



Water Shortage Contingency Plan for the Meiners Oaks Water District

June 20, 2023

Water is a precious resource in California, and maintaining its quality is of utmost importance to safeguard the health of the public and the environment.



Meiners Oaks Water District

(Name of Utility)

202 W. El Roblar Drive, Ojai, CA 93023

(Address, City, Zip Code)

www.meinersoakswater.org

(Website)

CA5610005

(PWS #)

July 1, 2023

(Plan Effective Date)

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Summary

The purpose of this Water Shortage Contingency Plan (“WSCP”) is to outline how the Meiners Oaks Water District (the “District”) plans to bring its water demand into balance with its limited water supply during varying stages of drought. The District’s mission is to produce and deliver a reliable and sustainable supply of water to meet the needs of the residents, properties, and community within its boundaries. This WSCP is part of the District’s management plan, as it improves preparedness for droughts and other impacts on water supplies. The WSCP allows water supply availability assessment and structured steps designed to respond to actual conditions, allowing for efficient and effective management of any shortage with predictability and accountability.

This WSCP was prepared in accordance with Water Code Section 10609.6 and contains all the mandatory elements. This WSCP is consistent with Casitas Municipal Water District’s (“Casitas”) Urban Water Management Plan and prepared in coordination with Ventura River Water District to ensure consistent water supply messaging among local water suppliers.

Section I: Declaration of Policy, Purpose, and Intent

In order to conserve the available water supply and protect the integrity of public water system (PWS) supply facilities, with particular regard for domestic water use, sanitation, and fire protection, to protect and preserve public health, welfare, and safety and minimize the adverse impacts of a water supply shortage or other water supply emergency conditions, the District hereby adopts the following regulations and restrictions on the delivery and consumption of water through Resolution 20230620 Adoption of Water Shortage Contingency Plan.

Water uses regulated or prohibited under this WSCP are considered to be non-essential, and continuation of such uses during times of water shortage or other emergency water supply conditions are deemed to constitute a waste of water, subjecting the offender(s) to penalties as defined in Section XI of the WSCP.

Section II: Public Involvement

The District provided the opportunity for the public to provide input into the preparation of the WSCP through in-person and web-based Board meetings. The final adoption of the WSCP occurred at a properly noticed Board meeting on June 20, 2023.

Section III: Public Education

The District will regularly provide the public with information about the WSCP, including information about the conditions under which each stage of the WSCP is to be initiated or terminated and the drought response measures to be implemented in each stage. Detailed information on public education is provided in Section X of the WSCP.

Section IV: Coordination with Regional Water Planning Groups

The District's service area is located within the Upper Ventura River Groundwater Agency (UVRGA) regional water planning area. The regional water planning area assessment documents were considered in developing the WSCP. A copy of the final WSCP was posted on June 26, 2023, on the District's website: www.meinersoakswater.org.

Section V: Authorization

The General Manager, or designee, is hereby authorized and directed to implement the applicable provisions of this WSCP upon determination that such implementation is necessary to protect public health, safety, and welfare. The General Manager, or designee, shall have the authority to initiate or terminate drought or other water supply emergency response measures as described in this WSCP. The contact information for General Manager, Justin Martinez, is (805) 646-2114 or justin@meinersoakswater.com.

Section VI: Application

The provisions of this WSCP shall apply to all persons, customers, and property utilizing water provided by the District. The terms "person" and "customer" as used in the WSCP may include individuals, corporations, partnerships, associations, and all other legal entities.

Section VII: Definitions

For the purposes of this WSCP, the following definitions shall apply:

Aesthetic water use: water used for ornamental or decorative purposes such as fountains, reflecting pools, and water gardens.

Commercial and Institutional water use: water use is integral to the operations of commercial and non-profit establishments and governmental entities such as schools, hospitals, clinics, retail establishments, hotels and motels, restaurants, and office buildings.

Conservation: those practices, techniques, and technologies that reduce the consumption of water, reduce the loss or waste of water, improve the efficiency in the use of water or increase the recycling and reuse of water so that a supply is conserved and made available for future or alternative uses.

Customer: any person, company, or organization using water supplied by the District.

