

MEMORANDUM

TO: Lauren Borocharner, Chief, Engineering Division (USACE)
FROM: John Mitnik, Chief District Engineer (SFWMD)
Akin Owosina, Chief, Hydrology & Hydraulics Bureau (SFWMD)
DATE: December 20, 2018
SUBJECT: Operational Position Statement for December 18, 2018 to December 31, 2018

This Position Statement is for the two-week period from December 18, 2018 to December 31, 2018. On December 17, 2018, the Lake Okeechobee stage was 12.79 feet NGVD, which places it within the Base Flow Sub-band of the 2008 Lake Okeechobee Regulation Schedule (LORS). The Lake stage decreased by 0.12 feet during the preceding 7 days.

SFWMD (District) December rainfall to date is below-average (73% of average). District forecast (issued December 18) predicts substantially above-average rainfall for the first week and below-average rainfall the following week.

Precipitation Outlook: The CPC precipitation outlook for December is for substantially increased chances of above-normal rainfall (55%) for the District. The outlook for the 3-month windows from Dec-Feb to Apr-Jun is for increased chances (45%) of above-normal rainfall. All periods starting with the May-Jul window show 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 Base Flow Sub-band and the Tributary Hydrologic Conditions in the Dry category, Part C of the 2008 LORS release guidance recommends “No releases to the WCAs”.

Over the 7-day period from December 10, 2018, to December 16, 2018, STA-1E received 1,800 acre-feet of Lake Okeechobee regulatory releases, STA-2 received 700 acre-feet and STA 3/4 received 200 acre-feet. No Lake Okeechobee releases were discharged to tide through the C-51 canal. Stage in WCA-1 is below regulation schedule. Stage in WCA-2A is above regulation schedule. WCA-3A stage is in Zone D of the regulation schedule. For the coming operational period, the USACE is utilizing Additional Operation Flexibility (AOF) within LORS2008 Water Control Plan as documented in the October 26, 2018 Memorandum For the Record (MFR) and is directing the SFWMD to continue regulatory releases from the lake south to the WCAs until a time when either the lake stage moves into the Beneficial Use Sub-band or regulatory releases to the estuaries start to be reduced or the USACE no longer request the regulatory releases south.

2008 LORS Release Guidance (Part D): With Lake Okeechobee stage within the Base Flow Sub-band, Part D of the 2008 LORS release guidance suggests: “S-79 up to 450 cfs and S-80 up to 200 cfs”.

Total discharge to the St. Lucie Estuary averaged approximately 190 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 1,030 cfs over the past week with 570 cfs (55%) coming from the lake. Salinity conditions between Val I-75 and Ft. Myers remain good for tape grass. Salinity conditions are in the good range for adult oysters at Shell Point and at Cape Coral.

The District recognizes the USACE’s stated desire to further lower the lake stage as documented in the October 26, 2018 MFR. Therefore, the SFWMD recommends the USACE follow LORS 2008.