Panel on Water in the Ojai Valley
What’s Changing and What Might Still Need to Change

We wish to thank our panelists for giving their time and expertise to this ongoing critical matter. We hope this afternoon will provide insight and community support as we share information and explore solutions to our water situation.
The Ojai Chautauqua is part of a 150-year tradition that has thrived across the United States since the 19th century. The concept of the Chautauqua is to build community by bringing together ideas, entertainment, discussion, and expertise to local family and community gatherings. Former U.S. President Theodore Roosevelt is quoted as saying that the Chautauqua is “The most American thing in America.”

Ojai has modernized the Chautauqua tradition by focusing on today’s need to improve civil discourse on controversial subjects, where passions tend to run high. Civil discourse is noticeably absent from many aspects of contemporary life. The result of this failing is not only sad… It is dangerous. Through the Ojai Chautauqua, we hope to develop this essential ability so that together we can affect a positive change that extends far and wide. Visit www.ojaichat.org to view our past panels, to learn about future events, and to contribute to this endeavor.

This free event is made possible with support from private donors, the Ojai Valley Chamber of Commerce, and the Ojai Valley Inn.

Ojai Chautauqua Moderator

Tom Krause

Tom Krause is the President of the Ojai Chautauqua Committee. Over the last 35 years, Tom has been an entrepreneur, consultant and frequent author and speaker on topics such as culture change, cognitive bias, leadership development, executive decision-making, behavioral safety, and patient safety. He is currently president of The Agora Foundation, a member of the Board of Visitors and Governors for St. John’s College, and the Board of Directors of Thomas Aquinas College. In 1979 Tom co-founded Behavioral Science Technology (BST) now a global consulting firm acquired in 2012 by DEKRA Insight. Tom has a Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology from the University of California-Irvine, master’s degrees from California State University-Long Beach and St. John’s College of Santa Fe, New Mexico, and a bachelor’s degree from California State University-Long Beach. He is a long-time Ojai resident and non-profit contributor.
Anthony Emmert
Anthony is the Assistant General Manager of United Water Conservation District. A graduate of UC Davis, he has extensive experience working within the Public Works Departments of both the cities of Oxnard and Santa Paula. Anthony has worked for the past ten years developing recycled water as a new water source in the Oxnard area, and is working on the District’s efforts to balance human water needs with the needs of anadromous fish in the Santa Clara River. He also works closely on sustainability with the groundwater agencies in the region.

Richard Hajas
Richard has been involved in the management of water and wastewater for over 40 years and is currently on the board of the Ojai Basin Groundwater Management Agency. He has managed the operations and maintenance of two major water districts in Ventura County and has provided management consulting services to other local agencies. Beginning in 2007 he used his experience to assist the Ojai community effort to replace the CPUC regulated water company, Golden State Water. He authored a feasibility analysis of the acquisition, which became the basis for the eventual sale of the water company to Casitas Municipal Water District in June 2017. Richard also authored what has become known as the 3 Sisters Plan. He has a B.A. Degree and a master’s Degree in public administration from CSU, Northridge.

Susan Mulligan
Susan is the General Manager of Calleguas Municipal Water District and is a native of Southern California. She obtained her bachelor’s degree in civil engineering from Stanford University and her master’s degree in business administration from UCLA. She is a Registered Professional Engineer in the field of civil engineering and a Grade 5 Water Treatment Plant Operator. Mrs. Mulligan started her career at the Pasadena Water and Power Department in 1984, working primarily in the fields of water quality and supply. She began work at Calleguas Municipal Water District in 1993 as Manager of Engineering, with responsibility for design and construction of capital projects. In 2010 she took on the position of General Manager with the goal of providing water reliability in an economically responsible manner.

Stephanie Pincetl
Dr. Stephanie Pincetl is Professor-in-Residence at the UCLA Institute of the Environment and Sustainability and Director of the California Center for Sustainable Communities at UCLA. Dr. Pincetl conducts research on environmental policies and governance and analyzes how institutional rules construct how natural resources and energy are used to support human activities. She is expert in bringing together interdisciplinary teams of researchers across the biophysical and engineering sciences with the social sciences to address problems of complex urban systems and environmental management. Dr. Pincetl and her husband manage a 20-acre orange orchard in Ojai’s East End.

