OAK VALLEY NEWS
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FEATURED

Lake Casitas is full of water, fish and family fun

By Rob Kelley, CPW Outstanding Volunteer | Jul 1, 2016 Updated 10 Yrs ago | 0

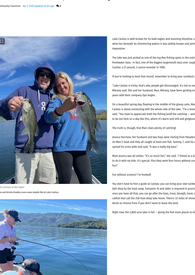

Photo courtesy of Rob Kelley

Lauren and Brittany Kelley are seen outside that of Lake Casitas.

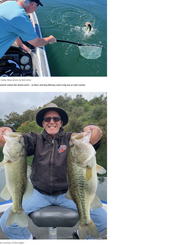

Photo courtesy of Rob Kelley

Hazelnuts seems like dessert, until — Rob and Kay Kelley share bites of Lake Casitas.

Photo courtesy of Rob Kelley

Rob and Kay Kelley hiking up our Lake Casitas.

Lake Casitas is well known for its bass organ and stunning shoreline campgrounds, but what lies beyond the spillway aspens is an entirely human and perhaps even more impressive.

The lake was just plotted as one of the top five fishing spots in the entire country for freshwater bass. In fact, one of the biggest largemouth bass ever caught was taken in Casitas. It's a record. It swam in Casitas.

If you're looking to beat that record, remember to bring your contract and your patience.

"Lake Casitas is tricky. Don't ask why people get discouraged. It's not easy at times," Mary Whitney said. She and her husband, Marc Whitney, have been guiding on the lake for 30 years and their company has been.

On a monsoon's parting day, floating in the middle of the glassy calm, Marc said fishing on Casitas requires a lot of patience. Sometimes, it's a lot of patience. Sometimes, it seems like heaven is appropriate name for fishing (much like catching — and the act of catching — is for one heart as a day-filler for life, where it's warm and cold, and gorgeous, you know?

"The truth is, though, that fishing is a lot of work," Marc said.

Jessica Hartman, her husband and two boys were visiting from Nuevitas. They had a blast at Marc's boat and they all caught at least one fish. Starting, I said the caught a fish, spread his arms wide and said, "It was a really big bass."

Mom was proud, she admits. "It so much fun," she said. "I fished as a kid and I got over to Lake Mt. Pleasant, Rice Rice, Rice Rice, Rice Rice, Rice Rice, Rice Rice without screens and still had fun!"

Fun without screens? I'm hooked.

You don't have to be a guide at Casitas, you can bring your own tackle or buy it at the bait shop by the boat ramp. Everyone 16 and older is required to purchase a fishing license and a boat permit. Kayaks are allowed, but they must be registered and have a safety reflector and the US Rec map also forces. There's 12 miles of shoreline and plenty of docks to choose from if you don't want to leave the land.

Night time, the Lights are turn off — giving the fish some places to hide.

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That makes it even harder for assistant anglers to compete with Marc and the other guides who know the lake's secrets and seasonal variability.

Marc's tip for the day was pick. "The time of year, he is using artificial worm lures paired with his patented advisory and under Florida. The fish seem to bite his secret ingredient.

"It smells like black licorice," he said. "It smells actually good, if you like the smell of black licorice. And it's a very highly concentrated formula. Since it's applied, it's there."

With the rubber worm washed in the calypso, it's time to put the lines in the water and wait... and wait some more ... There's time to breathe, chill and check out the majestic ospreys, hawks and bald eagles that reside in the lake. Marc's boat is a fine place for a bird-watching venture, as well.

"This is a therapeutic, multisensory experience for lots of people, and it's like that for the bass and for the people that deal with retention."

A few fishing and boating rules are in place to make sure everyone can safely, fairly and fun fishing and relaxed.

One minute you're hypothetical by your line rigging directly in the water, there BANG. When a fish hits your line, there's an immediate rush of adrenaline as you pants for rest and crash the reel and set your strength.

Then Mom rolls the line — pressure per name — and the fish is quickly returned to the water. You can keep the fish with certain restrictions, but Marc and Kay are all about sustainable catch and release. Now that their son is Eagle, 26, is part of the team, their commitment to a healthy lake is stronger than ever.

"I want to preserve the fishery for the next generation," Marc said. "It's part of my responsibility, and catch and release helps to achieve that."

The winter months are slower because the water is colder, but now the water is heating up and it is time fishing.

Roger Mendez was staying at the Casitas campground and went out for half a day with Marc.

