

# CMWD Water System - Updates & Improvements

Casitas Municipal Water District (“District”) is committed to maintaining our infrastructure to reduce the amount of water loss due to leaks. Since the acquisition in June of 2017, the District received a steady stream of phone calls from Ojai customers reporting leaks throughout the Ojai Water System (OWS). The aging infrastructure of the OWS is a much talked about issue that needs to be addressed urgently.



The District recently displayed sections of an underground pipe that until recently, was underneath the corner of N. Ventura St. and E Matilija St. The four inch-diameter cast iron pipe was installed in 1934. Last fall, the corroded pipe failed due to its advanced age, and flooded the street with 24,000 gallons of water. Leaks like this are able to release out large amounts of water, in this case, it was at a rate of 200 gallons per minute. Although the District responds to these types of leaks as quickly, it is our goal to prevent this type of water loss. The District is aggressively evaluating the Ojai system’s infrastructure

to quickly address weak spots in the system to prevent water losses.

The District approved its budget for the fiscal year 2018-2019 in May. Within the District’s \$4.9M capital budget, \$1.6M is set aside for specific projects within the Ojai system. “This budget cycle will allow us to begin to take the required actions to bring the Ojai Water System up to the standards of the rest of the District,” said Michael Flood, Assistant General Manager.

## NEW Casitas Water Security Page

As a response to frequently asked questions regarding the District’s water supply, management strategies and projects, we have created a site to help answer some of the most frequently asked questions. Please visit [www.casitaswatersecurity.org](http://www.casitaswatersecurity.org) to learn more.

Summer/Fall 2018

## New Water Security Webpage Online Now

The District’s customers are served both by groundwater supplies in the Ojai Valley as well as water stored in Lake Casitas. Even with the current drought, Casitas’ customers have water resources that will last into the future. The District is actively engaged in managing our water supply and has various water security projects underway.

As a response to questions from our customers and to help better communicate the status of our water supply including information about water security projects that Casitas has undertaken to extend water supplies, the Casitas Water Security Website was created in July 2018. Go to: <https://www.casitaswatersecurity.org/>

for the details.

Casitas Municipal Water District is committed to ensuring the security of our water supply now and into the future. We will continue to

communicate important updates about the status of this precious resource through this new website. Please feel free to reach out to Casitas staff with any questions at (805) 649-2251.

## Get to Know Your Water District Operations & Maintenance (O&M) Department

Contributed by Michael Shields, O&M Manager

**1. Please tell us what the O&M department does?**  
 The O&M department operates and maintains the District’s assets with a primary focus on the delivery of potable water to a population of approximately 70,000 consumers. Before water reaches the customer’s meter, employees take many steps to ensure its quality meets or exceeds state and federal standards. This includes carefully monitoring and protecting the Lake Casitas watershed and reservoir, operating the dam, filtering the water, maintaining a complex system of pipelines, pumping plants, and reservoirs, testing water samples in our lab, and responding to customer concerns. Below is a basic breakdown of the infrastructure O&M staff operate and maintain:

- Casitas Dam & Reservoir
- 2 Water Treatment Plants
- 7 Active Groundwater Wells
- 16 Pumping Stations
- 5,800 Service Connections
- 21 Reservoirs (total storage capacity of 28



million gallons)  
 • Over 160 Miles of Pipeline (ranging in diameter from 2” to 54”)

**2. How many people are in the department and what sort of major tasks do they do?** There are currently twenty

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**Your Board in Action**

Bill Hicks, Division I  
 James W. Word, Division II  
 Pete Kaiser, Division III  
 Mary Bergen, Division IV  
 Russ Bagerly, Division V

The Casitas Board of Directors is scheduled to meet at 3:00 p.m. in the board room located in the main office at 1055 Ventura Ave., Oak View, on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday of every month.

