



# Victory! The Toxic Ghost Fleet is Cleaned Up

Photo by Matt Knoth, Flickr/CC

The Ghost Fleet is finally gone. All 57 decaying military ships that poisoned the San Francisco Bay ecosystem for 40 years have been removed. This toxic pollution source was cleaned up thanks to your support for Baykeeper.

The Ghost Fleet was a collection of mothballed military ships from as long ago as World War II. They were originally stored in Suisun Bay, a large northern inlet of San Francisco Bay, for possible emergency wartime reactivation. But the ships slowly decayed—leaking fuel, rusting, collecting invasive species, and shedding metals and toxic paint.

The removal of these polluting ships will prevent an estimated 50 tons of heavy metal pollution, and keep 14 million gallons of oil and wastewater from entering Suisun Bay and San Francisco Bay. It will also stop the release of 38,000 cubic yards of PCBs, a dangerous and long-lasting contaminant.

When Baykeeper first investigated, the mud directly below the ships was so polluted, it qualified as hazardous waste. Toxins in the sediment could enter the Bay's food chain and harm the wildlife that lives in Suisun Bay.

So Baykeeper filed a lawsuit, along with our partner environmental organizations Arc Ecology and NRDC. We successfully required the federal government to clean up and remove the Ghost Fleet, starting in 2010.

To protect San Francisco Bay during the cleanup process, Baykeeper required the federal government to first remove loose and peeling paint from all the ships. Within a year, tons of paint and rust chips were collected in barrels and taken to a hazardous waste disposal facility.

The government was also required to remove the worst ships first, to address the biggest pollution threats as quickly as possible. Baykeeper made sure the facilities that were contracted to dismantle and recycle the ships followed best environmental practices. Plus, the agreement required controls to

***Because of you, 57 ships that poisoned the Bay for decades are now gone.***

prevent contamination from the remaining ships, such as onsite filtration systems and berms. As a result, ongoing pollution was significantly reduced during the seven-year ship removal process.

Suisun Bay and the adjacent Suisun Marsh—the largest brackish marsh on the West Coast—provide critical habitat for endangered fish, including Chinook salmon, and bottom-dwelling species like the green sturgeon. The wetlands are home to hundreds of native bird species, and it's an important feeding stop for thousands of migrating water birds.

With your support, Baykeeper will keep monitoring to ensure that the additional ships don't turn into a pollution source. Thank you for making this a true success story for a healthy San Francisco Bay. ♻️



***The last Ghost Fleet ship, the Cape Borda, as it departed San Francisco Bay.***

Photo by Tim Eichenberg, Baykeeper



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***Safeguarding San Francisco Bay from pollution since 1989.***

***Fall/Winter 2017***

# Letter From the Executive Director



During this critical time for San Francisco Bay, there is no one more important to the Bay than you. With federal actions rolling back national environmental protections, it's up to you and me to defend the Bay. With your support, Baykeeper is fighting on the local, state, and federal level to protect beautiful, beloved San Francisco Bay.

And you can see in this issue of *Baykeeper News* how very effective your support has been. Together, we got rid of the floating toxic waste dump that was the Ghost Fleet—57 rusted, unused military ships are no longer poisoning the Bay's

ecosystem. Thanks to you, that means more than 50 tons of heavy metal pollution will be prevented! We're also continuing to confront the oil industry, determined not to allow more oil tankers to come into the Bay and raise the risk of dangerous oil spills. And with your support, Baykeeper is expanding our Bay patrols by boat and air to stop new pollution threats to our wildlife and communities.

Thank you for making this work possible, and for sharing our commitment to make San Francisco Bay safe for wildlife, healthy for recreation, and more sustainable for us all.



Sejal Choksi-Chugh, Executive Director

## How You're Helping Prevent Oil Spills in the Bay

The oil company Phillips 66 wants to increase the number of tanker ships carrying crude oil across San Francisco Bay—from 59 to 135 tankers per year. Thank you for standing with Baykeeper as we work to stop Phillips 66 from putting San Francisco Bay in greater danger of oil spills.

The increased tanker traffic would likely carry dirty, heavy tar sands oil—a type that is difficult, if not impossible, to remove after a spill. If it spilled in the Bay, it could sink and irreparably smother bottom-dwelling life forms that are critical to the Bay's food chain.

***With your help, Baykeeper is advocating to prevent Phillips 66 from increasing the number of oil tankers on the Bay—from 59 to 135 tankers per year.***

The Phillips 66 refinery, on the Bay shoreline in Rodeo, has a poor track record of oil spills. In September 2016, oil was spilled there during the unloading of a tanker ship, causing large oil slicks in northern San Francisco Bay. Over 100 nearby residents sought treatment at hospital emergency rooms for exposure to fumes that were later linked to the oil spill.

With your help, Baykeeper and our coalition partners are advocating against Phillips 66 bringing more oil tankers to the Bay. Over 24,000 Bay Area residents responded to our action alerts and told responsible agencies to reject the proposal.

