

# Morgan Strand

As a resident of Lake Sawyer, I care deeply about the health of our lake, the surrounding creeks, and the wildlife that depend on them. The draft plan to reduce excess fine sediment in Soos Creek and its tributaries is an important step toward protecting our watershed — but it's equally important to recognize the vital role Lake Sawyer plays in this system.

When water levels in Lake Sawyer drop too low, the water warms more quickly. Warmer temperatures stimulate the overgrowth of aquatic plants, which eventually die, decay, and settle at the bottom. This process depletes oxygen levels, creates a murky layer of decomposing material, and leads to harmful algae blooms and overall declines in water quality.

That murky, silty water doesn't stay here — it flows downstream into the Soos Creek watershed, carrying fine sediment that increases turbidity and raises creek temperatures. These changes directly impact cold-water species, especially salmon, by degrading habitat and reducing oxygen levels in the water.

Maintaining higher water levels in Lake Sawyer helps prevent these problems before they start. When the lake is full, water moves more naturally over the weir earlier in the fall, cooling Covington Creek, Soos Creek, and even the Green River downstream. This timing is critical for salmon migration, providing them with a path back up Covington Creek and into Lake Sawyer.

Higher lake levels mean cleaner, cooler water — not just for those of us who live here, but for the entire connected ecosystem downstream. I urge decision-makers to include Lake Sawyer in sediment management and watershed planning efforts, and to support policies that maintain higher lake levels for the health of our community, our fish, and our shared environment.

Thank you for your time and consideration.  
Morgan Strand