"I got four," he said. "It's so peaceful, and then you get the adrenaline and blind everybody's fish is. It's exhilarating — this perfect out in a beautiful backdrop."

Let's be honest — you say fishing on a lake Casitas is a beautiful day, out and about with family.

For more information, visit http://tinyurl.com/lakecasitas or ventura@ccc.com.

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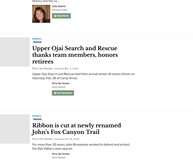

Photo courtesy of Rob Kelley

Marc and Mom Kay Whitney are seen on Casitas.

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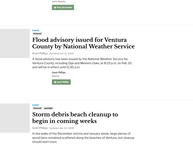
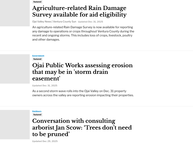


NEWS

Valley View Preserve in: Topatopa foothills offers many hiking trails

Allyson Zajac, in the Topatopa foothills, there is a selection of trails suitable for lovers of all abilities. With great views of the Ojai Valley, wildflowers and flowers while running water, springtime is perfect for exploring Ventura County.



NEWS

Reported snake bite victim rescued in Rose Valley

Marc Van Wagoner | Contributed | September 05, 2022

Ventura County Fire Department responded to a reported rattlesnake bite victim in Rose Valley, south of Ojai, on Friday, March 27.

Marc Van Wagoner
Ventura County Sun
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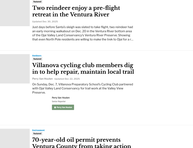

NEWS

Matilija Dam removal is an opportunity for safety, watershed restoration and recreation

Contributed | September 05, 2022

The current view of the 76-year-old Matilija Dam. The C.E.W.D. Executive Director Sarah Rudzewicz Dixon (center) is Watershed Program Manager Jeremy Ledbetter (left) and Watershed Program Director Jeff Stalnaker. Assistant Director Jeff Palmer, about 40 folks learned about the dam's history and future.

Sarah Rudzewicz Dixon
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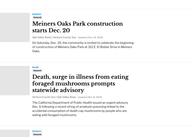

NEWS

Upper Ojai Search and Rescue thanks team members, honors retirees

Contributed | September 05, 2022

Upper Ojai Search and Rescue held their annual series all teams dinner on Saturday, Feb. 26 at Lions Arroy.

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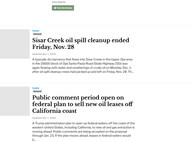

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Ribbon is cut at newly renamed John's Fox Canyon Trail

Contributed | September 05, 2022

For more than 30 years, John Bonsante worked to defend and protect the Ojai Valley's open spaces.

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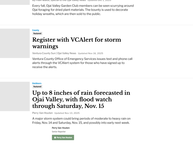

NEWS

Flood advisory issued for Ventura County by National Weather Service

Contributed | September 05, 2022

A flood advisory has been issued by the National Weather Service for Ventura County, including Ojai and Mission Oaks, at 8:31 p.m. on Feb. 15, and will be in effect until 10:30 p.m.

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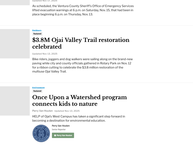

NEWS

Storm debris beach cleanup to begin in coming weeks

Kevin O'Neill | Contributed | September 05, 2022

In the wake of the December storms and January winds, large pieces of wood have remained scattered along the beaches of Ventura. Ocd cleanup should start soon.

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NEWS

Agriculture-related Rain Damage Survey available for aid eligibility

Contributed | September 05, 2022

An agriculture-related Rain Damage Survey is now available for operating farmers and ranchers in Ventura County who experienced losses from recent and ongoing storms. This includes loss of crops, livestock, poultry and other damages.

NEWS

Ojai Public Works assessing erosion that may be in 'storm drain easement'

Contributed | September 05, 2022

As a second storm wave rolls into the Ojai Valley on Dec. 30, property owners across the valley are reporting erosion impacting their properties.

NEWS

Conversation with consulting arborist Jan Scow: 'Trees don't need to be pruned'

Contributed | September 05, 2022

Jan Scow, a consulting arborist (an Scow has been working with plants for 50 years and caring for the trees that have been growing strong for more than 30 years, and seen a common buron's concerning how people want to have a mean (see: the need for safety, likely, that, in the interest of.)

