



PUBLIC UTILITY DISTRICT NO. 1 of CHELAN COUNTY

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May 6, 2011

Dear Lake Chelan residents:

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. In this unusually cool spring, there has been heightened interest about the lake level. The lake is not rising as fast as in an average year, although it has been this low five out of the last 20 years.

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.

Here is a brief explanation of PUD operations at Lake Chelan. Water from the lake generates electricity for much of the year. Water in Lake Chelan is channeled at the dam 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 60 megawatts of power, enough to supply approximately 30,000 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 spring runoff from melting snowpack in the surrounding mountains. The lake level can drop to 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 lake levels are managed. It dictates that the PUD give priority to year-round flows through the Chelan River and that the PUD avoid spilling large volumes of water through the gorge where new salmon/steelhead-spawning habitat has been created at the lower end of the Chelan River. 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.

The District will make reasonable efforts to bring the lake to target 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. 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. The effect of lake levels on private docks will vary, depending on dock location, type of use and design.

Snowpack has accumulated to over 140 percent of average at monitored locations in the Lake Chelan drainage basin. Runoff this spring will be significantly above average. 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 in the lake to accommodate the high runoff.

The best place to keep fully informed about lake levels is the District's Web site (www.chelanpud.org). 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.

We look forward to answering your questions or hearing your comments concerning lake levels. Contact us by telephone or e-mail.

Sincerely,



John Janney
PUD general manager

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Here is a chart showing current, historical and expected average elevations:

