

MEMORANDUM

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

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

DATE: March 22, 2018

SUBJECT: Operational Position Statement for March 20, 2018 to March 26, 2018

This Position Statement is for the one-week period from March 20, 2018 to March 26, 2018. On March 19, 2018, Lake Okeechobee stage was 14.28 feet NGVD, in the Low Sub-band. Lake stage decreased by 0.21 feet during the preceding 7 days.

District rainfall to date for March is well below average (27% of normal). District forecast (issued March 20) predicts well below average rainfall for the coming two weeks.

Precipitation Outlook: The most recent Climate Prediction Center (CPC) precipitation outlook indicates increased chances of below-normal rainfall (~55%) for the District for the month of April. The outlook for all the future 3-month windows is for equal chances of below-normal, normal and above-normal rainfall.

2008 LORS Release Guidance (Part C): With Lake Okeechobee stage within the Low Sub-band, the Tributary Hydrologic conditions in the Normal category and the multi-seasonal outlook in the Normal category, Part C of the 2008 LORS release guidance recommends "Up to Maximum Practicable to the WCAs if desirable or with minimum Everglades impacts. Otherwise no releases to the WCAs".

Over the 7-day period from March 12, 2018 to March 18, 2018, STA 1E received 1,500 acre-feet of Lake Okeechobee regulatory releases, STA-1W received 100 acre-feet, STA 2 received 2,600 acre-feet and STA 3/4 received 900 acre-feet. A volume of 4,400 acre-feet were released from the lake into the A-1 FEB. There were 3,100 acre-feet regulatory releases from the lake to tide through the C-51 canal. Stage in WCA-1 is slightly below regulation schedule. Marsh stage in WCA-2A remains above regulation schedule, but below the temporary deviation schedule, while canal stage (S11B-HW) is below the floor elevation. Stage in WCA-3A is below Zone E1 of the regulation schedule. For the coming operational period, the USACE is requesting the SFWMD implement maximum practicable releases from the lake south to all the WCAs.

2008 LORS Release Guidance (Part D): With Lake Okeechobee stage within the Low Sub-band, the Tributary Hydrologic Conditions in the Normal category, and the lake net inflow seasonal outlook in the Normal category, Part D of the 2008 LORS release guidance suggests Base Flow releases: "S-79 Up to 450 cfs and S-80 up to 200 cfs".

Total discharge to the St. Lucie Estuary averaged around 100 cfs over the past week with no releases coming from Lake Okeechobee. The 7-day average salinity at the US1 Bridge is in the good range for adult oysters. Total inflow to Caloosahatchee Estuary averaged approximately 675 cfs over the past week with approximately 350 cfs (52%) coming from the Lake. Salinity conditions between Val I-75 and Ft. Myers remain good for tape grass. Salinity is in the good range for adult oysters at Cape Coral and at Shell Point.

The District has considered the application of the SFWMD's Lake Okeechobee Adaptive Protocols (AP) this week since the lake stage is in the Low Sub-band and the LORS release guidance is recommending Base Flow releases. Given that the estuary does not need water, the AP recommendation is for "No S-77 releases to the Caloosahatchee Estuary". The District recognizes the USACE desire to manage the lake stage by making Base Flow releases per the LORS release guidance and therefore recommends continuation of releases at S-77 to supplement the target release at S-79.