

MEMORANDUM

TO: Jason Engle, Chief, Engineering Division (USACE)
FROM: John Mitnik, Chief District Engineer (SFWMD)
DATE: July 3, 2025
SUBJECT: System Operational Position Statement July 1, 2025 to July 7, 2025

This Position Statement is to provide operational input for the one-week period from July 1, 2025 to July 7, 2025 based on system conditions and data observed during the previous Monday to Sunday 7-day period.

Current climate conditions: District June rainfall was below normal (84% of normal). The rainfall forecast (issued July 2) calls for above to much above normal rainfall for the coming 7-day period and below normal for the following one.

Climate and weather forecasts: The most recent CPC precipitation outlook for Jul 2025 is equal chances of below, normal and above normal rainfall (EC) for the entire District. ENSO-Neutral is likely in the Northern Hemisphere summer 2025, with a greater than 75% chance in June-August 2025 and may continue into winter 2025-26, though confidence is lower. The 3-month window of Jul 2025 – Sep 2025 indicates a slightly increased chances (33-40%) in the likelihood of above normal rainfall for the entire District. The 3-month window of Aug 2025 – Oct 2025 shows increased chances (40-50%) of above normal rainfall for areas north of the EAA, and slightly increased chances (33-40%) of above normal for the respective remainder areas of the District. The 3-month window of Sep 2025 – Nov 2025 shows increased chances (40-50%) of above Normal rainfall for the Lake Okeechobee and south, and slightly increased chances (33-40%) of above Normal rainfall for the remainder of the District. The transition into the 2025 – 2026 Dry Season goes through the 3-month window of Oct 2025 – Dec 2025 showing equal chances of below, normal and above normal rainfall (EC) for the entire District. The outlooks for the 3-month windows from Nov 2025 – Jan 2026 to Jan 2026 – Mar 2026 indicate increased chances (40-50%) of below normal rainfall for the entire District. The transition into the 2026 wet season shows equal chances (EC) of rainfall for the state of Florida.

Hydrologic and tropical outlooks: Current climatological conditions are Normal. Current hydrological conditions are Normal. Based on conditions at the start of the month, the lake stage is projected to remain in Zone D and entered the Water Shortage Management Band in late-June.

Water-supply conditions: The Lake Okeechobee seasonal net inflow outlook is Normal to Extremely Wet and at Low risk for water supply. The multi-seasonal net inflow outlook is Normal and at Moderate risk for water supply.

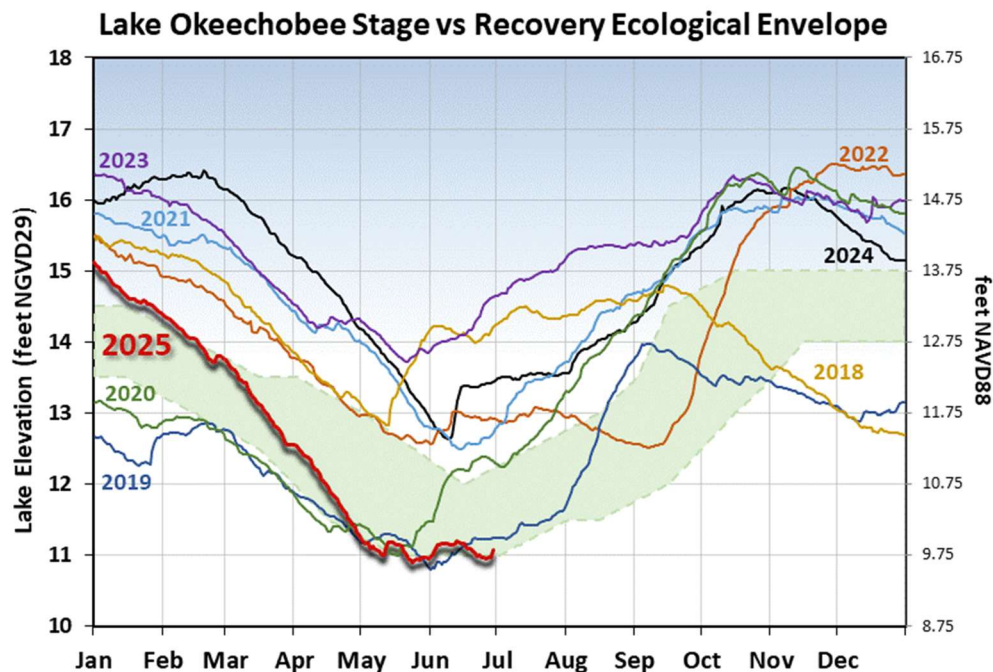
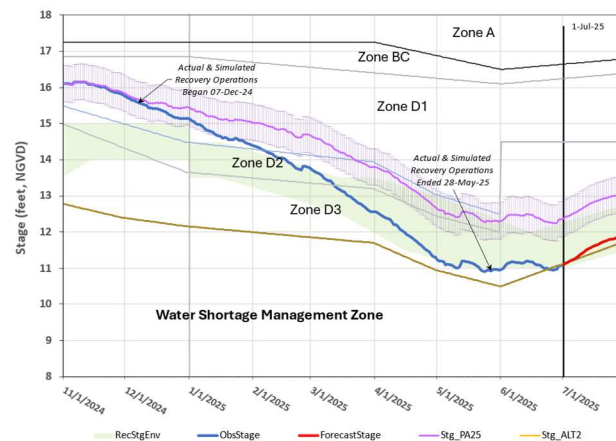
Estuary conditions: For the 7-day period, June 23 to June 29, 2025, total inflow to the Caloosahatchee Estuary averaged approximately 1,700 cfs with about 50 cfs flow coming from Lake Okeechobee through S-77. The mean salinities were in the optimal range (0-10) for tape grass at S-79 and Val I-75 and in the stressed range at Fort Myers. Salinities were in the optimal range (10-25) for adult eastern oysters at Cape Coral, and in the upper stressed range (>25) at Sanibel and Shell Point. Total discharge to the St. Lucie Estuary was about 1,100 cfs with no flow coming from Lake Okeechobee and the C-44 Basin, about 200 cfs coming from the C-23 Basin, about 100 cfs coming from the C-24 Basin, about 100 cfs coming from Ten Mile Creek, and about 700 cfs coming from the Tidal Basin. The average salinity in the middle estuary was within the optimum (10-25) for adult eastern oysters.