Domestic water use: water use for personal needs or for household or sanitary purposes such as drinking, bathing, heating, cooking, sanitation, or for cleaning a residence, business, industry, or institution.

Industrial water use: the use of water in processes designed to convert materials of lower value into forms having greater usability and value.

Landscape irrigation use: water used for the irrigation and maintenance of landscaped areas, whether publicly or privately owned, including residential and commercial lawns, gardens, golf courses, parks, rights-of-way, and medians.

Non-essential water use: water uses that are not essential nor required for the protection of public health, safety, and welfare, including:

- (a) irrigation of landscape areas, including parks, athletic fields, and golf courses, except otherwise provided under this WSCP;
- (b) use of water to wash any motor vehicle, motorbike, boat, trailer, airplane, or other vehicle;
- (c) use of water to wash down any sidewalks, walkways, driveways, parking lots, tennis courts, or other hard-surfaced areas;
- (d) use of water to wash down buildings or structures for purposes other than immediate fire protection;
- (e) flushing gutters or permitting water to run or accumulate in any gutter or street;
- (f) use of water to fill, refill, or add to any indoor or outdoor swimming pools or Jacuzzi-type pools;
- (g) use of water in a fountain or pond for aesthetic or scenic purposes except where necessary to support aquatic life;

- (h) failure to repair a controllable leak(s) within a reasonable period after having been given notice directing the repair of such leak(s); and
- (i) use of water from hydrants for construction purposes or any other purposes other than firefighting or hauling water for domestic water use.

Section VIII: Summary of Drought Response Stages and Response Actions

The General Manager or designee shall monitor water supply and/or demand conditions monthly and determine when conditions warrant initiation or termination of each stage of the WSCP, that is when the specified “triggers” are reached.

The triggering and termination criteria described in the subsequent sections are based on:

- Level of water storage in Lake Casitas;
- Groundwater well elevations and/or well production capacities relative to demands;
- County, State, or Federal Drought Emergency Orders; and
- Emergencies such as fire, earthquake, etc. resulting in potential water outages.

The response actions described in subsequent sections of this document are based on the following general precepts:

- Water conservation techniques include implementing progressively more strict water use policies, primarily focused on outdoor irrigation. In a natural disaster type scenario, water supplies will be limited based on minimum fixed dwelling allocations.
- Public notification is performed in various ways to ensure the residents receive drought messaging. This may include messages on the District’s website, social media, bill stuffers, drought banners, and other news media. Whenever possible, messages will be provided in English and Spanish. Messaging will be coordinated with Casitas and Ventura River Water District.
- The District will coordinate with a variety of agencies, including but not limited to the County of Ventura’s Environmental Health, the State Water Board’s Division of Drinking Water, local water suppliers, and the Upper Ventura River Groundwater Agency. In the event of severe water shortages, the District will also coordinate with County Public Health to support County registered vulnerable persons and the County Offices of Emergency Services (OES).

Response Stage	Event	Trigger	Response Action	Termination Action
Stage 1 Voluntary	Normal conditions.	Lake level 100% - 50%	Encourage water conservation practices, water waste prohibitions, and drought-tolerant landscaping. Ongoing water conservation campaign. Voluntary 20% reduction in water use.	In place indefinitely during normal conditions.
Stage 2 Warning	Anticipated drought conditions. or Minor water supply interruption.	Lake level 50% - 40% Minor water outage due to minor distribution equipment failure and/or small power outages.	Encourage drought-tolerant landscaping and water conservation. Outdoor water budget reduced by 20%. Ongoing water conservation campaign.	Lake level above 50%. Break is repaired and/or power is restored. Upon termination of Stage 2, Stage 1 becomes operative unless otherwise specified.
Stage 3 Acute	Below normal precipitation for a prolonged period. or Serious/prolonged water supply interruption.	Lake level 40% - 30% Serious water outage due to distribution equipment failure and/or power outages.	Mandatory 30% reduction in water use. Outdoor water budget reduced by 30%. Intensify water conservation campaign. Consider implementing drought surcharge and conservation penalties.	Lake level above 40% Outage is repaired or a backup water supply has been provided and/or power is restored. Upon termination of Stage 3, Stage 2 becomes operative unless otherwise specified.
Stage 4 Severe	Below normal precipitation for a prolonged period. or Serious/prolonged water supply interruption.	Lake level 30% - 25%	Mandatory 40% reduction in water use. Outdoor water budget reduced by 40%. Intensify water conservation campaign. Consider implementing drought surcharge and conservation penalties.	Lake level above 30% Outage is repaired or a backup water supply has been provided and/or power is restored. Upon termination of Stage 4, Stage 3 becomes operative unless otherwise specified.
Stage 5 Critical	Below normal precipitation for a prolonged period. Severe water supply interruption.	Lake level 25% - 0%	Outdoor water budget reduced by 50%, then transition to 0% as lake level drops. Consider setting allocations to only health and sanitation allocations minimum per dwelling. Consider implementing drought surcharge and conservation penalties.	Lake level above 25%. Outage is repaired or mostly repaired and/or power is restored. Upon termination of Stage 5, Stage 4 becomes operative unless otherwise specified.

