practices, bridging traditional ecological knowledge and practices with modern conservation efforts.

Channelkeeper was pleased to support the Northern Chumash Tribal Council's efforts through community advocacy, educational presentations at school assemblies, and letter-writing campaigns in classrooms.

We look forward to participating in the public process to adjust the boundary to completely connect the Channel Island National Marine Sanctuary with the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary and we celebrate this significant step for conserving California's marine and coastal waters.



### **Channelkeeper Opposes Transfer of Permits to Sable Offshore**

On October 30, Channelkeeper staff joined environmental organizations, State Senator Monique Limón, Assemblymember Gregg Hart, former State Senator Hannah Beth Jackson, and concerned community members at a press conference and Santa Barbara County Planning Commission hearing to voice opposition to the transfer of oil production facilities permits from ExxonMobil to Sable Offshore.

The transfer is a necessary step before Sable Offshore can restart oil production from the Santa Ynez Unit.

During the press conference before the meeting, Molly Troup, science and program manager, reminded community members of the devastating impacts of the 2015 Refugio Oil Spill during which 120,000 gallons of crude oil spewed from the same pipeline being transferred. She also delivered testimony before the Planning Commission. Ted Morton, Channelkeeper's executive director, also



provided testimony, urging the Planning Commissioners to deny the permit transfer.

After more than 35 community members voiced concerns over future oil spills, Sable Offshore's financial capacity to respond to a spill or disaster, and existing violations for repairing the pipeline without a Coastal Development Permit, the Planning Commission voted three to one to approve the transfer of permits.

Sable must overcome additional hurdles before it can resume production from the Santa Ynez Unit which include securing a state waiver from the Office of the State Fire Marshall and a Coastal Development Permit from the Coastal Commission to conduct repairs on the pipeline in the Coastal Zone. Sable is also requesting a lease transfer from the State Lands Commission for the land beneath the portion of the pipeline that runs through State waters.

In September, Channelkeeper joined a group letter sent to the Fire Marshal requesting a public hearing and a public process regarding the Fire Marshal's decision on Sable's risk analysis, state waiver to avoid the cathodic protection requirement, and restart plan.

Channelkeeper will continue working with partner organizations to oppose this project and will keep community members apprised of future opportunities to weigh in.



### **In a Victory for our Oceans, a Federal Court Finds the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Industrial Fish Farming Permit Unlawful**

On September 30, in a major victory for ocean advocates and coastal communities, the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Washington ruled that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers violated several key environmental laws when it issued Nationwide Permit 56 (NWP 56) in January of 2021. The court

found that the Corps violated the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the Rivers and Harbors Act, and the Administrative Procedures Act by failing to properly assess the impacts of industrial fish farms on marine life, water quality, and habitat when it issued its nationwide permit. The court will next decide on a remedy for the agency's unlawful activities.

Learn more about this court decision and what it means for aquaculture development in the Santa Barbara Channel on our blog.

[Read Blog](#)

**Petition Process Snapshot:**

- Context:
  - The California Fish and Game Commission (Commission) referred all 20 petitions submitted by the public proposing changes to the marine protected area (MPA) Network to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) for review in early 2024
- Current status:
  - CDFW is in Phase 2 of its 3-phased petition evaluation framework and splitting each petition into individual action items
  - **\*NEW\*** CDFW released its draft recommendations for the Commission's consideration of Bin 1 petitions
- Up next:
  - CDFW will provide preliminary recommendations on Bin 1 petitions and a proposed approach for evaluating Bin 2 petitions at the Marine Resources Committee (MRC) meeting on November 6, 2024

**Timeline:**

- July 17, 2024: MRC approved bins
- August 14, 2024: Commission received progress report on BMR recs, approved binning
- Oct 9, 2024: Commission meeting: Receive progress updates from CDFW
- Nov 6, 2024: MRC meeting: Receive and discuss draft Bin 1 recs and Bin 2 eval approach
- Dec 11, 2024: Commission meeting: Receive annual MPA program update and discuss next steps

## MPA Petitions Story Map

### New Web Site Provides Info Related to Proposed Changes to the California Marine Protected Area Network

Are you curious about the petitions for changes to the California Marine Protected Areas? The California Department of Fish and Wildlife launched a new [Marine Protected Area \(MPA\) Petitions StoryMap](#) that provides information about the 20 petitions for changes to the California MPA Network submitted by community members, non-profit organizations, scientists, and fishermen. The petitions propose more than 80 specific changes to MPAs in the state.

