

Fall 2010

The Casitas

Newsletter

focus



New Website Offers Residents Water Saving Tips

Casitas' new website at www.casitaswater.org offers some exciting new tools and information on how to use water more efficiently and save money on water bills.

The water conservation page has images of free water saving devices such as showerheads, faucet aerators, toilet flappers, and leak detection kits that are available at the District office. Rebate applications for washing machines, high efficiency toilets, and smart irrigation controllers are also available on the site.

Visitors to the site can find real time weather information to include Evapotranspiration (ET) data for the Ojai Valley. ET data can be used to modify landscape irrigation more efficiently. The Ojai ET station at Soule Park, where the information is generated, is shown in the photo on the right.



Soule Park ET Station

The new website includes a link to the Casitas sponsored Ventura County Landscape site that provides landscape assistance to residents <http://www.ventura.watersavingplants.com>. Visitors to the site can create a personalized plant database for planning a landscape. The database of plants gives information on how much water and sun is needed as well as specific plant qualities such as size at maturity. The site provides great examples of local landscapes found throughout Ventura County that offer a variety of aesthetic options for anyone wanting to redesign their yard to be more eco-friendly.

Visitors to Casitas' website will also find a graph on the home page that gives the current percentage for how full Lake Casitas is in real time. At spill level, when the lake is completely full, the lake has 254,000 acre-feet of water. One acre foot of water is about enough water to cover a football field one foot deep. Two average households will use about one acre foot of water in a single year at their residences.

A new monthly water rate calculator determines what a customer's bill will be depending on how many gallons or acre-feet of water they plan to use for a given month.

Free Water Saving Surveys

Receive a free home water survey for both your indoor and outdoor water usage. Our trained personnel can help you find the best ways to save money on your water bills. This includes doing a meter check to determine if you have any water leaks on your property. We will also provide you with free water saving devices and information on our rebate programs. Please call for an appointment at (805) 649-2251 Extension 128.



A leaky faucet can lose 50 gallons a day.

Reset Your Timer

It is time to reset your irrigation timer to start watering fewer days and times. As daylight periods become shorter, reduce the amount of water you apply to your plants and lawns, even if the fall temperatures remain warm.



Lawns use lots of water during the long days of summers.

Nordhoff High School Soars

Nordhoff High School has reduced their annual water usage by 7.6 million gallons, or 23 acre-feet, in the 2009-2010 versus the water usage in 2007-2008. The campus requested a water audit from Casitas in the spring of 2009 that provided a variety of outdoor and indoor recommendations on how to improve water efficiency. The school has since made many upgrades to increase their water use efficiency.

“We are pleased to realize the significant water savings that we achieved with the implementation of a few key modifications to our irrigation system,” said Eric Ordway, Maintenance Manager for the Ojai Unified School District. The school district was provided nearly \$3,000 in rebates from Casitas that went toward the purchase of weather-based irrigation controllers. The controllers operate automatically based on current weather conditions so that they irrigate turf areas with much greater efficiency than a typical controller that uses only time of day. The controllers were installed at a number of their campuses. They changed their irrigation procedures to avoid runoff on all of their campuses at the same time. The school also made many repairs and replacements to the turf irrigation system, including the repair or replacing of sprinkler heads, fixing leaks, and adjusting pressure in irrigation lines. These efforts resulted in a \$15,240 savings in Nordhoff’s annual water bill – and the turf fields are ready for Ranger football.

The Ojai Unified School District staff is commended for their actions to conserve water.



Casitas to Offer Free Info and Stuff at Ojai Festival

You will not want to miss this year’s Annual Ojai Day festival located in downtown Ojai because Lake Casitas Recreation Area staff and Casitas’ water conservation staff will be looking forward to meeting you and your family at their booth. There will also be lots of food and entertainment to be enjoyed at the festival.

Recreation staff will answer your questions about Lake Casitas, camping, fishing and boating and the Casitas Water Adventure. There will be plenty of fun give-a-ways and gate discount passes for the Lake Casitas Recreation Area to make it your worthwhile. Water Conservation staff will provide plenty of information on how you can easily save both water and money by learning new and exciting ways to use your water more wisely. There will also be free water conservation give-a-ways.

This year’s downtown festival is scheduled from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on Saturday, October 16.

La Niña Weather Prediction

The National Weather Service has announced that the weather pattern known as La Niña is strengthening and may have an effect on next winter’s rainfall amounts.

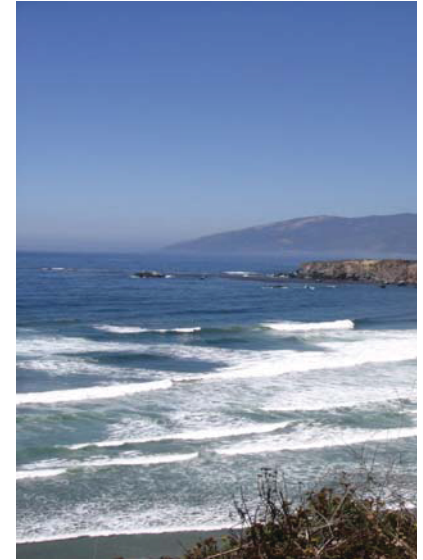


Photo of Pacific Ocean

La Niña is the phenomena marked by cooler Pacific Ocean temperatures that usually results in less rain and snow in Southern California. The last strong La Niña occurred in 1989 in the middle of a six year drought that brought Lake Casitas levels to half full. A similar occurrence this year would once again reduce Lake Casitas levels.

Presently, Lake Casitas is approximately 74% full. “Historically, La Niña has meant less rain for the Ventura watershed so it is important that each of us to continue to implement more water conservation measures,” said Ron Merckling, Water Conservation Manager for Casitas.