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M E M O R A N D U M

TO: John Mitnik, Assistant Executive Director, Executive Office Staff

FROM: SFWMD Staff Environmental Advisory Team

DATE: May 29, 2024

SUBJECT: Weekly Environmental Conditions for Systems Operations

Summary

Weather Conditions and Forecast

Drier conditions are expected on Wednesday, with isolated shower activity confined to the southern interior. By Thursday, a weak frontal boundary will have mostly cleared the area, drawing in drier and more stable conditions, resulting in little to no rainfall across the SFWMD. An additional frontal boundary could sweep through the area on Sunday, but this forecast is less certain. Much below normal total SFWMD rainfall is likely for the 7-day period ending next Tuesday morning.

Kissimmee

Releases were made from East Lake Toho and Lake Toho to continue spring lake stage recessions to low pool. Weekly average discharge on May 26, 2024, was 350 cfs and 310 cfs at S-65 and S-65A, respectively. Mean weekly water depth on the Kissimmee River floodplain was 0.07 feet over the week ending May 26, 2024 and unchanged from the previous week. The weekly average concentration of dissolved oxygen in the Kissimmee River increased from 7.8 mg/L the previous week to 8.2 mg/L for the week ending May 26, 2024, which is well above the potentially lethal and stressful levels for largemouth bass and other sensitive species.

Lake Okeechobee

Lake Okeechobee stage was 11.88 feet NAVD88 (13.19 ft NGVD29) on May 26, 2024, which was 0.34 feet lower than the previous week and 1.20 feet lower than a month ago. Average daily inflows (excluding rainfall) were similar to the previous week, at 250 cfs, compared to 300 cfs. Average daily outflows (excluding evapotranspiration) increased from the previous week, from 5,330 cfs to 5,810. Taxa and toxin results from the May 20-22 sampling showed *Microcystis aeruginosa* dominated communities at 25 of the 32 sites. Fifteen sites had toxin levels above the 0.25 µg/L method's detection threshold, but none exceeded the EPA recreational standard of 8 µg/L. The May 26th, 2024, image from NOAA's Harmful Algal Bloom Monitoring System suggested moderate to high cyanobacteria abundance in the shallow regions of the Lake.

Estuaries

Total inflow to the St. Lucie Estuary averaged 490 cfs over the past week with all coming from the Tidal Basin. Mean surface salinities increased at all sites in the estuary over the past week. Salinity in the middle estuary was in the upper stressful range (>25) for adult eastern oysters.

Total inflow to the Caloosahatchee Estuary averaged 2,180 cfs over the past week with 1,720 cfs coming from Lake Okeechobee. Mean surface salinities remained the same at S-79 and decreased at the remaining sites in the estuary over the past week. Salinities were in the optimal range (0-10) for tape grass in the upper estuary. Salinities were in the optimal range (10-25) for adult eastern oysters at Cape Coral, and in the upper stressed range (>25) at Shell Point and Sanibel.

Stormwater Treatment Areas

For the week ending Sunday, May 26, 2024, 12,500 ac-ft of Lake Okeechobee water was delivered to the FEBs/STAs. The total amount of Lake releases sent to the FEBs/STAs in WY2025 (since May 1, 2024) is approximately 45,900 ac-feet. The total amount of inflows to the STAs in WY2025 is approximately 48,198 ac-feet. Most STA cells are near or below target stage. STA-1E Eastern Flow-way is offline for rehydration and vegetation establishment following erosion repair. Operational restrictions are in effect in STA-1E Western Flow-way, STA-2 Flow-ways 2 and 4, and STA-3/4 Eastern Flow-way for vegetation management activities. An operational restriction is in effect for STA-2 Flow-way 5 for construction activities. STA-1W Eastern and Northern Flow-ways and Cells 6, 7, and 8, as well as STA-2 Flow-ways 2, 3, and 4 contain nests of Migratory Bird Treaty Act protected species. This week, if 2008 LORS recommends Lake releases to the WCAs and conditions allow, releases will be sent to STA-2, STA-3/4, or STA-5/6.

Everglades

Over the last few weeks rates of stage change remain generally favorable for wading bird foraging and dry season Everglades ecology. Stages remained unchanged on average in Taylor Slough and remain above recent averages for this time of year. Average salinity increased in Florida Bay last week, however conditions remain at or below historical estimates for this time of year. Florida Bay MFL metrics remain well outside thresholds of harm. With continued drier weather wading bird foraging and nesting numbers continue to increase within the WCAs. White Ibis continue to nest at Alley North, WCA1, and ENP. Around 650 Wood Storks are nesting in the Everglades Protection Area. Those nests are likely to fail since there will not be enough time for chicks to fledge before the wet season rains begin.

Biscayne Bay

Total inflow to Biscayne Bay averaged 60 cfs and the previous 30-day mean inflow averaged 110 cfs. Average daily salinities at BBCW8 and BBCW10 stations were 30.1 and 37.6, respectively, which are both within the ideal salinity range for estuarine organisms in this region (salinity less than 35). Data provided by Biscayne National Park.

Supporting Information

Kissimmee Basin

Upper Kissimmee

On May 26, 2024, mean daily lake stages were 54.1 feet NAVD (0.1 feet below schedule) in East Lake Toho, 51.1 feet NAVD (0.1 feet above schedule) in Lake Toho, and 48.2 feet NAVD (1.7 feet below the temporary deviation schedule) in Lakes Kissimmee-Cypress-Hatchineha (KCH) (**Table KB-1, Figures KB-1-3**).

Lower Kissimmee

For the week ending May 26, 2024, mean weekly discharge was 350 cfs and 310 cfs at S-65 and S-65A, respectively. Mean weekly discharge from the Kissimmee River was 280 cfs at S-65D and 240 cfs at S-65E (**Table KB-2**). Mean weekly headwater stages were 45.2 feet NAVD at S-65A and 24.4 feet NAVD at S-65D on May 26, 2024. Mean weekly river channel stage decreased by 0.1 ft from the previous week's stage to 31.1 feet NAVD over the week ending on May 26, 2024 (**Figure KB-4**). Mean weekly water depth on the Kissimmee River floodplain was 0.07 feet over the week ending May 26, 2024, and unchanged from the previous week (**Table KB-2, Figure KB-5**). The weekly average concentration of dissolved oxygen in the Kissimmee River increased from 7.8 mg/L the previous week to 8.2 mg/L for the week ending May 26, 2024 (**Table KB-2, Figure KB-6**).

Water Management Recommendations

Continue the stage recessions in Lakes East Toho and Toho to reach their low pools on May 31, 2024. Follow the Hybrid A discharge plan for S-65/S-65A (**Figure KB-7**) through May 31, 2024, except as otherwise indicated. Maintain at least minimum flow (250-300 cfs) at S-65A. To the extent possible, attempt to keep the recession rate in KCH slower than -0.18 ft/week while facilitating S-69 repairs. To the extent possible, modify S-65D headwater stage to meet USACE's objectives for S-69 repairs.

