

Army Corps of Engineers' regulation of Wynoochee Dam reduces flows

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SEATTLE--The Seattle District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, reduced flows by 10,000 cubic feet per second this weekend by regulating Aberdeen's Wynoochee Dam on the Olympic Peninsula.

The dam on the Wynoochee River in Grays Harbor County held flows from a potential of 25,483 cfs, reducing to 15,483 cfs early Monday morning.

Although flood levels are causing damage in the Wynoochee basin, river levels would have been about 6 feet higher without the storage of water in Wynoochee Dam.

Discharge from the dam will be gradually increased to optimize the use of the remaining storage as the reservoir nears being full.

The purpose of a flood control project is to hold the floodwaters back until it is safe to release the water in carefully measured amounts. The Wynoochee Dam is owned by the city of Aberdeen and operated by Tacoma City Light. The Corps of Engineers directs the flood control operation of the dam.

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On a 24-hour watch this weekend, engineers and staff closely monitored both the Skokomish River in Mason County and the Satsop River in Grays Harbor County the areas with the highest likelihood of major flooding due to the intensity of forthcoming cold frontal rains.

The Corps' Chehalis River flood team remains deployed to continue to monitor the situation and assist locals as needed.

Sandbags—10,000—were delivered to Grays Harbor County Sunday afternoon for expected overnight flooding on the Satsop River near the town of Elma. The Chehalis River is expected to peak early Tuesday with other rivers peaking today.

The Corps of Engineers is authorized by federal law to aid local governments with flood fighting efforts when local and state resources are pushed to their limits.

Public Law 84-99 (33 USCA 701n) authorizes the Corps of Engineers to engage in flood fighting and rescue operations. Local officials may request Corps assistance through county and state officials if the emergency is beyond state and local capabilities. Flood fighting may include:

- temporarily raising the height of levees with sandbags
- strengthening flood control works with armor rock
- evacuating people and livestock when necessary
- providing equipment and supplies, such as pumps, sandbags, plastic sheeting, etc.
- providing 24-hour technical assistance during the event
- removing logs and debris.