**Customers - Update Your Account Contact Info**

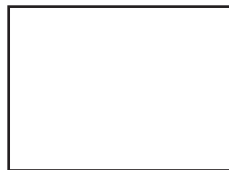
Please update your contact information (contact phone number, email, and mailing address) with the District if any of the information we have might be outdated. Reasons we might need to reach you include:

- Bill questions
- Interruption in service
- Emergency announcements

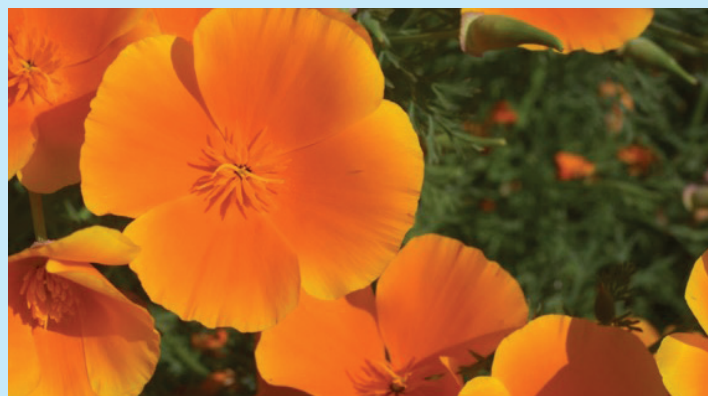
Call (805) 649-2251 and one of our customer service representatives will assist you! Thank you.

Municipal Water District  
 1055 Ventura Ave.  
 Oak View, CA 93022  
 805-649-2251  
[www.casitaswater.org](http://www.casitaswater.org)

POSTAL CUSTOMER  
 ECRWSS



# Conservation Corner



## Drought Boot Camp for Plants

Summer is in full swing. Here are some water conservation tips to refresh our memories!

Landscape water use is the largest waste in an average household. Get your landscape ready now. This little “Drought Boot Camp for Plants” can prepare your landscape for our current drought conditions.

**1. WAKE UP YOUR PLANTS:** Over-watered, lazy plants grow roots near the soil’s surface. They know that, four days a week, water will be delivered right to their “door.” Disciplined, well-trained plants dive their roots deep into the soil, knowing that they have to work to maintain their keep. Help your plants develop deeper root bases by cutting back watering days and watering deeply. This can be tricky. Once the water goes past the roots, it is wasted. Don’t be deterred:

- a. Ask your water provider for a free water survey to help assess your plants’ needs
- b. Seek recommendations from your local nursery
- c. Use a core sampler to see what is going on beneath the surface.

**2. CONSIDER COMPOST TEA:** Assist your plants in developing stronger and deeper root structures to enable them to acquire more water and nutrients in deeper soil zones. San Luis Obispo City Parks have demonstrated amazing root structure increases (even in grass) after a compost tea regime. **NOTE:** Native plants, however, do not like compost tea.

**3. MULCH:** Assist with water retention in the soil, decrease evaporation from the soil, and lower the soil temperature at the root zone to reduce plant stress.

**4. ELIMINATE FUSSY PLANTS:** If your plants can’t hack it, let them go. If your plants are not climate-appropriate, then they might be inappropriate here. There are plenty of native plants that would gladly take their place.

**5. DILIGENTLY CHECK YOUR IRRIGATION SYSTEM:** All irrigation systems are prone to problems. Drip systems require constant monitoring and care. Traditional sprinklers also have issues. Watch your system run, in its entirety, once a month (at least) to be sure it has not succumbed to any cars running over the lines; animals chewing on it; the neighbor kids; UV light’s destruction of plastics; thirsty roots forcing their way into the lines; high water pressure; lawn mowers; etc.

With proper planning, irrigation, and maintenance, you can come through dry conditions with a stable landscape. Now is the time to begin the Drought Boot Camp with your plants. Keep your eye on the environment by keeping an eye on your outdoor water use.

For detailed plant information and design ideas appropriate for our area, visit the Waterwise Gardening in Ventura County’s website at [www.ventura.watersavingplants.com](http://www.ventura.watersavingplants.com). Don’t forget to Google your plants’ names to find relevant watering and maintenance information all over the internet.



## FREE Water Conservation Devices

A friendly reminder that the District provides free water conservation devices to make your showerhead, kitchen and bathroom faucets, and toilets more efficient to all of its customers. Visit our front desk for devices!

