

# RECLAMATION

*Managing Water in the West*

## Categorical Exclusion Checklist

## Hypolimnetic Oxygenation System at Lake Casitas

**CEC-15-010**

Prepared by:

  
Rain L. Emerson  
Supervisory Natural Resources Specialist  
South-Central California Area Office

Date: 04/09/2015

Concurred by:

See Attachment A  
Archaeologist  
Mid-Pacific Regional Office


Date: See Attachment A

Concurred by:

See Attachment B  
Native American Affairs Specialist  
Mid-Pacific Regional Office


Date: See Attachment B

Concurred by:

  
Jennifer L. Lewis  
Wildlife Biologist  
South-Central California Area Office

Date: 4/9/2015

Approved by:

 for  
Michael Jackson  
Area Manager  
South-Central California Area Office

Date: 4/10/15





## Background

Lake Casitas is a water storage facility located in Ventura County, California. Casitas Municipal Water District (Casitas) operates Lake Casitas on behalf of the Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) pursuant to Contract No. 14-06-200-5257. Lake Casitas suffers from low dissolved oxygen levels in the bottom waters during spring, summer, and fall affecting water quality in the lake. Since 1968, Casitas and Reclamation have installed and operated aeration systems in the lake in order to improve dissolved oxygen concentrations when the lake stratifies. There is an existing bubbler aeration system within the lake; however, the system has not been able to keep up with dissolved oxygen concentrations due to current drought conditions.

## Need for the Proposal

Casitas needs to improve dissolved oxygen concentrations in Lake Casitas in order to improve water quality. Casitas needs Reclamation approval in order to install the additional infrastructure within federal facilities.

## Proposed Action

Reclamation will issue an MP620 permit (Mid-Pacific Region specific permit for additions or alterations to federal facilities) to Casitas for the installation of a hypolimnetic aeration system. The additional system would complement the existing bubbler aeration system already in place. The installation will consist of four submerged diffuser hoses with a total length of 5,400 feet, an aboveground oxygen supply pipeline, one or two oxygen storage tanks, and two to four vaporizers. All in-lake systems will be confined to the region near Casitas Dam within the restricted buoy line (see Figure 1).

Installation of the oxygen storage tank(s) will require removal of approximately 140 cubic yards (75 feet by 25 feet and 2-feet deep) of the existing concrete paved area and replacement with a new concrete pad as shown in Figure 2. A new electrical conduit will be installed in a 250 foot long by 1 foot wide by 2-foot deep trench to connect power between an existing electrical connection (identified as repurposed storage building in Figure 2) and the proposed storage tank area. A removable outdoor light will also be installed within the proposed storage tank area. All construction activities will be conducted within the previously disturbed and paved area located adjacent to Casitas Dam (see Figure 2). All construction activities will be completed within 70 days.

The system is expected to operate annually between March through November. Three truckloads of liquid oxygen would be supplied per week during peak operating times and one truckload during normal operating periods. The hypolimnetic oxygenation system will maintain 3 mg/L to 6 mg/L of dissolved oxygen in the hypolimnion of Lake Casitas.

