# MEMORANDUM

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

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

**DATE:** June 2, 2022

**SUBJECT:** Operational Position Statement for May 31, 2022 to June 6, 2022

This Position Statement is to provide operational recommendations for the one-week period from for May 31, 2022 to June 6, 2022 based on system conditions and data observed during the previous Monday to Sunday 7-day period. On May 30, Lake Okeechobee stage was 12.59 feet NGVD, which places it within the Beneficial Use Sub-band of the 2008 Lake Okeechobee Regulation Schedule (LORS). Lake stage decreased 0.11 feet over the preceding 7 days period.

District April rainfall was normal (~99% of normal). Rainfall forecast (issued May 31) is highly above normal for the coming 7-day period and below normal for the following 7-day period.

Precipitation Outlook: The most recent CPC precipitation outlook for South Florida for June 2022 is for substantially increased chances (80-90%) of above normal rainfall for most of the District area, and for large chances (70-80%) of above normal for the region north of Lake Okeechobee. The outlooks for the 3-month windows from Jun-Aug to the beginning of the 2022-2023 dry season (Dec 2022- Feb 2023) are for equal chances of below, 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 23, 2022 to May 29, 2022 deliveries from Lake Okeechobee were 1,900 acre-feet to STA-2 and 100 acre-feet to STA 3/4. No Lake regulatory releases reached the Lake Worth Lagoon through the C-51 canal. Stage in WCA-1 is above regulation schedule in Zone A1, stage in WCA-2A is above regulation schedule in Zone A, and WCA-3A stage is below schedule in Zone B. For the coming operational period, the USACE is not requesting regulatory releases be sent south from Lake Okeechobee towards the WCAs.

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.

For the 7-day period May 20, 2022 to May 26, 2022, total discharge to the St. Lucie Estuary was about 350 cfs with no flows coming from Lake Okeechobee. The 7-day average salinity at the US1 Bridge is in the stressed range (> 25) for adult eastern oysters. Total inflow to the Caloosahatchee Estuary averaged approximately 1,050 cfs over the past week with about 500 cfs coming from Lake Okeechobee. Salinities were in the optimal range (0-10) for tape grass in the upper estuary. Salinities were in the optimal range (10-25) for adult eastern oysters at Cape Coral and in the stressed range (> 25) at Shell Point and Sanibel.

The District will continue to work with the USACE to manage Lake Okeechobee levels in an effort to curtail harmful discharges over this year. Generally speaking, the District and Corps should strive to move as much water out of the lake without harming natural resources and other critical resources. At this time, this involves releases that maintain appropriate salinity in the estuaries and ensuring the Stormwater Treatment Areas don't sustain long term damage from extended high-volume flows. Current District operational objectives are to continue to move water south from Lake Okeechobee for delivery to the Everglades where opportunities exist.

The District recommends USACE continue lake discharges to the Caloosahatchee Estuary in a pulse release fashion, measured at S-79, at a non-damaging level of 1,000 cfs (7-day average), while continuing to monitor estuary conditions and make any adjustments as necessary. This decision should be reassessed as needed based on lake and estuarine conditions. The USACE typically implements the releases to the estuaries over a 7-day period starting on Saturday and ending on Friday.