Jim Word
Jim is the Board Director of Casitas Municipal Water District. A 26-year resident of Ventura, Jim was elected to the Casitas board in 1997. He is a former President and Director of the Ventura County Association of Water Agencies, past Director of United Way of Ventura County, past President of the Boys and Girls Club of Ventura, former President of the Greater Ventura Chamber of Commerce, and is a member of the Foster Your Future Library Committee and the Ventura Chamber of Commerce Governmental Affairs Committee. During his 45 years with JCPenny, Jim served in several Store, District, Regional, and Corporate positions.
Content Summary

1. What is the current state?

Assuming that the drought continues, between Lake Casitas and our groundwater basins, we have 5–8 year supply at the current use level. If water management improves in the valley, that time frame could increase and possibly stabilize to ongoing sustainability.

2. How much state water would we have access to, when the plan is complete?

State water could provide 1,000–3,000 Acre Feet per Year (AFY), or 8–22% of Lake Casitas’ current need, when the state water is available.

3. Is it possible to get more water into the Lake coming down the Ventura River?

About 30% of the Ventura River is diverted into Lake Casitas, which replenishes about 30% of the lake’s annual yield (under normal, non-drought conditions) to its customers. This source is dependent on rain, but also federal regulations that strive to balance the needs of endangered species and human use. The Biological Committee, the body that determines diversion numbers, has just made a recommendation to the Management Committee to increase the diversion into Lake Casitas. The increase yield will depend on rainfall and can begin this winter.

4. Are we planning for a potential crisis?

Some will argue that Casitas Municipal Water District (CMWD) has not planned well for this drought, and has used a rainfall average that is optimistic when determining safe yield (an extraction number that is meant to sustain for the next 20 years). If the drought continues, CMWD either needs to improve supply through new or enhanced sources, or reduce demand. But the needs of the Ojai Valley and CMWD are not identical (CMWD covers Ventura to Mills Road, and to the Rincon area). Some argue that the Ojai Valley can more heavily rely on its on groundwater basins in the future.

5. Can the Ojai Valley do more to improve rain and groundwater management?

Yes! There are many efforts underway to slow, sink, and capture more rainwater, and better manage the efficiency of the Ojai Basin. Some argue these efforts will lead to our ongoing sustainability and self-sufficiency.
Supply and Demand

**Source:** Casitas Municipal Water District

![Supply and Demand Infographic]

**Current Lake Supply:** 75,171 acre-feet

**Current Ground Water Supply:** 50,000 acre-feet

**Total Supply:** 125,171 acre-feet

**Current Lake Demand:** 11,350 acre-feet per year

**Current Ground Water Demand:** 1,830 acre-feet per year

**Total Evaporation:** 4,510 acre-feet per year

**Total Demand:** 17,690 acre-feet per year

AFY = Acre Feet/Year. 1 acre-foot is 325,851.45 Gallons

Casitas users’ conservation efforts are making the difference in this time of drought.

**Actual Conservation:** 40%

**Conservation Target:** 30%

Consumer conservation efforts are performing better than anticipated, conserving more water and preserving existing supplies.
Figure 1. Storage volume, represented by a solid line, is reservoir storage at the start of each calendar year (elevation measured on last day of previous calendar year). Rainfall, represented by data points with drop lines, is the three-station water year average for Casitas Dam, Casitas Recreation and Matilija Dam rain gages. Reservoir volume prior to 1970 (not shown) represents initial filling period after Casitas Dam completion in 1959.

Source: Willyweather.com - 2018 Ojai Rain Information YTD
In normal replenishment, the Robles Diversion provides approximately 30% of the total inflow to Lake Casitas - the local watersheds of Coyote and Santa Ana provide the other 66% of inflow to Lake Casitas. 4% is direct rainfall and small tributaries.
Our Local Groundwater Basins

Source: The Ojai Basin Groundwater Management Agency (OGBMA)

The Ojai Basin has the largest capacity of the Ventura River watershed’s four groundwater basins. It has a maximum capacity of approximately 85,000 acre-feet, with a safe annual year of approximately 5,026 acre-feet. (Note: A groundwater basin’s maximum capacity does reflect the amount of available water. Much of that water is not usable or economically recoverable.)

