

# Becky Walter

If you live near Lake Sawyer or spend time on its shores, you've probably noticed the changes. Docks sitting above dry lakebed. Boats stranded. The quiet absence of frogs and fish where there used to be movement. These aren't just seasonal quirks—they're signs of a lake under stress.

## The Fish Aren't Coming Back

Lake Sawyer's fish ladder, built decades ago to help salmon and trout migrate, only works when water levels are high enough. In late summer and fall, the lake often drops below the weir, cutting off Covington Creek and leaving fish with nowhere to go. That means fewer spawning runs, fewer fish in the lake, and fewer herons and eagles overhead.

## Shorelines Are Shrinking

If you've walked the perimeter lately, you've seen it: exposed roots, cracked mud, and stressed vegetation. Native plants that stabilize the shoreline are drying out, and invasive species are creeping in. Erosion is becoming a real threat—not just to the ecosystem, but to property owners too.

## Water Quality Is Slipping

Warm, shallow water is a breeding ground for algae. And with less water to dilute runoff from nearby development, nutrient levels spike. That green film you sometimes see? It's not just unsightly—it can be toxic. Lake Sawyer's delicate balance is tipping, and it's happening right in our backyard.

## Recreation Is Fading

For many of us, Lake Sawyer is a place to kayak, fish, swim, or simply unwind. But when water levels drop, those activities become harder—or impossible. Docks become useless, boat launches dry up, and the lake feels less like a sanctuary and more like a warning.

This isn't just about the lake—it's about the community that surrounds it.