Stage 6 Catastrophic	Complete water interruption.	Well/pump failure and/or major tank/transmission main failure and/or severe power outage.	Restrict use for health and sanitation purposes only.	Interruption is repaired or a backup water supply has been provided and/or power is restored. Health advisory lifted by DDW. Upon termination of Stage 6, current Stage in effect becomes operative unless otherwise specified.
	or Water contamination.	Well and/or distribution system contamination. Natural disaster that interrupts water supply.	Distribute health advisories; may prohibit use completely. Restrict outdoor water use completely, including all Ag.	

Section IX: Drought Response Triggers & Actions

The primary water source available to the District is from the Upper Ventura River Groundwater Basin. The sustainable yield described in the UVRGA's 2022 Groundwater Sustainability Plan is estimated at 5,600 AF/yr. The basin has demonstrated the ability to quickly recharge within any year with sufficient rainfall; however, the basin has a very small amount of groundwater storage, rapidly and naturally draining to the Ventura River during dry periods. The Lake Casitas surface water supply serves as the backup water supply to the groundwater supply during extended droughts. The drought response triggers are based on the level of water storage in Lake Casitas.

The goals of the Staged Demand Reduction are to:

- 1) Conserve water supply for the greatest priority and public benefit; and
- 2) Mitigate the water shortage effects on public health and safety.

Stage 1 – Voluntary Water Shortage WATCH Conditions

Target: Achieve a voluntary 20% reduction in total monthly water use.

Trigger: Lake Casitas storage is between 100% - 50% of its capacity.

Response Actions:

- a) The District's interties with Casitas will be tested periodically to ensure they are operational.
- b) Positive shut-off nozzles for hoses;
- c) Voluntary limitation of irrigating landscaped areas to the hours of 6:00 pm – 10:00 am.
- d) Friendly Reminder door hangers when water waste is observed by the District.
- e) Water conservation banners installed throughout the District.

Notification Methods:

Methods: 1, 2, and 3 (described in Section X)

Agencies Contacted:

Contact Casitas Municipal Water District and Ventura River Water District to coordinate future actions.

Requirements for termination

Stage 1 of the WSCP always remains operative unless superseded by a more severe stage.

Stage 2 - Water Shortage WARNING Conditions

Target: Achieve a 20% reduction in total monthly water use.

Trigger: Lake Casitas storage is between 50% - 40% of capacity, and Casitas has declared a Stage 2 drought condition with a mandatory 20% demand reduction.

Response Actions:

- a) The District's interties with Casitas will be tested periodically to ensure they are operational.
 - a. Monitor groundwater elevations, production rates, and demand rates, and be prepared to turn on Casitas connection(s).
- b) Positive shut-off nozzles for hoses and water-conserving shower heads.
- c) Limit outside irrigation to the hours of 6:00 pm – 10:00 am, no outside irrigation within 48 hours of measurable rainfall.
- d) Friendly Reminder door hangers when water waste is observed by the District.
- e) Water conservation banners installed throughout the District.
- f) Implement fines for improper water use (water waste).
- g) Consider implementing a drought surcharge.
- h) Consider reducing customer variable allocations by 20%.

