

# Casitas' Office Landscape Receives Facelift

Casitas recently removed all the grass in front of the main office building located at 1055 Ventura Ave. in Oak View and replaced it with drought-tolerant plants, decorative bark and rocks.

"We hope to provide an example for our customers to follow when they redo their own front yard. We are not applying any water after these plants are established. We have beautiful plants that save both time and money," said Water Conservation Manager Ron Merckling.

There are several basic principles of water-wise landscaping that can be used to create beautiful landscapes that will thrive in the Ojai Valley or in Ventura.

- 1 Limit unused turf. Remove grass areas in your lawn that are not used by people or pets.
- 2 Use sprinklers for turf and drip lines for low-volume plants such as shrubs and perennials.
- 3 Group plants with similar water needs in the same area so they can easily get the same amount of water from your irrigation system.
- 4 Improve soil texture with amendments that can increase water retention or improve drainage, depending on composition.
- 5 Use a thick layer of mulch to increase water retention and reduce weeds around plants.

- 6 Plant trees to lower air and soil temperatures. This reduces shrub and grass water needs.
- 7 Design for your slope. Minimize runoff with drip irrigation or multiple short irrigation cycles. Lower watering on slopes by planting drought-tolerant trees and shrubs rather than shallow-rooted ground covers.

**The Casitas Speakers Bureau** provides an opportunity for customers and the community to learn more about water issues in the Western Ventura County area. Please contact Ron Merckling, Water Conservation and Public Affairs Manager, 805-649-2251, extension 118, to invite a speaker to your next community group or organizational meeting.



Join the Casitas Municipal Water District Facebook page to get the latest updates on water conservation and the Lake Casitas Recreation Area at: [www.facebook.com/fbsitecasitasmunicipalwaterdistrict](http://www.facebook.com/fbsitecasitasmunicipalwaterdistrict).



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

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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 Baggerly**, 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.

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# CASITAS WATER NEWS

Winter 2011

## Public Invited to Participate in Public Hearing for Urban Water Management Plan

Casitas is planning to hold a public hearing on its Urban Water Management Plan (UWMP) at 3 p.m. on Wednesday, May 25, 2011. This document serves as a long-range planning document for water supply and demand and provides an overview of Casitas' water supply and usage and water conservation programs.

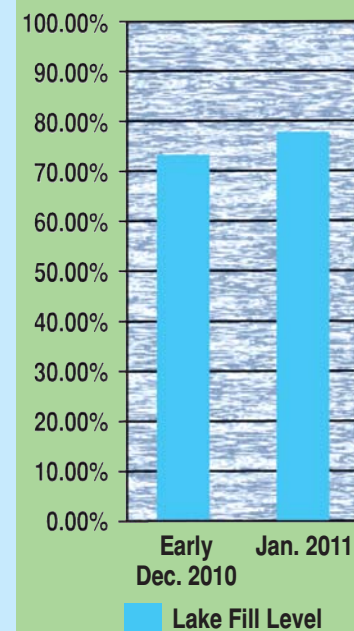
In 1983, the California Legislature enacted the Urban Water Management Planning Act (Division 6 Part 2.6 of the Water Code §§10610 - 10656). The Act states

that every urban water supplier which provides water to 3,000 or more customers, or provides more than 3,000 acre-feet of water annually, should make every effort to ensure the appropriate level of reliability in its water service that is sufficient to meet the needs of all its customers during normal, dry, and multiple dry years. The UWMP will exam historic and current water use projections and compare projected water supplies with demands over the next 20 years. Our plan will acknowledge that our water supply is local and explain

how those water supplies are intended to meet future demands. The plan is meant to help ensure that Casitas can provide a reliable supply of high-quality water to customers and can meet current and future water demands. A copy of Casitas' 2005 UWMP is available on Casitas' website [www.casitaswater.org](http://www.casitaswater.org).

Anyone with questions about the plan is encouraged to contact Ron Merckling, Public Affairs Manager, at [rmerckling@casitaswater.com](mailto:rmerckling@casitaswater.com) or 805-649-2251, extension 118.

### December Rains Increase Lake Casitas Water Nearly 5%



Thanks to unusual heavy rains in December, Lake Casitas rose by 5.5 feet. Lake Casitas serves as both a primary water source and as a backup water source for the local community, which relies completely on local water supplies. "We all need to continue to do our part to use our water wisely at all times to avoid future water supply shortages should the next few years result in below average rainfall," said Ron Merckling, Water Conservation Manager for Casitas.

### Lake Casitas Recreation Area Updates Lifeguards Wanted at Lake Casitas

Lifeguards are needed for the Casitas Water Adventure, located at the Lake Casitas Recreation Area, which will open for the season on Saturday, May 28, 2011. Anyone interested in becoming a lifeguard may contact Aaron Wall at 805-649-2233, extension 114 for employment information.

