

MEMORANDUM

TO: Laureen Borocharner, Chief, Engineering Division (USACE)
FROM: John Mitnik, Chief District Engineer (SFWMD)
Akin Owosina, Chief, Hydrology & Hydraulics Bureau (SFWMD)
DATE: July 16, 2020
SUBJECT: Operational Position Statement for July 14, 2020 to July 20, 2020

This Position Statement is to provide operational recommendations for the one-week period from July 14, 2020 to July 20, 2020, based on system conditions and data observed during the last 7 days. On July 13, Lake Okeechobee stage was 12.50 feet NGVD, which places it within the Beneficial Use Sub-band of the 2008 Lake Okeechobee Regulation Schedule (LORS). Lake stage increased by 0.23 feet during the preceding 7 days.

Rainfall over the District for the month of July to date is average. District rainfall forecast (issued July 14) for the next 7 days predicts above average rainfall, and near average for the following 7-day period.

Precipitation Outlook: The most recent CPC precipitation outlooks for July 2020 and for the 3-month windows of Jul-Sep and Aug-Oct are for increased chances of above-normal rainfall. Outlook for the 3-month window of Sep-Nov calls for increased chances of above-normal rainfall for most of the District, but with areas north of the Lake showing a slightly increased chances of above normal rainfall. The 3-month window of Nov 2020-Jan 2021 shows slightly increased chances of below normal rainfall. The outlook corresponding to the transition months from dry to wet season in 2021 shows slightly increased chances of 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 July 6 to July 12, 2020, a volume of 1,000 acre-feet was sent to the STA-1W to raise stages to target in some cells. 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).

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 July 7 to July 13, 2020, total discharge to the St. Lucie Estuary averaged approximately 1,450 cfs with no releases from Lake Okeechobee. The 7-day average salinity at the US1 Bridge is in the good range for adult oysters. Total inflow to the Caloosahatchee Estuary averaged approximately 1,050 cfs over the past week with about 200 cfs 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.

The District, in coordination with the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP), has considered the current system conditions and the application of the SFWMD's Lake Okeechobee Adaptive Protocols (AP) because the lake stage is in the Beneficial Use Sub-band. The AP recommendation is for "No S-77 release to the Caloosahatchee Estuary unless the Governing Board recommends otherwise". At this time, the District recommends a 7-day pulse release (650 cfs average) to the Caloosahatchee Estuary as measured at S-79, if needed to maintain favorable salinity conditions in the Caloosahatchee Estuary. With recent rains and current wet conditions, the generated runoff within the basin may be sufficient, and S-77 supplemental releases may not be needed to achieve the target pulse at S-79. The USACE typically implements the releases to the estuaries over a 7-day period starting on Saturday and ending on Friday.