Table KB-1. Average discharge for the preceding seven days, Sunday's average daily stage and Sunday's average daily departure from KCOL flood regulation lines or temporary schedules. All data are provisional.

Water Body	Structure	Stage Monitoring Site	Weekly (7-Day) Average Discharge (cfs)	Sunday Lake Stage (feet NAVD) ^a	Schedule Type ^b	Sunday Schedule Stage (feet NAVD)	Sunday Departure from Regulation (feet)	
							5/26/24	5/19/24
Lakes Hart and Mary Jane	S-62	LKMJ	2	58.5	R	58.5	0.0	0.0
Lakes Myrtle, Preston and Joel	S-57	S-57	1	59.0	R	59.1	-0.1	0.0
Alligator Chain	S-60	ALLI	17	61.2	R	61.2	0.0	0.1
Lake Gentry	S-63	LKGT	25	58.6	R	58.6	0.0	0.0
East Lake Toho	S-59	TOHOE	78	54.1	R	54.2	-0.1	-0.2
Lake Toho	S-61	TOHOW S-61	90	51.1	R	51.0	0.1	-0.1
Lakes Kissimmee, Cypress and Hatchineha	S-65	KUB011 LKIS5B	350	48.2	T	49.9	-1.7	0.1

a. Names of in-lake monitoring sites and structures used to determine lake stage. If more than one site is listed, an average is reported.

b. A: projected recession line; R: USACE regulation schedule; S: temporary recession target line; T: temporary schedule; NA: not applicable or not available.

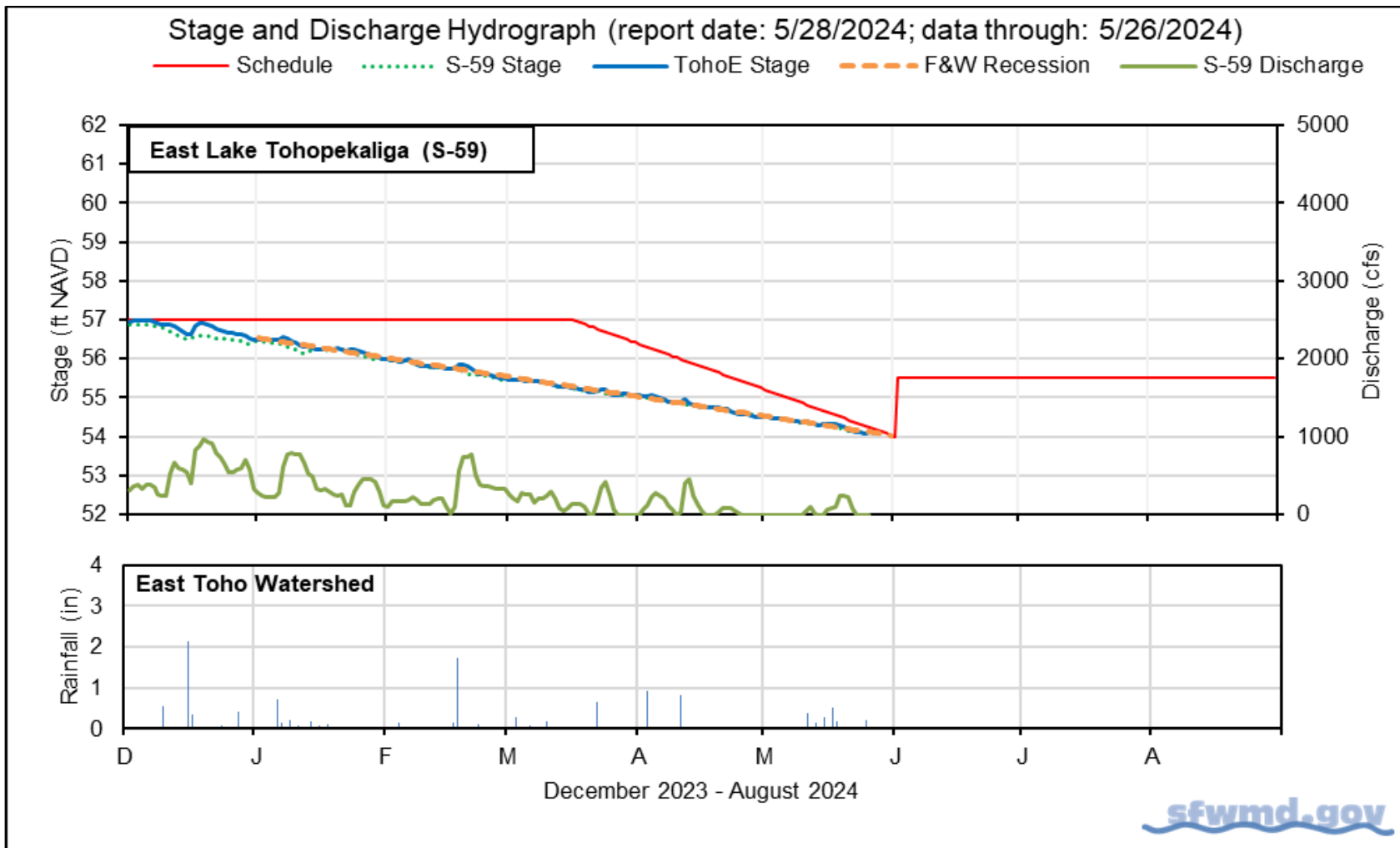


Figure KB-1. East Lake Toho regulation schedule, stage, discharge, and rainfall.

