

MEMORANDUM

TO: Laureen Borocharner, Chief, Engineering Division (USACE)
FROM: John Mitnik, Chief District Engineer (SFWMD)
Akin Owosina, Chief, Hydrology & Hydraulics Bureau (SFWMD)
DATE: August 13, 2020
SUBJECT: Operational Position Statement for August 11, 2020 to August 17, 2020

This Position Statement is to provide operational recommendations for the one-week period from August 11, 2020 to August 17, 2020 based on system conditions and data observed during the last 7 days. On August 10, Lake Okeechobee stage was 13.67 feet NGVD, as it transitioned from the Base Flow Sub-band to the Low Sub-band of the 2008 Lake Okeechobee Regulation Schedule (LORS). Lake stage increased by 0.37 feet during the preceding 7 days.

Rainfall over the District for the month of August to date is about average. District rainfall forecast (issued August 12) predicts below to near average rainfall for the next 7 days and near average for the following period.

Precipitation Outlook: The most recent CPC precipitation outlooks for August 2020 shows substantially increased chances of above normal rainfall for the east area of the District, from Martin/St. Lucie to Broward County, and increased chances of above normal rainfall for the remainder of the District. The 3-month outlook windows of Aug-Oct and Sep-Nov call for increased chances of above-normal rainfall for the District. Outlook for the 3-month window of Oct-Dec calls for equal chances of above-normal, normal, and below-normal rainfall. For the first half of the 2020-2021 dry season, the forecast indicates increased chances of below normal rainfall. The outlook corresponding to the transition months from dry to wet season in 2021 shows increased chances of above normal rainfall.

2008 LORS Release Guidance (Part C): With Lake Okeechobee stage within the Low Sub-band, the Tributary Hydrologic Conditions in the Very Wet category and the Multi-seasonal Lake Okeechobee Net Inflow Outlook in the Normal category, Part C of the 2008 LORS suggests "Up to Maximum Practicable to the WCAs if desirable or with minimum Everglades impact; otherwise no releases to WCAs".

Over the 7-day period from August 3 to August 10, 2020, no Lake Okeechobee releases were sent to any of the STAs. No Lake releases were sent to the Lake Worth Lagoon through the C-51 canal. Stage in WCA-1 is above schedule (Zone A1), stage in WCA-2A is above schedule (Zone A), and WCA-3A stage is above schedule (Zone A). For the coming operational period, the USACE is not requesting the SFWMD to implement maximum practicable regulatory releases south from the lake to the WCAs as all three WCAs are above schedule.

2008 LORS Release Guidance (Part D): With Lake Okeechobee stage in the Low Sub-band, the Tributary Hydrologic Conditions in the Very Wet category, Lake stage more than 1.0 ft from the Intermediate Sub-band, and the Multi-seasonal Lake Okeechobee Net Inflow Outlook in the Normal category, Part D of the 2008 LORS suggests "S-79 Up to 450 cfs and S-80 Up to 200 cfs".

For the 7-day period August 4 to August 11, 2020, total discharge to the St. Lucie Estuary averaged approximately 1,900 cfs 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 1,800 cfs over the past week with no contribution coming from Lake Okeechobee. Salinity conditions are in the good range for Tape Grass at Val I-75 and at Ft. Myers. Salinity conditions for adult eastern oysters are in the good range at Shell Point and at Cape Coral and in the fair range at Sanibel.

Given forecast and current system conditions, the District recommends the USACE take the necessary steps to manage lake stage, as allowed within LORS 2008, while maintaining favorable salinity conditions in the Caloosahatchee Estuary. The USACE typically implements the releases to the estuaries over a 7-day period starting on Saturday and ending on Friday.