



Low Riffe Lake Elevation/Boat Launch Access Update

March 2024

We typically draw Riffe Lake down to 745 feet every winter to ensure there is room to absorb large storms; this helps protect public safety by limiting any potential flooding impacts to the downstream Cowlitz River communities. We provide updates on river flows, lake levels, and boat launch availability at MyTPU.org/LakeLevels.

In 2017, we reduced the maximum lake level from 778.5 to 749 feet due to updated seismic loading concerns on the Mossyrock Dam spillway piers (not to the dam itself).

We received the updated seismic hazard analysis at the end of 2022. We assembled a team to determine what projects need to be done to mitigate risk and allow us to bring the lake back up. Once we have a proposal, we will present it to our regulators for input.

Other factors impact the lake level:

- As a steward of this resource, besides recreational opportunity, we must balance predetermined downstream flows for fish, plus power production and grid reliability, regardless of the amount of water flowing into the reservoir.
- When our region experiences extreme cold (or heat), we are required to help meet the higher energy demand.
- We constantly monitor weather, including inflow forecasts, precipitation, and snowpack levels, which are becoming harder to predict with climate change

Have questions? Send them to cowlitz@cityoftacoma.org. If you would like to receive updates about the Cowlitz River Project, please provide your name and email address at MyTPU.org/CowlitzCurrents.