This basin is quickly recharged during wet periods, and can be rapidly depleted during periods of drought. For example, in just seven months, between March 2012 and October 2012, water levels in the Ojai Basin dropped 84 feet. On the other extreme, in 1952, the heavy winter rainfall was sufficient to return the groundwater in the Ojai Basin to near maximum levels, even though the basin was at historic low levels following five years of deficient rainfall. In terms of the long-term average, however, amount of groundwater in storage has been fairly stable.

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(Note: a - Preliminary estimate, based on groundwater balance for water years 1997-2007; b - Represents unconsolidated alluvium.)

(Note: A groundwater basin’s maximum capacity does reflect the amount of available water. Much of that water is not usable or economically recoverable.)

(Note: A groundwater basin’s maximum capacity does reflect the amount of available water. Much of that water is not usable or economically recoverable.)
Sources of Water

Source: The Ojai Basin Groundwater Management Agency (OBGMA)

2017 Ojai Basin Area Estimated Demand - 6,750 AF

- Casitas Wells - 1,279 AF
- Casitas Importation - 2,924 AF
- Private Wells - 2,547 AF

Total groundwater extraction in the Ojai Basin in 2017 - 3,826 AF

Estimated Breakdown of Regional Use within Casitas Municipal Water District

- Ojai Basin - 4,200 AFY (the City of Ojai 1,600 AFY)
- Meiners Oaks - 1,100 AFY
- Upper and Lower Ventura River, and Upper Ojai - 4,230 AFY
- City of Ventura - 2,500 AFY
- Rincon Area - 1,100 AFY
- (Evaporation - 4,560 AFY)
New Sources of Supply, Part I

**Ojai Well Field Rehabilitation**
This project includes the rehabilitation of several drinking water wells operated by Casitas MWD within the Ojai Groundwater Basin. The goal is to bring the wells back to their original production levels by improving and enhancing infrastructure.

**Ojai Desalter Project**
This project involves the installation of treatment equipment that removes the high level of salt from well water that cannot currently be used for drinking water purposes. Equipment typically used in this project would be a membrane treatment plant and a brine line connected to the local wastewater system to dispose of the brine concentrate from the treatment process.

**State Water Project Interconnect**
This project involves the construction of a pipeline that connects the City of Ventura’s water system to Calleguas Municipal Water District’s water system. This shared connection will allow the City of Ventura, United Water Conservation District, and Casitas MWD to gain access to their individual State Water Project allocations through Calleguas MWD via the Metropolitan Water District.

Casitas MWD recently passed a resolution affirming its support for this critical project. Read the full text here.

**Matilija Formation Deep wells**
This project involves the construction of one or more deep water wells, possibly 6,000 feet deep or more, into the Matilija formation near Casitas MWD’s Robles Diversion facility. Water would be extracted under pressure and either treated and delivered directly into the drinking water system or placed in the Robles Diversion canal for disposition into Lake Casitas. The project’s operational parameters will be determined through the CEQA process but is currently proposed to be only used during times of drought or other emergency.

*CEQA = California Environmental Quality Act*
Map of Local Water Districts

Source: Calleguas Municipal Water District
State Water Interconnection

Source: Calleguas Municipal Water District

State Water Project Interconnection Alignment Map
### State Water Interconnection Project Schedule

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**Imported Supply Infrastructure**

[Map showing imported supply infrastructure]
State Water Interconnection Continued

Source: City of Ventura

City of Ventura Proposed Infrastructure Improvements

Legend
- Existing Waterline
- Proposed Waterline
- Proposed Pressure Reducing Valve

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New Sources of Supply, Part II

Source: Casitas Municipal Water District

Robles Diversion Canal and Fish Passage Facility

The Fish Passage Facility at the Robles water diversion facility is a state-of-the-art fish ladder constructed by Casitas Municipal Water District in 2005. It allows the endangered southern California steelhead to travel upstream of the Robles facility to prime spawning areas, which was not possible prior to 2005. It also lets fish swim downstream to the ocean. This federally mandated project is a collaborative effort by multiple agencies and community organizations.

Agencies and organizations that supported the fish ladder project included the Association of California Water Agencies, Coastal Conservancy, Friends of the River, Matilija Coalition, Ventura County Watershed Protection Area, City of Ojai, Bureau of Reclamation, NOAA Fisheries, Association of California Water Agencies, and the California Department of Fish and Game.

