

# THE CASITAS WATER NEWS

## Lake Casitas Featured in Ojai Valley Museum Display



The Ojai Valley Museum's Lake Casitas model is now on display as part of "The Land Beneath the Lake" exhibit.

### 'Surprises Under Lake Casitas'

The Ojai Valley Museum is now showing, "The Land Beneath the Lake," an exhibit that examines the structures and features that existed under Lake Casitas. The exhibit includes a large three-dimensional model of the lake that highlights historical areas once underneath the lake including the ranches, buildings, and Chumash villages. The exhibit is scheduled to be open through the end of this year. The museum is located at 130 West Ojai Avenue, Ojai, California, 93024. Museum hours are 1 to 4 p.m. Thursdays and Fridays, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturdays, and noon to 4 p.m. on Sundays. The cost for admittance is \$3 for adults and \$1 for youths ages 6 to 18 year olds. Children 6 and under are admitted free. For additional information on this intriguing exhibit, please call Museum Executive Director Jane McClenahan, at 805-640-1390.

## Lake Casitas Recreation Area – Part of Casitas' Obligation From the Start

Between 1952 and 1956, when ground was broken for the Casitas Dam, the United States National Park Service made a detailed study of the recreation potential of the area around the reservoir (Lake Casitas). Once informed of the positive recommendations from the study, Casitas Municipal Water District agreed to operate a full-scale park.

In 1978, 19 years after the dam's completion, the lake overflowed for the first time. The reservoir with a shoreline of 35 miles is one of the longest in the U.S. After approximately 30 years in operation, the lake has proven to be one of the most valuable water recreation resources in California.

Continued recreational use of Lake Casitas is contingent upon compliance with regulations to protect the water supply. Since Lake Casitas is a domestic drinking water supply, no body contact with the water is allowed. Water skiing, swimming and wading are thus not allowed. Since 1974, the federal government has spent more than \$25 million to purchase watershed



All types of bike rentals are now available at the Lake Casitas Recreation Area.

lands to preserve water quality.

The park holds many special events, including the prestigious Ojai Wine Festival, the popular Ojai Renaissance Festival and numerous live music venues. Casitas was a proud host to the 1984 Olympic canoeing and rowing events.

The Casitas Recreation Area has many amenities. They include two fully stocked park stores; a lakeside café; bike, boat and overnight trailer rentals; trailer storage; the bait and tackle shop; a fuel dock and marine boat repair station; and a new family water park with snack bar. The recreation area also

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## Casitas Joins Regional Energy Alliance In an Effort to Hold Rates Down



VCREA completed an investigation of the Lake Casitas Water Park in May with potential energy savings.

Casitas joined the Ventura County Regional Energy Alliance (VCREA) in an effort to keep District expenses down. Electrical costs comprise between 10 and 15 percent of Casitas' total budget. The VCREA was formed in January 2002 as a pilot program to help local communities establish a regional energy office. VCREA provides funding for specific energy efficient retrofits, such as the replacement of high-cost lighting or inefficient motors and pumps, to help public agencies like Casitas decrease their energy bills. VCREA completed an investigation of the Lake Casitas Water Park on May 26, 2005. The study identified energy-related measures that would cost only \$28,177 to implement but would result in energy savings of \$10,803 per year. That equates to a 2.6-year payback, or a 38 percent return on an investment.

