

MEMORANDUM

TO: Luis Alejandro, Chief, Water Management Section (USACE)

FROM: John Mitnik, Chief District Engineer (SFWMD)
Akin Owosina, Chief, Hydrology & Hydraulics Bureau (SFWMD)

DATE: July 26, 2018

SUBJECT: Operational Position Statement for July 24, 2018 to July 30, 2018

This Position Statement is for the one-week period from July 24, 2018 to July 30, 2018. On July 23, 2018, the Lake Okeechobee stage was 14.47 feet NGVD, which places it within the Low Sub-band of the 2008 Lake Okeechobee Regulation Schedule (LORS). The Lake stage increased by 0.03 feet during the preceding 7 days.

July rainfall has been below average (87% of average through July 24). District forecast (issued July 24) predicts above-average rainfall for the coming two weeks.

Precipitation Outlook: The most recent Climate Prediction Center (CPC) precipitation outlook indicates equal chances (EC) of below-normal, normal and above-normal rainfall for the District for August 2018. The 3-month window Aug-Oct shows slightly increased chances (37%) of above normal rainfall for the Upper and Lower Kissimmee areas, while the outlook for the 3-month window Sep-Nov is for equal chances (EC). The outlook for the 3-month window Oct-Dec is for slightly increased chances of above normal rainfall (~ 37%). The Nov-Jan and Dec-Feb windows show considerably increased chances of above normal rainfall (~ 55%). The 3-month windows from Jan-Mar to May-Jul 2019 slowly transition from increased likelihood of above normal rainfall to equal chances of below-normal, normal and above normal precipitation.

2008 LORS Release Guidance (Part C): With Lake Okeechobee stage within the Low Sub-band, the Tributary Hydrologic Conditions in the Wet category and the Multi-Seasonal Lake Okeechobee Net Inflow outlook in the Wet category, Part C of the 2008 LORS release guidance recommends "Up to maximum practicable releases to the WCAs if desirable or with minimum Everglades impacts". Otherwise no releases.

Over the 7-day period from July 16, 2018 to July 22, 2018, STA-2 received 5,200 acre-feet of Lake Okeechobee regulatory releases, and 10,600 acre-feet were sent to the A-1 FEB, STA 3/4 complex. Stages in all three WCAs are above their respective regulation schedules. For the coming operational period, the USACE is requesting the SFWMD make maximum practicable regulatory releases from the lake south to the WCAs. The District and USACE will continue to evaluate the capacity in the system to send lake water to the WCAs.

2008 LORS Release Guidance (Part D): With Lake Okeechobee stage within the Low Sub-band, the Tributary Hydrologic Conditions in the Wet category and the Multi-Seasonal Lake Okeechobee Net Inflow Outlook in the Wet category, Part D of the 2008 LORS release guidance suggests: "S-79 up to 3,000 cfs and S-80 up to 1,170 cfs".

Total discharge to the St. Lucie Estuary averaged around 3,300 cfs over the past week with 2,000 cfs (61%) coming from Lake Okeechobee. The 7-day average salinity at the US1 Bridge is estimated to be in the poor range for adult oysters; however, the water column is significantly stratified with a freshwater layer at the surface and saltier water at the bottom. Total inflow to the Caloosahatchee Estuary averaged approximately 5,350 cfs over the past week with 2,750 cfs (51%) coming from the Lake. Salinity conditions between Val I-75 and Ft. Myers remain good for tape grass. Salinity conditions are in the fair range for adult oysters at Shell Point and in the poor range at Cape Coral.

Lake Okeechobee stage remains the Low Sub-band, showing a small increase during the past 7 days. The District recommends that the Corps follows the LORS 2008 Regulation Schedule, with consideration for local basin runoff and the downstream estuaries, for the coming operational period. The Corps should look for opportunities to make reductions in Lake Okeechobee discharges in the coming weeks and continued consideration should be given to implementing pulse releases to the estuaries in order to allow the estuaries a rest period in between releases.