



The First Year of Monterey Waterkeeper, a Rising Voice Protecting Clean Water for All in the Central Coast

This year, Monterey Waterkeeper began protecting and restoring drinkable, swimmable, and fishable waters for all in the Central Coast.

Monterey Waterkeeper (also known as Monterey Coastkeeper) originated as a program of The Otter Project. In 2021, The Otter Project merged with California Coastkeeper Alliance, which is now working to enhance the coastal habitats of the southern sea otter.

This merger offered Monterey Waterkeeper a new opportunity to emerge as a leader in protecting the Central Coast's waterways and drinking water, which remain contaminated from agricultural and urban runoff. Nearly half of Monterey County's domestic wells contain dangerously high levels of nitrate, which can be deadly for babies and cause heart problems and cancers in adults.

In July, Monterey Waterkeeper began working as a standalone non-profit to ensure that our region's interconnected waters, as well as underserved communities that rely on groundwater—have an advocate. Our vision is a Central Coast where all families can drink safe, affordable water, and enjoy clean fresh and coastal waters that are free from pollution. Here are a few things we are working on:

- We lead regional and statewide advocacy to reduce nitrate and pesticide pollution in our groundwater and drinking water.
- We are petitioning to protect water quality at Point Sur to prevent land-based pollution from harming this iconic and pristine coastal ecosystem.
- Our Central Coast Water Leaders program has taken 23 youth from the Salinas Valley to Monterey Bay to inspire the next generation of diverse water leaders. See a recent news article on our first adventure to Elkhorn Slough [here](#). In 2023 and 2024, we hope to engage 220 youth from our community in this program.

I'm proud of all that we have accomplished in such a short time, and can't wait to do more. We need your support to sustain this work. This giving season, please consider giving to Monterey Waterkeeper via www.montereycountygives.com/waterkeeper. Your donation will be matched. Thank you for helping us reach our goal of raising \$20,000 by December 31, 2022.

I am grateful for every drop of support you are able to provide, and look forward to protecting and restoring clean water with you.

In gratitude,

Chelsea H. Tu, Executive Director