



Photo: Vicki Anderson



Casitas Newsletter

Fall 2022

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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.

- **Your District at Work:** The District has completed multiple projects to upgrade the aged Ojai Water System and increase the system's reliability for years to come. An important component to this effort is the ambitious project to replace the pipeline in Ojai Avenue. Casitas is also working on water supply security projects including the design of the Ventura/Santa Barbara Counties Intertie.
- **Water Supply:** Casitas' customers consistently demonstrate their understanding of the local water conditions with an overall conservation response that currently exceeds the District's mandatory water use restrictions in place. With several years of less than average precipitation, we still remain in a rain deficiency status and conservation is as important as ever for our customers. That said, Casitas' water supply status remains

at a 3-4 year supply based on current water demands on Lake Casitas and groundwater, due in large part to the success of our customers' ability to use water wisely.

- **Drought Status:** Since 2016, the District has been in a Stage 3 drought designation implemented under the District's Water Efficiency and Allocation Program (WEAP). While Casitas customers continue to do a great job conserving, our local supplies have not been replenished due to less than average rainfall. With Lake Casitas storage declining to less than 30% of capacity, the Board may declare a Stage 4 drought before the end of the year. Read ahead to see what this might mean for you.

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

Regards,

Mike Flood, General Manager

Your District at Work

The District continues upgrading the aged Ojai Water System with the West and East Ojai Avenue project currently underway. The water pipeline segments being replaced are shown in the figure below. Due to Caltrans requirements, we are required to keep one lane of traffic open in each direction. This means there will be times when there is temporarily no parking on Ojai Avenue in the active construction zone. The District will keep businesses informed through regular emails in cooperation with the Ojai Chamber of Commerce. The project is expected to be complete by the end of the year.

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



We are also finalizing construction of Mutual Well No. 7 at the Ojai Wellfield. Equipment and material lead times contributed to some delays. This replacement well is expected to be active in 2023.

The District is also leading several projects to address water supply security, including the design of the Ventura-Santa Barbara Counties Intertie, which is a 1.5-mile intertie between Casitas and Carpinteria Valley Water District. The project is currently being designed, with the pipeline portion expected to be in construction in 2023. The District has already secured funding but continues to pursue additional federal and state grant opportunities.

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 3-4 years, using a combination of water from Lake Casitas and groundwater. This is based on a conservation 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, please visit: www.casitaswater.org/your-water/casitas-water-security

Drought Status

According to the U.S. Drought Monitor, 100% of the state is currently suffering from abnormally dry to exceptional drought conditions. Casitas has been in an extended multi-year drought condition, with current levels in Lake Casitas at 75,000 acre-feet, 31.7% of capacity, which is sufficient for several years of water supply at the current demand levels.

Water supply conditions are reviewed by the Casitas Board of Directors annually in the spring, after the typical rainy season has ended, for consideration of necessary customer conservation mandates. The Board will be considering a Stage 4 drought condition before the end of the year as the lake level reaches the 30% capacity level. Under the District's Water Efficiency and Allocation Program (WEAP), a Stage 4 condition would decrease current stage 3 allocations by 10% for a total of 40% mandatory conservation compared with historical demands.

Continued conservation measures are an important component of bolstering the local water supply, and a California way of life. The District's Conservation Department offers programs for customers to help improve water use efficiency and are happy to assist you. 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: 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 landscape 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.

Several parties have requested a temporary stay in the case to allow a mediation process to occur. The 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.casitaswater.org/for-customers/adjudication-information

Calendar of Events

2022 Water Security & Facilities Tour

Join Michael Flood, General Manager, and District staff on an informative tour of Casitas' facilities and learn about the work that the District is doing to increase our customers' water security. The tour includes visits to the Casitas Dam and the Robles Diversion and Fish Passage Facility.

- Saturday, October 29, 2022 | 9am - 12pm; or
- Saturday, November 5, 2022 | 9am - 12pm

Space is limited, RSVP required - please email: mortiz@casitaswater.com