The federal National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA) has identified in their Biological Opinion (BO) that less than 200 endangered steelhead trout remain in the Ventura Basin. Steelhead trout are dependent upon quality spawning sites that are no longer accessible in many streams and rivers throughout the California coastline. Upstream of the Robles Water Diversion Dam on the Ventura River are historic steelhead spawning areas. The fish ladder at the Robles Diversion Dam now provides access to spawning areas that were not accessible for over fifty years.

The Biological Committee has submitted a recommendation to the Management Committee to increase the amount of water that can be diverted into Lake Casitas.
Federal Regulations That Protect Steelhead

Protection Provided By The Endangered Species Act

- The Policy of Congress Is That:
  - All Federal Departments and Agencies shall
    • Conserve endangered and threatened species
    • Utilize their authorities in the furtherance of the purposes of the act
  - Federal Agencies shall
    • Cooperate with state and local agencies to resolve water resource issues in concert with conservation

- Federal NOAA Fisheries Is The Lead Agency
  Southern California Steelhead warrant protection and are listed as an endangered species effective October 17, 1997

- Endangered Species Act Section 7 Requires Federal Agency Cooperation
  • All Federal Agencies must utilize their authorities to advance the Endangered Species Act
  • All Federal Agencies must insure that any action authorized, funded, or carried out is not “destructive or adverse modification of habitat,” or “likely to jeopardize the continued existence” of an endangered species

- Endangered Species Act Section 9 Prohibits “Take”
  • “Take is defined as: “harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, or collect, or to attempt to engage in any such conduct”

NOAA Fisheries Provides Criteria for Operation of the Robles Fish Passage Facility

- Season
  • The Fish Passage season of operation is January 1 to June 30

- Fish Passage Flows
  • Fish Passage flows are designed to mimic natural storm flows. The duration of these flows is 10 days with a minimum water flow of 50 cubic feet per second. This volume of water is equal to filling an average residential swimming pool every minute or less.

- Minimum Flow Between Storms
  • Between storms the district cannot divert water until fish flows exceed 30 cubic feet per second minimum.

Endangered Species Act Section 9 Prohibits “Take”

- “Take is defined as: “harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, or collect, or to attempt to engage in any such conduct”

At the state level, Casitas has to adhere to its state water permit, which generally stipulates that Casitas’ diversion do not impair the downstream water rights. To do so, Casitas adopted the 1959 Criteria that causes a minimum instream flow release of 20 cfs, and all water flow inflows to Robles that are less than 20 cfs for downstream water right holders from July-December. At the federal level (Robles BO requirements), Casitas has to release a minimum of 30 cfs from January-June. In addition, during times of higher flows from January-June (i.e., storm flows), Casitas has to release water to mimic the receding limb of the storm hydrograph in accordance with the 2003 Biological Opinion. Adjustments to these flow releases are being addressed in the CDPM.
Is Our “Safe Yield” Safe?

LETTER FROM RICHARD HAJAS TO THE CASITAS BOARD OF DIRECTORS

MAY 9, 2018

Your “2018 Casitas Water Supply and Demand Assessment” contained in the May 8, 2018 Board Agenda is an excellent summary of Casitas’ policies and positions on water supply. The report confirms that Casitas’ focus is on what you consider a short-term emergency created by drought. Currently, you are managing this condition solely with water conservation and rationing measures. Your report states that you are “committed to investigating and implementing opportunities to expand water supply availability”, but these supply alternatives have been repeatedly characterized as “emergency” supplies, reaffirming Casitas’ position that the current condition is a temporary, short-term problem.

The basis of your water resource management plan is a safe yield analysis of Lake Casitas’ water storage over a 35 year drought and recovery period. The plan forecasts lake levels reaching nearly an empty condition and then rapidly recovering because of two extremely heavy rainfall years. This is a very risky method of managing a municipal water supply. As much as all of us hope we experience another 1969 or 1978 rain year the probability, based on historic records, is not high.

