MEMORANDUM

TO: Jason Engle, Chief, Engineering Division (USACE)

FROM: John Mitnik, Chief District Engineer (SFWMD)

DATE: February 5, 2026

SUBJECT: System Operational Position Statement February 3, 2026 to February 9, 2026

This Position Statement is to provide operational input for the one-week period from February 3, 2026 to February 9, 2026 based on system conditions and data observed during the previous Monday to Sunday 7-day period.

Current climate conditions: District January rainfall to date was much below normal (30% normal). The rainfall forecast (issued February 4) calls for below normal rainfall for the coming 7-day period and the following one.

Climate and weather forecasts: The most recent CPC precipitation outlook for Feb 2026 is equal chances of below, normal and above normal rainfall (EC) for the entire District. There is a 75% chance of a transition to ENSO-neutral during January-March 2026 and likely through at least Northern Hemisphere late spring 2026. The 3-month window Feb 2026 – Apr 2026 shows slightly increased chances (33-40%) of below Normal rainfall for the entire District. The 3-month window Mar 2026 – May 2026 indicates equal chances of below, normal and above normal rainfall (EC) for the entire District. The 3-month windows from Apr 2026 – Jun 2026 to Jun 2026 – Aug 2026 indicate slightly increased chances (33-40%) of above Normal rainfall for the state of Florida. The outlooks for the 3-month windows from Jul 2026 – Sep 2026 to Feb 2027 – Apr 2027 signal equal chances of below, normal and above normal rainfall (EC) for south Florida.

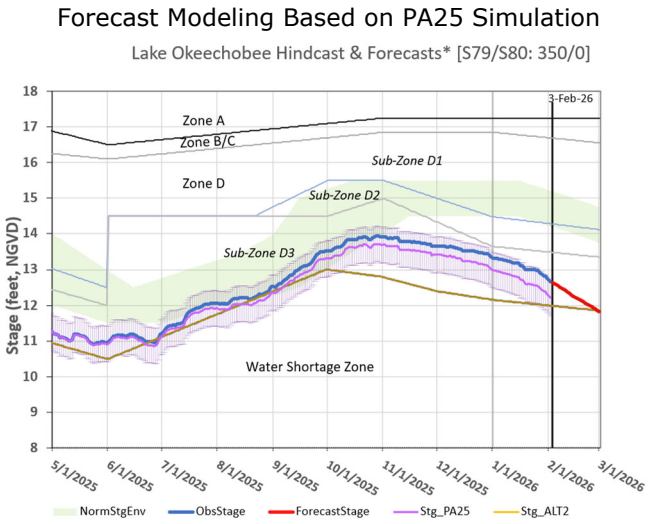
Hydrologic and tropical outlooks: Current climatological conditions are Normal. Current hydrological conditions are Dry. The lake stage is projected to remain in Zone D3 for the next 2 months.

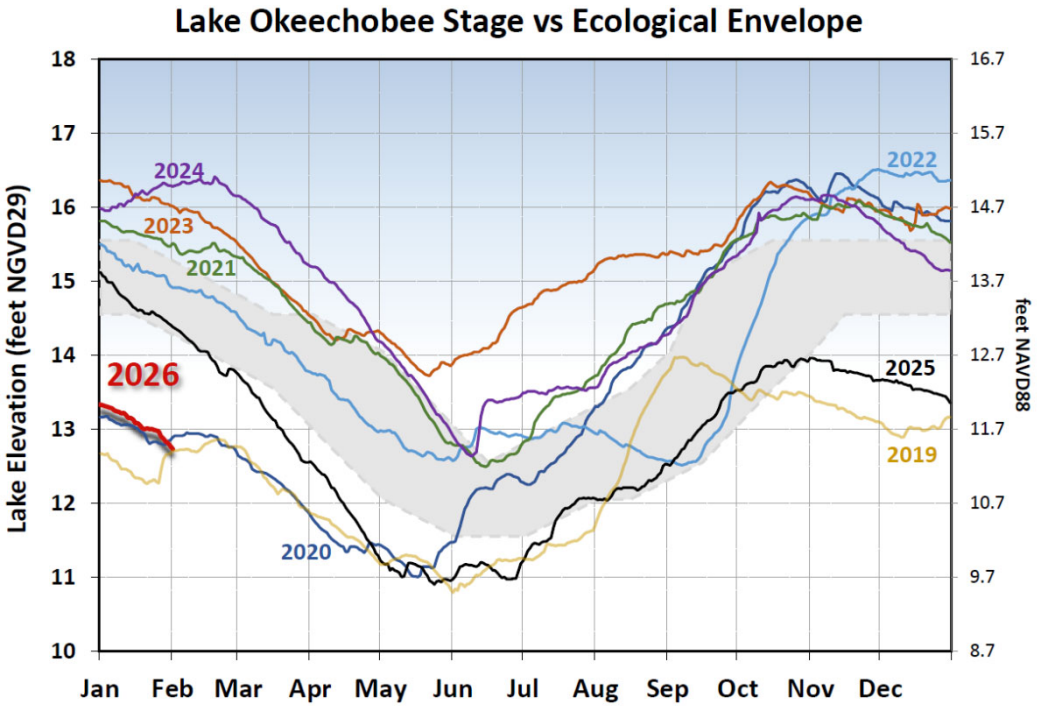
Water-supply conditions: The Lake Okeechobee seasonal net inflow outlook is Dry and at Moderate risk for water supply. The multi-seasonal net inflow outlook is Normal and at Moderate risk for water supply.

