



Casitas Newsletter

Fall 2021

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GM's Corner

Hello,

I am pleased to bring you the Casitas Municipal Water District's fall newsletter: an update on the District's work to deliver quality service, a more secure water supply and public recreation opportunities.

- **Ojai Water System Improvements:** The District is pursuing multiple projects to upgrade the aging Ojai Water System and increase the system's reliability for years to come. An upcoming phase will include Ojai Avenue.
- **Dry Times Call for Continued Conservation:** Overall, there is an exceptional effort at conserving and using water more efficiently within the Casitas service area. With western Ventura County in either an Extreme or Exceptional Drought designation based on the U.S. Drought Monitor, individual participation in conservation will continue to be very important for our region as a whole. Casitas' customers consistently demonstrate their understanding of the local water conditions with an

overall conservation response that currently exceeds the mandatory water use restrictions in place.

- **Planning for the Future:** Given the current drought designations across western Ventura County, Casitas' water supply status remains at a five year supply based on the level of current demands on Lake Casitas. Casitas is committed to securing and diversifying its water portfolio through projects that will enhance diversion operations, improve the District's aging groundwater wells, and allow access to Casitas' State Water Project supplies.

Thank you for your interest in your local water district, serving our community for more than sixty years.

Regards,
Mike Flood, General Manager



Photo: GardenSoft

Ojai Water System Improvements

The District continues upgrading the aging Ojai Water System with replacement of water mains on Ojai Avenue scheduled for later this year.

In the last two years, Casitas has completed main replacement projects totaling almost five miles. The undersized cast iron pipes were replaced with new PVC pipe which improves flow and pressure throughout the system. New service lines were installed for each customer along the new main, including replacement of valves and fire hydrants. Of particular note is the project on Grand Avenue that replaced a critical transmission pipeline that had been in service for over ninety years.

One of the larger pipeline replacement projects will begin construction later this year along West and East Ojai Avenue. This improvement project is expected to take 6-12 months to complete. Projects are being planned to minimize traffic impacts and the District is coordinating with Caltrans and the City of Ojai to ensure we are ahead of upcoming road work.

A replacement well was drilled in the Ojai Wellfield last year and we recently awarded a contract to install the new pump and piping so this well can be placed into service before summer 2022.

For more information or to sign up for project updates, please visit: www.casitaswater.org/for-customers/your-district-at-work.

Water Supply Status

Water resource management requires responsible stewardship of our limited water resources in Lake Casitas and local groundwater. As such, Casitas is constantly working to manage local supplies and plan for a more sustainable water future. This process involves taking a comprehensive look at our available water supplies, demand management practices, and assessing how we can ensure there will be enough water to go around for the needs of all our customers, both now and into the future.

Based on updated Lake Casitas modeling analyses, the Casitas Board adopted a lower long-term operational supply yield compared with a 2004 study. The updated analysis accounts for several factors including hydrologic variability and climate change, the existing non-jeopardy Biological Opinion for Steelhead Trout related to Robles Diversion operations, and current lake capacity. The modeling results were incorporated into the 2020 Urban Water Management Plan which plans supplies for the next 20 years.

Casitas also evaluates its near-term supplies for drought management. The near-term supply outlook indicates that the District's current water demands can be met through the next 5-years, using a combination of water from Lake Casitas and groundwater. This is based on a conservative assumption of continued dry conditions and no significant inflows to Lake Casitas.

Even with our drought and current lake level, Casitas has water resources for the future. The District is adaptively planning for water security, and several water supply projects led by Casitas have been completed or are underway. These include the Robles Diversion Facility forebay cleanout and fish screen enhancements, replacement and rehabilitation of Casitas' local groundwater wells, and design of intertie pipeline projects that will allow access to Casitas' State Water Project water supply.

For more information about drought planning: www.casitaswater.org/your-water/casitas-water-security

Dry Times Call for Continued Conservation

According to the U.S. Drought Monitor, 100% of the state is currently suffering from moderate to exceptional drought conditions. This year brought only 6-7 inches of rainfall at Casitas Dam, far below the typical average of more than twenty inches. Casitas has been in an extended multi-year drought condition, with current levels in Lake Casitas at 80,000 acre-feet, 34% of capacity, which is sufficient for several years of water supply at the current demand levels.

Water supply conditions will be reviewed by the Casitas Board of Directors in April 2022 after the upcoming rainy season for consideration of necessary customer conservation levels. Continued conservation measures are an important component of bolstering the local water supply, and a California way of life. We are grateful to our customers who are our partners in helping to conserve the water we all rely on from Lake Casitas and local groundwater.

For more information and ideas on how you can do your part, please visit: <https://www.casitaswater.org/for-customers/water-conservation>.

Water Saving Tips!

Water conservation is a cornerstone of Casitas' water supply management strategy and will continue to be as our region grapples with the increasing impacts of drought and climate change. Every drop counts, and we are relying on our customers to continue their water wise conservation habits to help maintain the water levels in Lake Casitas.

Save up to 67,000 gallons per year with these no regrets water saving tips:

750 to 1,500 gallons/month: Water your lawn only when it needs it and before 10am or after 6pm.

700 gallons/month: Slightly shorter showers.

500-800 gallons/month: Install water-saving showerheads or flow restrictors.

400-600 gallons/month: Don't use your toilet as a wastebasket.

300-800 gallons/month: Use only full loads in washing machines & dishwashers.

200-300 gallons/month: Capture tap water while you wait for hot water & use it on plants.

150 gallons each time: Don't run the hose while washing your car & use a broom, not a hose, to clean driveways & sidewalks.

20 gallons/day: Fix leaky faucets & plumbing joints.

For more conservation tips, and a full list of Stage 3 drought condition restrictions, visit www.casitaswater.org/for-customers/water-conservation/drought-stage.





Groundwater Adjudication Update

Casitas is committed to defending the District's water rights on behalf of you, our valued customer.

Currently, the parties in the groundwater adjudication case hold monthly Case Status Conferences with the judge and we will provide additional details as they become available. This adjudication process may take several years to resolve, and Casitas is focused on an outcome based on the best science and an effective long-term management structure.

All of Casitas' court filings are publicly available on our website: www.castiaswater.org/for-customers/adjudication-information