

MEMORANDUM

TO: Laureen Borochaner, Chief, Engineering Division (USACE)
FROM: John Mitnik, Chief District Engineer (SFWMD)
Akin Owosina, Chief, Hydrology & Hydraulics Bureau (SFWMD)
DATE: January 17, 2019
SUBJECT: Operational Position Statement for January 15, 2019 to January 21, 2019

This Position Statement is for the one-week period from January 15, 2019 to January 21, 2019. On January 14, 2019, the Lake Okeechobee stage was 12.44 feet NGVD, which places it within the Beneficial Use Sub-band of the 2008 Lake Okeechobee Regulation Schedule (LORS). The Lake stage decreased by 0.14 feet during the preceding 7 days.

SFWMD (District) January rainfall to date is well below average (15% of average). District forecast (issued January 15) predicts near-average rainfall for this week and above-average rainfall for the following week.

Precipitation Outlook: The CPC precipitation outlook for January is for equal chances of above-normal, normal, or below normal rainfall for south Florida. The outlook for the 3-month windows from Jan-Mar to Apr-Jun is for increased chances (45%) of above-normal precipitation, except Feb-Apr with substantially increased chances (55%) of above-normal precipitation. 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 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 January 7, 2018, to January 13, 2019, STA-2 received 900 acre-feet of Lake Okeechobee releases and STA 3/4 received 100 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 below Zone E1 of the regulation schedule. Since lake stage transitioned into the Beneficial Use Sub-band, operations being implemented by the USACE under the Additional Operation Flexibility (AOF) defined by LORS2008 (October 26, 2018 Memorandum For the Record) ended on Thursday January 10, 2019. For the coming operational period, USACE is not directing the District to send Lake Okeechobee regulatory releases south to the WCAs. The SFWMD may continue releases south for the benefit of the STAs and the Everglades.

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 100 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 870 cfs over the past week with 470 cfs (54%) 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 has considered the application of the SFWMD's Lake Okeechobee Adaptive Protocols (AP) this week since the lake stage is in the Beneficial Use Sub-band and above the Lake Okeechobee Water Shortage Management zone. Given that the estuary does not need water, the AP recommendation is for "No S-77 releases to the Caloosahatchee Estuary unless the Governing Board recommends otherwise". The District recognizes that an immediate and drastic transition to much lower than current flows will not benefit the Caloosahatchee Estuary. The District recommends that the USACE operate to meet a target of 850 cfs, 7-day average, measured at S-79 for the benefit of the Caloosahatchee Estuary during the coming release period, January 18, 2018 to January 24, 2018. In addition, the District recommends that the USACE implement operations at S-78 and S-79 so as to conserve basin runoff and further extend the period of time that basin runoff can supply water to the Caloosahatchee Estuary with minimal deliveries of water through S-77. Should local runoff be insufficient to achieve the S-79 targets, District recommends supplemental releases at S-77 to achieve the target release at S-79.