The [MPA Petition StoryMap](#) includes an [overview of the process and timeline](#), up-to-date information about the 20 petitions including a map, status updates, and instructions for how to engage and provide comments through the CA Fish and Game Commission as they consider the petitions.

Earlier this year the petitions were sorted by the Department of Fish and Wildlife into two categories. Petitions that were ready to be evaluated in the near term were placed in Bin 1. Petitions that require additional policy guidance, information, and/or resources before they are evaluated were placed in Bin 2. All of the petitions proposed in the



Santa Barbara Channel were placed in Bin 2 for evaluation in the longer term, likely in 2025.

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### **Channelkeeper's Water Quality Data Submitted to State Water Board**

Channelkeeper recently submitted water quality data collected by our stream monitoring program between June 2019 and October 2024 to the California State Water Board to inform the 2028 California Integrated Report.

This report is used to identify surface waters throughout the state that do not meet water quality standards and should be considered for the State of California's 303 d list of impaired waterways. Once the data is aggregated, each of the regional water quality control boards will evaluate the waterways within its jurisdiction and share the results with the State Water Board.

Channelkeeper has submitted data for inclusion in this report every two years for more than 20 years.

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## California King Tides Project

November 15 - 17

### Community Science Opportunity: Help Document King Tides November 15 - 17

The term King Tide describes an especially high winter tide when the sun, the Earth, and the moon line up. Each winter, high tide events provide us with a great opportunity to understand how sea level rise will impact California's 1,100 miles of coastline. On November 15, 16, and 17, our beaches will experience extreme high and low tides, and King Tides return on December 13, 14, and 15.

You can take part in an exciting community science initiative by taking photos of beaches at high tide during King Tide events and share them with the California King Tides Project, an initiative led by the California Coastal Commission.

The [California King Tides Project](#) engages the public to help visualize future sea levels by observing the high tides of today and how those tides interact with our coastal infrastructure, recreation areas, and ecosystems. Photos and observations by community scientists help document current flood risk in coastal areas, visualize the impacts of future sea level rise in a community, validate climate change models by comparing predictions with the high tide reality, and serve as a living record of change for future generations.

Head to the beach on November 15, 16, and 17 to document the first of this winter's King Tides. The highest tides will take place during the morning hours:

- Nov. 15, 2024 - high tide 8:09 AM / 6.96 ft.
  - Nov. 16, 2024 - high tide 8:47 AM / 7.03 ft.
  - Nov. 17, 2024 - high tide 9:27 AM / 6.87 ft.
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## Maria Ygnacio Creek Cleanup

November 16  
9:00 - 11:30 am

### Maria Ygnacio Creek Cleanup Saturday, November 16 9:00 to 11:30 am

With the rainy season on its way, fall is the perfect time to remove trash from local creeks before it can be washed out into the ocean. Channelkeeper's Watershed Brigade is collaborating with the Environmental Defense Center this month to clean up Maria Ygnacio Creek.

Volunteers will meet at 9:00 am at the corner of **Ribera Drive and Matorral Way** in Goleta. The terrain may be rocky and wet so we encourage volunteers to wear appropriate clothing and footwear. It's a good idea to bring a hat, sunscreen, and a reusable water bottle. Channelkeeper will provide buckets, trash grabbers, and gloves.

We hope you will join us for this special fall creek cleanup event! Sign up below!

[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!

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