# There Are Many Reasons You Are Getting This Newsletter

## What Area Does Casitas Cover?

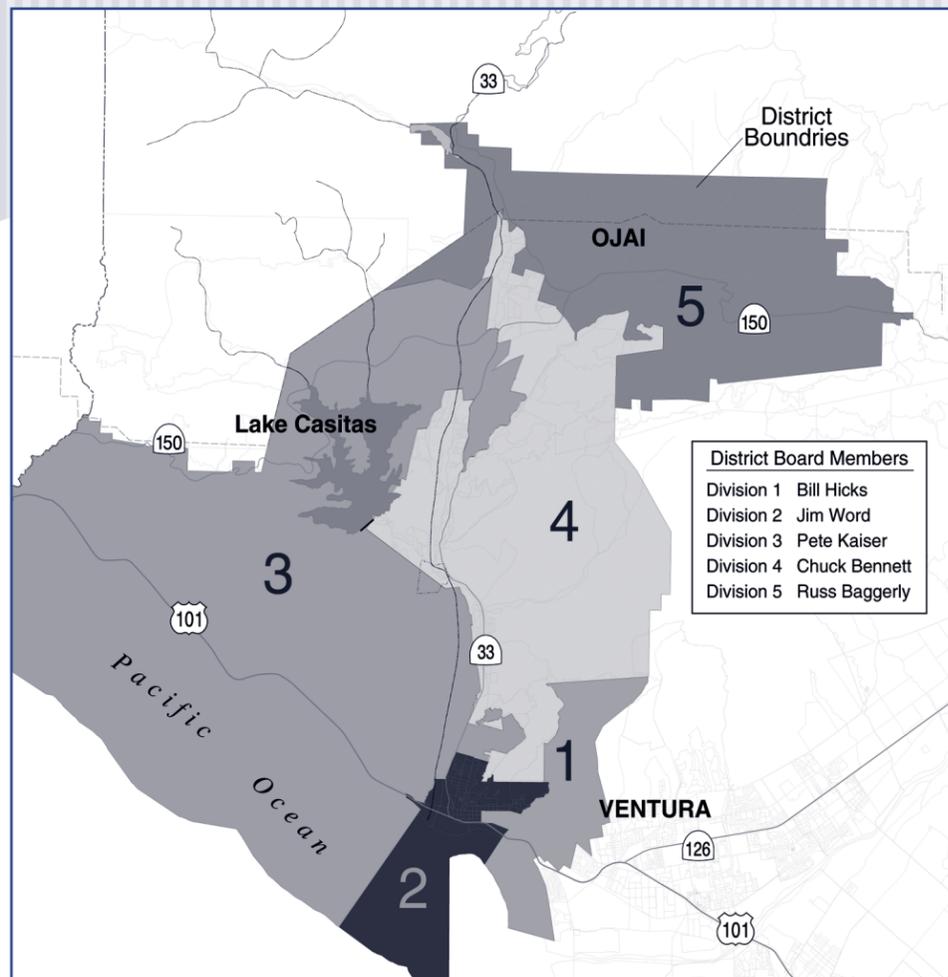
Residents and farmers during the 1940's and 1950's continued to struggle with water shortages in the area that is now encompassed by the boundaries of the Casitas Municipal Water District. Many people were having to truck in water to the area during periods of even minimal drought. The Casitas Municipal Water District was created in the early 1950s to address this issue and to help establish the Ventura River Project in 1956. The District enlisted federal assistance, by means of the Bureau of Reclamation, to construct the Ventura River Project. Between 1956 and 1959, the Bureau designed and constructed Casitas Dam, approximately 85 miles of pipeline, Robles Dam and Canal, six reservoir tanks, and five pump plants. The District later continued to expand upon this infrastructure to serve additional customers.

The properties within the boundaries of the District have a portion of their property taxes used for repaying the cost of building the Ventura River Project infrastructure. Casitas collects the property tax dollars to repay the federal loan for building the project. The District is divided into five divisions. Residents vote for candidates running in their respective divisions for a position on the Casitas Municipal Water District's Board of Directors during general elections when their particular seat is up for election, which is every four years.

Casitas is considered a primary source of water for drought protection. Casitas water is supplied to most agencies within the District during severe droughts so nearly everyone living within the District is likely to receive Casitas water at some point.

### Water Agencies Within Casitas Boundaries:

- Casitas Mutual Water Company
- Hermitage Mutual Water Company
- Meiners Oaks County Water District



Casitas Municipal Water District Boundaries with insert showing the five board members division boundaries.