Lake Okeechobee stage and ecological conditions:

On June 29 the daily average Lake Okeechobee stage was 9.76 feet NAVD88 (11.07 feet NGVD29), which placed it within the Water Shortage Management Zone of the Lake Okeechobee System Operating Manual (LOSOM). Lake stage increased by 0.08 feet over the preceding 7-day period. ENSO-neutral conditions are present and are likely during the summer. The District will continue to monitor conditions in the estuaries, as well as the systemwide conditions, as the wet season progresses. With the initiation of the wet season, Normal Lake Operations have resumed pursuant to the considerations in LOSOM as informed by PA25. To maintain favorable salinity levels in the estuaries and begin to conserve water, it is recommended that flow targets for the Caloosahatchee Estuary should rely on rainy season basin flows which are expected to occur over the next week to ensure the delivery of the Minimum Flow and Level, but use Lake Okeechobee flows from S-77 to ensure S-79 flows remain above a targeted steady release of 250 cfs; flow targets for the St. Lucie Estuary and Lake Worth Lagoon should remain at 0 cfs consistent with Normal Operations within Zone D. As of July 1st, the water level of Lake Okeechobee has returned to Zone D, following about a week in the Water Shortage Management Band of the LOSOM Regulation Schedule. The District will continue to monitor salinity conditions in the estuaries and water supply conditions within the Lake Okeechobee Service Area to assess whether further reductions are warranted in future operational recommendations. The USACE typically implements the releases to the estuaries over a 7-day period starting on Saturday and ending on Friday.

Forecast Modeling Based on PA25 Simulation

Lake Okeechobee Hindcast & Forecasts* [S79/S80: 350/0]



The current and seven prior years' annual stage hydrographs for Lake Okeechobee in comparison to the recovery envelope (light green). A shift from the normal ecological envelope to the recovery envelope occurred because the 30-day minimum lake stage (elevations exposed for at least 30 days, nonconsecutively) in the June 1 – July 31, 2023 window was >11.75 feet NAVD88 (13 feet NGVD29).

Navigation and recreation conditions: Currently, there are no planned deviation or declared water shortage impacting navigation or lockages.

STOF water supply conditions: Current Lake Okeechobee stage is sufficiently high that water supply deliveries to the Seminole Tribe of Florida (STOF) Brighton Reservation, if needed, will not be impacted. When Lake Okeechobee stage recedes below 8.75 feet NAVD88 (10 feet NGVD29) and 6.75 feet NAVD88 (8 feet NGVD29), water supply delivery is not achievable via Pump Station G-207 on the Harney Pond Canal and Pump Station G-208 on the Indian Prairie Canal, respectively, as the respective canals become disconnected from Lake Okeechobee.

