

MEMORANDUM

TO: Laureen Borochaner, Chief, Engineering Division (USACE)
FROM: John Mitnik, Chief District Engineer (SFWMD)
Akin Owosina, Chief, Hydrology & Hydraulics Bureau (SFWMD)
DATE: August 15, 2019
SUBJECT: Operational Position Statement for August 13, 2019 to August 19, 2019

This Position Statement is for the one-week period from August 13, 2019 to August 19, 2019. On August 12, Lake Okeechobee stage was 12.30 feet NGVD, which places it within the Beneficial Use Sub-band of the 2008 Lake Okeechobee Regulation Schedule (LORS). Lake stage increased by 0.35 feet during the preceding 7 days.

District August rainfall to date is above-average rainfall (150% of normal). District rainfall forecast (issued August 13) predicts above-average rainfall for this 7-day period and below-average rainfall for the following week.

Precipitation Outlook: The most recent south Florida CPC precipitation outlook for August calls for increased chances of above normal rainfall for Lake Okeechobee and the southern areas of the District, and slightly increased chances of above normal rainfall for the areas north of the lake. The outlooks for all the 3-month windows from Aug-Oct 2019 to the 2020 wet season are for equal chances of above-normal, normal, or below-normal rainfall for south Florida.

2008 LORS Release Guidance (Part C): With Lake Okeechobee stage within the Beneficial Use Sub-band, Part C of the 2008 LORS does not suggest releases to the WCAs to manage lake stages.

Over the 7-day period from August 5 to August 11, 2019, no Lake Okeechobee regulatory releases were sent south to the STAs or to the Lake Worth Lagoon through the C-51 canal. Stage in WCA-1 is above regulation schedule. Stage in WCA-2A is above regulation schedule. WCA-3A stage is in Zone D of the regulation schedule.

2008 LORS Release Guidance (Part D): With Lake Okeechobee stage in the Beneficial Use Sub-band, Part D of the 2008 LORS does not suggest releases to the St. Lucie and Caloosahatchee Estuaries to manage lake stages.

Total discharge to the St. Lucie Estuary averaged approximately 1,750 cfs over the past week with no releases from Lake Okeechobee. The 7-day average salinity at the US1 Bridge is in the good range for adult oysters. Total inflow to the Caloosahatchee Estuary averaged approximately 6,950 cfs over the past week with no releases coming from Lake Okeechobee. Salinity conditions between Val I-75 and Ft. Myers remain good for tape grass. Salinities are in the good range for adult eastern oysters at Shell Point and Sanibel locations.

The District, in coordination with the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP), has considered the system conditions this week. Given that the lake stage is in the Beneficial Use Sub-band, and the above average rainfall, the Estuary does not need water. Therefore, the District recommends to the USACE not to implement any regulatory releases from the lake, and manage local basin runoff to support healthy estuarine conditions in the Caloosahatchee estuary and that releases be reevaluated on a weekly basis in order to increase flexibility of decision making based on current conditions.