

Casitas Finalist for Grant Funding to Help With Water Supply Concerns

Local Coalition Recommended For \$25 Million Grant

The California Department of Water Resources and the State Water Resources Control Board announced that the Watersheds Coalition of Ventura County (WCVC) is one of seven finalists recommended to receive a \$25 million State grant from funds allocated under Proposition 50, the 2002 State Water Bond. Casitas Municipal Water District has actively participated as a member of this organization for the past couple of years. If awarded by the State in January, the grant will help fund eleven of the region's priority projects for water supply, water quality, habitat, and flood protection. One of these projects includes a project submitted by Casitas. The \$25 million will leverage local and federal contributions to construct more than \$65 million in water-related improvements within the county.



Larry Catlett, general manager of Senior Canyon Mutual Water Company, stands next to a main distribution line which is slated for replacement with grant funds. This line is almost completely filled with mineral deposits.

Casitas to Receive Nearly \$500,000 to Help With Water Supply Shortage

Casitas submitted Senior Canyon Mutual Water Company upgrades project, which is one of the eleven regional projects that will be funded. The project will receive \$488,000 to help upgrade the Senior Canyon Mutual Water Company's treatment and distribution system. One component of this project is to replace Senior Canyon pipelines that have almost completely filled with mineral deposits so that more of their source water can be collected and used. This project will allow Senior Canyon to rely more on its own water supply rather than having to purchase water from Casitas. This will help Casitas better manage its own limited water supplies.

What does this grant mean for Casitas' customers? According to Ron Merckling, Casitas' Water Conservation Manager, "Our water supply will become more reliable. This project helps contribute to our goal of meeting our customers' water supply demands throughout a long term drought. Water quality and water reliability will also improve for Senior Canyon customers."

Events at Lake Casitas

Kids Fishing Day

Saturday, March 24, 2007



For more information visit our Web site www.lakecasitas.info

Is the Robles Fish Passage Facility Helping Steelhead in the Ventura River?



Robles Fish Passage Facility during a winter period when there is water.

What Happened at the Fish Passage Facility this Year?

During the 2006 fish passage period, the Robles Fish Passage Facility completed its first full year of operations. The facility reopened historical steelhead habitat in the upper Ventura River basin for the first time in 50 years. There were four rainstorms during the year which could have allowed adult steelhead to swim upstream shortly after the peak river flows. In fact, Casitas identified fourteen fish swimming upstream through the fish passage facility during these four storm periods. Several were large enough to be adult steelhead returning from the ocean. An adult steelhead is a trout that goes into the ocean for part of its life cycle. Casitas also detected nineteen fish migrating downstream toward the ocean during this period.

Improvements in Detecting and Identifying Fish Are Planned

More work is planned for this upcoming fish passage year to

enhance our ability to detect and identify fish. This will include improving our techniques by redesigning our counting equipment and installing an additional underwater camera. "It looks like we might be witnessing the beginning of what will eventually be the successful restoration of the endangered steelhead in the Ventura River," said Scott Lewis, Casitas' Fisheries Biologist.

How Does the Fish Passage Help With Fish Migration?

The facility is primarily composed of a fish ladder and fish screen. Juvenile trout spend about one year in the upper freshwater areas of the Ventura River above the Robles Fish Passage Facility. The Robles Fish Passage Facility guides juvenile trout to safe passage down the Ventura River on their way to the ocean. The fish passage facility contains guidance devices that lead juvenile fish through the facility, and it contains screens that prevent the juvenile trout from

going down the diversion canal to Lake Casitas. The Fish Passage Facility also allows the endangered Southern California steelhead to migrate upstream to spawn after their return from the ocean.

Check Out Casitas' Web Site For Updates on Fish Passage Successes

A final 2006 progress report outlining this year's successes will soon be available on Casitas' Web site under the Fish Passage section, www.casitaswater.org. As part of the federal requirements for the operation of the fish passage facility, Casitas monitors the progress and success of the operation. While a fish ladder and fish screen may sound simple, it is actually quite complicated. One way we monitor the fish using the facility is by using a device called a Vaki Riverwatcher. This is an electronic fish counter that is placed in the fish ladder to count upstream and downstream migrating fish as they pass through the ladder. The 2006 progress report will highlight all of the activities that Casitas is doing to include those efforts to adhere to all federal monitoring requirements.