Estuary conditions: For the past 7-day periods, January 26 to February 1, 2026, total inflow to the Caloosahatchee River Estuary averaged approximately 500 cfs with about 200 cfs coming from Lake Okeechobee through S-77. Salinities in the upper estuary were within the optimal range (0-10) for tape grass at S-79 and Val I-75 and in the stressed range at Ft. Myers. Salinities were in the optimal range (10-25) for adult eastern oysters at Cape Coral, and in the upper stressed range (>25) at Shell Point and Sanibel. Total inflow to the St. Lucie Estuary was about 100 cfs with no flow coming from Lake Okeechobee, C-44 Basin, C-23 Basin, C-24 Basin, and the Ten Mile Creek Basin, and about 100 cfs coming from Tidal Basin. The average salinity in the middle estuary was within the upper stressed range (>25) for adult eastern oysters.

Lake Okeechobee stage and ecological conditions:

On February 1 the daily average Lake Okeechobee stage was 11.43 feet NAVD88 (12.73 feet NGVD29), which placed it within the lower portion of Zone D (Zone D3 of the PA25 simulation) of the Lake Okeechobee System Operating Manual (LOSOM). Lake stage decreased by 0.25 feet over the preceding 7-day period. There is a 75% chance of a transition to ENSO-neutral during January-March 2026. The District will continue to monitor conditions in the estuaries, as well as the systemwide conditions. With the initiation of the dry season, Normal Lake Operations continue pursuant to the considerations in LOSOM as informed by PA25. It is recommended that flow targets for the Caloosahatchee Estuary should rely on basin flows to ensure the delivery of the Minimum Flow and Level, but use Lake Okeechobee flows from S-77 to ensure S-79 flows remain above a targeted steady release of 350 cfs; flow targets for the St. Lucie Estuary and Lake Worth Lagoon should remain at 0 cfs consistent with Normal Operations within Zone D. The District will continue to monitor salinity conditions in the estuaries and water supply conditions within the Lake Okeechobee Service Area. The USACE typically implements the releases to the estuaries over a 7-day period starting on Saturday and ending on Friday.





The current and seven prior years' annual stage hydrographs for Lake Okeechobee in comparison to the ecological envelope (light grey).

Navigation and recreation conditions: Currently, there are no planned deviation or declared water shortage impacting navigation or lockages.

STOF water supply conditions: Current Lake Okeechobee stage is sufficiently high that water supply deliveries to the Seminole Tribe of Florida (STOF) Brighton Reservation, if needed, will not be impacted. When Lake Okeechobee stage recedes below 8.75 feet NAVD88 (10 feet NGVD29) and 6.75 feet NAVD88 (8 feet NGVD29), water supply delivery is not achievable via Pump Station G-207 on the Harney Pond Canal and Pump Station G-208 on the Indian Prairie Canal, respectively, as the respective canals become disconnected from Lake Okeechobee.

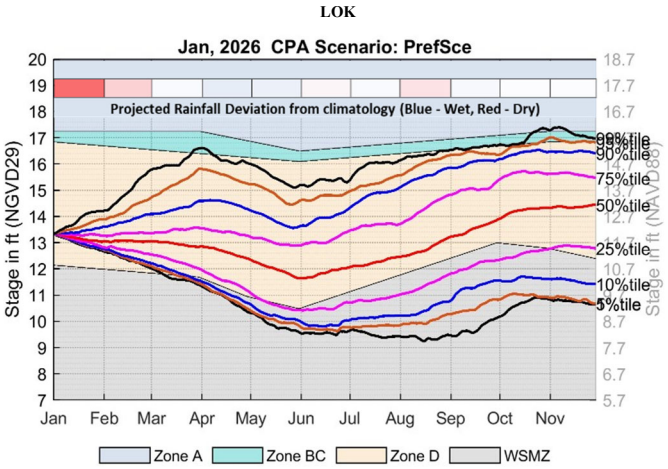
Algal Bloom conditions: The Fish and Wildlife Research Institute reported on January 30, 2026, that *Karenia brevis*, the Florida red tide dinoflagellate, was not observed at bloom concentrations in samples collected within the District region. In the most recent non-obscured satellite image from January 29, 2026, NOAA's Harmful Algal Bloom Monitoring System suggests the moderate to high cyanobacteria potential in the southern and western regions has been dispersed by recent strong winds and cold temperatures.