### Old Creek Road Water Association

### Oviatt Water Association

### Rancho del Cielo Mutual Water Company

### Rincon Water and Road Works

### Senior Canyon Mutual Water Company

### Siete Robles Mutual Water Company

### Sisar Mutual Water Company

### Southern California Water Company Sulphur Mountain Road Water Association

### Tico Mutual Water Company

### Toyon Ranches Mutual Water Company

### City of Ventura

### Ventura River County Water District

## Casitas Recreation Area

Continued from page 1

features more than 400 campsites; day use areas; two boat launch ramps; an upgraded digital satellite television signal for hook-up sites; and free movies at our outdoor theater in the park for campers.



Casitas Recreation Area has many amenities, including boat and overnight trailer rentals, two boat launch ramps and a lakeside café.

# What We Heard From You: The Survey Results

Casitas would like to thank the more than 140 people who responded to our survey. We were pleased to see that the responses we received were mostly positive. In questions 1-4, all the average ratings placed the newsletter above a "good" rating. In questions 5-10, the vast majority of respondents indicated they wanted to continue to see various topics covered in upcoming newsletters.

The issue our readers commented on the most was clearly the Robles Fish Passage Facility. This issue generated a great deal of passion from those of you who responded to our survey. We received 16 negative written comments about the fish ladder and 11 positive comments about it. Five people wrote neutral comments. Some examples of the comments related to the fish ladder included:

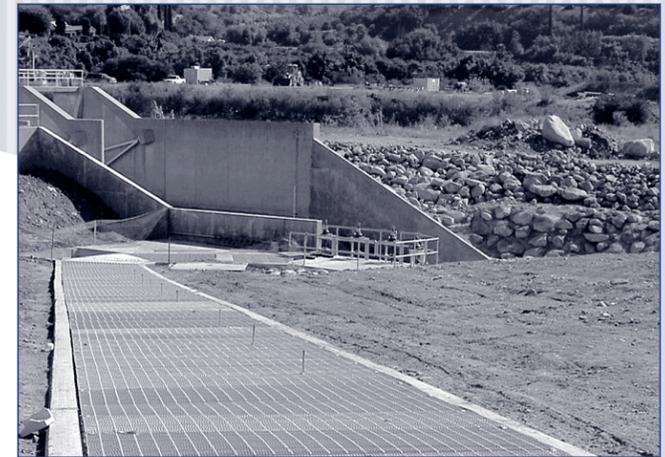
*"I'm confused, your newsletter seems supportive of the fish ladder and dam removal but your actions seem constantly bent on thwarting them both."*

*"More news on the fish and what we can hope for in the future."*

*"Fish ladder – stupid waste of money!"*

*"Keep us current on the fish ladder and Matilija issues."*

*"Fish ladder, Matilija Dam - I'd like to know more about these two subjects."*



Covering over the new fish passage facility entryway located at the Robles Diversion Facility on the Ventura River.

*"Tone of newsletter was anti-fish ladder."*

*"(Like to see) More on the fish."*

Average rating for responses to the following four questions regarding how readers valued the newsletter. (1= Very Good, 2=Good, 3=Average, 4=Poor). 140 respondents.

1. The newsletter increases my understanding of water issues.	2. It raises my awareness of water policy developments like water supply impacts associated with the fish passage facility or Matilija Dam projects.	3. The newsletter increases my interest in learning about issues such as water conservation in the home and yard.	4. The newsletter provides information otherwise not available elsewhere, like information about water-supply issues in Ventura County.
1.88	1.88	1.95	1.91

Responses to questions 5-10 involving what respondents (140) wanted to see in future newsletters.