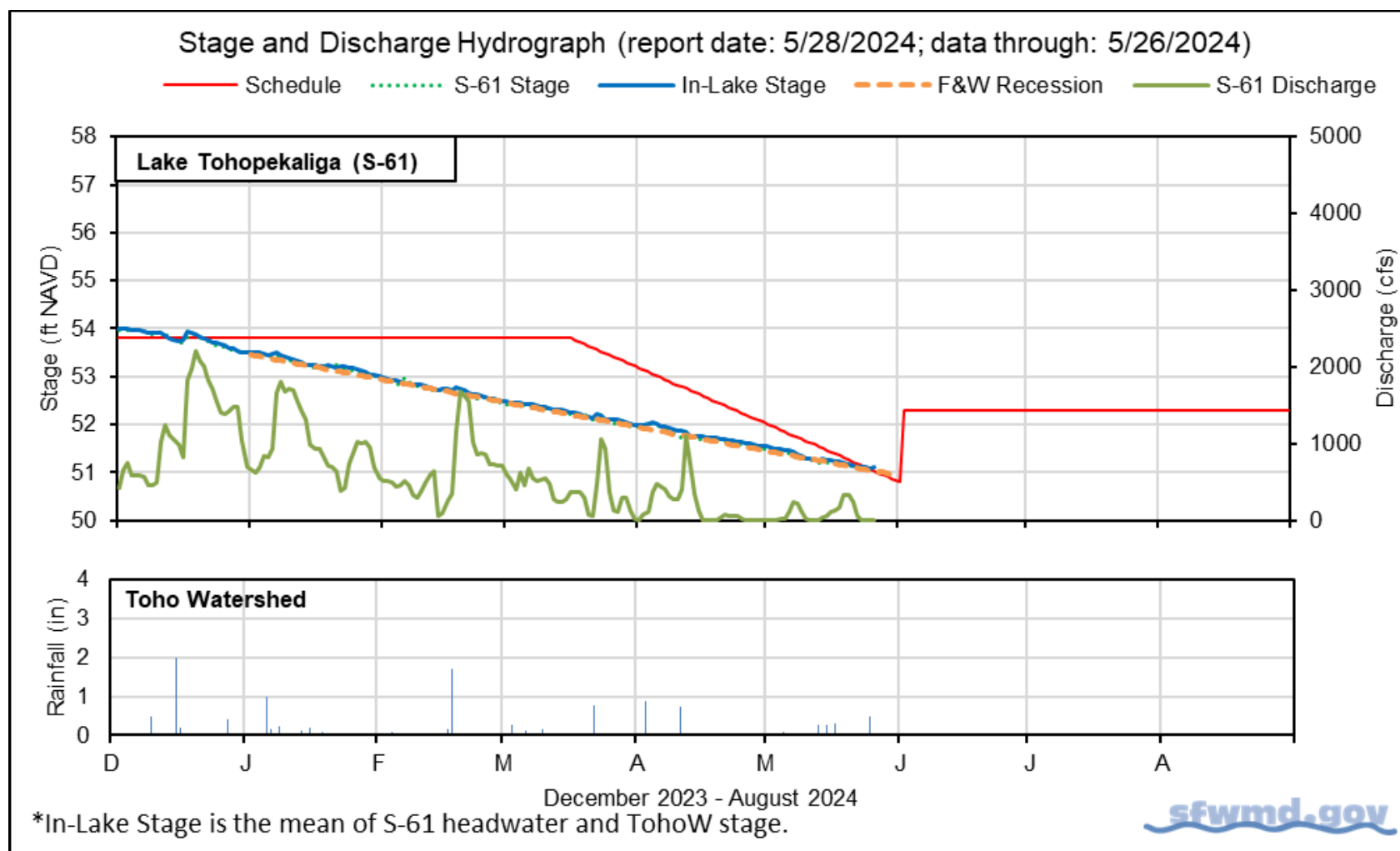


Figure KB-2. Lake Toho regulation schedule, stage, discharge, and rainfall.

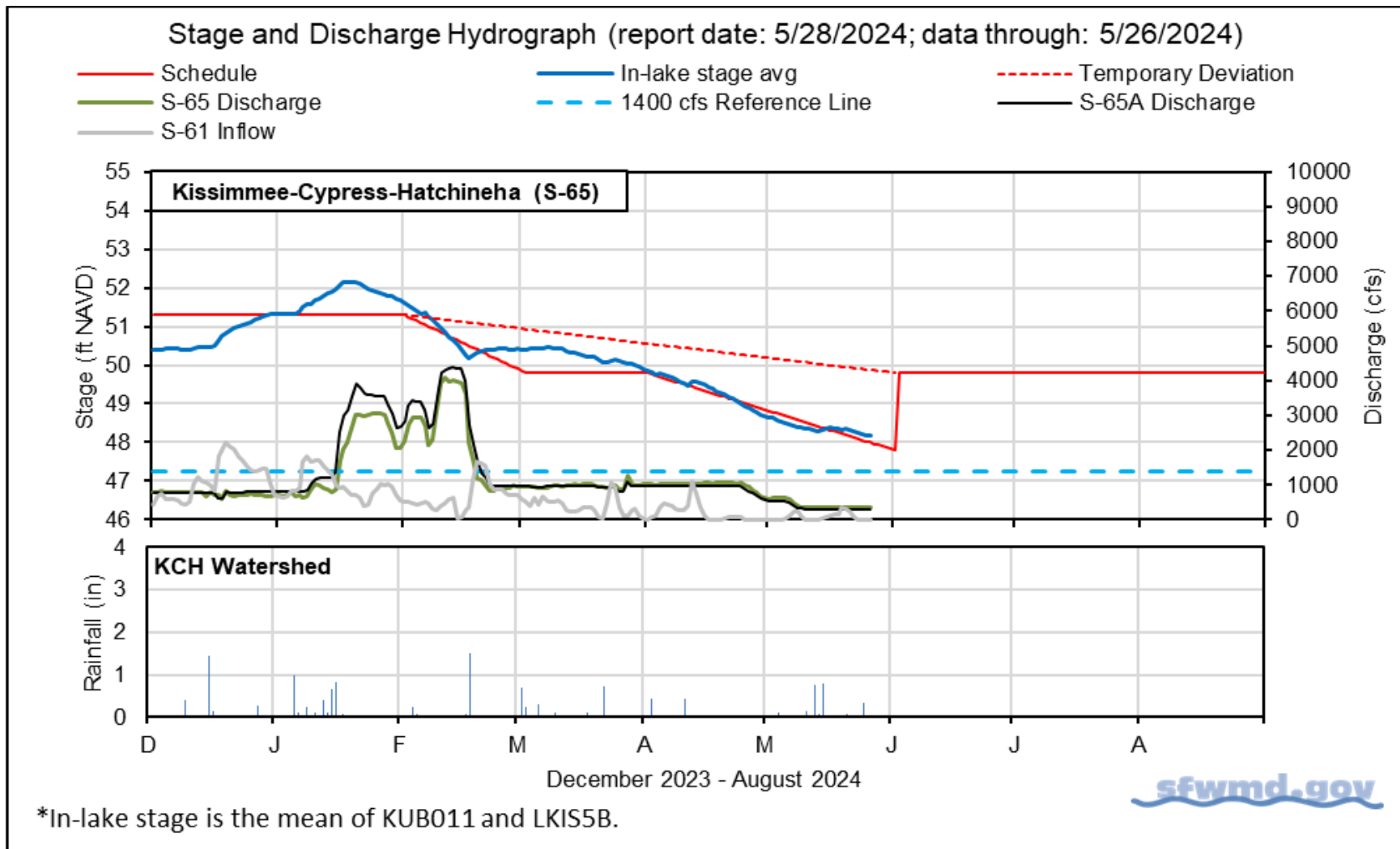


Figure KB-3. Lakes Kissimmee, Cypress and Hatchineha regulation schedule, stage, discharge, and rainfall.

Table KB-2. One- and seven-day average discharge and stage at Lower Kissimmee basin structures, river channel dissolved oxygen concentrations and water depths in the Phase I area floodplain. All data are provisional.