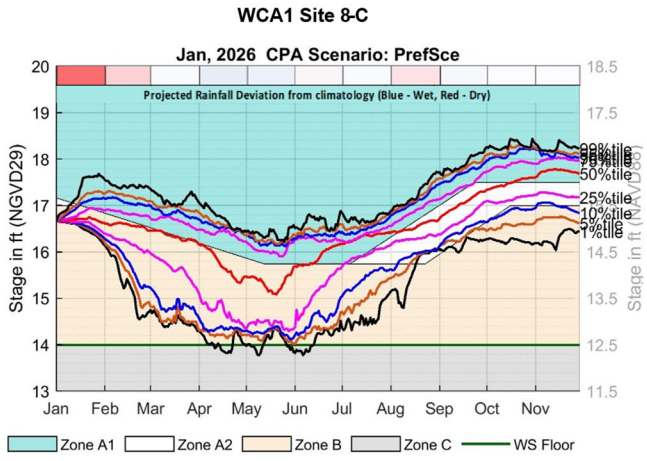
STA conditions: In STA-1E, Central Flow-way is offline for construction activities. An operational restriction is in place in the Western Flow-way for post-construction vegetation grow-in. Online treatment cells are at or slightly above target stage. In STA-1W, Eastern Flow-way is offline for vegetation management activities. Most treatment cells are at target stage. Vegetation in the Western and Eastern Flow-ways is highly stressed. The 365-day PLRs for the Northern and Western Flow-ways are below 1.0 g/m2/year. In STA-2, operational restrictions are in place in Flow-ways 2, 3, and 4 for vegetation management activities. Treatment cells are at target stage or slightly below target stage. The 365-day PLRs for all Flow-ways are below 1.0 $g/m^2/yr$. In STA-3/4, an operational restriction is in place in the Eastern Flow-way for vegetation management activities. Most treatment cells are slightly above target stage. Vegetation in the Central Flow-way is highly stressed. The 365-day PLR for the Eastern, Central, and Western Flow-ways are below 1.0 $g/m^2/yr$. For the current operational period, USACE is not requesting flows south from Lake Okeechobee towards the WCAs. The District will continue to work with the USACE to manage Lake Okeechobee levels in an effort to curtail harmful discharges over this year. To help with this objective the District will move as much water south through the Stormwater Treatment Areas as possible under the current permits as regional conditions allow.

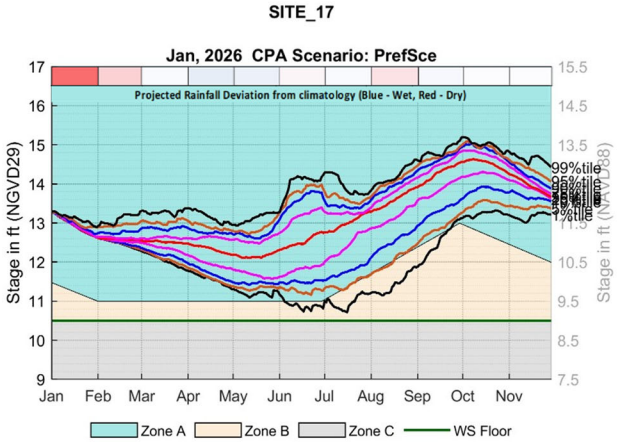
WCA conditions: On February 1 the daily average stage in WCA-1 was at 14.79 feet NAVD88 (16.39 feet NGVD29), in Zone B and 0.42 feet below regulation schedule. The daily average stage in WCA-2A was at 11.23 feet NAVD88 (12.82 feet NGVD29), in Zone A and 1.79 feet above regulation schedule. The daily average stage in WCA-3A was at 7.27 feet NAVD88 (8.79 feet NGVD29), in Zone B and 1.50 feet below regulation schedule. Over the 7-day period, January 26, 2026 to February 1, 2026, no regulatory releases were sent from Lake Okeechobee south to the STAs. No Lake regulatory releases reached the Lake Worth Lagoon through the C-51 canal during this period.

