

Meiners Oaks Water District

Drought Update

April 2018

Despite recent rains, this winter has been exceptionally dry. Moreover, fine ash from the Thomas fire has apparently reduced groundwater recharge along the Ventura River. River flows that normally soak into the ground upstream of Highway 150 are now flowing all the way to the ocean. As a result, our wells have recharged less than expected. It is hard to predict how long our wells will continue pumping in these unprecedented conditions.

Fortunately, if our wells go dry, we will receive lake water from Casitas MWD. Of course, once that happens you will see the “Casitas Surcharge” added to your water bills each month. Lake water is not free. We will advise you when that happens.

Here is how we plan to respond to the worsening drought:

- ◆ Lake Casitas is now at 35.7% of capacity. We will notify you when the lake falls below 30%, possibly in the fall, at which time Casitas MWD will declare a Stage 4 drought. We will also declare Stage 4 at that time. In Stage 4, we must attain a 40% reduction in water use compared to pre-drought usage.
- ◆ We are revising our allocation and rate program to more closely conform to the Water Efficiency and Allocation Program (WEAP) implemented by our backup water supplier, Casitas MWD. We are calculating new allocations for our customers based on the WEAP. We will send you information and hold a public meeting to discuss the changes to our program before we implement it.
- ◆ There is a chance that Lake Casitas could go dry in as little as 4-5 years. Casitas MWD is participating in ongoing studies to import state water from the north. We are participating in discussions with them and other agencies about how the project would work. Casitas is also pursuing their “Hobo Project” (Horizontal Bore) to increase local groundwater supplies.
- ◆ We are also considering a new well within our district, drilled into the deeper, untapped “Cold Water Formation.”

We will keep you informed on these efforts. However, even with these potential projects, it is essential that our customers increase their efforts to conserve water. This is not a good time to plant a garden or new landscaping. Please visit our website or call us at 805-646-2114 if you have any questions.