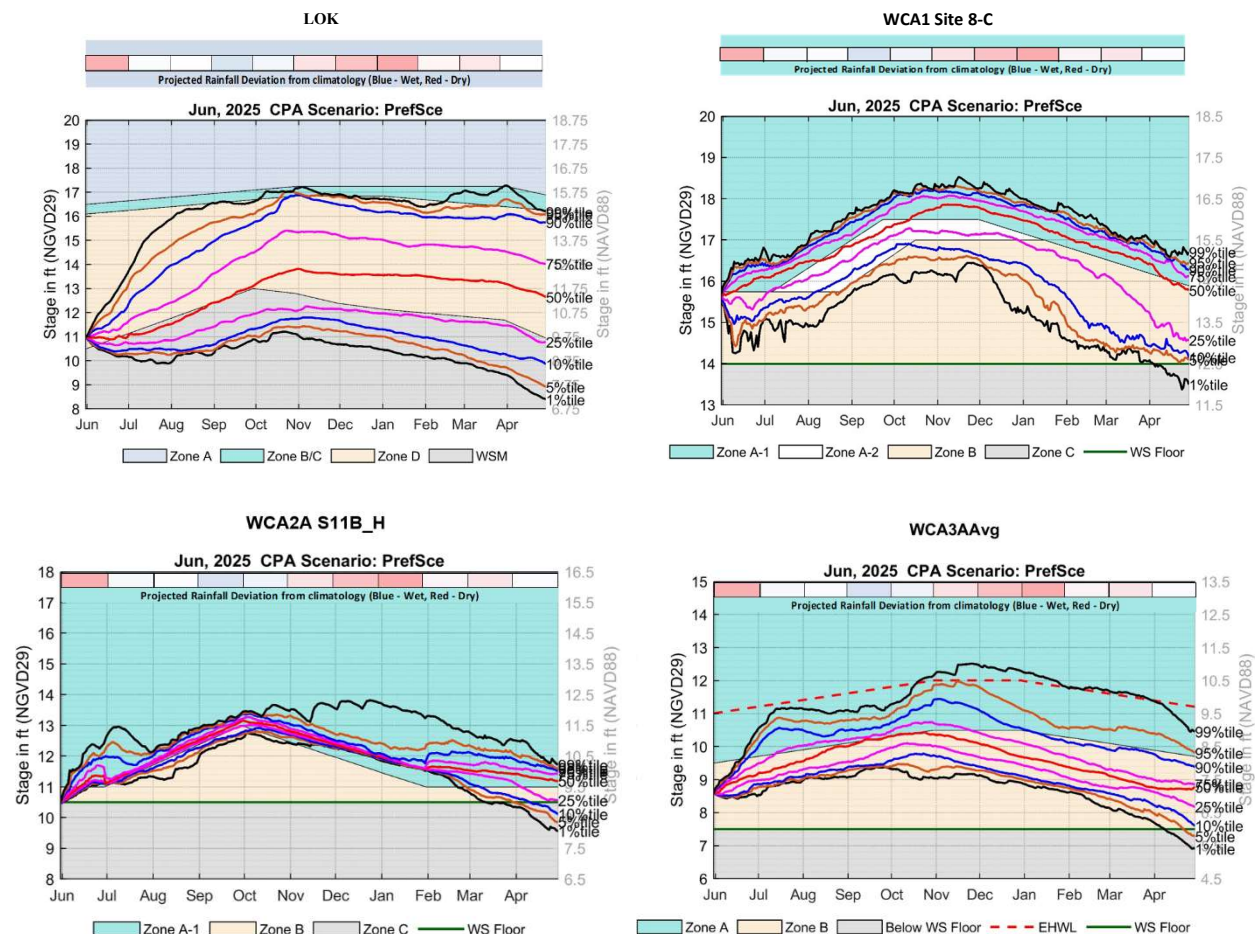
Algal Bloom conditions: The Fish and Wildlife Research Institute reported on June 27, 2025, that *Karenia brevis*, the Florida red tide dinoflagellate, was not observed in any samples collected within the District region. In the most recent non-obscured satellite image from June 28, 2025, NOAA's Harmful Algal Bloom Monitoring System suggests moderate to high cyanobacteria potential in northern and western nearshore areas of the lake, and low to moderate potential in some pelagic and southern regions.

