

MEMORANDUM

TO: Lauren Borocharner, Chief, Engineering Division (USACE)
FROM: John Mitnik, Chief District Engineer (SFWMD)
Akin Owosina, Chief, Hydrology & Hydraulics Bureau (SFWMD)
DATE: October 1, 2020
SUBJECT: Operational Position Statement for September 29, 2020 to October 5, 2020

This Position Statement is to provide operational recommendations for the one-week period from September 29, 2020 to October 5, 2020 based on system conditions and data observed during the last 7 days. On September 28, Lake Okeechobee stage was 15.43 feet NGVD, which places it within the Low Sub-band of the 2008 Lake Okeechobee Regulation Schedule (LORS). Lake stage increased by 0.26 feet during the preceding 7 days.

September to date rainfall over the District is above average (111% of normal). District rainfall forecast (issued September 29) predicts well above average rainfall for the next 7-day period and near to above average for the following period.

Precipitation Outlook: The most recent CPC precipitation outlooks for October 2020 is for highly increased likelihood (65%) of above normal rainfall for most of the District area. The Upper Kissimmee Chain shows substantially increased likelihood (55%) of above normal precipitation. The 3-month window of Oct-Nov shows equal chances of above-normal, normal, and below-normal rainfall. The outlooks for the 3-month windows from Nov-Jan to Jan-Mar gradually increase the likelihood of below normal rainfall for south Florida, from slightly increased, to increased and then substantially increased. The precipitation outlook for the 3-month window Feb-Mar is for increased chances of below normal rainfall, while the 3-month window of Mar-May shows equal chances of above-normal, normal, and below-normal rainfall. The outlook for the transition from the dry to the wet season in 2021 (Apr-Jun to Jun-Aug) 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 September 21 to September 27, 2020, Lake Okeechobee regulatory releases in the amount of 9,500 acre-feet were sent primarily to STA-2 and the L8-FEB. 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, although all the WCAs are above their respective regulation schedules, the USACE is requesting up to maximum practicable releases be sent south from Lake Okeechobee towards WCA-1, WCA-2A and WCA-3A while considering available treatment capacity within the STAs. In addition, USACE is requesting up to maximum practicable releases from WCA-1, WCA-2A and WCA-3A be sent to tide as downstream conditions allow.

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 less than 1.0 ft below the Intermediate Sub-band and the Seasonal Lake Okeechobee Net Inflow Outlook in the Wet category, Part D of the 2008 LORS suggests "S-79 Up to 3,000 cfs and S-80 Up to 1,170 cfs".

For the 7-day period September 22 to September 28, 2020, total discharge to the St. Lucie Estuary was around 1,600 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 4,850 cfs over the past week with 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 poor range at Cape Coral.

Given the forecast and current system conditions, the District, in coordination with the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP), recommends the USACE maintain favorable salinity conditions in the Caloosahatchee Estuary when taking steps to manage lake stage, as allowed within LORS 2008. The USACE typically implements the releases to the estuaries over a 7-day period starting on Saturday and ending on Friday.

