



Press Release 12/12/2025

## **How is the lake responding to the heavy rainfall and what can we expect?**

The City of Lake Stevens' Environmental Programs Division tracks many factors about our treasured lake, including the lake elevation. We recently observed a rise to elevation 215.1 feet. This is not abnormal for the wet season, but with the recent heavy rains, it is important to understand how the lake and surrounding streams might respond. . When the lake rises to 215.6 feet, many lakeshore homeowners report issues with their shoreline. The Federal Emergency Management Agency flood elevation for the lake is 216.1 feet. What does this mean, and should we be concerned? The simple answer is we do not anticipate any lakeshore impacts, but we wanted you to be aware that more increases in the lake elevation may occur over the next couple days.

You may note that the lake is not flooding as much as the large rivers in the surrounding area. The primary reason is that the lake is a large waterbody (approximately 1,000 acres), and its watershed is relatively small in comparison to most rivers and their watersheds. This means there is a lot of room in the lake to store water and that not as much water is flowing into the lake as the larger rivers.

A watershed is the area in which rain or snow falls on and then makes its way to a stream or lake. When it rains or snows, there are many paths that water can take before it reaches its waterbody. Generally speaking, water can be absorbed into the ground, be intercepted by vegetation, or flow quickly over hard surfaces such as roads. Each of these pathways impacts how much water and how fast water enters a waterbody.

Over the next couple of days, we might see an increase in the lake level from the last atmospheric river event. Because of the lake's size, it takes several days for it to fill up for us to notice an increase in the lake's elevation. There is only one outlet to Lake Stevens, this controls how much water can leave the lake. When it rains, water enters the lake faster than it can leave the lake, causing the lake's water surface elevation to increase.

### Other observations around the city

You may notice more water in some of our local streams, stormwater ditches or even around your homes. During heavy rainfall events that last several days or are back-to-

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**City of Lake Stevens**

**Public Works Department**

1812 Main Street | PO Box 257 | Lake Stevens, WA 98258-0257  
[www.lakestevenswa.gov](http://www.lakestevenswa.gov)



back with other events, the ground fills up with water and can no longer accept more water, and water will start to runoff like it does on pavement. High intensity, back-to-back rainfall events may also overwhelm some parts of the stormwater conveyance system. This means that the drainage system cannot work as fast as moving the water (down the series of pipes and structures) as the water is coming in from roads and collection systems.

To prepare for the wet season, Public Works performs routine maintenance on our stormwater infrastructure, performs regular checks around the city before and during a rainfall event, and monitors conditions carefully to keep the public informed and provide quick responses to issues. Due to routine maintenance and proactive inspections, the impact to local flooding from this event has been minimal.

Want to learn more?

The city maintains an interactive dashboard ([Lake Level Dashboard Link](#)) that is updated once a week with the lake level elevation. To learn more about the lake or the Environmental Programs Division, please visit our website.

[Environmental Programs | Lake Stevens, WA - Official Website](#)