Metric	Location	Sunday Daily Average 5/26/24	Weekly Average for Previous Seven Day Periods			
			5/26/24	5/19/24	5/12/24	5/5/24
Discharge	S-65	350	350	350	420	630
Discharge	S-65A ^a	310	310	310	360	560
Headwater Stage (feet NAVD)	S-65A	45.2	45.2	45.1	45.2	45.1
Discharge	S-65D ^b	250	280	300	430	650
Headwater Stage (feet NAVD)	S-65D ^c	24.5	24.4	24.6	24.5	24.5
Discharge (cfs)	S-65E ^d	190	240	290	360	570
Discharge (cfs)	S-67	0	0	0	0	0
Dissolved Oxygen (mg/L) ^e	Phase I, II/III river channel	7.9	8.2	7.8	7.8	7.9
River channel mean stage ^f	Phase I river channel	31.0	31.1	31.2	31.8	32.7
Mean depth (feet) ^g	Phase I floodplain	0.07	0.07	0.07	0.08	0.09

a. Combined discharge from main and auxiliary structures.

b. Combined discharge from S-65D, S-65DX1 and S-65DX2.

c. Average stage from S-65D and S-65DX1.

d. Combined discharge from S-65E and S-65EX1.

e. Dissolved oxygen is the average of values from sondes KRBN, PC62, PC33, PD62R and PD42R.

f. Mean of five river channel stations (PC62, KRDR02, KRBN, PC33, PC11) in the Phase I area.

g. One-day spatial average obtained from the South Florida Water Depth Assessment Tool (SFWDAT).

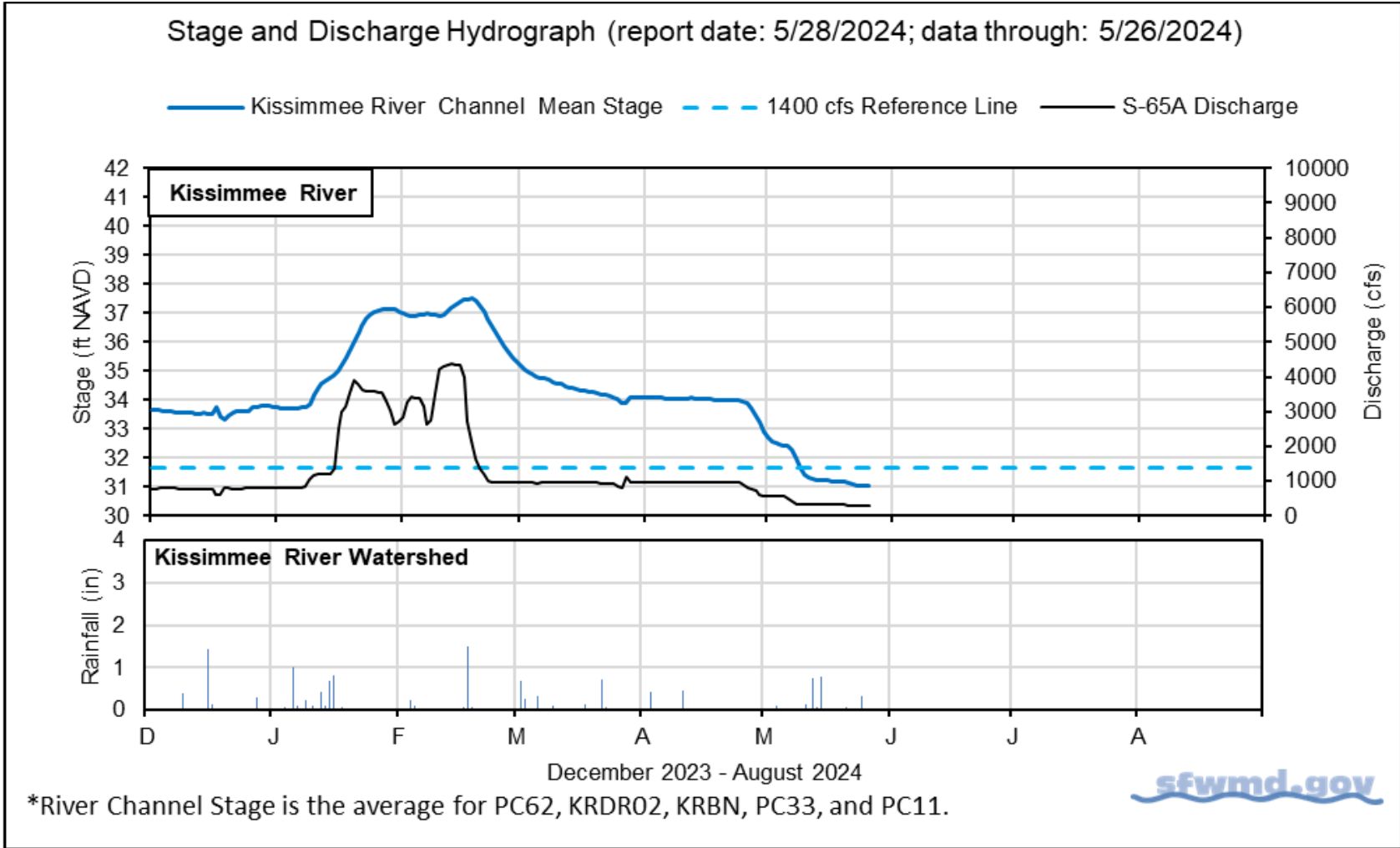


Figure KB-4. Kissimmee River stage, discharge, and rainfall.

