



February eNewsletter

Join the Fight to Protect the Santa Barbara Channel from Future Oil Spills

Texas-based oil company Sable Offshore continues its efforts to fast-track the restart of oil production along the Gaviota Coast and conveyance through the corroded pipeline that caused the devastating 2015 Refugio Oil Spill. Operations at the Santa Ynez Unit have been shut down since that spill of more than 140,000 gallons of heavy crude oil. This month, we highlight two community events at which you can learn more, as well as one important opportunity to voice opposition — and the stakes have never been higher.

A few years ago, consultants hired by the County of Santa Barbara estimated that putting this corroded pipeline back into use creates the risk of a spill every year, a rupture similar to the one in 2015 every four years, and a potentially catastrophic spill almost twice the size of the 2015 Refugio Oil Spill.

In fact, returning oil to this corroded pipeline would increase the threat of potential spills and oil-related disasters significantly along the California coast. While new protections provided by the designation of the Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary and President Biden's withdrawal of remaining coastal areas from federal oil leasing contracts have minimized risk elsewhere, the Gaviota Coast is vulnerable.

Channelkeeper is actively engaged in the fight to protect coastal waters and prevent future spills. Our team, represented by the Environmental Defense Center (EDC), is working closely with EDC and other organizations to vigorously oppose the restart of oil production from the Santa Ynez Unit and conveyance through its corroded pipeline.

Multiple state and federal agencies oversee aspects of oil and gas operations at the Santa Ynez Unit. In order to restart oil production and conveyance through the pipeline, Sable Offshore must secure permits, authorizations, and plan approvals from these agencies, including the California Coastal Commission and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. There should be additional opportunities in the upcoming months for the public to participate in critical decisions about restarting oil production along the Gaviota Coast.

On February 25, the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors is tentatively set to consider an appeal of the County's Planning Commission's action last October to approve the transfer of operating permits from ExxonMobil to Sable Offshore.

We encourage community members to take action this month, attend informative community events, express their opposition to the pipeline's restart at the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors meeting tentatively scheduled for February 25, and provide written comments before the meeting.

Ways to Get Involved:

February 7 from 3:30 to 5 pm

Attend [Climate Fridays](#) at the Community Environmental Council, 1219 State Street, Santa Barbara. At the February event, EDC Chief Counsel Linda Krop and Staff Attorney Jeremy Frankel will share details and updates on Sable Offshore's project. Register [here](#) for this free event.

February 13 at 6:30 to 8:30 pm

Join us for a screening of ***Broke***, the film by Santa Barbara filmmaker Gail Osherenko about the 2015 Refugio Oil Spill at Community Environmental Council's Environmental Hub, 1219 State Street. A panel discussion will follow, focused on the current plan by Sable Offshore to restart the defective pipeline that caused the 2015 spill. Panelists include EDC attorneys Linda Krop and Jeremy Frankel, along with representatives from the Chumash community and the offices of State Assemblymember Gregg Hart and State Senator Monique Limón. Register [here](#) for free tickets.

February 25 at 8:00 am for Rally and 9:00 am for Meeting

Show your opposition at the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors meeting in the Santa Barbara County Administration Building, 105 East Anapamu Street. During the meeting, County Supervisors will consider an appeal of the transfer of pipeline permits from ExxonMobil to Sable Offshore approved by the Santa Barbara County Planning Commission in October 2024. There will be a press conference and rally at 8:00 am prior to the meeting. Channelkeeper will share specific talking points later this month.

Community members are invited to provide testimony on February 25 and/or submit written public comments to the Santa Barbara Board of Supervisors via email before 5:00 PM on the day prior to the meeting. We will provide more



Help Advocate for Strong Safeguards in Proposed Offshore Aquaculture Expansion in the Channel

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) recently put forward a proposal to designate 15,000 acres of the Santa Barbara Channel as Aquaculture Opportunity Areas (AOAs), areas that have been evaluated to determine their suitability for commercial aquaculture. The proximity of these sites to sensitive habitats, fishing grounds, and critical wildlife migration corridors raises serious concerns about long-term environmental, social, and economic impacts.

