

THE CASITAS WATER NEWS

Casitas Works to Find and Assure Long-Term Water Sources For New and Future Customers District Offers 26 Additional Acre-Feet of Water For New Water Hook-Ups

Additional Water Services Approved

The Casitas Board of Directors recently approved allocating an additional 26 acre-feet of water for those on the waiting list for new water hook-ups. (One acre-foot of water fills one acre of land a foot deep, or a football field 10 inches deep.) The Board began a water allocation waiting list for persons seeking new water hookups in 2005, and the additional 26 acre-feet of water is a continuation of that program. Casitas will offer new water service to five applicants each month until all of the water is allocated.



Lake Casitas has done much to make the arid Ojai Valley a greener place in which to live. The Soule Park Golf Course opened in 1962, after the Casitas Dam was constructed in 1958. Before the creation of Lake Casitas, even a minor drought meant that water had to be trucked into the Ojai Valley.

Federal Regulations Limit Water Supply

Casitas restricts the number of new water services due to new federal regulations that limited the amount of water available during a long-term drought. Casitas manages water demand and supply by using data collected during a historical 21-year drought period that occurred in the Ojai area starting in the 1940s.

Stopping Lake Casitas From Going Dry

Our goal is to do everything we can to guarantee that the lake will never run dry if such a drought should reoccur. Casitas continues to actively seek out additional water supplies and/or permanent or proven water conservation methods. The District wants to ensure there will be enough water available to supply all existing customers and all new water customers added to the water district during a historical drought.

their efforts could well close this gap. It is, after all, our customers who will take the credit of assuring our water supply through our worst droughts.

The District will hold 13 acre-feet of the 26 acre-feet of water for one year as a priority allocation for agricultural customers. At the end of one year, nonagricultural customers may apply for any remaining water to be allocated.

Upcoming Events

👉 Saturday, May 13
Casitas Water Adventure
Open on Weekends

👉 Monday, June 19
Casitas Water Adventure
Open Daily

Casitas presently does not have enough water to supply all of our customers during a 21-year historical drought, according to a report issued on Dec. 7, 2004, called, "Casitas Municipal Water District Water Supply and Use Status Report." However, if all of our customers helped our water district through increased water conservation,

As of January 2006, the District offered new water services to 84 applicants on the water allocation waiting list. Casitas requires that those on the waiting list be ready to proceed with beginning their water service so that others who are waiting and ready to go will not have to wait indefinitely for water service. Those not ready when called will have to move to the bottom of the waiting list again.

Improved Water Adventure Set to Open Weekends Starting May 13, and Daily June 19



New programming and attractions at the Casitas Water Adventure at the Lake Casitas Recreation Area are guaranteed to bring more cool and refreshing experiences for park visitors this summer.

Water park weekend operations are set to begin on the morning of Saturday, May 13, 2006. Daily operations will start Monday, June 19, 2006, and will last until Labor Day weekend in early September. Weekend operations will stay in effect until the water park's scheduled seasonal closing date of Sunday, October 1, 2006.

More Variety For 2006

New programming and attractions at the Casitas Water Adventure at the Lake Casitas Recreation Area are guaranteed to bring more cool and refreshing experiences for park visitors this summer. Guests can expect to find water fitness and junior lifeguard programs, sand volleyball games, and "Dive-in" outdoor theater movies.

Families and friends will even be able to rent a scenic private island in the water park for festive gatherings.

"We are now catering to a much broader clientele," said Brian Roney, Park Services Manager.

Casitas Water Adventure will have more multiple shade structures to further

help visitors to enjoy their water park experience. Our water exercise programs will now be offered in the Lazy River. The exercise programs include a water aerobics class and a water fitness program that incorporates strength training. There are also many fun existing water park

features including a large play structure, a fun spray park, and a zero-depth lagoon with a waterfall.

Expanded BBQ Menu

The Lazy River Barbeque snack bar has expanded its menu to include more mouth-watering barbeque items, and video games are available to increase the fun.