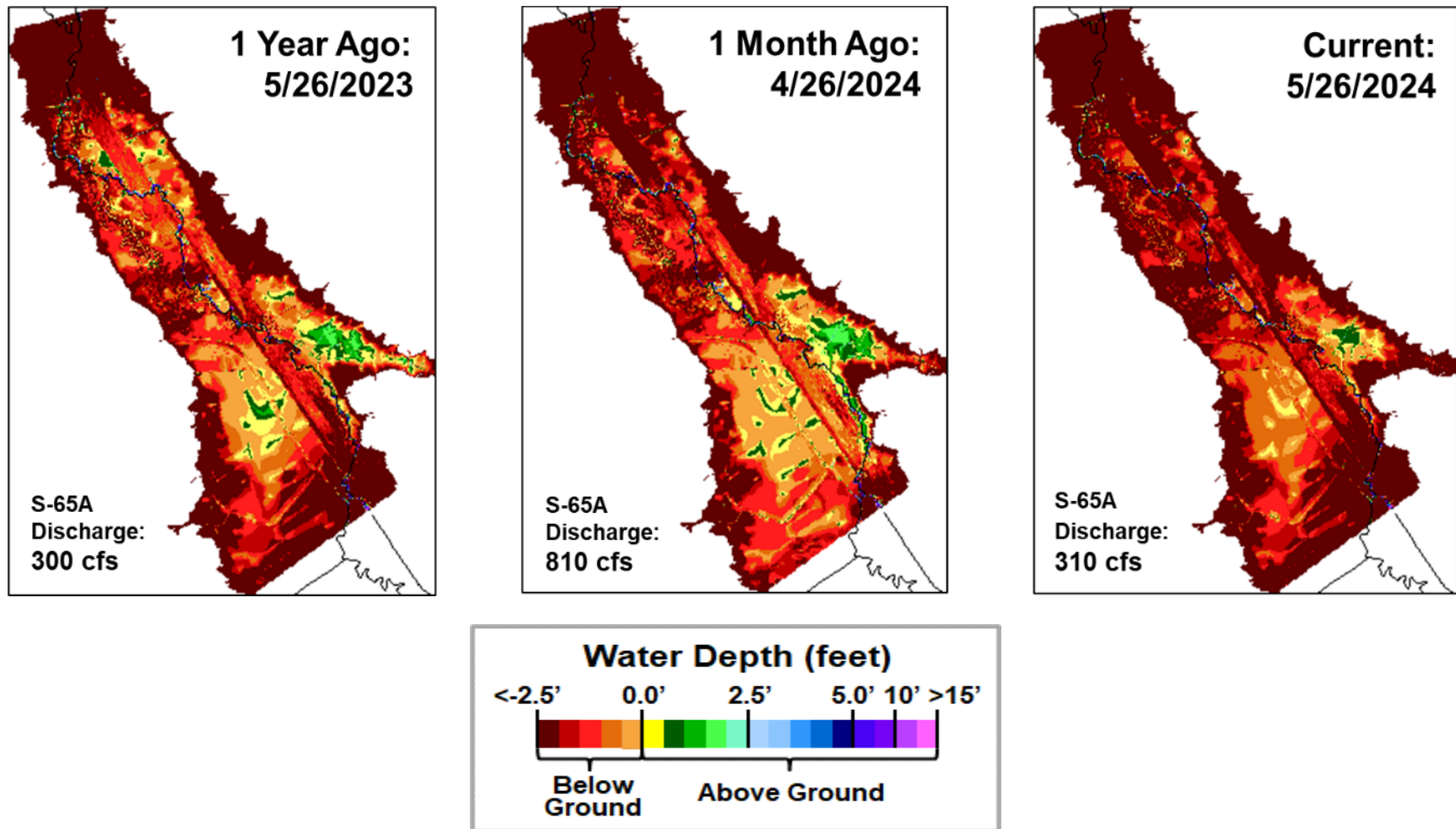


Figure KB-5. Phase I area Kissimmee River floodplain water depths (from left to right) one year ago, one month ago, and current.

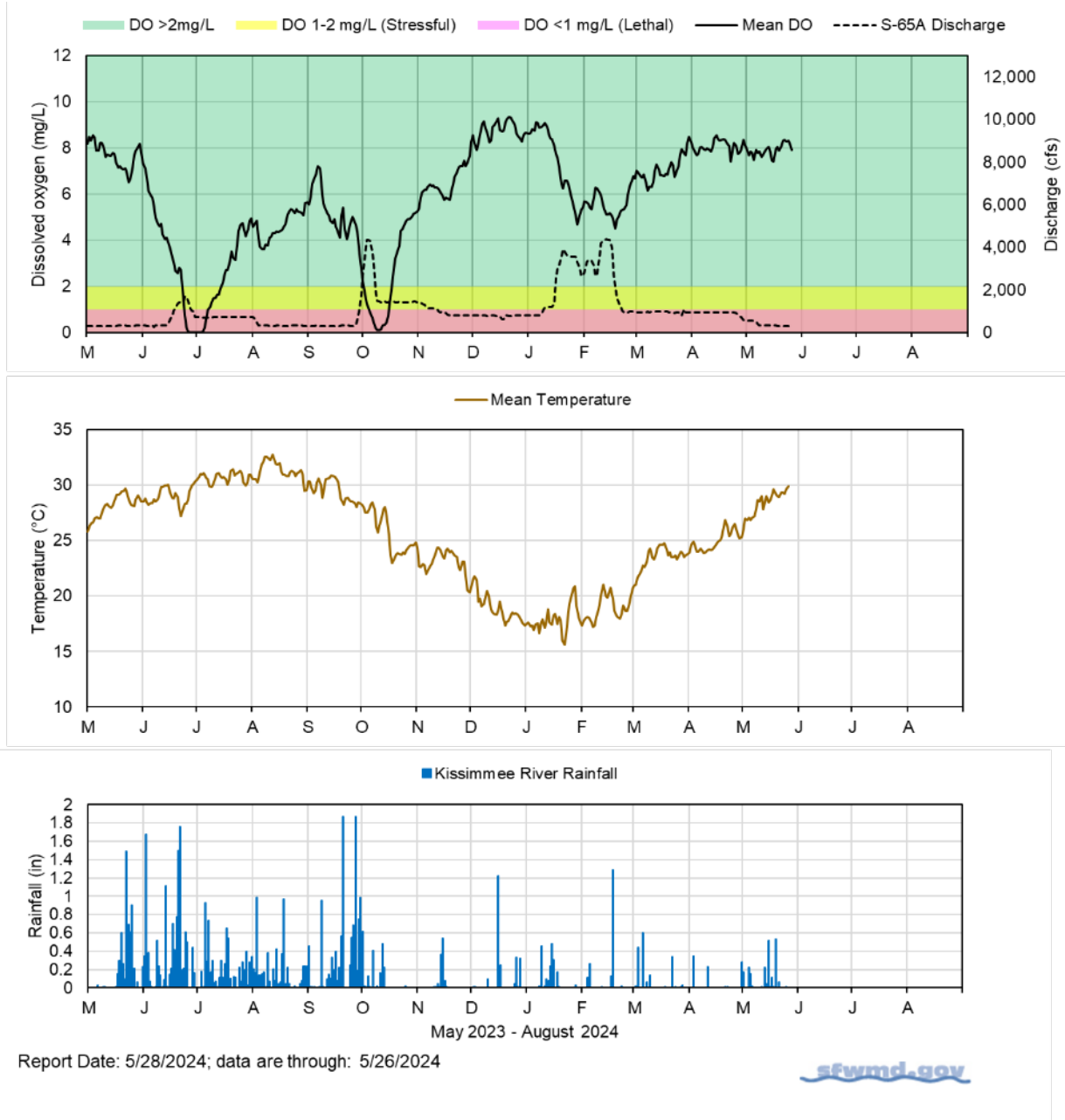


Figure KB-6. Kissimmee River channel mean daily dissolved oxygen concentration (mg/L), S-65A discharge (cfs), temperature (°C), and rainfall (inches). Dissolved oxygen (DO) and temperature are mean daily values averaged for PC62, KRDR02, KRBN, PC33, PC11, PD62R, and PD42R with an average of five stations reporting this week. Rainfall values are daily totals for Kissimmee River (Pool BCD) AHED watershed.