## Water Conservation Rebates

**Note: To check your eligibility, please email:** [bsandoval@casitaswater.com](mailto:bsandoval@casitaswater.com).

◆ **High Efficiency Toilet or Washing Machines** - <http://calwep.org/Resources/Conservation-at-Home-and-Work/Smart-Rebates-Program> or call 1-877-231-3625

◆ **Smart Irrigation Controller** - <http://www.casitaswater.org/lower.php?url=smart-irrigation-controller-rebates>

◆ **Turf Replacement** - <https://www.removeyourturf.com/>

## O&M Department

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seven full time O&M employees who are responsible for the day to day operations of the water system. The department is broken down into the following six sections.

◆ **Water Quality** - section is responsible for reservoir and watershed management, regulatory reporting, compliance monitoring, sampling, testing water quality, and providing analytical support to the treatment staff;

◆ **Water Treatment** - section operates and maintains the district’s water treatment facilities including two filtration plants which treat an average of 12 million gallons a day. This section is also responsible for remote operations of the pump plants and reservoirs;

◆ **Pipeline/Distribution** - section is responsible for maintaining all of the water transmission lines pipelines throughout the district’s service area, inclusive of water line installations and leak repairs. This section also operates the water diversion and fish passage facilities when applicable;

◆ **Electrical & Mechanical** - section maintains and performs repairs to the automation controls, and electrical equipment used in the treatment, distribution, pumping and storage of water; inclusive of motors, pumps, and other related equipment. Additionally, this section maintains the data acquisition and collection system necessary for operational reporting;

◆ **Utility** - section handles various maintenance programs including meter repairs, hydrant inspections, and the valve exercise program. This section also performs the monthly meter reads and provides customer support by addressing customer complaints and inquiries. Additionally, the Utility crew provides backup operational support to the other O&M sections; and lastly,

◆ **Maintenance** - section performs a variety of general maintenance and repair work for the District water facilities, buildings, and grounds. This section also assists

and provides backup for all other O&M departments on an as needed basis.

**3. How long have you been with Casitas? Which position did you start with?** I began my employment with the District over twelve years ago as a treatment plant operator.

**4. What is your vision and your biggest goal for the O&M department in the next five years?** My vision is simple and straightforward - maintain an ongoing effort to provide dependable high quality water to our customers and be good stewards of the infrastructure entrusted to our care. One of the biggest goals for the O&M department over the next five years will be to develop and maintain the workforce necessary to move the District forward. Capturing the institutional knowledge of experienced employees and transferring it to new hires, as well as to other parts of the organization is crucial for the future of the district. To this end, I plan on an ongoing effort to support and assist the O&M department in learning and development whenever possible.

**5. What is one thing that you wished people knew about Casitas that most don’t know?** In my opinion a majority of the customers probably don’t realize how hard the O&M field staff work to deliver water to their taps. These sections make themselves available 24/7, nights weekends, and holidays to ensure minimal disruption to the customer’s water service. During my tenure at Casitas, I have witnessed this dedication time and time again. Maintaining and operating the infrastructure mentioned above is a tall order and these employees have risen to the occasion. So, the short answer to your question; I feel that if we can convey this commitment to the public, it will go a long way in building mutual respect and understanding.

## Governor Jerry Brown Signed SB606 and AB1668

In May 2018, Governor Jerry Brown signed into law two bills that focus on long-term water conservation, even in non-drought conditions. The two bills, SB 606 and AB 1668, require the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB), in coordination with the Department of Water Resources (DWR), to establish long-term urban water use efficiency standards by June 30, 2022. Both bills establish 55 gallons per capita daily as the standard for indoor residential water use and the SWRCB and DWR can decrease the standard further every five years.

AB 1668 requires the SWRCB to adopt water efficiency regulations, outlines reporting requirements for water suppliers, and specifies penalties for violations.

SB 606 requires the SWRCB and DWR to adopt water efficiency regulations, outlines requirements for urban water suppliers, and specifies penalties for violations. The bill contains distinct provisions on water shortage planning and water loss reporting for urban wholesale water suppliers, and establishes a bonus incentive for potable reuse water.

It is much too early to tell how the State Water Board and DWR will implement these new laws. The District will be paying close attention and keep you updated.

Source: Association of California Water Agencies