

MEMORANDUM

TO: Laureen Borocharner, Chief, Engineering Division (USACE)
FROM: John Mitnik, Chief District Engineer (SFWMD)
Akin Owosina, Chief, Hydrology & Hydraulics Bureau (SFWMD)
DATE: January 3, 2019
SUBJECT: Operational Position Statement for January 1, 2019 to January 7, 2019

This Position Statement is for the one-week period from January 1, 2019 to January 7, 2019. On December 31, 2018, the Lake Okeechobee stage was 12.71 feet NGVD, which places it within the Base Flow Sub-band of the 2008 Lake Okeechobee Regulation Schedule (LORS). The Lake stage decreased by 0.05 feet during the preceding 7 days.

SFWMD (District) December rainfall was average (98% of average). District forecast (issued December 31) predicts below-average rainfall for this week and 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 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 24, 2018, to December 30, 2018, STA-1E received 400 acre-feet of Lake Okeechobee regulatory releases, STA-1W received 100 acre-feet and STA-2 received 700 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 the time when USACE is no longer sending regulatory releases to the estuaries.

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 215 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 1,050 cfs over the past week with 600 cfs (57%) 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.