In November, NOAA released a Draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (DPEIS) analyzing the impacts associated with the proposed development of these AOAs. **Community members can provide input into the AOA designation until the comment period closes on February 20, 2025.**

Channelkeeper is actively monitoring federal efforts to permit aquaculture operations in the Santa Barbara Channel and is urging agencies to take a hard look at the ecological, social, and economic risks before advancing the expansion of aquaculture, especially large-scale projects and offshore finfish operations. We are advocating for a cautious and more rigorous, science-based approach that prioritizes strong environmental safeguards, regulatory accountability, and transparent decision-making.

To support these efforts, we invite community members to provide public comments demanding stronger environmental protections and insisting that any expansion of offshore aquaculture is guided by science, public trust, and meaningful community engagement.

Please join us in working to ensure that the Santa Barbara Channel is healthy and resilient for generations to come. Find sample letters and resources [here](#). **All comments are due by February 20, 2025.**

- Email comments to socalaoa.wcr@noaa.gov with the subject line “Southern California AOA DPEIS Comments.”
- Mail written comments to:
Celia Barroso
Regional Aquaculture Coordinator, California
National Marine Fisheries Service
West Coast Region
501 W. Ocean Blvd., Ste. 4200
Long Beach, CA 90802



Voice Your Opinions on the Proposed Creek Buffer Ordinance

Creeks make up the liquid fabric of our watersheds, channeling rain from the Santa Ynez Mountains to the ocean, while shaping and nourishing the land, and supporting diverse ecosystems. Our creeks sustain wildlife and play a crucial role in keeping our community healthy and safe. Providing creeks with space to meander and interact with their surroundings by providing protective buffers between them and development structures will facilitate their functionality and maximize their benefits.

The City of Santa Barbara has released a draft ordinance proposing clear and consistent minimum buffers between development and city creeks. These buffers aim to keep our creeks healthy and our community safe by reducing flood risks, preventing erosion, protecting riparian habitats, and improving water quality. The ordinance establishes a minimum 50-foot buffer area from new or substantially

redeveloped structures along major creeks and smaller buffers along flood control project reaches and minor creeks, a promising step toward ensuring our creeks function effectively, providing essential ecosystem services for the community, vital habitat for wildlife, and greater public safety.

Find more information on the Creek Buffer Ordinance [here](#).

Share Your Opinions:

Submit Written Comments by Monday, March 10, 2025.

Email: CreekBuffers@SantaBarbaraCA.gov



Goleta Beach Post-Storm Cleanup
Saturday, February 8
10:00 am to 11:30 am

Join Channelkeeper's Watershed Brigade for a post-storm cleanup event! During rain events, trash from streets and urban areas is swept down our creeks and out to the ocean through the Goleta Slough. We will gather after this week's storm to remove this debris from the environment!

Volunteers will meet on Saturday, February 8th, at 10 am in the Goleta Beach parking lot and we will spread out to pick up trash along the beach. Channelkeeper will provide cleanup supplies and donuts!

We hope you join us to help keep Goleta Beach and the Santa Barbara Channel healthy and less polluted by trash.

[Sign Up](#)



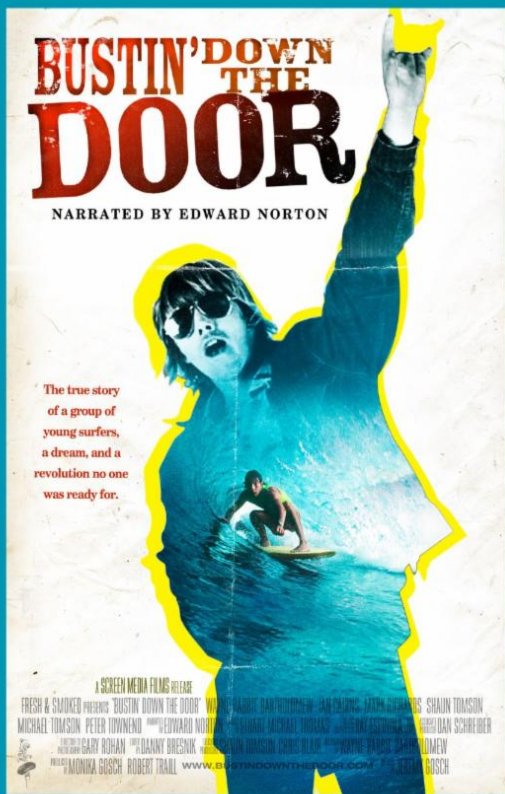
Film Screening
February 13 · 6:30 – 8:30pm
CEC's Environmental Hub, 1219 State Street