Notification Methods:

Methods: 1, 2, and 3 (described in Section X)

Agencies Contacted:

Contact Casitas Municipal Water District and Ventura River Water District to coordinate future actions.

Requirements for termination

Stage 2 of the WSCP may be rescinded when all the conditions listed as triggering events have ceased to exist. Upon termination of Stage 2, Stage 1 becomes operative unless otherwise specified.

Stage 3 – ACUTE Water Shortage Conditions

Target: Achieve a 30% reduction in total monthly water use.

Trigger: Lake Casitas storage is between 40% - 30% of capacity, and Casitas has declared a Stage 3 drought condition with a mandatory 30% demand reduction.

Response Actions:

- a) The District's interties with Casitas will be tested periodically to ensure they are operational.
 - a. Monitor groundwater elevations, production rates, and demand rates, and be prepared to turn on Casitas connection(s).
- b) Increase conservation messaging.
- c) Required positive shut-off nozzles for hoses and water-conserving shower heads.
- d) Limit outside irrigation to the hours of 6:00 pm – 10:00 am, no outside irrigation within 48 hours of measurable rainfall.
- e) Friendly Reminder door hangers when water waste is observed by the District.
- f) Implement/continue fines for improper water use (water waste).
- g) Implement a drought surcharge.
- h) Reduce customer variable allocations by 30%.

Notification Methods:

Methods: 1 - 5 (described in Section X)

Agencies Contacted:

Contact Casitas Municipal Water District and Ventura River Water District to coordinate future actions.

Requirements for termination

Stage 3 of the WSCP may be rescinded when all the conditions listed as triggering events have ceased to exist. Upon termination of Stage 3, Stage 2 becomes operative unless otherwise specified.

Stage 4 - CRITICAL Water Shortage Conditions

Target: Achieve a 40% reduction in total monthly water use.

Trigger: Lake Casitas storage is between 30% - 25% of capacity, and Casitas has declared a Stage 4 drought condition with a mandatory 40% demand reduction.

Response Actions:

- a) The District's interties with Casitas will be tested periodically to ensure they are operational.
 - a. Monitor groundwater elevations, production rates, and demand rates, and be prepared to turn on Casitas connection(s).
- b) Increase conservation messaging, including joint messaging from local water suppliers.
- c) Required positive shut-off nozzles for hoses and water-conserving shower heads.
- d) Limit outside irrigation to the hours of 6:00 pm – 10:00 am, no outside irrigation within 48 hours of measurable rainfall.
- e) Friendly Reminder door hangers when water waste is observed by the District.
- f) Implement/continue fines for improper water use (water waste).
- g) Implement a drought surcharge.
- h) Reduce customer variable allocations by 40%.

Notification Methods:

Methods: 1 - 5 (described in Section X)

Agencies Contacted:

Contact Casitas Municipal Water District and Ventura River Water District to coordinate future actions.

Requirements for termination

Stage 4 of the WSCP may be rescinded when all the conditions listed as triggering events have ceased to exist. Upon termination of Stage 4, Stage 3 becomes operative unless otherwise specified.

Stage 5 - EMERGENCY Water Shortage Conditions

Target: Achieve a 50% reduction in total monthly water use.

Trigger: Lake Casitas storage is between 25% - 0% of capacity, and Casitas has declared a Stage 5 drought condition with a mandatory 50% demand reduction.

Response Actions:

- a) The District's interties with Casitas will be tested periodically to ensure they are operational.
 - a. Monitor groundwater elevations, production rates, and demand rates, and be prepared to turn on Casitas connection(s).
- b) Increase conservation messaging, including joint messaging from local water suppliers.
- c) Required positive shut-off nozzles for hoses and water-conserving shower heads.
- d) Limit outside irrigation to the hours of 6:00 pm – 10:00 am, no outside irrigation within 48 hours of measurable rainfall.
- e) Friendly Reminder door hangers when water waste is observed by the District.
- f) Implement/continue fines for improper water use (water waste).
- g) Implement a drought surcharge.
- h) Reduce customer variable allocations by 50% and/or reduction of allocations to minimum fixed-only allocations.

