

MEMORANDUM

TO: Laureen Borocharner, Chief, Engineering Division (USACE)
FROM: John Mitnik, Chief District Engineer (SFWMD)
Akin Owosina, Chief, Hydrology & Hydraulics Bureau (SFWMD)
DATE: January 24, 2019
SUBJECT: Operational Position Statement for January 22, 2019 to January 28, 2019

This Position Statement is for the one-week period from January 22, 2019 to January 28, 2019. On January 21, 2019, the Lake Okeechobee stage was 12.28 feet NGVD, which places it within the Beneficial Use Sub-band of the 2008 Lake Okeechobee Regulation Schedule (LORS). The Lake stage decreased by 0.16 feet during the preceding 7 days.

SFWMD (District) January rainfall to date is below average (35% of average). District forecast (issued January 15) predicts significantly above-average rainfall for this week and near-average rainfall for 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 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 14, 2019, to January 20, 2019, L-8 FEB, STA-1E and STA-1W received each 100 acre-feet of Lake Okeechobee releases, STA-2 received 1,600 acre-feet and STA 3/4 received 300 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. 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 125 cfs over the past week with no releases from Lake Okeechobee. The 7-day average salinity at the US1 Bridge is in the fair range for adult oysters. Total inflow to the Caloosahatchee Estuary averaged approximately 800 cfs over the past week with 500 cfs (63%) 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". At this time the District recommends that the USACE operate to meet a target of a constant release rate of 700 cfs measured at S-79 for the benefit of the Caloosahatchee Estuary during the coming release period, January 25, 2019 to January 31, 2019. The District recommends that the USACE test the efficacy of maintaining desired salinity ranges across the estuary through constant releases. 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.