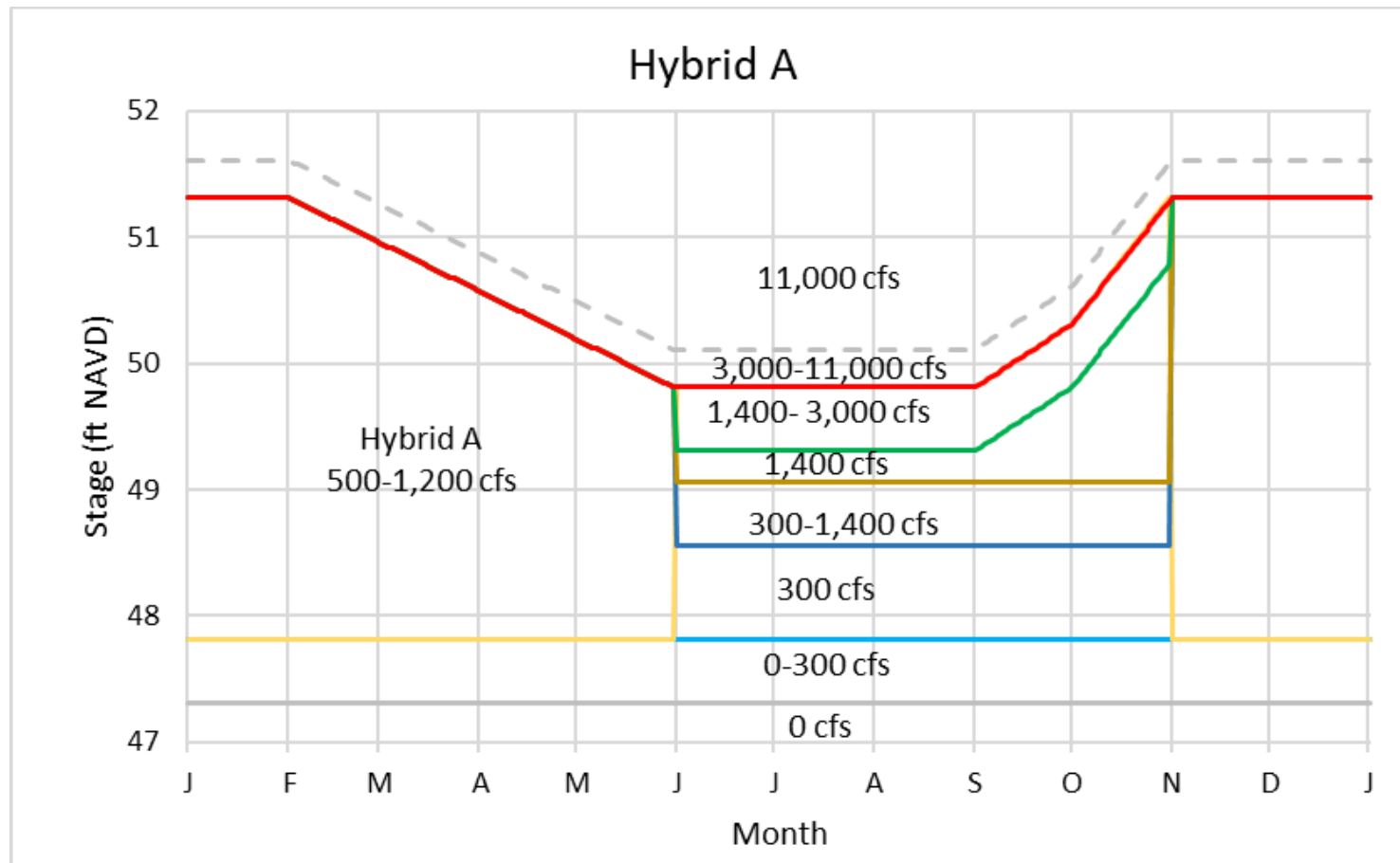


Figure KB-7. Hybrid A Discharge Plan for S-65/S-65A. Use discharge rate of change limits from IS-14-50 (**Fig. KB-8**).

Stage and Discharge Guidance for 2021-2023.

Zone	KCH Stage (ft NAVD)	S-65/S-65A Discharge*
A	Above regulation schedule line.	Flood control releases as needed with no limits on the rate of discharge change.
B1	In flood control buffer zone (0.5 ft below the schedule line).	Adjust S-65 discharge so that S-65A discharge is between 1400 cfs at the buffer zone line and 3000 cfs at the schedule line.
B2	Between the Flood Control Buffer and the 48.8 ft line.	Adjust S-65 discharge to maintain at least 1400 cfs at S-65A. Use ± 0.2 ft buffer (gray band) above and below the 48.8 ft line to decide when to begin ramping up to 1400 cfs or down to 300 cfs; do not continue reducing discharge if stage rises back to or above the threshold stage line.
B3	Between the 48.8 ft line and 47.8 ft.	Adjust S-65 discharge to maintain at least 300 cfs at S-65A.
B4	Between 47.3 ft to 47.8 ft.	Adjust S-65 discharge to maintain S-65A discharge between 0 cfs at 47.3 ft and 300 cfs at 47.8 ft.
C	Below 47.3 ft.	0 cfs.

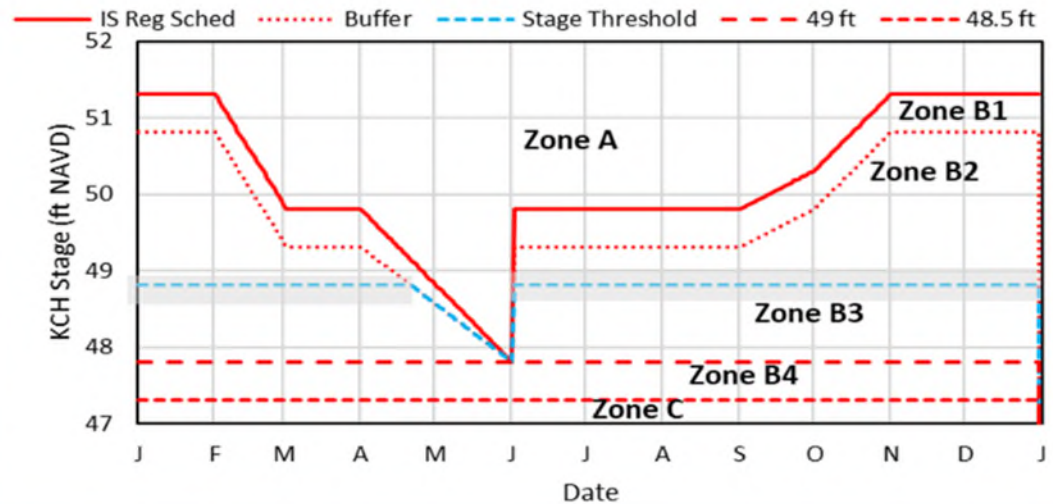
*Changes in discharge should not exceed limits in inset table below.

Table KB-3. Discharge Rate of Change Limits for S65/S65A (revised 1/14/19).

