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Yale Reservoir Levels to be Reduced to Accommodate Swift No. 2 Work.

Fishing access will be restricted for about four weeks in March and April

ARIEL, Wash. – Cowlitz County PUD and PacifiCorp today said that as part of the repair and reconstruction of the Swift No. 2 Hydroelectric Project, it will be necessary to drawdown the Yale Reservoir to an elevation of about 460 feet above sea level for a period of two weeks to accommodate work in the tailrace below the Swift No. 2 Powerhouse. Normal full pool levels at Yale Reservoir are at 490 feet above sea level.

Combined with the time it takes to drawdown to the 460-foot mark and to refill the reservoir afterward, it is estimated that all boat launch sites in Yale Reservoir will be unavailable for about four weeks.

Cowlitz PUD owns the Swift No. 2 Project that was damaged in April 2002 when its canal embankment failed, and water, soil and rock inundated Highway 503-Spur and the Swift No. 2 powerhouse and tailrace. PacifiCorp owns and operates the Swift, Yale and Merwin reservoirs.

The tailrace portion of the Swift No. 2 Project is where water is discharged from the powerhouse to Yale Reservoir after the water passes through the turbine generators. This area was filled with about 120,000 cubic yards of rock and soil when the Swift No. 2 canal embankment failed. This material must be removed to allow the project to return to full operation.

“We realize that this work activity may temporarily inconvenience some anglers and others who use Yale Reservoir for recreation,” said Cowlitz County PUD Spokesman Dave Andrew. “Our plans are to minimize the amount of time it will take to complete the needed debris removal work.”

“The two utilities are working cooperatively so that this critical work can be accomplished to get Swift No. 2 back into full service as soon as possible,” said Bill Fields, PacifiCorp Lewis River Manager. “Our goal is to refill Yale Reservoir as quickly as possible before the heart of the recreation season begins with the Memorial Day weekend.”

Normal low-pool operations at Yale can cause reservoir levels to fall as low as 470 feet above sea level. This level generally occurs only during winter months when space is left in the reservoirs during periods when snow accumulations are deep and high runoff conditions can occur. Drawdowns as low as 460 feet are rare in Yale Reservoir.

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Yale drawdown

All boat launch facilities at Yale will be unavailable during periods when the water level is lower than the lowest launch elevation:

Lowest Launch Elevations at Yale Reservoir

Beaver Bay Campground	475.5 feet
Cougar Campground	486 feet
Yale Park Boat Launch	472 feet
Saddle Dam Park	478 feet

PacifiCorp has already started lowering Yale Reservoir anticipating the Swift No. 2 work. It is expected that beginning about March 25, Yale Park Boat Ramp will be inaccessible and about April 24 the ramp would again be available.

PacifiCorp will work to keep Merwin Reservoir generally available for boat launching throughout the drawdown, construction and refill period. However, Swift Reservoir waters levels are not expected to be high enough to launch boats until the weekend of April 24. Water levels at Merwin will also be drawn down somewhat because more water will be needed to support minimum stream flows in the Lewis River downstream of Merwin Dam. “We’ll be managing water levels carefully to be certain that Merwin remains open,” said Fields.

Boaters and anglers wishing to determine when various boat launches are available are encouraged to check reservoir levels at the NOAA National Weather Service web site for Lewis River Reservoir Levels: http://www.wrh.noaa.gov/Portland/public_hydro/lc_swwa.html

Speelyai Boat Ramp Improvements on Tap for Fall 2004

During the fall of 2004 after Labor Day, PacifiCorp plans to begin work on extending the Speelyai Boat Ramp in Merwin Reservoir and to do work on the intake structure at Merwin Dam. The proposed boat-ramp improvements will allow boaters and anglers in that reservoir better access to the lake when levels are low. Full pool at Merwin is 239.6 feet, and Speelyai boat launch is currently unavailable when reservoir levels fall below 233.5 feet. After improvements, the Speelyai boat launch will allow boating access down to 227 feet. Similar to this spring’s work at Yale, it is expected that Merwin Reservoir will be drawn down after Labor Day to allow work on the Speelyai ramp.

Cowlitz PUD is a publicly-owned utility that serves 45,500 electric customers in Cowlitz County, Washington. The utility constructed the 70 megawatt Swift No. 2 Project in the late 1950s. When operating, the project serves about 15 percent of Cowlitz PUD’s non-industrial power needs.

More than 1.5 million customers in six Western states look to PacifiCorp for safe, reliable electrical service. Operating as Pacific Power and Utah Power, PacifiCorp is one of the lowest-cost electricity producers in the United States with a generation capacity of about 8,300 megawatts of energy. For more information, visit www.pacificcorp.com.