

MEMORANDUM

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

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

DATE: September 28, 2017

SUBJECT: Operational Position Statement for September 26, 2017 to October 2, 2017

This Position Statement is for the one-week period from September 26, 2017 to October 2, 2017. On September 25, 2017, Lake Okeechobee stage was 16.15 feet NGVD, in the Intermediate Sub-band. Lake stage increased by 0.61 feet during the preceding 7 days.

Rainfall for the month of September is well above-average, due to the impact from Hurricane Irma. District current forecast indicates above-average rainfall for the coming week and near-average for the following week.

Precipitation Outlook: The most recent Climate Prediction Center (CPC) precipitation outlook indicates increased chances (~45%) of above-normal rainfall for south Florida for October. The outlook for the three-month windows from December-February to February-April is for an increased chance (~45%) of below normal rainfall. The outlook for the remainder three-month windows in the period October 2017 to May 2018 is for equal chances of below-normal, normal and above-normal rainfall.

2008 LORS Release Guidance (Part C): With Lake Okeechobee stage within the Intermediate Sub-band and stages in WCA-2A and WCA-3A higher than the maximum of their respective schedules plus 0.25 feet, Part C of the 2008 LORS release guidance recommends “No Releases to the WCAs”.

There were no releases south from Lake Okeechobee through the EAA canals over the 7-day period from September 18 to September 24, 2017. No releases were made from Lake Okeechobee to tide via C-10A, L-8 and C-51 either.

For the coming operational period, the USACE is requesting the SFWMD send maximum practicable releases from the lake south, with the limitation that such releases should not enter WCA-2A or WCA-3A.

2008 LORS Release Guidance (Part D): With Lake Okeechobee stage in the Intermediate Sub-band, the Tributary Hydrologic Conditions in the Very Wet category and Lake Okeechobee stage projected to rise to the High Sub-band, the release guidance for Part D of the 2008 LORS is “S-77 up to 6,500 cfs and S-80 up to 2,800 cfs”

Total discharge to the St. Lucie estuary averaged 5,160 cfs over the past week with 2,470 cfs (48%) coming from Lake Okeechobee. Salinities increased slightly at the HR1 site and US1 Bridge and substantially at the A1A Bridge. The 7-day average salinity at the US1 Bridge is in the poor range for adult oysters and is likely to remain low due to continued Lake releases. Low oxygen levels (<3 mg/L) were recorded in the North Fork.

Total inflow to Caloosahatchee estuary averaged 11,470 cfs over the past week with 4,700 cfs (41%) coming from the Lake. Salinity conditions between Val I-75 and Ft. Myers are good for tape grass. Salinity conditions are estimated to be in the good range for adult oysters at Sanibel, in the fair range at Shell Point and in the poor range at Cape Coral.

Lake Okeechobee stages continue to increase from the rainfall generated by Hurricane Irma. The District recommends that USACE follows the LORS 2008 Regulation Schedule.