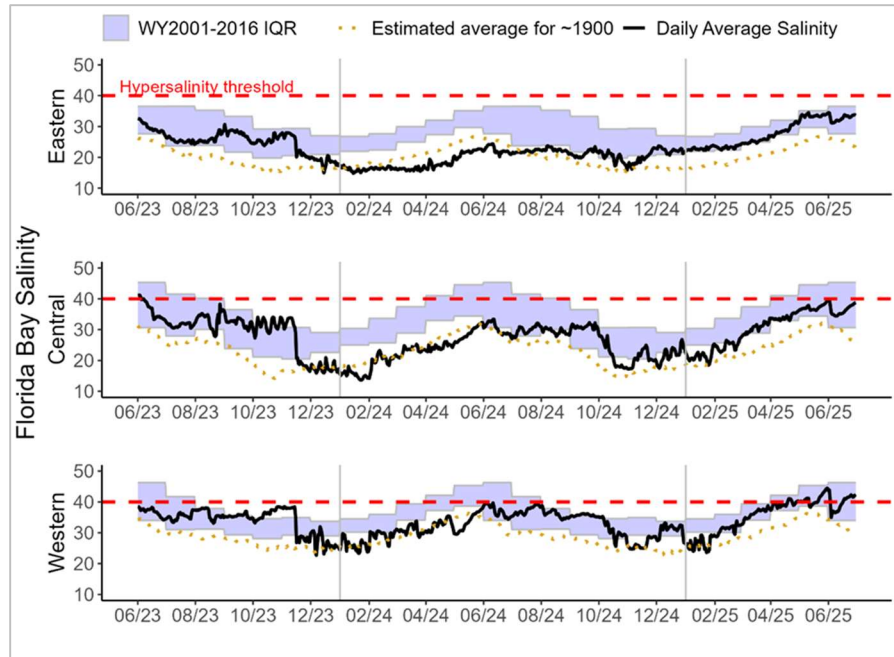
STA conditions: In STA-1E, Central Flow-way is offline for construction activities. An operational restriction is in place in the Western Flow-way for post-construction vegetation grow-in. Online treatment cells are near target stage. In STA-1W, treatment cells are near target stage. Vegetation in the Western and Eastern flow-ways is highly stressed. The 365-day PLRs for the Eastern and Northern Flow-ways are below 1.0 g/m²/yr. The 365-day PLR for the Western Flow-way is high (≥ 1.0 g/m²/yr). STA-2 Flow-way 3 is offline for post-drawdown vegetation grow-in. Operational restrictions are in place in Flow-ways 2 and 4 for vegetation management activities. An additional restriction is in place for inflow canal dredging in Flow-way 1. Online treatment cells are near target stage. Vegetation in Flow-ways 2 is stressed, and in 5 is highly stressed. The 365-day PLRs for flow-ways 2 are below 1.0 g/m²/yr. In STA-3/4, Eastern Flow-way is under limitations for post-drawdown vegetation grow-in. Treatment cells are near or above target stage, vegetation in the Central flow-ways is highly stressed, and the 365-day PLRs for the Central and Western Flow-ways are below 1.0 g/m²/yr. For the current operational period, USACE is not requesting flows south from Lake Okeechobee towards the WCAs. The District will continue to work with the USACE to manage Lake Okeechobee levels in an effort to curtail harmful discharges over this year. To help with this objective the District will move as much water south through the Stormwater Treatment Areas as possible under the current permits as regional conditions allow.

WCA conditions: On June 29 the daily average stage in WCA-1 was at 13.79 feet NAVD88 (15.39 feet NGVD29), in Zone B and 0.39 feet below regulation schedule. The daily average stage in WCA-2A was at 8.83 feet NAVD88 (10.43 feet NGVD29), in Zone C and 0.08 feet below the water supply line. The daily average stage in WCA-3A was at 7.19 feet NAVD88 (8.71 feet NGVD29), in Zone B and 0.97 feet below regulation schedule. Over the 7-day period, June 23 to June 29, 2025, a total of 700 acre-feet were sent from Lake Okeechobee south to STA-2. No Lake regulatory releases reached the Lake Worth Lagoon through the C-51 canal during this period.

ENP conditions: Releases from WCA-3A to the ENP continue through the S-12C/D and S333 structures. Hydrologic connectivity has now diminished in Shark River and Taylor Sloughs with little to no flow connectivity in either. Very dry conditions continue in WCA-1 and WCA-2A. Conditions remain relatively dry in WCA-3A South, but depths are increasing across WCA-3A, especially along the north and western regions. Big Cypress Basin depths continue to be significantly below soil surface only along Tamiami Trail, but that basin remains dry overall. Depths in the Everglades Protection Area (EPA) are well below average for this time of year. Stages decreased in Taylor Slough last week and remain below the recent average. Salinity increased on average in Florida Bay compared to last week and remain above the estimated average for 1900 and within the WY2001-2016 Interquartile Range (IQR) for all three regions. The Tamiami Trail Flow Formula (TTFF) recommends 430 cfs of daily target releases from WCA-3A to ENP. The District recommends continuing with the current operations for the releases from WCA-3A in accordance with the Combined Operating Plan.

June 2025 Conditional Position Analysis (CPA) results for Lake Okeechobee, WCA-1, WCA-2A and WCA-3A under LOSOM Recovery Operations.





Eastern (top panel), Central (middle panel) and Western (bottom panel) Florida Bay daily average salinities with WY2001-2016 interquartile (25-75 percentile) ranges (IQR) and estimated historical daily average salinities. The hypersalinity threshold indicates the level at which salinities start to become harmful to seagrass.