

MEMORANDUM

TO: Lauren Borocharner, Chief, Engineering Division (USACE)
FROM: John Mitnik, Chief District Engineer (SFWMD)
Akin Owosina, Chief, Hydrology & Hydraulics Bureau (SFWMD)
DATE: September 10, 2020
SUBJECT: Operational Position Statement for September 8, 2020 to September 14, 2020

This Position Statement is to provide operational recommendations for the one-week period from September 8, 2020 to September 14, 2020 based on system conditions and data observed during the last 7 days. On September 7, Lake Okeechobee stage was 14.50 feet NGVD, which places it within the Low Sub-band of the 2008 Lake Okeechobee Regulation Schedule (LORS). Lake stage increased by 0.21 feet during the preceding 7 days.

September to date rainfall over the District is slightly below average (93% of normal). District rainfall forecast (issued September 8) predicts above average rainfall for the next 7-day period and near average for the following period.

Precipitation Outlook: The most recent CPC precipitation outlooks for September 2020 and for the 3-month window of Sep-Nov show increased chances of above normal rainfall for south Florida. The outlook for the 3-month window of Oct-Dec is for equal chances of above-normal, normal, and below-normal rainfall. The precipitation outlook for the 3-month window Nov-Jan is for slightly increased chances of below normal rainfall. The outlook for the 3-month windows Dec-Feb and Jan-Mar call for increased chances of below normal rainfall for Lake Okeechobee and areas to the north, and slightly increased chances of below normal rainfall for the remainder of the District. The outlook corresponding to the remaining months in the dry season show equal chances of above-normal, normal, and below-normal rainfall.

2008 LORS Release Guidance (Part C): With Lake Okeechobee stage within the Low Sub-band, the Tributary Hydrologic Conditions in the 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 31 to September 6, 2020, no Lake Okeechobee regulatory releases were sent to the STAs. No Lake regulatory 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 two out of three WCAs are above their respective regulation schedules.

2008 LORS Release Guidance (Part D): With Lake Okeechobee stage in the Low Sub-band, the Tributary Hydrologic Conditions in the Wet category 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 September 1 to September 7, 2020, total discharge to the St. Lucie Estuary averaged approximately 750 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 2,750 cfs over the past week with about no flows 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 Sanibel and in the fair range at Cape Coral.

Given the 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.