Robert Moate

Dear Ms. Neculae and the Washington Department of Ecology Team,

I am writing to comment on the Soos Creek Fine Sediment Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) and to urge Ecology to explicitly consider Lake Sawyer water level management as a key factor in achieving sediment reduction and aquatic health goals throughout the watershed.

Lake Sawyer is an integral part of the Big Soos Creek drainage basin, and its hydrology directly influences water temperature, sediment transport, and overall water quality downstream. When lake levels drop too low—particularly during late summer and early fall—water temperatures rise significantly. The resulting chain reaction includes:

Accelerated aquatic plant growth followed by decomposition, which depletes oxygen and increases organic sediment buildup in the lakebed.

Murky, fine-particle runoff entering Covington Creek and ultimately the Soos Creek watershed.

Elevated water temperatures that degrade habitat for cold-water species, especially salmon.

By contrast, maintaining higher, stable lake levels has measurable benefits:

It helps moderate water temperature and oxygen levels in both Lake Sawyer and downstream waterways.

It reduces the transport of fine sediments that contribute to impairment in Soos Creek.

It allows earlier flow over the Lake Sawyer weir, improving salmon migration timing into Covington Creek and the Green River system.

For these reasons, I strongly recommend that Ecology:

Acknowledge Lake Sawyer's direct influence on fine sediment and temperature dynamics in the Soos Creek system within the TMDL framework.

Collaborate with King County and local stakeholders to evaluate water level management strategies (including weir operations and inflow/outflow balance) as part of the implementation plan.

Prioritize protection of salmon habitat by ensuring flow and temperature conditions that support migration and spawning in fall months.

The community around Lake Sawyer has a long history of stewardship and engagement in water quality issues. We stand ready to support Ecology's efforts with data, historical observations, and local coordination to ensure this plan produces meaningful, measurable outcomes.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input and for your commitment to restoring and protecting the Soos Creek watershed.

Sincerely,
Robert Moate
Lake Sawyer Resident / Community Member