Notification Methods:

Methods: 1 - 5 (described in Section X)

Agencies Contacted:

Contact Casitas Municipal Water District and Ventura River Water District to coordinate future actions.

Requirements for termination

Stage 5 of the WSCP may be rescinded when all the conditions listed as triggering events have ceased to exist. Upon termination of Stage 5, Stage 4 becomes operative unless otherwise specified.

Stage 6 Triggers – CATASTROPHIC Water Shortage Conditions

Target: Cease all outdoor irrigation. Limit water to essential uses only.

Trigger: Enacted when a catastrophic event occurs such that no water can be supplied due to infrastructure damage or failure. Such an event would trigger the implementation of the District's Emergency Response Plan.

Response Actions:

Follow recommended response actions in the most recently adopted MOWD Emergency Response Plan.

In the event that water outages occur and the Casitas connections are not available, the District will coordinate with the County Office of Emergency Services and/or CalWARN, as soon as possible if hauling of water is needed.

Notification Methods:

Methods: 1 - 6 (described in Section X)

Agencies Contacted:

Contact Casitas Municipal Water District and Ventura River Water District to coordinate actions.

Suppose adequate water supply will potentially become unavailable. In that case, the following emergency services providers will be notified as soon as possible to ensure that adequate planning, response, and assistance may be provided.

Local Fire	VC Fire Station 22	(805) 640-2777 or (805) 389-9710
Hospital	Ojai Valley Hospital	(805) 646-1401
Schools	Ojai Unified School District	(805) 640-4300
	Oak Grove School	(805) 646-8236
Elder Care	Artesian	(805) 798-9305
	Glen Park at Ojai	(805) 646-2402
Emergency	State Water Board	(805) 566-1326
	VC OES	(805) 654-2551

CATASTROPHIC Water Allocation Plan

In the event that water shortage conditions threaten public health, safety, and welfare, the General Manager, or designee, is hereby authorized to allocate water according to the following water allocation plan:

Single-Family Residential Customers

The allocation to residential water customers residing in a single-family dwelling shall be as follows:

Fixed Allocation Per Dwelling	Gallons per Month
Primary	7,480 or 10 HCF
Secondary	5,236 or 7 HCF
Tiny Home (<500 SF)	753 or 5 HCF

Master-Metered Multi-Family Residential Customers

The allocation to residential water customers billed from a master meter which jointly measures water to multiple permanent residential dwelling units shall be allocated as follows:

Master-Metered Dwelling Units	Gallons per Month per Unit
Multi-Family (Apartments)	5,236 or 7 HCF
Mobile Home Parks	5,236 or 7 HCF

Commercial Customers

A monthly water allocation shall be established by the General Manager, or designee, for each nonresidential, non-industrial commercial water customer who uses water for processing purposes. The allocation to nonresidential, non-industrial commercial water customers shall be 10 HCF or 7,480 gal/month.

Agriculture Customers

In a catastrophic event, all outdoor irrigation would be prohibited, including Agriculture.

Requirements for termination

Stage 6 of the WSCP may be rescinded when all the conditions listed as triggering events have ceased to exist. Upon termination of Stage 6, Stage 5 becomes operative unless otherwise specified.

Section X: Drought Response Stages

The General Manager, or designee, shall monitor water supply and/or demand conditions on a monthly basis and, in accordance with the triggering criteria set forth in Section IX of this WSCP, shall determine if a water shortage condition exists and the severity of any such water shortage conditions (e.g., *1-Watch, 2-Warning, 3-Acute, 4-Critical, 5-Emergency, 6-Catastrophic Water Loss*), and shall implement the following notification procedures accordingly:

Notifications

The General Manager or designee shall notify the public by means of one of the following Methods:

1. Public Notice on the District's website, social media and/or signage at District Office;
2. Direct mail to all customers via bill stuffer, emails and/or specific mailers;
3. Notice in the Ojai Valley News joint messaging with Casitas and Ventura River Water District;
4. Door to Door outreach focused primarily on elderly, vulnerable residents, high water users and/or parts of the distribution system most impacted by the emergency;
5. Phone calls to care facilities and schools; and
6. County Emergency Messaging alerts.

