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Low lake levels mean more than just a smaller shoreline — they affect the entire ecosystem. When Lake Sawyer's water levels drop, the lake warms up faster. Warmer water encourages extra growth of aquatic plants, which later die off and sink to the bottom. As they decay, oxygen levels in the lake drop, the water becomes murkier, and harmful algae can start to form. This not only reduces water quality but also impacts fish and other wildlife that rely on a healthy lake. The cloudy, silty water then flows downstream into the Soos Creek Basin, adding fine sediment and raising water temperatures there, too. These changes make it harder for salmon and other cold-water species to thrive — showing how what happens in Lake Sawyer affects the whole watershed.