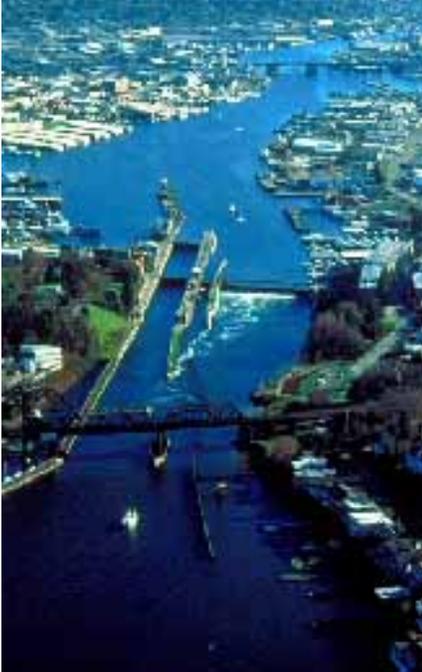


Boaters no longer face wait at Chittenden Locks in Ballard as wet weather kicks in



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Oct. 16, 2003

SEATTLE---Boats locking through the Hiram M. Chittenden Locks no longer face long wait times as lock operators yesterday stopped holding lockages until boats fill the lock chamber. The Locks began holding boaters in July as a means to conserve water and reduce the odds that Lake Washington would fall below normal levels.

The Army Corps of Engineers operates the Chittenden Locks in Ballard, which passes more than 57,000 vessels a year and also regulates the level of Lakes Washington and Union.

The Corps raised the level of the lake early, cut nighttime smolt flume operation, curtailed saltwater drain operation, and consolidated lockages to conserve water this year.

A dry summer, reduced spring runoff and dedicated flows for juvenile salmon migration had combined this year to threaten minimum lake levels. By undertaking conservation measures, the Corps expects that this winter the lake will stay at or above 20 feet the normal low elevation for the lake.

The Corps raises the lake elevation each spring to 22 feet Corps datum for recreation and fish passage and lowers the lake elevation to 20 feet for the winter each year to reduce storm damage. Current lake levels and yearly average lake elevations are available on-line at <http://www.nws.usace.army.mil> by clicking on the "Lake and river level information" link.