NEWS

Two reindeer enjoy a pre-flight retreat in the Ventura River

Contributed | September 05, 2022

Lucy and Lorenzo Gomez hugs and kisses their flight, two reindeer that are ready, rearing walkabout on Dec. 23 in the Ventura River before anxious to fly to the Ventura Harbor Village for the Ventura Harbor Village Parade that even North Pole residents are willing to cross the river to die for a.

NEWS

Villanova cycling club members dig in to help repair, maintain local trail

Mary Wickman | Contributed | September 05, 2022

On Tuesday, Dec. 7, Villanova Preparatory School's Cycling Club and Ventura County Land Conservancy to hold work at the Valley View Preserve.

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NEWS

70-year-old oil permit prevents Ventura County from taking action in Sisar Creek spill

Contributed | September 05, 2022

Around four gallons of hydraulic fluid and approximately 40 gallons of hydraulic oil of gallons in the 28 from a spark back in the Upper Ojai Valley's Sisar Creek Canyon, Ventura County Fire Department and Ventura County Resource Management Agency staff members say this county cannot take an...

NEWS

Meiners Oaks Park construction starts Dec. 20

Contributed | September 05, 2022

On Saturday, Dec. 20, the community is invited to celebrate the beginning of construction of Meiners Oaks Park at 12 S. Pleasant Drive in Meiners Oaks.

NEWS

Death, surge in illness from eating foraged mushrooms prompts statewide advisory

Samantha Gomez | Ventura County Sun | September 05, 2022

Ventura County Public Health is warning residents against accidentally foraging and eating poisonous mushrooms, following a recent spike in illnesses and the accidental consumption of death cap mushrooms by people who are eating wild foraged mushrooms.

NEWS

Conservancy volunteers bolster Ojai trail with rock retaining wall

Mary Van Wagoner | September 5, 2022

Ojai Valley Land Conservancy and Ventura Conservancy are building an impressive rock retaining wall on Jack's Pick Canyon Trail, in the Valley View Preserve above the city of Ojai.

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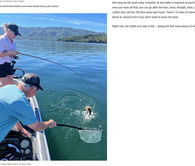

NEWS

Sisar Creek oil spill cleanup ended Friday, Nov. 28

A separate six-barrel oil field from Sisar Creek in the Upper Ojai area to the OVGSD block of Ojai Santa Paula Road (State Highway 150) was shut down Friday, Nov. 28, after an estimated 40 gallons of hydraulic oil and other oil spill cleanup crews had pumped up and left on Friday, Nov. 28. The...

NEWS

Public comment period open on federal plan to sell new oil leases off California coast

Samantha Gomez | Ventura County Sun | September 05, 2022

A federal proposal to establish plan to open up federal waters off the coast of the western United States, including California, for new oil and gas leasing and moving ahead. Public comments are being accepted on the proposal through Jan. 22. If the plan moves ahead, leases to federal waters would be...

NEWS

Ojai Valley Garden Club wreaths raise funds for NHS scholarships

Contributed | September 05, 2022

Ojai's Club Club Valley Garden Club Wreaths raised the annual scholarship program Ojai foraging for dried plant materials. This bounty is used to decorate holiday wreaths, which are then sold to the public.

NEWS

Register with VCAlert for storm warnings

Samantha Gomez | Ojai Valley News | September 05, 2022

Ventura County Office of Emergency Services issues text and phone call alerts through the VCAlert system for those who have signed up to receive the alerts.

NEWS

Up-to 8 inches of rain forecasted in Ojai Valley with flood watch through Saturday, Nov. 15

Contributed | September 05, 2022

A large storm system is expected to produce up to 8 inches of rain in Ventura Friday, Nov. 14 and Saturday, Nov. 15, and possibly into early next week.

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Evacuation warnings in VC lifted; flood advisory in effect

Contributed | September 05, 2022

As of Monday, the Ventura County Sheriff's Office of Emergency Services lifted evacuation warnings at Ojai, on Saturday, Nov. 15, that had been in place beginning 5 p.m. on Thursday, Nov. 13.

NEWS

$3.8M Ojai Valley Trail restoration celebrated

Contributed | September 05, 2022

Bike riders, joggers and dog walkers were walking along on the trail now paving while city and county officials gathered in Rincay Park on Nov. 12 to celebrate the trail restoration the $3.8 million restoration of the Ojai Valley Trail.

NEWS

Once Upon a Watershed program connects kids to nature

Contributed | September 05, 2022

ARCO Ojai Water Conservation Park plans a significant step forward in becoming a destination for environmental education.

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