March 26, 2019 State of the District
Questions + Answers

1. **In light of the fact that reservoirs behind dams eventually fill with silt, has that been factored into the current estimates of volume of water stored? What percentage of the original capacity is now displaced by silt? Is that reflected in the current 44.3% water level? What is the current actual capacity of the lake to store water, minus the current volume of silt?**

   ***Response*:** The storage volume of the lake was reevaluated in 2017 to take into account the sediment buildup over the years. A hydrographic survey was performed to measure the lake depth over its area. The previous capacity of 254,000 acre-feet (AF) was revised to 237,975 AF, a 6% decrease. The current percentage of water stored in the lake reflects the revised capacity.

2. **Will the biological opinion be revised if lake levels get to Stage 5 to increase storm flows into the lake?**

   ***Response*:** Yes, if Lake Casitas' level reach Stage 5 condition, a new set of Critical Drought Protection Measures (CDPM) will be implemented to provide additional water diversions. The stated goal in the Biological Opinion is a 50% reduction of required river releases. However, revised CDPMs must be approved by state and federal agencies before they can be implemented. If and when lake level dips toward Stage 5 conditions, Casitas will work with relevant agencies to develop new CDPMs and to receive approval prior to reaching Stage 5.

3. **Does Casitas sell water to West Ventura?**

   ***Response*:** Yes, the City of Ventura is a wholesale customer of the District. The District, which includes the western portion of the City of Ventura, was formed in 1952 when the public voted to improve water supply reliability. The Ventura River Project was constructed between 1956-1958 and funded through bond funding, which West Ventura residents also contributed to.

4. **Has Casitas considered water-wheeling instead of constructing a pipeline from Ventura to Casitas' trunk line?**

   ***Response*:** Wheeling is the conveying of water through the unused capacity in a pipeline or aqueduct by another water provider. The District is investigating an intertie with Carpinteria Valley Water District (CVWD) to make use of unused capacity in the South Coast Conduit pipeline in Santa Barbara County. This would still require the construction of a pipeline to connect Casitas and CVWD. This project, and the potential interconnection between Casitas and Ventura, are in the preliminary design phase. They are not mutually exclusive, i.e., they could both be constructed to provide additional redundancy in times of emergency and to provide access to the District's State Water Project allocation.

5. **How much water does the oil fields use from the Ventura River Basin? What is the source(s): surface, ground-wells, treated water, drinking water?**

   ***Response*:** The District is unable to provide information about specific water users' water consumption as the information is private.

6. **I live in Meiners Oaks. How is Meiner Oaks Water District "tied into" Casitas?**

   ***Response*:** Meiners Oaks Water District (MOWD) relies on groundwater for its primary source of water. During times when MOWD is unable to meet their full water demand, MOWD can import water from the CMWD. This is done through multiple piping connections that connect both systems and allow water to flow from CMWD to MOWD.

7. **How do I talk to people who are hosing down driveways? They are acting like there is plenty of water because of the rain we've had. What can I say nicely?**

   ***Response*:** Thank you for your efforts in ensuring our community conserves water! When you see water waste, we recommend that you contact your water provider. If Casitas is your direct water provider, please contact our water waste line by phone at 805-649-2251 ext. 128, or access our website at casitaswater.org and click on the "Report Water Waste" button.

   If a water waste situation is found to be occurring, then notices of water waste violations will be given to violators by telephone, mail, hand-delivery, or a post at the premise. A written notice will be issued stating time, place and general description of the violation, along with a time frame to correct the violation.

8. **Please address emergency management, especially related to Casitas dam regarding:**
    a. **Risk**
    b. **Risk management**
    c. **Community preparedness, especially alerts, alarms, evacuation**
    d. **Potentials to improve and upgrade risk mitigation, preparedness, and response**

***Response*:** The United States Bureau of Reclamation (USBR) built the Casitas Dam as part of the Ventura River Project in 1959. The USBR has overall jurisdiction while Casitas is the operator of the dam. While Casitas would be instrumental in providing suggestions and information to the USBR in the event of an emergency, the USBR has the final approval on measures to mitigate any hazards.

The two biggest risks to the dam would be an earthquake or overflow. Since it is an embankment dam, if the lake level exceeds the height of the dam, the overflowing water would rapidly erode the backside of the dam. There is a concrete spillway capable of moving a high volume of water to prevent an overflow and pre-emptive measures can be made based on forecasted weather reports.

Operators of the treatment plant at the base of the dam receive continued specialized training of risks associated with dams. Casitas also has an on-site Damtender who inspects the dam anytime an earthquake is detected in the area. Should any problems be discovered during the inspection, the USBR Emergency Action Plan (EAP) would be initiated.

The EAP provides steps to follow in the event of any potential emergency. This includes contact information for pertinent public officials and initial measures to take to begin the response process. These measures include contact with city and county emergency response personnel who would manage community notifications and evacuations, should they be required. In June, Casitas will be performing a functional exercise of the EAP with the USBR and local community responders to perform a stress test on our existing plans. Any gaps in our procedures will be addressed to improve the overall program.

9. **Are water customers paying for the recreation programs at the lake or are they self supporting?**

***Response*:** No, water customers are not paying for the recreation programs at the Lake Casitas Recreation Area. The recreation department's direct revenue is typically above all direct expenses for the recreation programs, including salary benefits, watershed

management, claim costs, and even depreciation. The revenue from the Lake Casitas Recreation area actually assists the District in providing District overhead costs.

10. **Who are the heroes who worked during the Thomas Fire?**

***Response*:** Thank you for providing us the opportunity to recognize the efforts our operations staff made toward saving property and lives during the fire. It was a significant challenge that took great effort and sacrifice from staff to ensure the system remained operational during the power outages. The aftermath of the fire is still providing challenges to Casitas, from water quality to the operation of the diversion canal.

Numerous employees worked steadfast throughout the disaster and dedicated themselves to ensuring that both the firefighting personnel and the communities within the district had an uninterrupted supply of water. We'd like to especially call out:

- The staff who stayed behind to operate the system when their families evacuated town;
- The staff who never went home from December 4th through December 8th and stuck it out for the district and the community;
- The staff who went into the active fire zone to monitor tank levels and operate pump stations when communications were down;
- The staff who communicated with our customers regarding water supply and patrolled the district to ensure conservation and curtail unnecessary water use;
- The staff who went into the active fire zone to setup and fuel the 12 emergency generators that powered district facilities; and
- The staff who operated our dam and treatment plants to ensure a continuous water supply.

Without hesitation, the District can say that more homes are standing and less destruction is present in the communities because of these employees' efforts. Heroes? Absolutely.

11. Were spawning areas reduced due to silt/sediment from fires?

***Response*:** Yes, the first two storms (January and March 2018) after the Thomas Fire washed an extensive amount of ash and silt into the Ventura River and tributaries. This ash and silt covered significant areas that had quality spawning gravel used by Steelhead and Rainbow Trout. However, the storm flows this year have cleaned much of the fine silt from the river and moved new spawning gravel into areas that previously did not have quality gravel before. Therefore, a short-term negative effect occurred from the fire, but

long-term there will likely be a positive effect on spawning success of Steelhead and Rainbow Trout in the Ventura River and tributaries.