Your own report states that:

“Casitas may experience elevated water supply risks that could be associated with a delay in the start of the recovery period while at minimum pool in Lake Casitas, or there could be a condition where the critical drought period begins with a partially recovered storage level in Lake Casitas. The availability of the Lake Casitas supply can be influenced or impacted by long-term droughts, changes to lake water quality, and/or changes to diversion and storage conditions. The safe yield of Lake Casitas and annual water availability may need to be reconsidered in the future as a result of changing conditions or new information that differs from the present conditions”.

There is evidence today of changing conditions and there is a large amount of new and historical information that suggests it is time for a re-evaluation of the lakes safe yield. The data shows that we are not facing a short-term problem or an emergency. An “emergency”, by definition, is an event which cannot be easily predicted and does not regularly reoccur. This is a long-term problem, that if not addressed, could result in chronic water shortages. It is unreasonable to base water resource plans on the best-case scenario. Your responsibility, as a water district, is to minimize risk and plan for what is reasonably predictable.
The current drought, your success in reducing water demands, the general recognition that the climate is changing, and the opportunity now available to access additional water supplies makes this the perfect time to address the long-term water supply issue. The community deserves an open and honest discussion of the following basic questions:

1. What is a reasonable minimum lake storage level to address future emergencies?
2. What is a reasonable safe annual yield based on preserving an emergency supply and rainfall projections that are conservative rather than overly optimistic?
3. Based on the success of your water conservation efforts what are our true future annual water needs?
4. How much water is required to consistently meet the above needs and limitations?

Without answers to these basic questions you cannot hope to effectively evaluate other water supply options. Droughts are not emergencies. They are predictable and repetitive. Planning for these conditions is the foundation of good water resource management in southern California. Please, let’s begin the discussion to address our long-term needs. Whether you are a farmer, business person or homeowner you need to know how much water you can depend upon for the future. Do not leave this problem to your successors, when the opportunity to address it may be far less favorable than it is today.

Sincerely,

Richard H. Hajas
Working Toward Sustainability

WATER FOR ALL BUT NOT TO WASTE

The California State Water Project (SWP) captures the water of the mighty rivers of the North to convey them through the Delta to farmers and cities of the south. Metropolitan Water District (MWD) was created to distribute that water to cities, including from the Colorado River. The CA. Department of Water Resources that manages the SWP, in fits of generosity and miscalculation, has promised delivery of SWP water, five times more than what it can generally deliver. The SWP is the lifeblood of CA agriculture, and its largest cities, but it is under tremendous stress and under the last period of aridity, cut its allocation by 15% or more. The state’s Water Fix is to build tunnels under the Delta, paid for by MWD rate payers. This will not increase the amount of water conveyed, as that is limited by precipitation.

In California, MWD distributes water to wholesalers & retailers. Retailers include private water companies, regulated by the California Public Utilities Commission, property-owner-owned-and-run mutual water companies, public special districts managed by appointed commissioners, municipal water agencies, among others. Each of these has its own water infrastructure, rates, management policies and procedures. Some are more democratic and transparent than others. The Calleguas district serves 23 different entities with MWD water (+ some groundwater), each of which, in the drought, was severely cut back. Each has its own internal imperatives, priorities and needs.

While Casitas Reservoir is running low on water, the Valley is not.

If Casitas MWD were to hook up to state water via Calleguas MWD, the Ojai Valley and Casitas would be new comers to a vastly over-subscribed water system, vulnerable to decisions entirely out of its control. What we do know is that the Ojai Valley has substantial local water resources. While Casitas Reservoir is running low on water, the Valley is not. The challenge before us is how to manage the water we have, responsibly, equitably, and for the long term.

In Huntington Park in LA, per capita water use is 37 gallons per person per day (GPCD). In the city of Ojai it has been up to 215 GPCD, now around 120 GPCD. What this tells us how much we can do. We also know that the stormwater runoff in the city is equal to more than the city currently uses, and that the groundwater basin is capable of a great deal more water storage. This represents the lowest hanging and cheapest fruit for our water security.
It is obvious agriculture in the valley is the highest user of the water. How to think about that? All food requires water: tomatoes, wheat, corn, almonds, avocados and oranges. Almost nothing we eat can be grown without water. And that applies world round. And so, we need to decide- water for lawns or water for food. Affordable water for food, or imported potable water from MWD at prices that will put farmers out of business. And MWD water prices will only go up to pay for the Delta tunnels. Ojai is at a crossroads.

