



Casitas Newsletter Spring 2021

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GM's Corner

Hello,

In this Spring newsletter, I am pleased to provide an update on the work our District has underway to ensure we can continue to provide reliable service of clean, affordable water for our customers and our community:

- **Ojai Water System Improvements:** The District is pursuing multiple projects to upgrade the aging Ojai Water System to meet current fire safety standards and increase the system's reliability for years to come.
- **Dry Times Call for Continued Conservation:** Experts forecast another dry year with roughly 90% of the state experiencing drought conditions. Our region has received only 6-7 inches of rainfall, about 30% of what we would expect to see for this time of year, making this one of the driest years on record since the construction of Lake Casitas as a multi-year storage

project. Casitas' customers continue to demonstrate their understanding of the local water conditions with an overall conservation response that currently exceeds the mandatory water use reductions that are in place.

- **Planning for the Future:** Casitas' Urban Water Management Plan is scheduled for release later this year. This state-mandated document assesses future water demands and available water supplies.

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

Regards,
Mike Flood, General Manager

Ojai Water System Improvement Projects

The District continues to be hard at work upgrading the Ojai Water System. When Casitas acquired the Ojai Water System in 2017, outdated infrastructure produced leaks and water main breaks at a rate more than three times that of Casitas' existing system.

To date, Casitas has completed water main replacement projects on Sunset, Ventura, Emily and Cañada Streets, as well as El Paseo and Cuyama Roads, replacing old and undersized pipelines, valves and service lines and upgrading fire hydrants. Topa Topa, San Antonio, Santa Ana, Crestview, and Oak Creek are currently underway. Grand Avenue started construction in April and Lion Street will follow in June.

West and East Ojai Avenue is scheduled to start construction in the fall, after Labor Day. Projects are being staggered to minimize traffic impacts and the District is collaborating with the City of Ojai to ensure that we make efficient use of any road work that needs to be completed as well.

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

Dry Times Call for Continued Drought Response

2021 has seen the return of drought conditions throughout the state. According to the U.S. drought monitor, roughly 90% of the state is currently suffering from moderate to exceptional drought conditions. This year brought 6-7 inches of rainfall at Casitas Dam, far below the typical average of more than 20 inches.

With low rainfall and little runoff this year, the District was unable to divert much additional water into Lake Casitas – a reality that underscores our region's vulnerability to changes in local rainfall and precipitation patterns. Currently, the levels in Lake Casitas are 89,759 acre-feet, 37.7% of capacity which is sufficient for several years of water supply at the current demand levels.

After reviewing the latest water supply and demand assessment, the Board decided to continue the Stage 3 drought declaration, and gave approval for the design of the Ventura-Santa Barbara Interconnection project that will allow the District to bring more water into our community when we need it most.

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>.

Planning for the Future: Urban Water Management Plan

As our community's water experts and as responsible stewards of our limited water resources in Lake Casitas and local groundwater, Casitas is constantly working to plan for a more sustainable and reliable water future. This process involves taking a comprehensive look at our available water supplies against the water needs of our customers, and how we can ensure there will be enough water to go around, both now and into the future.

Every five years, the District prepares an Urban Water Management Plan – a state-mandated planning document to assess long-term water supplies and demands. The plan outlines:

- The reliability of water sources over a 20-year time frame
- Demand management measures and water shortage contingency plans
- Progress toward meeting targeted reduction goals for per-person water consumption

Casitas' plan is scheduled to be released in June and will be available to view on our website at www.casitaswater.org. The District will hold a public hearing to share the plan's findings and what they mean for our customers. Thank you for your ongoing participation in conversations about the future of the District and water supply management here in our community.

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.





Lake Casitas Recreation Area

For years, the Lake Casitas Recreation Area has provided an opportunity to enjoy the Lake and take advantage of the recreational events and activities we have right here in our own backyard. The District continues to manage operations at the Lake with the safety of our customers and staff as the top priority.

Due to state COVID-19 restrictions, the Lake Casitas Water Adventure will remain closed through the 2021 season. We look forward to welcoming visitors back as soon as we can do so in a safe and responsible manner.

Currently, the Lake is open for day use and camping. We are also pleased to share that the much-loved movie nights will be returning in May 2021! Check the website for details on operations and reservations: <https://www.casitaswater.org/recreation>.

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 Management Conferences with the judge and we will provide additional details as they become available. For more information, please visit: <https://www.casitaswater.org/for-customers/adjudication-information>.