Scott Lewis, Casitas' Fisheries Biologist With Steelhead.

Greatest Water-Friendly Home Makeover Contest Winner!

Norma Curtis of Ojai won Casitas' Greatest Water-Friendly Home Makeover Contest. She was randomly selected from approximately 100 contestants who returned their newsletter survey form with their contact information included. As the winner of Casitas' first Water-Friendly Home Makeover Contest, Curtis is eligible to receive two new ultra low-flow toilets to replace her two forty-year old existing toilets. Casitas will also be providing her with water conserving low-flow showerheads, and sink and bathroom low-flow aerators. She will be eligible to receive a Smart Irrigation Control device as well. Said Curtis, after she was notified of her win, "It was a very big surprise to hear that I won. Thank you Casitas for this great gift."

"The uniqueness of the Ojai Valley is further enhanced by its ability to provide its own water supply without importing from outside sources," Curtis added. "However, its capacity has now been reached. Water conservation is essential to our future. Installing water-conservation devices such as such as low-flow toilets, shower heads and aerators is very important."

Norma Curtis of Ojai, Winner of the Greatest Water-Friendly Home Makeover Contest.



The Survey Results: What You Told Us

Casitas would like to thank the 124 respondents who took the time to fill out and return our survey. So what did you tell us?

The top priority you identified was to develop additional water supplies. This was followed closely by a request for more stabilized water rates. However, only half of you indicated you were willing to pay more each month to cover the costs for increased water supplies. About sixty-five percent of survey respondents indicated a willingness to pay between \$1 and \$10 more each month to protect or enhance the environment.

The vast majority of our customers who completed the survey said they are practicing water conservation. More than eighty percent of respon-



More than eighty percent of respondents said they run only full-loads in the dishwashers and washing machines.

dents said they run only full-loads in the dishwashers and washing machines. Also, more than eighty percent reported that they sweep the

sidewalks and driveways instead of washing them down with a hose. Most people said they avoid watering the lawn in the middle of the day and they change their lawn-watering practices seasonally. A large percentage of our customers use low-flow plumbing devices in their homes and repair leaks in a timely manner. All of these practices save water.

Survey respondents highly rated Casitas' water quality, water rates, water reliability, water pressure, communications and water conservation efforts. Readers gave us an average rating for protecting steelhead, but many people were divided about how much they thought Casitas was doing in this regard. Most respondents thought we could do more to obtain additional water supplies.

A Closer Look at Wise Water Use

Rebate Program to Be Made Available Soon for Washing Machines and Toilets

The One-Stop Water Conservation Rebate Program is co-funded through a grant from Proposition 50 and participating water suppliers throughout California. The California Urban Water Conservation Council is sponsoring this program. The Program includes a wide-ranging list of measures to maximize economies of scale and marketing power to achieve a high volume of savings. The Program's objective is to distribute rebates for water-saving appliances and equipment for our customers. This will improve water-use efficiency throughout the Ventura Watershed.



The program's objective is to distribute rebates for water-saving appliances and equipment for our customers, such as this high efficiency washing machine.

Casitas plans to offer the following rebates to customers starting in January 2007

Residential: High Efficiency Washing Machines and Ultra Low-Flow Toilets.

Commercial: High Efficiency Washing Machines and Ultra Low-Flow Toilets.

This cost-effective, comprehensive program offers a huge opportunity for market penetration in areas of the state that have never before operated programs. Additional information will be posted in January 2007 on Casitas' Web site www.casitaswater.org.

CASITAS SPEAKERS BUREAU: Casitas is committed to our community. As part of our efforts to better serve you, we created the Casitas Speakers Bureau to provide our customers and the community with an even greater opportunity to learn more about water issues in our area. If your community group or organization would like to invite a speaker to a meeting, please contact Ron Merckling, Water Conservation and Public Affairs manager, at 805-649-2251, ext. 118.

Please See Rebate Information Included in This Issue



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The Casitas Board of Directors is scheduled to meet at 3 p.m. in the board room located in the main office at 1055 Ventura Ave., Oak View, on the 2nd and 4th Wednesday of every month.