My husband and I have a 20 acre orange grove at the East end of the Ojai Valley. Through conscientious attention to watering, repairing of leaks and adjusting of emitters, and the application of 6 inches of mulch, we have reduced our water use by over 40% and increased yield and tree health. This is not a zero sum game. We all can do better, and those efforts will ensure Ojai will have water for all. Ojai will not have water to waste; we will continue to experience shortages over time. But we can be water self-reliant, the only way to water security. Twentieth century modernist water infrastructure like the SWP overpowered localities, ignored managing local resources with care. We are now in a different era. Precipitation is likely to be about the same going forward, but less predictable. Let us create an infrastructure that welcomes the rain, infiltrates it into our groundwater basin and let us treat each drop as a precious gift.

Stephanie Pincetl Ph.D.
Contacting Your Local Agencies

Casitas Municipal Water District
www.casitaswater.org
1055 Ventura Avenue
Oak View, CA 93022
(805) 649-2251

Ojai Basin Groundwater Management Agency
www.obgma.com
428 Bryant Circle, Suite 100
Ojai, CA 93023
(805) 640 - 1207

Meiners Oaks Water District
www.meinersoakswater.com
202 W. El Roblar
Ojai, CA 93023
(805) 646-2114

Ventura River Water District
www.venturariverwd.com
409 Old Baldwin Road
Ojai, CA 93023
(805) 646-3403

Ventura Water
www.cityofventura.ca.gov/885/Ventura-Water
Ventura City Hall
501 Poli Street
Ventura CA 93001
(805) 652 - 4587

United Water Conservation District
www.unitedwater.org
106 North 8th Street
Santa Paula, CA 93060
(805) 525 - 4431

Calleguas Municipal Water District
www.calleguas.com
2100 Olsen Road
Thousand Oaks, CA 91360
(805) 526 - 9323

City of Ojai
www.ojaicity.org
401 S. Ventura Street
Ojai, CA 93023
(805) 646 - 5581

Calleguas Municipal Water District
The Ojai Chautauqua free community seminars offer small groups a unique opportunity to consider and discuss the fundamental principles of our Republic. Are these principles based on a view of objective reality/nature, or simply the consent of the governed? Are these principles changeable, and if so on what grounds? What authority is given to the Executive, Legislative, and Judiciary branches? What are rights? Are rights based on nature or consent? Are they inalienable? We invite you to join us as we seek to better understand the principles of our ongoing American experiment.

Series Readings:
- Declaration of Independence
- Federalist Papers
- The U.S. Constitution
- Dred Scott Decision
- Lincoln Douglass Debates
- Letter from Birmingham Jail

Free admission thanks to private donations. Reservations are required and attendees read the scheduled material prior to attending each event.

(805) 231-5974 for more info.
Chautauqua tickets prices are kept low or zero to encourage maximum participation. Through essential community support, students and teachers attend free of charge for most events, and it is very deeply appreciated. Please give what you can once per year. All supporters will benefit from the difference they make together through the Ojai Chautauqua.

These leaders bring the Chautauqua to the Ojai Valley:

**Founding Members**
- Allen and Marilyn Camp
- Lynn Carter
- Maurice Chasse and Marilyn Wallace
- Tom and Cathryn Krause
- Ann and Mike Morris
- Lois Rice
- The Shanbrom Family Foundation
- Tom and Esther Wachtell

**Contributing Members**
- Kate and Barney Barnhart
- James and Carolyn Bennett
- Casa Baranca
- Constance Eaton and William Hart
- Andrew Holguin
- David Korse and Sally Matteson
- Ojai Valley Chamber of Commerce
- The Ventura Community Foundation

**Sponsors**
- George Berg
- Mary Bergen
- Curt Biern
- Carl Bobkoski
- Sharon Bushman
- Vance Carney
- Leslie Clark
- Sean Clark
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- Karen Farr
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- Johnny Johnston
- Irmgard Lake
- Cathleen Lynch
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- Carol Shaw-Sutton
- Paula Spellman
- Eugene Stemm
- Beth Stephens
- Michael Swimmer
- Tony Thacher
- Guy and Leone Webster
- Marion Weil
- Merrill Williams

They hope you will join them.

Ojai CHAUTAUQUA

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