### Record Size Trout Being Caught in Lake Casitas

A number of recent large trout catches at Lake Casitas have broken the old record of 9 lbs, 4 oz set in 1985. Mike Jones from Ventura now holds the new record trout catch with his catch of an 11 lb, 13 oz rainbow trout on Dec. 22, 2010. A December planting of large trout has contributed to nearly a half dozen catches bigger than the 1985 record.

### Lake Casitas Disc Golf Course Rated #1 in California

The Coyote Disc Golf Course at the Lake Casitas Recreation Area, as of December 31, 2010, was rated by Disc Golf Course Review as the Number One course in California and the 24th in the nation.

### Camping

Please remember that camping reservations at Lake Casitas are taken up to 180 days in advance. Reservations: 805-649-1122.





# Casitas Invests in Facility Improvements to Increase Water Reliability and Quality

Casitas is working on capital improvement and maintenance projects at a cost of \$3.7 million this year. "These projects support Casitas' mission to provide our customers with safe, reliable and cost-effective drinking water," said Neil Cole, Principal Engineer at Casitas.

Two pipeline replacement projects are scheduled. One project involves replacing 1,000 feet of pipe in a remote hilly area north of La Conchita associated with a break that occurred in the winter storms of 2005, causing significant water outages to beach community customers. Casitas looked at various alternatives for replacing the water main and selected the lowest-cost option, which involves drilling underneath the ground and pushing the new pipe through. Another smaller, main pipeline project entails the replacement of 100 feet of 18-inch pipe. This pipe provides water to the Casitas Pass area and beach community customers. Casitas anticipates minimal water service interruption to customers with these two projects that are

scheduled for winter and summer of 2011.

Casitas' projects are not limited to pipelines. Providing maintenance to keep the system operating into the future includes maintaining the treatment plant and storage reservoirs. This year's projects include repairing and coating the interior of one of eight filter vessels at the treatment plant and coating two steel reservoirs. Repairs on the filter vessel at the treatment plant involve removing the filter media, repairing the vessel structure, applying a long-term coating and re-installing the cleaned filter media. Casitas organized repairs on 8 filter tanks over a period of 6 years so that water rates would not



Casitas' Ojai 4 (M) Reservoir Tank.

be impacted. Two steel reservoir tank projects required draining the tanks of water and recoating their interior walls to protect them from long-term corrosion. Both the filter vessel and reservoir projects will increase the longevity of the respective tanks, avoiding costly replacements.

Other significant projects include pump plant improvements, which increases water reliability and efficiency for Ojai Valley customers.

# Urban Water Demand Still Too High



A cool and wet fall brought Casitas' urban water demand down by 2.5%. The state of California recently passed the Water Conservation Act of 2009, which sets a target of a 20% reduction by the year 2020. Casitas' urban water usage is twice the state average on a gallons-per-capita-day measurement. "Our customers will need to use much less if we are going to meet the new state legislative requirements. A good place for most people to start using less water is outside the home where one half to two-thirds of residential water use occurs," said Ron Merckling.

Replacing any unused lawn with beautiful native or drought-tolerant plants can add color, fragrance and shade to landscapes. Drought-tolerant landscapes often require less maintenance, attract butterflies and other beneficial insects, and ward off pests. The best time to start planting drought-tolerant plants is in the cooler months so that they can become established before warmer temperatures arrive. Beside local nurseries, there are plenty of sites on the Internet to learn more about how to get started with landscape beautification projects: A good site for helping to start a plan is [ventura.watersavings.com](http://ventura.watersavings.com), which can be linked through Casitas' website, [casitaswater.org](http://casitaswater.org). This site allows users to build a database of plants that includes all the specific planting information needed for each plant.

## Other good sites include:

- [Bewaterwise.com](http://Bewaterwise.com)
- [Theodorepayne.org](http://Theodorepayne.org)
- [Wateraware.org](http://Wateraware.org)
- [California Native Plant Society - cnps.org](http://CaliforniaNativePlantSociety-cnps.org)
- [American Horticultural Society - ahs.org](http://AmericanHorticulturalSociety-ahs.org)

Anyone within the Casitas district boundaries (if you are receiving this newsletter you probably are) who would like a free water survey and additional suggestions on how to save water is encouraged to contact Larry Harris, Water Conservation Coordinator, at [lharris@casitaswater.com](mailto:lharris@casitaswater.com) or 805-649-2251, extension 128.



Casitas district maintenance staff from left to right: Eric Grabowski, Bob Phillip and Dave Polk planting drought-tolerant plants outside Casitas' main office in Oak View.

## SAVE MONEY & OUR LOCAL WATER SUPPLY

Present This Coupon at Casitas MWD for One **FREE** Residential Water Survey

Made possible by Casitas Municipal Water District



Offer Expires December 31, 2011.

Not valid with any other offer and only for homes within the Casitas MWD boundaries. Redeem today at Casitas MWD - 1055 Ventura Avenue Oak View, California, CA 93022. Please contact: 805-649-2251 Extension 128 or [lharris@casitaswater.com](mailto:lharris@casitaswater.com)

