



Casitas Newsletter Spring 2022

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GM's Corner

Hello,

I am pleased to bring you the Casitas Municipal Water District's spring 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 this summer. 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 mandatory water use restrictions in place. With another less than average amount of precipitation this year, 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 the level of current water supply demands on Lake Casitas and groundwater, due in part to the success of our customers' ability to use water wisely.

- **Water Rate Study:** The District has embarked on a water rates study that uses a rate model to evaluate the cost of service, as required by Proposition 218. Customers can expect to receive separate informational mailings on the subject that outline how to participate in the process.

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 recently completed replacement of water mains on Grand Avenue and Lion Street.

The West and East Ojai Avenue project was recently awarded for construction. Pipe materials are experiencing long delivery times which will impact the project timeline. Groundbreaking is currently planned for early summer 2022 and the project is expected to be complete by the end of the year. The District will keep businesses informed through regular emails in cooperation with the Ojai Chamber of Commerce. The segments being replaced are shown in the figure below.

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



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. This project is being partially funded by a \$2-million dollar Reclamation WaterSMART Drought Resiliency Project Grant awarded to the District in January 2022.

Annual Rain Report

According to the U.S. Drought Monitor, 100% of the state is currently suffering from moderate to extreme drought conditions. This season has delivered approximately 17 inches of rainfall at Casitas Dam, below the typical average of more than 20 inches. Casitas has been in an extended multi-year drought condition, with current levels in Lake Casitas at 80,565 acre-feet, 33.9% 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. In May, the Casitas Board reaffirmed the current Stage 3 drought condition based on current water levels. In addition, with the lake levels projected to reach 30%, the Board directed staff to return in the Fall 2022 to reassess supplies and 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 Rate Study

Casitas is dedicated to providing safe, reliable, cost-effective water deliveries at rates that do not exceed the cost of service.

Casitas last completed a water rate study in 2017 that established rates through fiscal year 2022. Water rates are typically updated and set for a five-year period, thus the District is currently in the process of a new water rate study. Using a rate model, the District's water rates are evaluated to ensure they provide revenue stability, are fair and equitable, and are based on cost of service principles, as required by Proposition 218. Updates to water rates are anticipated to take effect in January 2023.

Customers who receive water directly from the District will be receiving notices in the mail that outline proposed changes and detail the opportunity for customers to participate in the process.

For more information on water rates, visit: www.casitaswater.org/about-us/finance



Update on Water Use Prohibitions

In response to State-wide drought conditions, the California State Water Resources Control Board adopted emergency regulations prohibiting wasteful water uses.

While most of the State's emergency prohibitions were already adopted and implemented in Casitas' existing policies, the Casitas Board of Directors adopted an updated ordinance to reflect all of the State's current water waste prohibitions.

Some examples of prohibited uses include:

- Washing of hard or paved surfaces
- Washing of structures and vehicles without the use of a positive shut-off nozzle
- Irrigation runoff
- Irrigation of ornamental landscapes and turf areas between 10:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. (some exceptions apply)
- Watering during and within 48-hours of measureable rainfall of 1/4" or more
- Non-recirculated ornamental fountains
- Drinking water served only upon request at eating and drinking establishments
- Lodging establishments providing option to not launder linens and towels daily

For more information about water waste prohibitions, 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.

While the Phase 1 trial of the groundwater adjudication was scheduled for March 2022, several parties are requesting a temporary stay 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.castiaswater.org/for-customers/adjudication-information