MEMORANDUM

TO: Laureen Borochaner, Chief, Engineering Division (USACE)

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

DATE: June 13, 2019

SUBJECT: Operational Position Statement for June 11, 2019 to June 17, 2019

This Position Statement is for the one-week period from June 11, 2019 to June 17, 2019. On June 10, Lake Okeechobee stage was 10.94 feet NGVD, which places it within the Beneficial Use Sub-band of the 2008 Lake Okeechobee Regulation Schedule (LORS). Lake stage increased by 0.10 feet during the preceding 7 days.

District June rainfall to date is above average (112%). District rainfall forecast (issued June 11) predicts slightly above-average rainfall for this week and slightly below-average rainfall for the following week.

Precipitation Outlook: The most recent CPC precipitation outlooks for June and all the 3-month windows from Jun-Aug 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 June 3, 2019 to June 9, 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 slightly above regulation schedule (estimated). WCA-3A stage is in Zone E1 of the regulation schedule. For the coming operational period, the USACE is utilizing Additional Operation Flexibility (AOF) within LORS2008 Water Control Plan as documented in the February 22, 2019 Memorandum For the Record (MFR). **For the coming operational period, the USACE is directing the District to send no Lake Okeechobee regulatory releases south or to the Lake Worth Lagoon through the C-51 canal.**

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.

With Lake Okeechobee stages being below 11.3 NGVD, the majority of the lake littoral zone marshes are dry. Total discharge to the St. Lucie Estuary averaged approximately 630 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 840 cfs over the past week with about 30 cfs (less than 1%) coming from Lake Okeechobee. 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 Cape Coral and in the fair range at Shell Point and Sanibel locations.

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 recognizes the USACE's responsibility to control lake stages. On May 27th the Lake Okeechobee stage fell below the Minimum Flow and Level for Lake Okeechobee of 11.0 feet NGVD. At this time, the District recommends that the USACE follow LORS 2008, using its operational flexibility to continue beneficial flows from S-79 on the order of 450 cfs, with reliance primarily on local basin runoff, in order to maintain a favorable salinity gradient in the Caloosahatchee estuary. Furthermore, the District recommends that releases be reevaluated on a weekly basis in order to increase flexibility of decision making based on current conditions.