



PUBLIC UTILITY DISTRICT NO. 1 of CHELAN COUNTY

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Dear Lake Chelan residents:

In this unusually cool spring, there has been heightened interest in the level of Lake Chelan. The lake is not rising as fast as in an average year. As part of our ongoing management of the lake, we at Chelan County PUD want to provide you the latest, most accurate information about lake level management throughout the year.

This letter is to let you know that due to cooler-than-average temperatures and late runoff, the lake level will likely be lower than average until early summer.

If you are not familiar with PUD operations at Lake Chelan, here is a brief explanation. We use the lake to generate electricity for much of the year. Water in Lake Chelan is channeled into a 14-foot-diameter penstock (steel and concrete tunnel) that carries the water underground about 2.2 miles from the dam to the power plant near Chelan Falls. Two turbines/generators at the powerhouse are capable of producing about 54 megawatts of power, enough to supply approximately 25,000 average Northwest homes.

Each fall, the PUD draws down the lake gradually from its summer elevation of 1,098-1,100 feet above sea level and prepares for the winter buildup of snowpack in the surrounding mountains. The lake level can drop as low as 1,079 feet through the winter and spring, although it rarely gets that low. Each spring as temperatures warm up, the lake begins to refill as the snow melts in the surrounding mountains. A license approved by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) guides how the lake levels are managed. It dictates that the PUD give priority to year-round flows through the Chelan River, that the PUD avoid spilling large volumes of water through the gorge where new salmon/steelhead-spawning habitat is being created at the lower end of the Chelan River, and that the PUD take other steps to help native fish in tributaries of the lake. Essentially, the lake is held higher for the summer recreation season from July 1 through Labor Day. The rest of the year the lake is in various stages of emptying and refilling.

Weather conditions are unpredictable, especially during the next several months. The District will make reasonable efforts to bring the lake to elevation 1,098 feet by the first of July. Actual lake levels will depend on weather, snowpack runoff, energy demand, and the District's license requirements to decrease the potential for high spillway flows in the Chelan River, and for preventing flooding upstream and downstream of the dam. **This may mean that the elevation of Lake Chelan will need to be held below 1,098 feet into early July if a significant amount of snowpack is still remaining.**

These lower lake level elevations may have a temporary impact on local recreation. Generally, boat ramps, boat launches, and marina slips are functional above 1,090 feet. The effect of lake levels on private docks will vary, depending on dock location, type of use and design.

Snowpack accumulations in the mountains above Lake Chelan continue to increase and are 120 percent of average. During March, generation at the Lake Chelan powerhouse was minimized due to low inflows into the lake and forecasts for less precipitation and continued cooler weather. The lake level was stabilized near 1,082.6 feet on March 13, 2008, and has generally been increasing since then. The District expects to generate additional energy between now and July 1 at the Chelan powerhouse to help meet local and regional energy needs and to provide room to accommodate runoff.

The best place to keep fully informed about lake levels is the District's Web site (www.chelanpud.org) under "[Fish counts and lake levels.](#)" It contains daily lake levels, weekly forecasts, graphs of historic lake level averages and links to the Stehekin River flow, the main tributary into the lake.

You can expect to receive occasional letters about lake level management as conditions change. Also watch for advertisements and information on local radio, in newspapers and on the Internet. This is the second letter we have sent to property owners following approval of the new 50-year operating license by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission in November 2006.

We look forward to answering your questions or hearing your comments concerning lake levels. Contact us by telephone or e-mail. We'd be happy to provide future updates by e-mail if you provide us an address.

Sincerely,



Rich Riazzi
PUD general manager

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