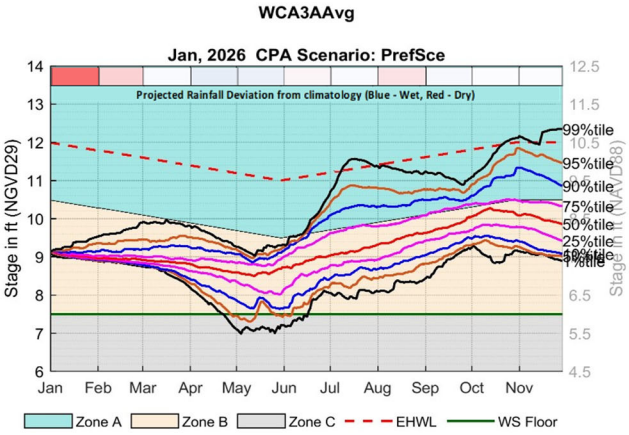
ENP conditions: Releases from WCA-3A to the ENP continue through the S-12D and S333 structures. S333s flow is limited by the head differential across the structures. Hydrologic connectivity within the major sloughs of ENP has declined with some potential remaining in Taylor Slough. Over the past two months, there has been a slow recession in northern WCA-1 and WCA-2A compared to northern WCA-3A, with very little water left in that region. The southern half of WCA-2A remains very deep for this time of year. Very dry conditions expand across Northern WCA-3A. Depths continue to decline steadily in WCA-3A and WCA-3B and remain very low for this time of year with potential impacts on system-wide ecology. Stages decreased in Taylor Slough over the past week and remain below the recent average. Salinity decreased on average in Florida Bay compared to last week but remain above the estimated historical average (circa 1900) and above the WY2001-2016 Interquartile Range (IQR) 75^{th} percentile in the eastern region, and within the IQR in the central and western regions. The Tamiami Trail Flow Formula (TTFF) recommends 444 cfs of daily target releases from WCA-3A to ENP. The District recommends continuing with the current operations for the releases from WCA-3A in accordance with the Combined Operating Plan.

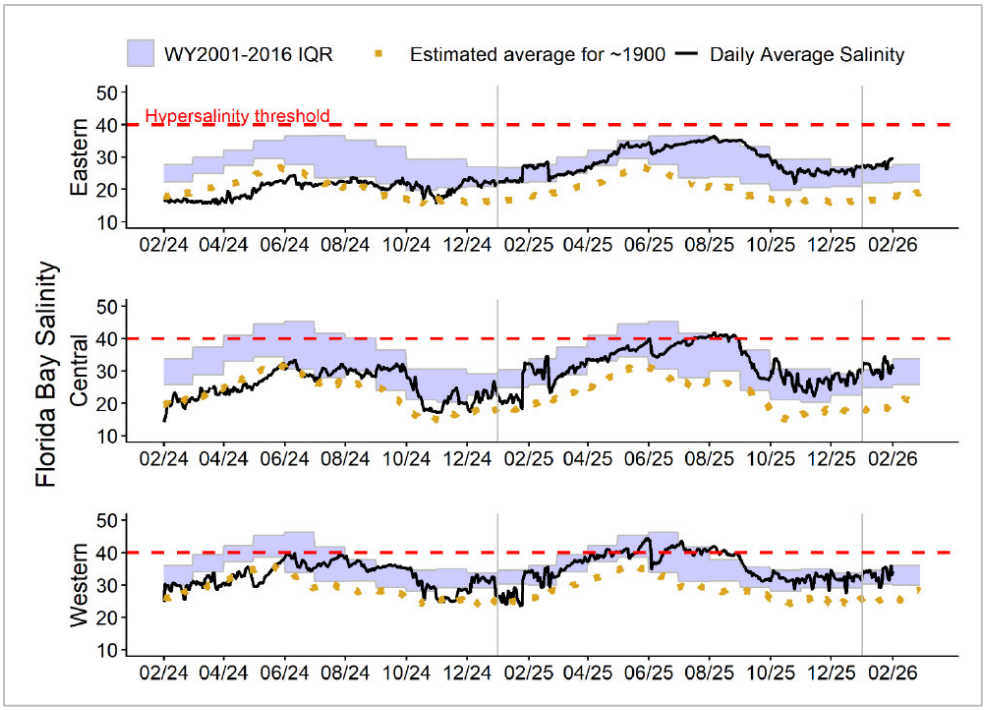
January 2026 Conditional Position Analysis (CPA) results for Lake Okeechobee, WCA-1, WCA-2A and WCA-3A under LOSOM Recovery Operations.











Eastern (top panel), Central (middle panel) and Western (bottom panel) Florida Bay daily average salinities with WY2001-2016 interquartile (25-75 percentile) ranges (IQR) and estimated historical daily average salinities. The hyper salinity threshold indicates the level at which salinities start to become harmful to seagrass.