Q (cfs)	Maximum rate of INCREASE (cfs/day)	Maximum rate of DECREASE (cfs/day)
0-300	100	-50
301-650	150	-75
651-1400	300	-150
1401-3000	600	-600
>3000	1000	-2000

2021-2023 Discharge Plan for S-65/S-65A

Preferred Discharge Plan for S-65/S-65A (IS-14-50.0)



Other Considerations

- When possible, limit lake ascension rate in the Jun 1 - Aug 15 window to 0.25 ft per 7 days in Lakes Kissimmee, Cypress, Hatchineha (S-65), East Toho (S-59) and Toho (S-61).
- If outlook is for extreme dry conditions meet with KB staff to discuss modifications to this plan.

Slide Revised 1/3/2022

Figure KB-8. IS-14-50 Discharge Plan for S65/S65A with discharge rate of change limits (revised 1/14/19).

Lake Okeechobee

Lake Okeechobee stage was 11.88 feet NAVD88 (13.19 ft NGVD29) on May 26, 2024, which was 0.34 feet lower than the previous week and 1.20 feet lower than a month ago (**Figure LO-1**). Lake stage remained in the Low sub-band (**Figure LO-2**) and was 1.02 feet above the upper limit of the recovery ecological envelope (**Figure LO-3**). According to NEXRAD, 0.51 inches of rain fell directly over the Lake last week.

Average daily inflows (excluding rainfall) were similar to the previous week, at 250 cfs, compared to 300 cfs. Most of the inflow came from the C-38 Canal via the S-65E/65EX1 structure. Average daily outflows (excluding evapotranspiration) increased from the previous week, from 5,330 cfs to 5,810. The highest average single structure outflow was recorded at the S-77 structure into the C-43 canal (2,050 cfs), while an average of 3,700 cfs was released south through the S-350 structures. No water was released to the east through S-308 into the C-44 canal. **Figures LO-4 and LO-5** show the combined average daily inflows and outflows for the Lake over the past eight weeks, and average inflows and outflows last week, respectively.

From May to November, WQ and cyanobacteria taxa/toxins samples are collected twice per month at all in-lake sites. Provisional taxa and toxin results from the May 20-22 sampling showed *Microcystis aeruginosa* dominated communities at 25 of the 32 sites, two sites were dominated by *Dolichospermum circinale*, two had shared dominance (*Microcystis* and *Dolichospermum*), and three were mixed. Fifteen sites had toxin levels above the 0.25 µg/L method's detection threshold, but none exceeded the EPA recreational standard of 8 µg/L (**Figure LO-6**).

In the most recent satellite image from May 26th, 2024, NOAA's Harmful Algal Bloom Monitoring System suggested moderate to high cyanobacteria abundance in the shallow regions of the Lake (**Figure LO-7**).

Note: All data presented in this report are provisional and are subject to change.

1 Month Ago:
04/26/2024

Current:
05/26/2024

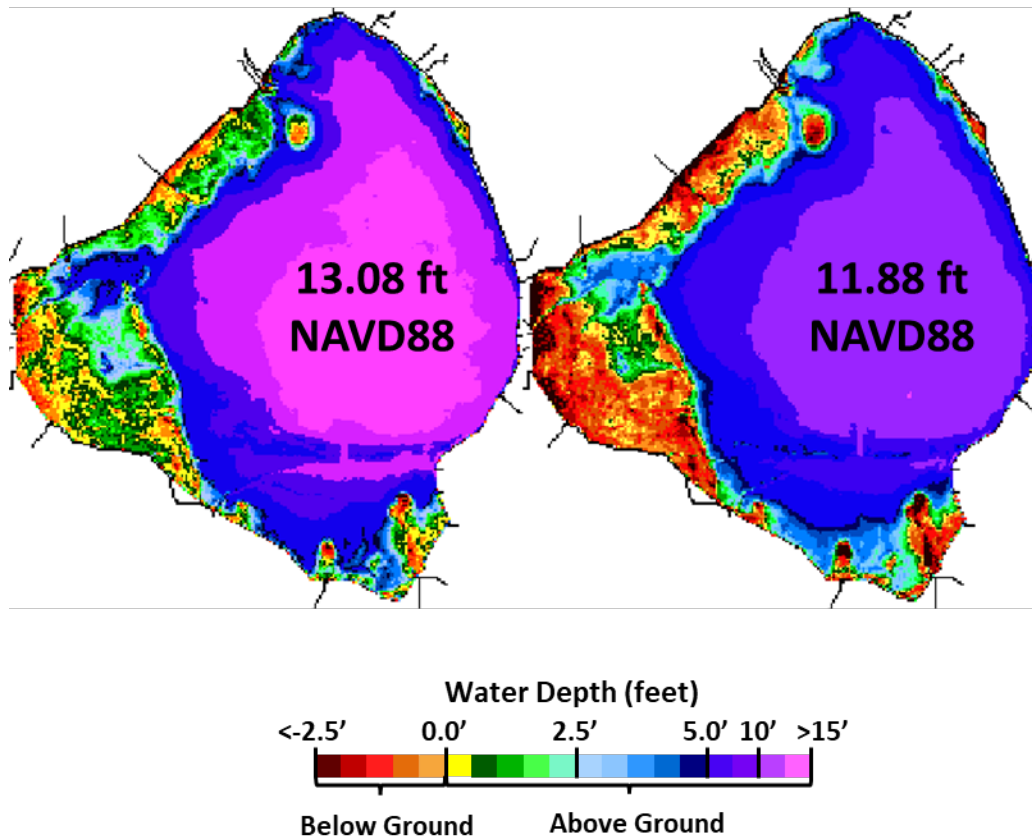
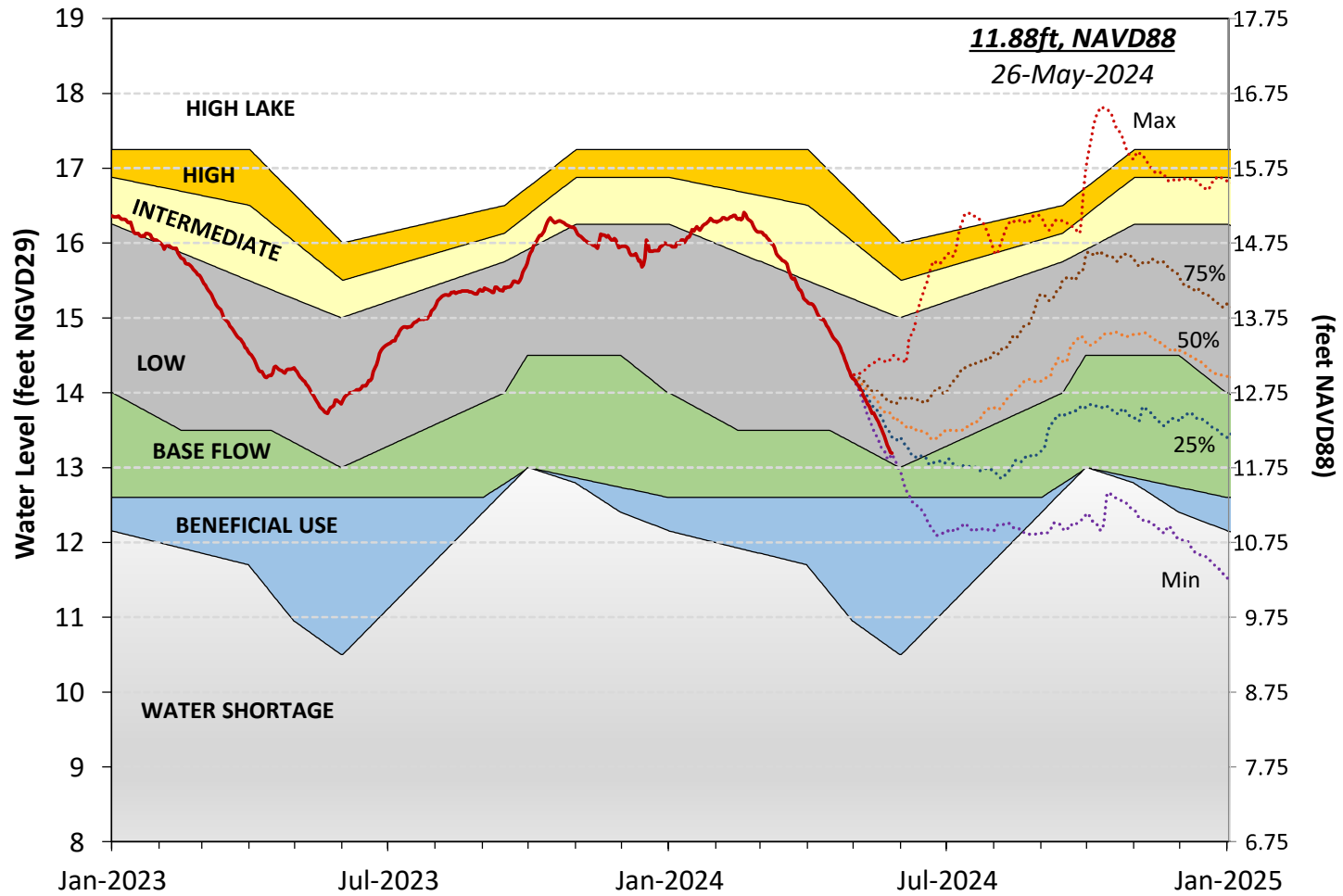