"Broke" Film Screening and Panel Discussion
Thursday, February 13
6:30 pm to 8:30 pm
Community Environmental Council's Environmental Hub

On May 19, 2015, line 901, operated by Plains All-American Pipeline burst, spilling over 140,000 gallons of crude oil onto the Gaviota Coast and into the ocean. *Broke* captures the sequence of events that took place in the aftermath and the reaction of community members who came together to help rescue wildlife, clean oil off of the beaches, and demand more stringent spill prevention and response.

Come watch the film about this devastating spill and listen to local experts discuss Sable Offshore's current efforts to restart the same pipeline.

[Free Tickets](#)



Santa Barbara
INTERNATIONAL
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50th Anniversary Screening

Bustin' Down The Door
Introduced by Shaun Tomson

Friday, February 14 @ 2:00 pm
Arlington Theater
Free Admission

Free Screening of Bustin' Down The Door
Friday, February 14
2:00 pm
Arlington Theater

Join legendary surfer Shaun Tomson for the 50th-anniversary screening of *Bustin' Down the Door*. The film, directed by Jeremy Gosch, chronicles the revolutionary journey of surfers in the 1970s who transformed the sport, facing intense rivalry and cultural challenges, ultimately setting the stage for modern professional surfing. Channelkeeper and other environmental nonprofits will be there to share our work to protect the health of the ocean and local watersheds. We hope to see you at this free Santa Barbara International Film Festival event!



WORLD
PREMIERE

THE LITTLE MERMAID

MARCH 1-2

State Street Ballet Presents *The Little Mermaid*
Saturday, March 1, 2025; 7:30 pm
Sunday, March 2, 2025; 2:00 pm
The Lobero Theatre

Journey under the sea for an extraordinary ballet performance featuring all-new sets, costumes, life-sized puppets, and a world-premiere musical score by composer Charles Fernandez. In this heartwarming tale, *The Little Mermaid* takes the ultimate adventure, sacrificing her tail and her voice to experience life as a human and pursue true love. An imaginative take on a classic story, this production is perfect for all ages. Channelkeeper will be on hand to share information about our work to protect and restore the Santa Barbara Channel.

Enjoy choreography by Megan Philipp and Cecily MacDougall. The Opera San Luis Obispo Grand Orchestra will accompany the performance, conducted by Brian Asher Alhadeff.

[Tickets](#)



Save the Santa Barbara Steelhead - Town Hall Gathering

March 9

1:00 to 3:00 pm

Lobero Theatre

Join the Santa Barbara Flyfishers on Sunday, March 9, to learn about the Southern California Steelhead and be inspired by artists, activists, and speakers working to save this species from extinction.

This free event aims to bring awareness to the Southern California Steelhead, a sea-run rainbow trout that thrived in local waters with historical runs of up to 30,000 fish annually but is now on the brink of extinction. Over the years, their numbers have dwindled to fewer than twenty due to habitat destruction caused by dams, roads, and other barriers.

A panel discussion will address the Southern California Steelhead's fascinating history, the effects of watershed changes, strategies to prevent extinction, and actions community members can take to help the species recover. Experts will include representatives from the Environmental Defense Center, Cal Trout, California Department of Fish & Wildlife, Cachuma Project, Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians, Koehler Winery, and Santa Barbara Channelkeeper.

Concurrently, Grace Fisher and artists from The Grace Fisher Foundation will conduct live steelhead-themed painting demonstrations and a collaborative art project on the Lobero Theatre Esplanade.



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](#)

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