

MEMORANDUM

TO: Laureen Borochaner, Chief, Engineering Division (USACE)
FROM: John Mitnik, Chief District Engineer (SFWMD)
Akin Owosina, Chief, Hydrology & Hydraulics Bureau (SFWMD)
DATE: August 1, 2019
SUBJECT: Operational Position Statement for July 30, 2019 to August 5, 2019

This Position Statement is for the one-week period from July 30, 2019 to August 5, 2019. On July 29, Lake Okeechobee stage was 11.62 feet NGVD, which places it within the Water Shortage Management band. Lake stage increased by 0.11 feet during the preceding 7 days.

District July rainfall to date is average (101% of normal). District rainfall forecast (issued July 30) predicts substantially above-average rainfall for this 7-day period and below to near-average rainfall for the following week.

Precipitation Outlook: The most recent CPC precipitation outlooks for August and all the 3-month windows from Aug-Oct 2019 to the 2020 wet season are for equal chances of above-normal, normal, or below-normal rainfall for south Florida.

2008 LORS Release Guidance (Part C): With Lake Okeechobee stage within Water Shortage Management 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 22, 2019 to July 28, 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 Water Shortage Management 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 1,000 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 2,500 cfs over the past week with 50 cfs in releases coming from Lake Okeechobee. Releases from the lake through S-77 were in support of algae bloom control research conducted by USACE's contractors. 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.

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. Given that the lake stage is in the Lake Okeechobee Water Shortage Management band, the AP recommendation is for "No S-77 releases to the Caloosahatchee Estuary unless the Governing Board recommends otherwise". Therefore, the District recommends to the USACE not to implement any regulatory releases from the lake, continue to rely on local basin runoff to 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.