We're mounting the same kind of coalition advocacy that succeeded in stopping two previous proposals for expansion of Bay Area oil refining. Along with partner organizations and many concerned community members, we stopped Valero Energy Corporation's attempt to expand its rail yard and bring more oil to its Benicia refinery, and we stopped a new WesPac crude oil storage facility that was proposed for Pittsburg.

The oil industry's expansion plans for the Bay Area raise the risk of disastrous oil spills like the 53,000-gallon spill in 2007

from the container ship *Cosco Busan*. This November marks ten years since that oil spill blackened shorelines and beaches, contaminated sensitive wildlife habitat, and killed thousands of birds.

Since then, Baykeeper has been on the frontlines to make sure another major oil spill doesn't happen. With your support, we are helping ensure that the Bay has the strongest possible spill protections in place. To find the latest on how you are helping oppose the most recent oil spill threats—including Phillips 66's proposal for more oil tankers—visit us at [baykeeper.org](http://baykeeper.org). 



Photo by Nick Fullerton, Flickr/CC

***The Bay near the Phillips 66 oil refinery. More oil tankers raise the risk of oil spills that can coat shorelines & harm wildlife.***

# Thanks to You, We're on the Water and on Patrol

On pollution patrol in the Baykeeper boat this year, Baykeeper staff spotted a large shack falling into the Bay near San Francisco's eastern shore (see photo, below). We investigated and found that it was possibly laden with toxic levels of heavy metals and asbestos. So Baykeeper made sure the responsible agencies removed the shack and cleared all contaminating debris from the Bay.

Your support keeps Baykeeper's pollution patrol boat on San Francisco Bay. We respond to spills in the Bay, follow up on pollution hotline tips, and stop sources of contamination like the deteriorating shack.

Now your support is helping Baykeeper do even more for San Francisco Bay. To handle the high volume of pollution tips we receive, we recently hired a new Field Investigator and scientist, Sienna Courter. She and the Baykeeper team of volunteer skippers are regularly out on the water and along Bay shorelines, looking into potential threats to the Bay.



***The Baykeeper patrol team spotted a shack that posed a contamination threat, and we ensured it was removed.***

The past few months have been busy. From aboard our boat, Baykeeper:

- ▶ Monitored the removal and cleanup of a barge that sank near the Bay Bridge and leaked fuel into the Bay. The leak was successfully contained and did not cause significant environmental damage.
- ▶ Investigated several industrial sites we suspect are illegally polluting the Bay, and collected data for follow-up action.
- ▶ Took samples for measuring microplastic pollution. The results will be analyzed by our partners at the San Francisco Estuary Institute to determine the levels of harmful microplastics in the Bay.

Baykeeper is also forging new partnerships to expand our capacity to investigate more pollution sources. We're working with LightHawk Conservation Flying and a local drone group, Autonomous Imagery, to find and stop contamination that's not accessible by boat.

If you see pollution or dumping in the Bay, call 1-800-KEEP-BAY (1-800-533-7229), e-mail [hotline@baykeeper.org](mailto:hotline@baykeeper.org), or click "Report Pollution" at [baykeeper.org](http://baykeeper.org). Thank you for helping stop pollution in San Francisco Bay! 🐾

## Tip for a Healthy Bay

Dish washing often results in fats, oils & grease getting washed down the drain. **These fats harden in drain pipes, causing sewage overflows into the Bay.**

*You can help!*

- Don't wash fats, oils, and grease down the sink drain.
- Pour cooled fats and oils into a can with a lid, and put it in the garbage. You can also pour small quantities of cooled oil into a paper carton and place it in the compost.
- Wipe down greasy pans and dishes with a paper towel before washing. Dispose of the paper towel in your compost.
- Drop off large amounts of cooking oil at Bay Area recycling locations.



**For more information, visit [baykeeper.org/kitchen](http://baykeeper.org/kitchen)**

## The Bay is Our Home.



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for healthy wildlife & communities**

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## Fall/Winter 2017 Baykeeper News

# You make a difference for San Francisco Bay



Photo by Robert McKinney



Photo by Robb Most

At Baykeeper's 4<sup>th</sup> annual **Bay Parade**, more than 250 swimmers, kayakers, paddlers, boaters, volunteers, and party-goers celebrated a healthy San Francisco Bay. A big thank you to everyone who came out and raised funds to support Baykeeper's work to protect the Bay, and to our premiere Bay Parade sponsors, **Levi Strauss & Co.**, **Anchor Brewing**, the **San Francisco Giants**, and the **Waterkeeper Alliance Splash Series** presented by **Toyota**. 🐟 Kudos to the volunteers who pitched in with Baykeeper to clean up the India Basin Park shoreline on **Coastal Cleanup Day**. The cleanup helps protect the Bay and wildlife from trash pollution and toxic debris. 🐟 Thanks to fans of the Bay who set sail aboard **FDR's former presidential yacht**, the **USS Potomac**, hosted by Baykeeper and curiosity society **Atlas Obscura**. The tour of San Francisco Bay explored Golden Gate bridge construction, open water swimming adventures, pollution issues, and more. 🐟



Photo by Robb Most



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