Questions	Yes	No	No Change	Eliminate	No Response
5. Would you like more Lake Casitas recreation information on topics like clean-up day, fishing day, and the water park?	73	28	25	3	11
6. Would you like more information about District operational issues like water pumps and treatment processes?	61	26	38	1	14
7. Would you like more information about how customers are affected by water issues?	91	15	21	1	12
8. Do you find water-conservation information, like how to conserve water in the yard or in the home, to be helpful?	100	17	14	1	8
9. Do you find the full color annual water quality report to be helpful?*	68	28	27	4	13
10. Are you interested in water policy information like state and federal legislative issues or local decision making?	108	8	16	0	8

\*11 respondents said the report did not need to be in color. Our printer tells us that when we print more than 500 copies of sheets larger than letterhead, the job must run on a two-color press.

The District is committed to include in our future newsletters articles that address issues in which you have expressed interest or concern. Anyone who would like to receive a more detailed account of the survey responses may contact Ron Merckling, Water Conservation Manager, at (805) 649-2251, extension 118.

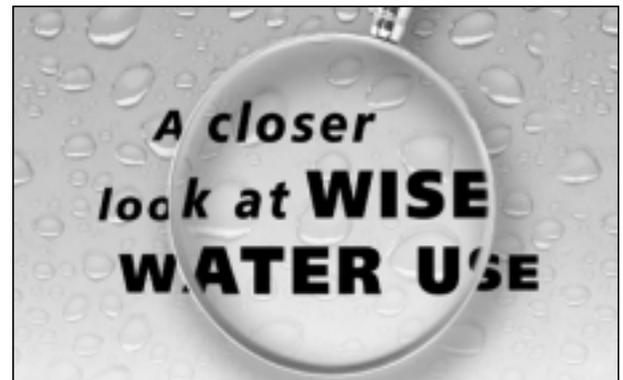
# Reliable and Healthy Supply of Water Prioritized in 2005-06 Budget

Casitas' 2005-06 budget, in the amount of \$10.35 million, was adopted on June 8, 2005. Although the District is facing cost constraints, the District prioritized its water utility mission to provide a reliable supply of healthy and clean drinking water to our customers.

The budget is split between the District's two primary functions: to include the water deliveries and maintenance, and lake recreation area operations and maintenance. The budget's largest annual revenue source is projected to come from water sales, at \$6.27 million. This pays for most of our water utility operations. The District's recreation operations are independently balanced. The recreation budget is considered an enterprise fund, which means it is funded independently of the water utility operations. Recreation funding comes from user fees. Recreation has provided a balanced budget for the past 15 years so District customers do not pay for any recreation operating expenses.

Some budgetary highlights for the District include:

- Funding approximately \$250,000 for Ventura River improvements that are required to help the endangered Southern California Steelhead trout to swim upstream.
- Budgeting for emergency rainstorm damage repairs that were needed after this past winter's rainstorms. Federal and state emergency funds were not enough to cover all repair costs.
- Accounting for the loss of about \$800,000 in property tax revenues that were taken by the state of California.
- Reducing some maintenance efforts and delaying some necessary upgrades for future years. Overall, however, the budget covers all necessary services to District customers



We all want attractive yards, patios, and outdoor areas around our homes and workplaces. This can be easily accomplished by making strategic landscaping choices in your yard that incorporate both aesthetic and water-conscious considerations.

### **Trees, plants and shrubs, what to do next:**

Check with your local nursery to learn about drought-resistant plants and shrubs. Some popular water-saving plants, shrubs and trees for our area (listed by popular name) include:  
**Perennial plants** – Old English Phlox, Daylily, Plantain Lily, Purple cornflower, and Yarrow.  
**Trees** – Golden Raintree and James McFarlane Lilac.  
**Shrubs** – Bearberry, Bumalda Spirea, Glossy Abelia, Japanese Holly, Japanese Spirea, Mugo Pine, Willowleaf Cotoneaster, and Wintergreen Barberry.

Ron Merckling, Water Conservation Coordinator, is available at 805-649-2251 ext. 118 or [rmerckling@casitaswater.com](mailto:rmerckling@casitaswater.com), to talk about water conservation.

## Casitas Water News

### What's Inside: Your Responses to Our Survey, Surprises Under Lake Casitas



#### Casitas Municipal Water District

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