



SPRING 2024 UPDATE

Monterey Waterkeeper is sprinting forward with action this season! Here is a snapshot of our recent work and achievements:



Two Complaints Filed To Reduce Agricultural Nitrate Runoff

Thousands of people in the Central Coast region do not have safe drinking water due to high levels of nitrate in their wells. Too much nitrate can cause serious illness or death in babies (blue baby syndrome) and various cancers in adults. Despite this public health crisis, the State Water Resources Control Board struck down limits on fertilizer nitrate use from the Central Coast Water Board's 2021 Agricultural Order.

On October 27, 2023, Monterey Waterkeeper and a coalition of farmworker groups, environmental, and environmental justice advocates filed a lawsuit challenging the State Water Board's removal of these critical limits. We also challenged the Central Coast Water Board's failure to require farmers to maintain riparian habitat buffers to protect our waterways from agricultural runoff. *See the [press release](#) and a [Monterey Herald article](#) on the lawsuit.*

On March 18, we filed an administrative complaint with the US EPA against the State Water Board under the Civil Rights Act of 1964, along with groups in the Salinas Valley. **Latinx communities are 4.4 times more likely to have nitrate-contaminated drinking water than white communities in the Central Coast region.** We requested that the US EPA investigate the racial impacts of the State's failure to curb agricultural nitrate pollution, and require the Board to set enforceable nitrate limits by a certain date. *See the [press release](#) and a [Monterey County Weekly article](#) on the complaint.*

Central Coast Water Leaders Began Water Quality Testing

In February, we began testing nitrate levels in the Upper Salinas River at San Lorenzo County Park in King City. Students enjoyed learning about fertilizer nitrate pollution in the river and contributing their scientific measurements to the GLOBE database. **This Spring, we facilitated water quality testing and outdoor education trips for 104 fourth to sixth grade students from Soledad!**



May & June River Clean Up and Kayak Days

Join us **Saturday May 11 from 9:30 am to Noon** to clean up the mouth of the Pajaro River! You bring the water warrior spirit, we bring the tools and snacks! Please [RSVP here](#).

Kayak down the Salinas River with us **Sunday June 2 (Salinas River Lagoon) and Saturday June 8 (Upper Salinas River)**. Please [RSVP here](#).

*In gratitude,
Chelsea*

*Please consider [donating](#) to support clean water for all.
We are always looking for passionate volunteers and bright ideas!*