

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 17, 2018

SUBJECT: Operational Position Statement for May 15, 2018 to May 21, 2018

This Position Statement is for the one-week period from May 15, 2018 to May 21, 2018. On May 14, 2018, Lake Okeechobee stage was 12.83 feet NGVD, in the Base Flow Sub-band. Lake stage decreased by 0.14 feet during the preceding 7 days.

To date District rainfall for May is above average (173% of normal). District forecast (issued May 15) predicts above average rainfall for the coming week and 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 the District for the month of May. The outlooks for all the future 3-month windows are for equal chances of below-normal, normal and above-normal rainfall, with the exception of the Jun-Aug and Jul-Sep windows which show slight increase of above-normal rainfall (37%) for the areas north of Lake Okeechobee and a more significant increase of above-normal rainfall (45%) for the areas south of the lake.

2008 LORS Release Guidance (Part C): With Lake Okeechobee stage within the Base Flow Sub-band and the Tributary Hydrologic Conditions in the Dry category, Part C of the 2008 LORS release guidance recommends “No releases to the WCAs”.

Over the 7-day period from May 7, 2018 to May 13, 2018, STA-1E, STA 1W, L-8 FEB and A-1 FEB received no releases from Lake Okeechobee, STA 2 received 100 acre-feet, and STA 3/4 received 300 acre-feet. About 200 ac-ft made it from the lake to tide through the C-51 canal. Stage at gauge 1-8C in WCA-1 is in Zone A1 of the regulation schedule. Stage in WCA-2A (S-11B HW) is slightly above the regulation schedule. Stage in WCA-3A is in Zone E. For the coming operational period, the USACE is requesting the SFWMD make no regulatory releases from the lake south to the WCAs.

2008 LORS Release Guidance (Part D): With Lake Okeechobee stage within the Base Flow Sub-band, 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 450 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 1,200 cfs over the past week with approximately 350 cfs (29%) 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 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 Base Flow 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 unless the Governing Board recommends otherwise”. The District recognizes the USACE desire to manage the lake stage by making Base Flow releases per the LORS release guidance.