For additional information please contact Joe Goss, Park Services Officer, at 805-649-2233, or by e-mail at waterpark@casitaswater.com.



The Casitas Water Adventure is open throughout the summer, offering everyone a splash, beginning May 13.

Directors Set Sights on Greater Organizational Efficiency

Casitas Board members work to improve the District's operations. The Board has taken the position that every so often, Casitas needs to review its entire process from top to bottom to streamline district operations and increase efficiency.

This past year, the Board hired an outside firm, Baker and Associates, to get a fresh look at District operations and to conduct interviews with all of the District's employees and board members. The consultant developed 43 recommendations for the Board which are designed to further streamline the District's utility and recreational operations. The Board of Directors reviewed all of the recommendations and directed that all be evaluated for implementation based on their ability to create greater efficiency.

District employees are encouraged to work together to ensure that the Board's adopted recommendations are successfully implemented. Some recommendations involve increasing internal communication within the District. The District has since implemented an internal employee e-mail newsletter to provide updates on District operations and to encourage employees to ask questions about District operations.

The Board hopes that by adopting these recommendations the District will be in a better position to operate more efficiently and improve public service.

Program to Assist Farmers With Improving Irrigation

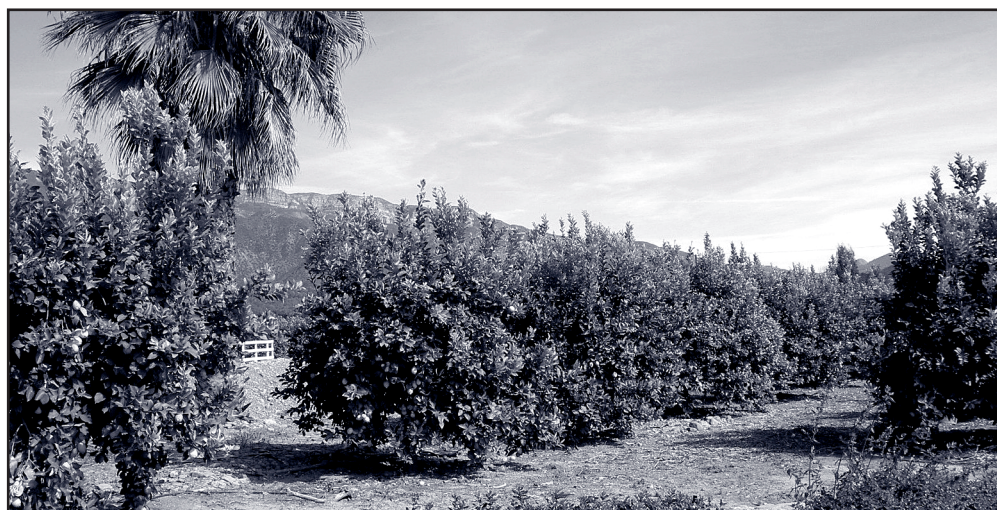
Casitas created the Significant Watering Enhancement Agricultural Program (SWEAP) to help the relatively small number of farmers who have tended to irrigate excessively improve their irrigation efficiency. The District is in the process of revisiting a farmer-assistance program that was implemented more than a decade ago. That program included a mobile van that visited various orchards to make recommendations on ways to improve the efficiency of existing watering systems.

Our Best Water Managers

Farmers tend to irrigate very efficiently because their livelihood depends upon it. Water is a major cost factor in their business and watering requires careful ongoing management. SWEAP aims to help the few farmers that tend to have higher watering rates per acre. This program would provide resources to those farmers so that they can water their crops even more efficiently.

Irrigation Evaluations

Casitas is considering a number of options to assist farmers. For example, the District is researching the possibility of providing irrigation evaluations for farmers so that they will be able to know more precisely how efficient their irrigation systems are currently working.



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Grant Requests

The District recently submitted a grant request to the federal government so that this service could be provided. The District is also investigating the option of providing:

- Low-interest loans
- Rebates for irrigation upgrades
- Grants to refurbish water wells or irrigation systems.