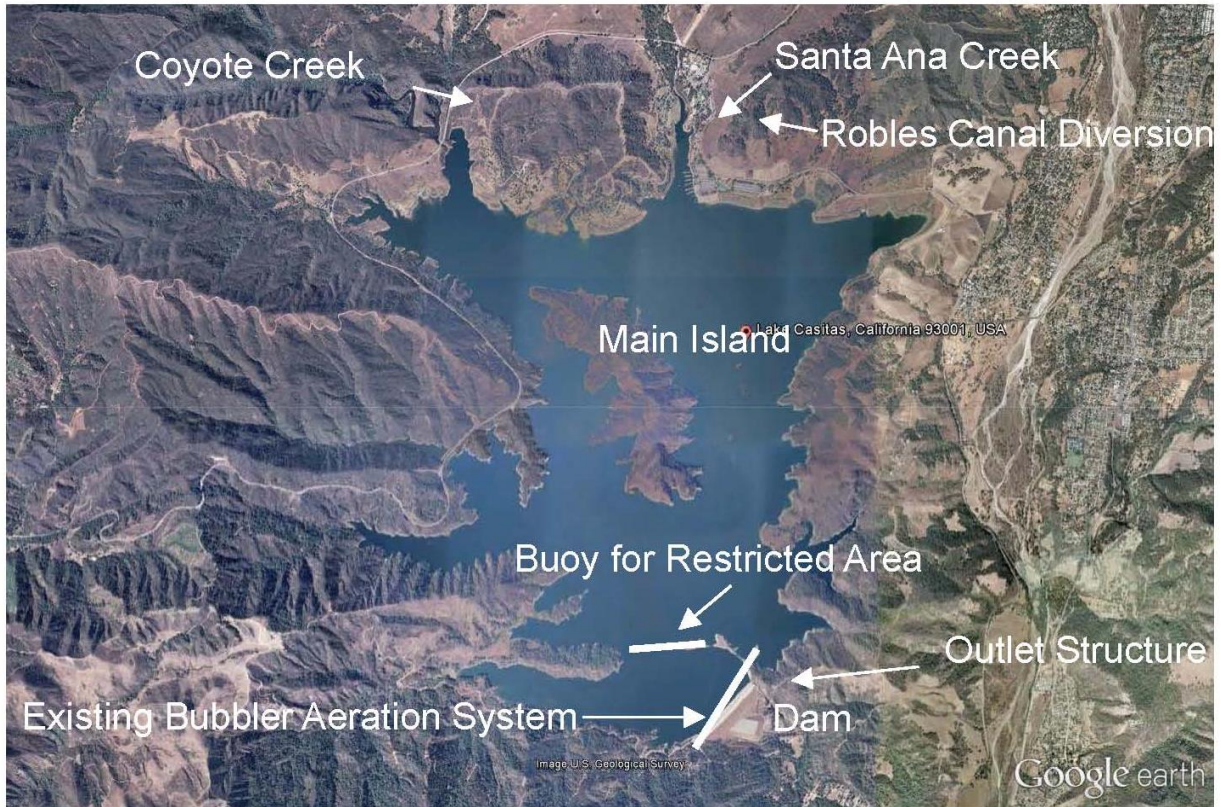


Figure 1 Lake Casitas Proposed Action Area (locations are approximate)

As part of their normal operating procedures, Casitas will implement the following Invasive Species Quarantine Requirements:

- No vessel or equipment shall be allowed onto the Lake until the vessel has undergone an inspection for quagga mussels and other invasive species by Lake Casitas personnel and a thirty-five day quarantine period.

## Exclusion Category

516 DM 14.5 C (3). *Minor construction activities associated with authorized projects which correct unsatisfactory environmental conditions or which merely augment or supplement, or are enclosed within existing facilities.*



## Evaluation of Criteria for Categorical Exclusion

- |   |   |                                       |                                 |
|---|---|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. This action would have a significant effect on the quality of the human environment (40 CFR 1502.3).   | No<br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Uncertain<br><input type="checkbox"/> | Yes<br><input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. This action would have highly controversial environmental effects or involve unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources (NEPA Section 102(2)(E) and 43 CFR 46.215(c)).  | No<br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Uncertain<br><input type="checkbox"/> | Yes<br><input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. This action would have significant impacts on public health or safety (43 CFR 46.215(a)).  | No<br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Uncertain<br><input type="checkbox"/> | Yes<br><input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. This action would have significant impacts on such natural resources and unique geographical characteristics as historic or cultural resources; parks, recreation, and refuge lands; wilderness areas; wild or scenic rivers; national natural landmarks; sole or principal drinking water aquifers; prime farmlands; wetlands (EO 11990); flood plains (EO 11988); national monuments; migratory birds; and other ecologically significant or critical areas (43 CFR 46.215 (b)). | No<br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Uncertain<br><input type="checkbox"/> | Yes<br><input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. This action would have highly uncertain and potentially significant environmental effects or involve unique or unknown environmental risks (43 CFR 46.215(d)).   | No<br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Uncertain<br><input type="checkbox"/> | Yes<br><input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. This action would establish a precedent for future action or represent a decision in principle about future actions with potentially significant environmental effects (43 CFR 46.215 (e)).  | No<br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Uncertain<br><input type="checkbox"/> | Yes<br><input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7. This action would have a direct relationship to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant environmental effects (43 CFR 46.215 (f)).  | No<br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Uncertain<br><input type="checkbox"/> | Yes<br><input type="checkbox"/> |
| 8. This action would have significant impacts on properties listed, or eligible for listing, on the National Register of Historic Places as determined by Reclamation (LND 02-01) (43 CFR 46.215 (g)).  | No<br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Uncertain<br><input type="checkbox"/> | Yes<br><input type="checkbox"/> |

