

Casitas' Property Taxes Safe for the Moment

The State of California has approved another budget year without taking any property tax revenues normally allocated to local governments like the Casitas Municipal Water District. However, the governor and state legislature are expected to correct the budget before next year's budget is adopted because of an anticipated shortfall. This may place local government property taxes in jeopardy once more. Furthermore, when the governor sits down with his advisors for next year's budget, local tax monies may once again become a tantalizing target.



For the moment the State of California has approved another budget year without taking any property tax revenues normally allocated to local governments like the Casitas Municipal Water District.

Casitas relies on property tax revenues to pay for infrastructure and operational costs that would otherwise need to come from higher rates to water customers. In recent years, water districts have witnessed a significant portion of their property tax revenues be reallocated to help fund the state's budgetary obligations. In 1992 and 1993, the state shifted an ongoing share

of property taxes from local governments to schools and community colleges. In 2004, the state enacted a similar two-year shift of property taxes (\$1.3 billion annually) from local governments to schools and community colleges. These shifts reduced local government resources. Casitas' property tax revenues are roughly \$1.7 million annually. Casitas' budget reserves were depleted in 2004 when the state took away some of Casitas' property tax funds.

Proposition 1A was passed by California voters in November of 2008 to prevent the state from taking local government property taxes, but the state has been creative in attempting to work around the language in this proposition to justify the continued ability to raid these funds. Earlier this year, the State Legislative Analyst's Office (LAO) released an alternative budget that called for using special districts' property tax funds to pay for the state's parole system.

Lake Casitas Recreation Area to Offer Lifeguard Training – Equip Yourself With the Tools for a Great Summer Job!



February 16-20, 2009 and April 6-10, 2009. This professional American Red Cross course will teach participants the knowledge and skills to prevent and respond to aquatic emergencies.

REQUIREMENTS: Participants must be 15 years of age by the last day of instruction, able to swim 300 continuous yards, and fully participate in all drills and exercises provided during the course. The course will be offered without charge to participants hired by Casitas Water Adventure. For further information, please contact Aquatics Coordinator Justin Klein at 805-649-2233, extension 116, or e-mail jklein@casitaswater.org

Drought Declared – Local Wa

State Water Supplies Under Stress

Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger declared a statewide drought last spring after the state experienced its driest spring on record. This was the first declaration of a statewide drought in nearly 20 years. Statewide runoff this

year was 57 percent of normal and last year it was 53 percent of normal. Southern California is in its eighth year of drought conditions. Statewide water reserves are extremely low. With the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta ecosystem

near collapse, court-ordered restrictions on water deliveries from the delta have reduced supplies from the state's two largest water systems by 20 to 30 percent.

Drought conditions in the Colorado River Basin and a Sierra snowpack that is now dangerously unreliable due to global climate change is leaving many communities throughout California facing mandatory restrictions on water use and/or rising water bills. If the drought continues into next year, the results could be catastrophic to our economy.

In June 2008 the governor issued Executive Order S-06-08 declaring a statewide drought, which directed his state agencies and departments to take immediate action to address the serious drought conditions and water delivery reductions that exist in California. He also issued a Central Valley State of Emergency Proclamation for nine Central Valley counties (Sacramento, San Joaquin, Stanislaus, Merced, Madera, Fresno, Kings, Tulare and Kern) to address urgent water needs.



Photo above depicts Lake Oroville, which now is at a third of its 3.5 million acre-feet capacity.

Continued Local Water Conservation Needed

In spite of the fact that rainfall has been below normal for the last few years, Casitas has done well to maintain its overall storage levels in Lake Casitas. Casitas continues to urge water conservation efforts by local residents, businesses and agricultural customers to help sustain local water supplies. Lake Casitas remains at over 80 percent full as of December 2008.

Water supplies are expected to be sufficient throughout 2009 even with a moderate to low rainfall this winter. However, continued water conservation measures are necessary to maintain ample water supplies for an extended drought. Western Ventura County is one of a few areas in Southern California that relies

exclusively on local rainfall for its water supplies rather than on imported water. Western Ventura County includes the cities of Ojai and Ventura. As of December, Lake Casitas' storage level was at more than 80 percent capacity.



