

MEMORANDUM

TO: Luis Alejandro, Chief, Water Management Section (USACE)

FROM: John Mitnik, Chief District Engineer (SFWMD)
Akin Owosina, Chief, Hydrology & Hydraulics Bureau (SFWMD)

DATE: December 21, 2017

SUBJECT: Operational Position Statement for December 19, 2017 to January 1, 2018

This Position Statement is for the two-week period from December 19, 2017 to January 1, 2018. On December 18, 2017, Lake Okeechobee stage was 15.73 feet NGVD, in the Low Sub-band. Lake stage decreased by 0.15 feet during the preceding 7 days.

District wide rainfall for December up-to-date is below average (94%), with most of the rainfall concentrated on a single rainfall event. District forecast (issued December 19) indicates below-average rainfall for the coming week and the following week.

Precipitation Outlook: The most recent Climate Prediction Center (CPC) precipitation outlook for December indicates equal chances of below-normal, normal and above-normal rainfall for the District. The outlooks for the three-month windows from December-February to February-April gradually increase to a more severe below-normal condition, peaking for the January-March window with ~55% chance of below-normal, and transitioning to equal chances of below-normal, normal and above-normal rainfall for the March to May window.

2008 LORS Release Guidance (Part C): With Lake Okeechobee stage within the Low Sub-band, the Tributary Hydrologic conditions in the Wet category and the Multi-seasonal outlook in the Normal category, Part C of the 2008 LORS release guidance recommends "Up to Maximum Practicable to the WCAs if desirable or with minimum Everglades impacts. Otherwise no releases to the WCAs".

There were no releases south from Lake Okeechobee through the EAA canals to the STAs/WCAs over the 7-day period from December 11, 2017 to December 17, 2017. No releases were made from Lake Okeechobee to tide via C-10A, L-8 and C-51. Stage in WCA-1 remains above its regulation schedule. Stage in WCA-2A remains above its regulation schedule, but below the temporary deviation schedule. It is recommended to manage WCA-2A to produce recession rates similar to those of the temporary deviation schedule, and to reduce inflows to WCA-3A. Stage in WCA-3A remains high and above its regulation schedule. For the coming two-week operational period, the USACE is requesting the SFWMD to not implement releases from the lake south to the WCAs. The District and USACE will continue to evaluate the capacity to send lake water to the WCAs.

2008 LORS Release Guidance (Part D): Since Lake Okeechobee stage is in the Low Sub-band, the Tributary Hydrologic Conditions are in the Wet category, and with the lake net inflow Multi-seasonal outlook in the Normal category, the release guidance for Part D of the 2008 LORS is "S-79 Up to 450 cfs and S-80 up to 200 cfs".

Total discharge to the St. Lucie Estuary averaged 2,000 cfs over the past week with about 1,050 cfs (53%) coming from Lake Okeechobee. Salinities increased throughout the St. Lucie Estuary. The 7-day average salinity at the US1 Bridge is in the fair range for adult oysters.

Total inflow to Caloosahatchee Estuary averaged 3,200 cfs over the past week with 2,050 cfs (64%) 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 in the poor range at Cape Coral.

Lake Okeechobee stage continues to recede normally. The District recommends that USACE follows the LORS 2008 Regulation Schedule release guidance.