

MEMORANDUM

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

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

DATE: May 18, 2017

SUBJECT: Operational Position Statement for May 16, 2017 to May 22, 2017

This Position Statement is for the one-week period from May 16, 2017 to May 22, 2017. On May 15, Lake Okeechobee stage was 11.43 feet NGVD, in the Beneficial Use Sub-band. During last week, the lake stage decreased 0.21 feet.

District total rainfall for May up to date is below average (~93%). District rainfall is expected to be near average for the next week and below average for the following week.

Precipitation Outlook: The most recent Climate Prediction Center (CPC) precipitation outlook indicates equal chances of below-normal, normal and above-normal rainfall for south Florida for May 2017. The outlook for the three-month windows extending into the 2017 wet season is for equal chances of below-normal, normal and 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 May 8, 2017 to May 14, 2017, a total of 17,500 acre-feet were released south from Lake Okeechobee through EAA canals. Of this volume, only 100 acre-feet made it as inflow into STA-1E. No releases were made from the lake to tide via C-10A, L-8 and C-51.

At this time, the USACE is not requesting the SFWMD implement lake regulatory releases to WCA-1, WCA-2A or WCA-3A. There will be no releases from the lake into the A-1 FEB for this operational period. Lake releases are directed to STA 2 via the North New River canal and to STA 3/4 via the Miami 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.

Over the past several weeks the District has recommended releases averaging 300 cfs measured at S-79, consistent with both the District's Lake Okeechobee Adaptive Protocols and the Minimum Flow Rule for the Caloosahatchee Estuary. Salinities in the upstream portion of the estuary have risen in response to reduced flows and lack of rainfall. Recognizing that south Florida is in a transition period awaiting the onset of the rainy season and in balancing conditions throughout the system, the District recommends the USACE increase the weekly average flow at S-79 to 375 cfs beginning this week. In addition, the District recommends that the USACE implement operations at S-78 and S-79 so as to conserve basin runoff and further extend the period of time that basin runoff can supply water to the Caloosahatchee Estuary with minimal deliveries of water through S-77. Should local runoff be insufficient to achieve the S-79 targets, the District recommends supplemental releases at S-77 to achieve the target release at S-79.

Salinity at the US 1 Bridge location in the St. Lucie Estuary remained within the fair range for adult oysters. In the Caloosahatchee Estuary, salinity conditions between Val I-75 and Ft. Myers are poor for tape grass. Salinity conditions are in the good range for adult oysters at the Cape Coral Bridge, in the fair range at Shellpoint, and likely in the fair range at the Sanibel Causeway.