Picture of Casitas Dam showing lake level nearly full.



Sweeping the front walk instead of hosing it off is a great way to save water.

Water Supplies Secure for Now

Lake Casitas Recreation Area Voted Best Campground in Ventura County

The Lake Casitas Recreation Area campgrounds were voted the Best Campgrounds in Ventura County in the annual readers' survey conducted by the Ventura County Reporter. "Considering the steep competition from campgrounds like Pine Mountain and the many ocean/beach campgrounds available in Ventura County, we are proud to be rated the best campground of 2008," said Brent Doan, park services officer at the Lake Casitas Recreation Area.



Park Service Officers Brent Doan (left) and Rob Weinerth (right) with a certificate from the Ventura County Reporter for Best Campground.

Family Fun Fishing Day and Renaissance Festival Coming Soon!

Don't miss the next annual Family Fun Fishing Day and Renaissance Festivals this April at the Lake Casitas Recreation area. Family Fun Fishing Day, a free community-wide event, attracts hundreds of kids and their families every year for a "guaranteed" realistic fish catching experience. The California Department of Fish and Game will plant 2,500 rainbow trout. Free Fishing rods will be raffled! There will be plenty of fish related games for the whole family. Kids can pet the Sheriff's K9 dog. Fire personnel will display a fire truck and an ambulance. The event will be on Saturday April 4, 2009 and registration will begin at 9:00 a.m. near the Santa Ana boat ramp at the Picnic #1 basketball court. Tax deductible donations for this event are much appreciated and can be made to the Lake Casitas Improvement Foundation. For additional information on this event, please email Rob Weinerth, Park Services Officer, at rweinerth@casitaswater.com

The annual Renaissance Festival will be on April 4 and 5. The festival will showcase 16th century life in the "Village of Wixonshire" at the time of Queen Elizabeth's Court. Please visit www.goldcoastfestivals.com/ojairen/renpg1.html for admission cost and other information.



At Lake Casitas Recreation Area campers have a large variety of choices to best tailor their camping experience.

Lake Casitas Campgrounds

At the Lake Casitas Recreation Area, with over 400 camping sites available, campers have a large variety of choices to best tailor their camping experience. Some sites are lakeside, close enough to hear the lapping water; others are nestled among the trees; and still more are located on hillsides offering striking views of Lake Casitas. The recreation area also offers a convenient, fenced, dry storage facility for recreational vehicles, boats, canoes and kayaks. For additional information, please visit www.lakecasitas.info/camping.html.



Some campsites are lakeside, close enough to hear the lapping water; others are nestled among the trees; and still more are located on hillsides offering striking views of Lake Casitas.

Our Water Is Local: Use It Wisely

Water conservation is important in western Ventura County because water supplies are limited to the local area. A small amount of water wasted can add up over time and make it more likely that the area will not be able to last through a long-term drought without severe water shortages. “Late fall and



early winter are great times to think about ways to implement water conservation practices into next year’s landscaping projects or home remodeling projects,” said Ron Merckling, water conservation manager for Casitas. “It is important for our customers to know where their water comes from and how they can use it efficiently so that they can be assured that water will be available even in a long-term drought,” said Merckling.



The winter season is the best time to plan for next summer’s water use by installing smart irrigation controllers. Casitas still has rebates for up to \$350 for smart irrigation controllers that automatically adjust watering cycles on a daily basis according to climatic changes. This offer is limited to current funding, so do not delay. For more information on Casitas’ water conservation rebates please visit www.casitaswater.org or call Ron Merckling at 805-649-2251, extension 118.

See Inside: Why Lake Casitas Campgrounds Are Ventura County’s Best!



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

PRSR STD
U.S.POSTAGE
PAID
Oxnard, CA
Clark’s Printing Company

ECRWSS
POSTAL CUSTOMER

Your Board in Action

Bill Hicks, Division I
James W. Word, Division II
Pete Kaiser, Division III
Richard Handley, Division IV
Russ Baggerly, Division V

The Casitas Board of Directors is scheduled to meet at 4:30 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.