

MEMORANDUM

TO: Laureen Borocharner, Chief, Engineering Division (USACE)
FROM: John Mitnik, Chief District Engineer (SFWMD)
Akin Owosina, Chief, Hydrology & Hydraulics Bureau (SFWMD)
DATE: February 21, 2019
SUBJECT: Operational Position Statement for February 19, 2019 to February 25, 2019

This Position Statement is for the one-week period from February 19, 2019 to February 25, 2019. On February 18, the Lake Okeechobee stage was 12.83 feet NGVD, which places it within the Base Flow Sub-band of the 2008 Lake Okeechobee Regulation Schedule (LORS). The Lake stage increased by 0.13 feet during the preceding 7 days.

SFWMD (District) February rainfall to date is above-average (106%). District rainfall forecast (issued February 21) predicts below-average rainfall for this week and the following week.

Precipitation Outlook: The CPC precipitation outlook for February is for equal chances of above-normal, normal, or below normal rainfall for south Florida. The outlook for the 3-month windows from Feb-Apr to May-Jul is for increased chances (45%) of above-normal precipitation. All periods starting with the Jun-Aug 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, the Tributary Hydrologic Conditions in the Wet category and the Multi-Seasonal Lake Okeechobee Net Inflow Outlook in the Wet classification, Part C of the 2008 LORS suggests "Up to Maximum Practicable Releases to the WCAs if Desirable or with Minimum Everglades Impact".

Over the 7-day period from February 11, 2019, to February 17, 2019, STA-1E received 200 acre-feet of Lake Okeechobee releases, STA-1W received 900 acre-feet, STA-2 received 3,100 acre-feet and STA 3/4 received 3,800 acre-feet. Lake Okeechobee releases in the amount of 700 acre-feet were discharged to tide through the C-51 canal. Stage in WCA-1 is slightly above regulation schedule. Stage in WCA-2A is above regulation schedule. WCA-3A stage is in Zone E1 of the regulation schedule. **For the coming operational period, the USACE is directing the District to send maximum practicable Lake Okeechobee regulatory releases south to WCA-1, WCA-2A, WCA-3A and to tide through the C-51 canal.**

2008 LORS Release Guidance (Part D): With Lake Okeechobee stage in the Base Flow Sub-band, Part D of the 2008 LORS suggests "S-79 Up to 450cfs and S-80 Up to 200 cfs".

Total discharge to the St. Lucie Estuary averaged approximately 575 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 2,250 cfs over the past week with about 500 cfs (22%) coming from Lake Okeechobee. 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, in coordination with the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP), has considered the application of the SFWMD's Lake Okeechobee Adaptive Protocols (AP) this week since the lake stage is in the Base Flow Use Sub-band and LORS 2008 suggests Base Flow releases to the Estuaries. Therefore, the SFWMD and FDEP recommend the USACE follow LORS 2008 to move water towards both estuaries in a flexible manner which maintains ecosystem salinity conditions that support existing and recovering ecological resources.