

MEMORANDUM

TO: Laureen Borochaner, Chief, Engineering Division (USACE)
FROM: John Mitnik, Chief District Engineer (SFWMD)
Akin Owosina, Chief, Hydrology & Hydraulics Bureau (SFWMD)
DATE: September 19, 2019
SUBJECT: Operational Position Statement for September 17, 2019 to September 23, 2019

This Position Statement is for the one-week period from September 17, 2019 to September 23, 2019. On September 11, Lake Okeechobee stage was 13.89 feet NGVD, which places it within the Base Flow Sub-band of the 2008 Lake Okeechobee Regulation Schedule (LORS). Lake stage decreased by 0.08 feet during the preceding 7 days.

District September rainfall to date is below-average (55% of normal). District rainfall forecast (issued September 17) predicts below-average rainfall for this 7-day period and the following week.

Precipitation Outlook: The most recent CPC precipitation outlooks for September 2019 calls for increased chances of above normal rainfall for the south and south-west portions of the District and for substantially increased chances of above normal rainfall for the remainder of the District. The CPC precipitation outlooks for the 3-month windows of Sep-Nov and Oct-Dec are for increased chances of above normal rainfall for south Florida. All the 3-month windows from Nov-Jan into the 2019-2020 dry season and the 2020 wet season have outlooks for equal chances of above-normal, normal, or below-normal rainfall for south Florida.

2008 LORS Release Guidance (Part C): With Lake Okeechobee stage within the Base Flow Sub-band, the Tributary Hydrologic Conditions in the Wet category and the Multi-Seasonal Lake Okeechobee Net Inflow Outlook in the Normal classification, Part C of the 2008 LORS suggests "Up to Maximum Practicable Releases to the WCAs if Desirable or with Minimum Everglades Impact".

Over the 7-day period from September 9 to September 15, 2019, Lake Okeechobee regulatory releases were sent south to the STA1-E in the amount of 2,300 acre-feet, 2,100 acre-feet to STA-1W, 7,300 acre-feet to the L-8 FEB, 6,300 acre-feet to STA-2, and 13,100 to the A-1 FEB + STA 3/4 complex. Lake Okeechobee regulatory releases were not sent to the Lake Worth Lagoon through the C-51 canal. Stage in WCA-1 is in Zone A2 of the regulation schedule. Stage in WCA-2A is below regulation schedule. WCA-3A stage is above the regulation schedule. For the coming operational period, the USACE is recommending the SFWMD not implement maximum practicable Lake Okeechobee regulatory releases south to the WCAs.

2008 LORS Release Guidance (Part D): With Lake Okeechobee stage in the Base Flow Sub-band, Part D of the 2008 LORS suggests "S-79 Up to 450cfs and S-80 Up to 200 cfs".

Total discharge to the St. Lucie Estuary averaged approximately 1,000 cfs over the past week with no releases from Lake Okeechobee. The 7-day average salinity at the US1 Bridge is in the fair range for adult oysters. Total inflow to the Caloosahatchee Estuary averaged approximately 1,100 cfs over the past week with about 160 cfs coming from Lake Okeechobee. Salinity conditions between Val I-75 and Ft. Myers remain good for tape grass. Salinities are in the good range for adult eastern oysters at Shell Point and Sanibel locations, and in the fair range for Cape Coral.

The District, in coordination with the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP), has considered the system conditions this week. Given that the lake stage is in the Base Flow Sub-band, and the runoff for the previous weeks, the Estuary does not need water. Therefore, the District recommends USACE not implement any regulatory releases from the lake to the estuaries, manage local basin runoff to support healthy estuarine conditions in the Caloosahatchee estuary, and that releases be reevaluated on a weekly basis in order to increase flexibility of decision making based on current conditions.