Prepared materials from the Department of Water Resources, "Save Our Water Toolkit", may be used as drought communication tools: <https://saveourwater.com/en/Partner-Toolkit>

Public Safety Contacts:

The General Manager, or designee, shall notify directly the following individuals and entities of restrictions or water shortages, as defined in the subsections below, as appropriate for each response stage.

Organization or Department	Name & Position	Telephone	Email
Fire Department Station 22	Battalion Chief	(805) 640-2777 (805) 389-9710	
Police Department	Ojai Police Department	(805) 646-1414	
County Office of Emergency Services	Daniel Cohen, Water Agency Contact	(805) 654-2551 (805) 654-2311	dcohen@calleguas.com
Ventura County Watershed Protection District		(805) 654-2018	
Ojai Valley Sanitation District	Jeff Palmer, General Manager	(805) 646-5548 (805) 340-5585	Jeff.palmer@ojaisan.org
Ventura County Environmental Health		(805) 654-2813 (805) 654-2818	
State Division of Drinking Water	Patrick Karinja, Div 6 Engineer	(805) 566-1326 (805) 566-1839	Patrick.Karinja@waterboards.ca.gov
Ojai Valley Community Hospital		(805) 646-1401	
Upper Ventura River Groundwater Agency	Bryan Bondy, Executive Director	(805) 212-0484	bbondy@uvrgroundwater.org
Mutual Aid Contact / CalWARN Contact	Mike Flood, CMWD	(805) 746-2251 (805) 649-2251	mflood@casitaswater.com
Ventura River Water District	Bert Rapp, General Manager	(805) 646-3403	bert@venturariverwd.com

Support Services Contacts:

The following is a listing of support services that may be appropriate for a water shortage emergency.

Organization or Department	Name & Position	Telephone	Email
Meiners Oaks Water District	Justin Martinez, General Manager	(805) 297-7240	justin@meinersoakswater.com
Meiners Oaks Water District	Levi Maxwell, Field Supervisor	(805) 297-7241	levi@meinersoakswater.com
Meiners Oaks Water District	Jeffrey Groves, Operator I	(805) 297-6587	jeffrey@meinersoakswater.com
Famcon Pipe Supply		(805) 485-7867	
Ferguson Water Works		(805) 644-7279	
Aqua Flow & Supply		(805) 646-7244	
Oilfield Electric		(805) 648-3131	
Chemical Disinfectant Supplier- JCI		(310) 523-1629	
Quinn Company Rental		(805) 648-3131	
General Pump	Ray Reece	(805) 482-1215	
So Cal Edison		(800) 611-1911 or (800) 655-4555	
So Cal Gas		911 or (800) 427-2000	

Section XI: Enforcement

- (a) No person shall knowingly or intentionally allow the use of water from this water system for residential, commercial, agricultural, governmental, or any other purpose in a manner contrary to any provision of this WSCP, or in an amount in excess of that permitted by the drought response stage in effect at the time pursuant to action taken by General Manager, or designee, in accordance with provisions of this WSCP.
- (b) Any person, including a person classified as a water customer of the water system, in apparent control of the property where a violation occurs or originates shall be presumed to be the violator, and proof that the violation occurred on the person's property shall constitute a presumption that the person in apparent control of the property committed the violation, but any such person shall have the right to show that he/she did not commit the violation.
- (c) Each day that one or more of the provisions in this WSCP is violated shall constitute a separate offense. Suppose a person is in repeated violation of this WSCP. In that case, the water supplier shall be authorized to assess fines related to water misuse and/or installation of a water flow restrictor upon due notice to the customer.

References

- Meiners Oaks Water District Allocation Program – adopted February 2020:
<https://meinersoakswater.com/customer-information/allocations-rates/>
- Upper Ventura River Groundwater Agency – Groundwater Sustainability Plan:
<https://uvrgroundwater.org/sgma-overview/>
- Casitas Municipal Water District: Urban Water Management Plan, June 2021:
<https://www.casitaswater.org/your-water/urban-water-management-plans>
- Casitas Municipal Water District: Water Efficiency & Allocation Plan:
<https://www.casitaswater.org/your-water/casitas-water-security>
- Ventura River Water District: Water Shortage Contingency Plan, June 2023.