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## Lake draw-down expected to be lower than usual

By [Christine Pratt](#)  
World staff reporter

CHELAN — Chelan County PUD analysts estimate they'll have to drop Lake Chelan to its lowest level since 1988 to accommodate a big spring runoff.

Randy Lowe, executive manager for Energy Resources, told commissioners Monday that a lake draw-down to 1,081 feet above sea level may be necessary to compensate for spring runoff expected to be from 98 percent to 103 percent of normal.

Lowe said the lake level would likely remain above 1,081 feet if the weather remains cool and dry.

The PUD draws the lake down before spring, so it will hold more mountain runoff.

At 1,081 feet, the lake would be at its lowest level since 1988, when the water level dropped to 1,081.24 feet on March 8, Lowe said.

The PUD's federal license to operate the Lake Chelan Hydro Project allows a minimum draw down to 1,079 feet.

The proposed draw-down is four feet below the "safe minimum operating level" for the Chelan Boat Company, which operates its Lake of the Lake water taxi service.

The company's boats make the only regularly scheduled daily runs of passengers and freight from Chelan to the remote town of Stehekin, on the opposite end of the 50-mile-long lake.

A company official said no immediate plans exist to stop running the boats.

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