

Lake Levels and River Flows

The Cushman Project settlement agreement addresses water elevation levels in lakes Cushman and Kokanee and flow releases into the North Fork Skokomish River.

Lake levels

Tacoma Power is pleased to announce that our approach to managing the water levels of Lake Cushman and Lake Kokanee in the future will be similar to the current approach. However short-term changes to the water levels are allowed during operating emergencies or by approval of the Fisheries and Habitat Committee.

- **Lake Cushman**

The settlement agreement proposes that Tacoma Power keep the water elevation of Lake Cushman:

- ▶ between 735 feet and 738 feet between Memorial Day and Labor Day weekends
- ▶ at least 690 feet between November 1 and March 31

- **Lake Kokanee**

The water level of Lake Kokanee is proposed to be kept between 474 feet and 480 feet of elevation, except when maintenance is required at the intake or spillway of Dam No. 2.

Flows released into the North Fork Skokomish River

A new flow regime for the North Fork is designed to mimic the timing, duration and frequency of natural flow events. This approach is designed to enhance healthy conditions in the river system. There are four categories of flow in the new flow regime:

- **Base flows** – the standard amount of water that must be released into the North Fork. Additional water will be released for fish, channel formation and sediment transport.
- **Flows for fish** – additional flows to improve conditions for fish
- **North Fork channel formation flows** – predetermined flows designed to establish and maintain habitat in the lower North Fork. Triggered by upstream USGS Staircase gauge measurements.
- **Mainstem sediment transport flows** – flows designed to flush sediment in the mainstem downstream after storm events. Triggered by downstream USGS Potlatch gauge measurements.

Skokomish River Research

Tacoma Power will work with Mason County, the Skokomish Tribe and Army Corps of Engineers to complete an extensive study of the Lower Mainstem Skokomish River and seek funding for Skokomish River restoration projects.

Reservoir level and flow monitoring

A reservoir level and flow monitoring plan will be developed by Tacoma Power and other agencies and will involve a representative from Save the Lakes Coalition.

Q & A

How will river flows in the North Fork Skokomish change?

Future flow releases into the North Fork will more closely reflect the amount of rain and melting snow entering the river than current flow releases. When rainstorms occur, more water will be released. As rainfall and snowmelt subside, the amount of water released into the North Fork will be reduced, but not below base flows.

The quantity of flow released each year will be determined by a water budget, which will be evaluated annually by a committee of federal and state agencies, the Skokomish Tribe, and Tacoma Power.

Will the new flow requirements impact Tacoma Power's ability to fill Lake Cushman each year?

Once the Cushman Project flow monitoring plan is approved, Tacoma Power is to maintain the water elevation in Lake Cushman between 735 and 738 feet between Memorial Day and Labor Day weekends. However short-term changes water levels are allowed during operating emergencies or by approval of the Fisheries and Habitat Committee.

How will flooding be addressed in the mainstem Skokomish River?

Tacoma Power will provide sediment transport flows to improve the river's ability to hold flood waters. We will also work with Mason County, the Skokomish Tribe and Army Corps of Engineers to complete the study of the lower river basin to identify physical improvements to help reduce flooding. The combination of sediment transport flows and channel modifications are intended to help address flooding.

Although Tacoma Power submitted the Cushman Settlement Agreement containing these license articles and proposals to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, the actual requirements of the license may be amended by the Commission.

For more information, and to view the settlement agreement and other documents, please visit mytpu.org and enter 'Cushman Settlement Agreement' in the search bar.