- |  | No                                  | Uncertain                | Yes                      |
|--|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 9. This action would have significant impacts on species listed, or proposed to be listed, on the List of Endangered or Threatened Species, or have significant impacts on designated critical habitat for these species (43 CFR 46.215 (h)).  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 10. This action would violate a Federal, tribal, State, or local law or requirement imposed for protection of the environment (43 CFR 46.215 (i)).   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 11. This action would affect ITAs (512 DM 2, Policy Memorandum dated December 15, 1993).   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 12. This action would have a disproportionately high and adverse effect on low income or minority populations (EO 12898) (43 CFR 46.215 (j)).  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 13. This action would limit access to, and ceremonial use of, Indian sacred sites on Federal lands by Indian religious practitioners or significantly adversely affect the physical integrity of such sacred sites (EO 13007, 43 CFR 46.215 (k), and 512 DM 3)).   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 14. This action would contribute to the introduction, continued existence, or spread of noxious weeds or non-native invasive species known to occur in the area or actions that may promote the introduction, growth, or expansion of the range of such species (Federal Noxious Weed Control Act, EO 13112, and 43 CFR 46.215 (l)). | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

## **Attachment A: Cultural Resources Determination**



**CULTURAL RESOURCE COMPLIANCE**  
**Mid-Pacific Region**  
**Division of Environmental Affairs**  
**Cultural Resources Branch**

MP-153 Tracking Number: 15-SCAO-095

Project Name: Hypolimnetic Oxygenation System at Lake Casitas

NEPA Document: CEC-15-010

MP 153 Cultural Resources Reviewer: Amy J. Barnes

Date: April 8, 2015

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This proposed undertaking by Reclamation is to issue a permit to the Casitas Municipal Water District, who operates Lake Casitas on behalf of Reclamation, to modify the existing hypolimnetic aeration system at Casitas Dam approximately 8 miles north of Ventura, California. This is the type of undertaking that does not have the potential to cause effects to historic properties, should such properties be present, pursuant to the NHPA Section 106 regulations codified at 36 CFR § 800.3(a)(1). Reclamation has no further obligations under NHPA Section 106, pursuant to 36 CFR § 800.3(a)(1).

This project will include adding three additional submerged diffuser hoses with a total length of 5,400 feet, an oxygen storage tanks, and two to four vaporizers. The existing compressors are located in a visitor viewing point with a paved access road, parking, and a pit toilet building on the southwest end of the dam; this vista point is no longer used. The new oxygen tank and vaporizers will be placed next to the air compressor for the existing bubbler aeration line and will connect with that system. The additional diffuser hoses will connect to the main aeration hose within the reservoir. An unused pit toilet building will be retrofitted for use as the electrical control building for the new oxygen tank and vaporizers. The project is located in Section 6, T. 3 N., R. 23 W. and Section 1, T. 3 N., R. 24 W., San Bernardino Base and Meridian, as depicted on the Ventura 7.5' U.S. Geological Survey topographic quadrangle map.

After reviewing CEC-15-010, dated March 2015, I concur with Item 8 which states that this action would not have significant impacts on properties listed, or eligible for listing, on the National Register of Historic Places.

This memorandum is intended to convey the completion of the NHPA Section 106 process for this undertaking. Please retain a copy in the administrative record for this action. Should changes be made to this project, additional NHPA Section 106 review, possibly including consultation with the State Historic Preservation Officer, may be necessary. Thank you for providing the opportunity to comment.

## **Attachment B: Indian Trust Assets Determination**



Emerson, Rain &lt;remerson@usbr.gov&gt;

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**Re: ITA Request for Drought Project (CEC-15-010)**

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**STEVENSON, RICHARD** <rstevenson@usbr.gov>

Thu, Apr 9, 2015 at 9:48 AM

To: "Emerson, Rain" &lt;remerson@usbr.gov&gt;

Rain,

I have examined the action covered by CEC-15-015 and described as Hypolimnetic Oxygenation System at Lake Casitas and have determined that this project does not have the potential to impact Indian Trust Assets. There are no Indian Trust Assets within a 25 mile radius of the project site.

Richard M. Stevenson  
Deputy Regional Resources Manager

On Wed, Apr 8, 2015 at 3:19 PM, Emerson, Rain <remerson@usbr.gov> wrote:

Dick,

Attached is an ITA request for a drought project that will need to be expedited, if possible. If you have any questions, please let me know.

Rain L. Emerson, M.S.  
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