

MEMORANDUM

TO: Laureen Borochaner, Chief, Engineering Division (USACE)
FROM: John Mitnik, Chief District Engineer (SFWMD)
Akin Owosina, Chief, Hydrology & Hydraulics Bureau (SFWMD)
DATE: July 18, 2019
SUBJECT: Operational Position Statement for July 16, 2019 to July 22, 2019

This Position Statement is for the one-week period from July 16, 2019 to July 22, 2019. On July 15, Lake Okeechobee stage was 11.48 feet NGVD, which places it within the Beneficial Use Sub-band of the 2008 Lake Okeechobee Regulation Schedule (LORS). Lake stage increased by 0.14 feet during the preceding 7 days.

District July rainfall to date is average (99% of normal). District rainfall forecast (issued July 16) predicts below-average rainfall for this week and the following week.

Precipitation Outlook: The most recent CPC precipitation outlooks for July and all the 3-month windows from Jul-Sep to Sep-Nov are for equal chances of above-normal, normal, or below-normal rainfall for south Florida. The outlook for the first half of the 2019-2020 dry season is for slightly increased chances (37%) of above-normal rainfall.

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 July 8, 2019 to July 14, 2019, no Lake Okeechobee regulatory releases were sent south to the STAs or to the Lake Worth Lagoon through the C-51 canal. Stage in WCA-1 is above regulation schedule. Stage in WCA-2A is above regulation schedule. WCA-3A stage is in Zone D of the regulation schedule.

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 800 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 2,800 cfs over the past week with no releases coming from Lake Okeechobee. Salinity conditions between Val I-75 and Ft. Myers remain good for tape grass. Salinities are in the good range for adult eastern oysters at Shell Point and Sanibel and fair range 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 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 recommends that the USACE continue to rely on local basin runoff and sustain healthy estuarine conditions in the Caloosahatchee estuary and that releases be reevaluated on a weekly basis in order to increase flexibility of decision making based on current conditions.