

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 25, 2017

SUBJECT: Operational Position Statement for May 23, 2017 to May 29, 2017

This Position Statement is for the one-week period from May 23, 2017 to May 29, 2017. On May 21, Lake Okeechobee stage was 11.16 feet NGVD, in the Beneficial Use Sub-band. During last week, the lake stage decreased 0.27 feet.

District total rainfall for May up to date is below average (~86 %). District rainfall is expected to be average for the next two coming weeks.

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 June 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. For the three-month windows falling in the first half of the 2017-2018 dry season, CPC indicates an increased change of above-normal rainfall for south Florida.

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 15, 2017 to May 21, 2017, a total of 34,800 acre-feet were released south from Lake Okeechobee through EAA canals. Of this volume, 600 acre-feet made it as inflow into STA-1E, 1,000 acre-feet into STA 2 and 3,100 acre-feet into STA 3/4. 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 will be directed 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 balancing conditions throughout the system, the District recommends the USACE continue the previous week's weekly average flow at S-79 of 375 cfs for the coming 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 in the poor range at the Sanibel Causeway.