Water Expenses a Growing Concern

Water rates are likely to increase for everybody in the Ojai Valley if supply remains limited. Farming in the Ojai Valley is a difficult business, and properly managing our limited water supply is very important. Casitas recognizes that water expenses are a big issue and we anticipate that there will be a tiered water rate structure put in place for all customers. Some farmers in the future will not be able to raise certain crops as a result of the large water demands that certain crops require.

Excessive Water Users

The SWEAP program would assist those agricultural customers that are using between 3.3 acre-feet to 6 acre-feet of water per planted acre within a given year.



Casitas is considering a number of options to assist farmers.

Ron Merckling, Water Conservation Manager for the Casitas Water District, explained, “Curtailing this higher usage is aimed at securing water supply for all of Casitas’ agricultural customers during a long-term drought without having to raise overall costs. Our agricultural customers will not have enough water with our existing limited local water supply during a long-term drought unless we encourage greater efficiency. Creating an incentive for farmers to increase their irrigation efficiency will help to eliminate the practice by some farmers to water at an excessive rate per acre-foot.”

The First Stage of SWEAP Program

“The first part of this program will include a dialogue with our agricultural customers. We want to hear from our agricultural customers and collect their ideas on how many have already implemented many creative solutions about what they think is the best way we can help them become more efficient,” Merckling said.

The District will schedule a public meeting in the near future and will invite all agricultural customers to participate. For additional information on SWEAP, please contact Ron Merckling at (805) 649-2251, ext. 118.

The second stage of the SWEAP program will involve providing direct assistance such as irrigation evaluations, rebates, and grants. The third stage will be creating an incentive rate that would apply to excessive water usage on a per acre-foot per year basis.

Pool Covers Increase Safety and Create Big Water and Energy Savings

How can swimming pool owners save over 95% of the water that would normally be lost to evaporation? The answer is using a pool cover, which also provides a number of other advantages too!

- **Save about 1,000 Gallons a month!** Did you know placing a cover on your swimming pool saves about 1,000 gallons of water every month? You can save 90 to 95% of the water that would otherwise be lost to evaporation. An uncovered standard-sized (16 ft. x 32 ft.) pool loses approximately an inch of water each week to evaporation.



Swimming pool covers save approximately 1,000 gallons of water a month.

- **A pool cover may pay for itself in one year in heating and water savings.** At a cost of 20 to 60 cents per square foot, a pool cover is very economical. However, be aware that UV radiation deteriorates the cover, requiring that you replace it every 3 to 5 years. Before you buy one, make sure the cover comes with at least a 2-year warranty. Also find out how easily you can place the cover over the pool, how to remove it, and how to store it.
- **Consider a cover with a reel system.** This system moves the cover off and on the pool with a motor or hand crank. It

makes it easier and more convenient to take the cover off and on prolonging the life of the cover and saving energy.

- **Pool covers reduce temperature loss during non-use times.**
- **Solar pool covers can add up to 10°F.** This takes some of the load off conventional heaters. If the solar cover is put on a month early, the sun alone may heat the water 20°F.
- **Safety pool covers add a protection barrier for small children, non-swimmers, pets, or uninvited guests.**
- **The Red Cross recommends 78°F for competitive swimming** (<http://www.redcross.org/services/hss/aquatics/faq.htm#Q10>). Each rise of one degree significantly increases energy costs. If you want higher temperatures, then consider alternative forms of heat such as solar covers and solar systems. Service your heaters annually to ensure they function at top efficiency.
- **Drain pools – rarely** Pools seldom require draining.

Would you like a speaker to come and talk to your classroom, organization or business? Please call Ron Merckling, Water Conservation Coordinator, at 805-649-2251 ext. 118 or rmerckling@casitaswater.com, to talk about water conservation.

Implementation of an Independent Top-to-Bottom Review Is Expected to Streamline Water Operations



1055 Ventura Ave.
Oak View, CA 93022
805-649-2251
www.casitaswater.org

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John J. Johnson, General Manager

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

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