Figure LO-1. Lake Okeechobee water depth estimates based on South Florida Water Depth Assessment Tool (SFWDAT).

Lake Okeechobee Water Level History and Projected Stages



LORS-2008 - Adopted by USACE 28-April-

Figure LO-2. Recent Lake Okeechobee stages with projected stages based on a dynamic position analysis.
Note: stages are in NGVD29, approximate NAVD88 values are shown for reference.

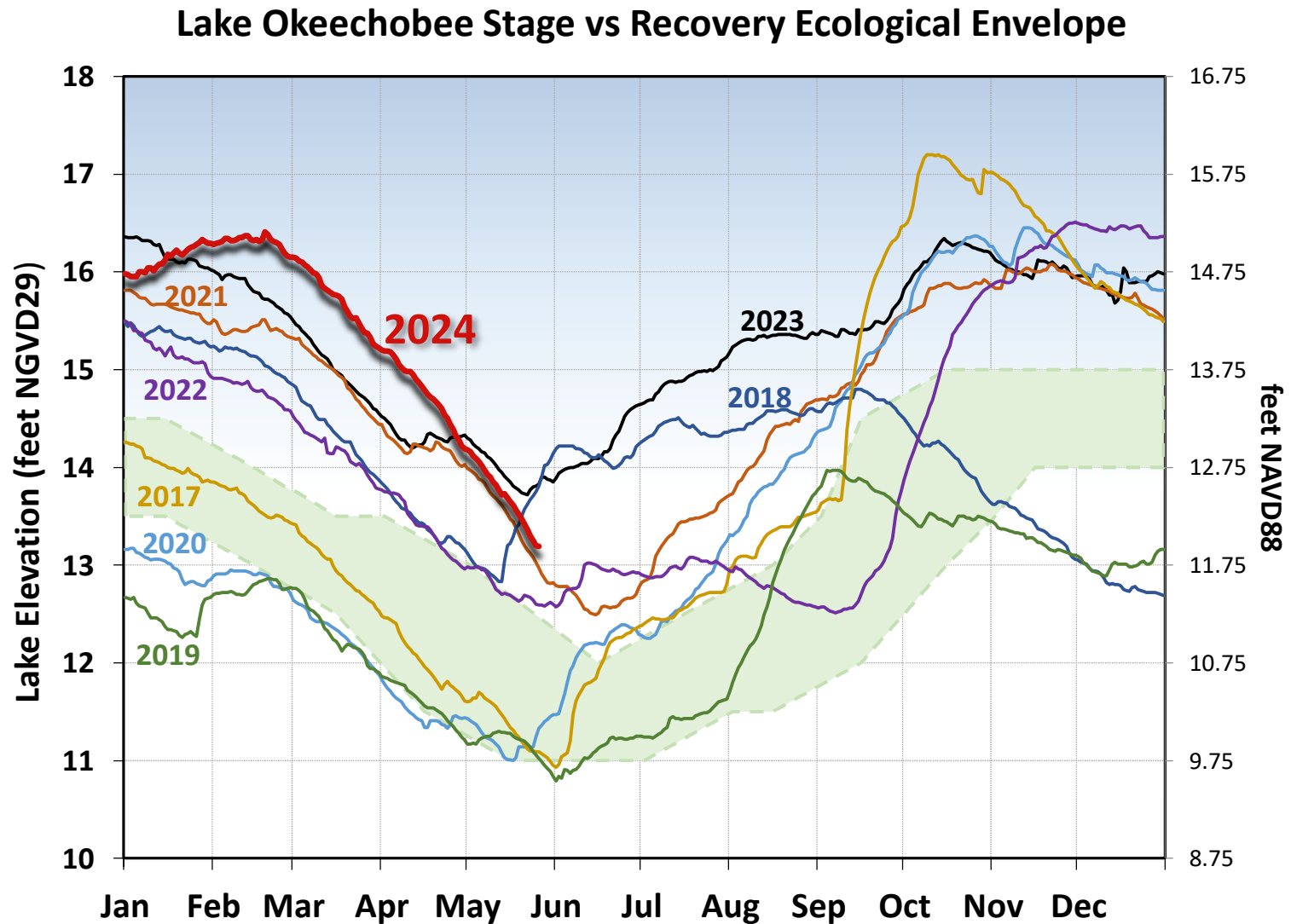


Figure LO-3. The current and seven prior year's annual stage hydrographs for Lake Okeechobee in comparison to the recovery envelope (light green). A shift from the normal ecological envelope to the recovery envelope occurred because the 30-day minimum lake stage (elevations exposed for at least 30 days, nonconsecutively) in the June 1 – July 31, 2023 window was >13 ft NGVD29 (11.75 ft NAVD88).

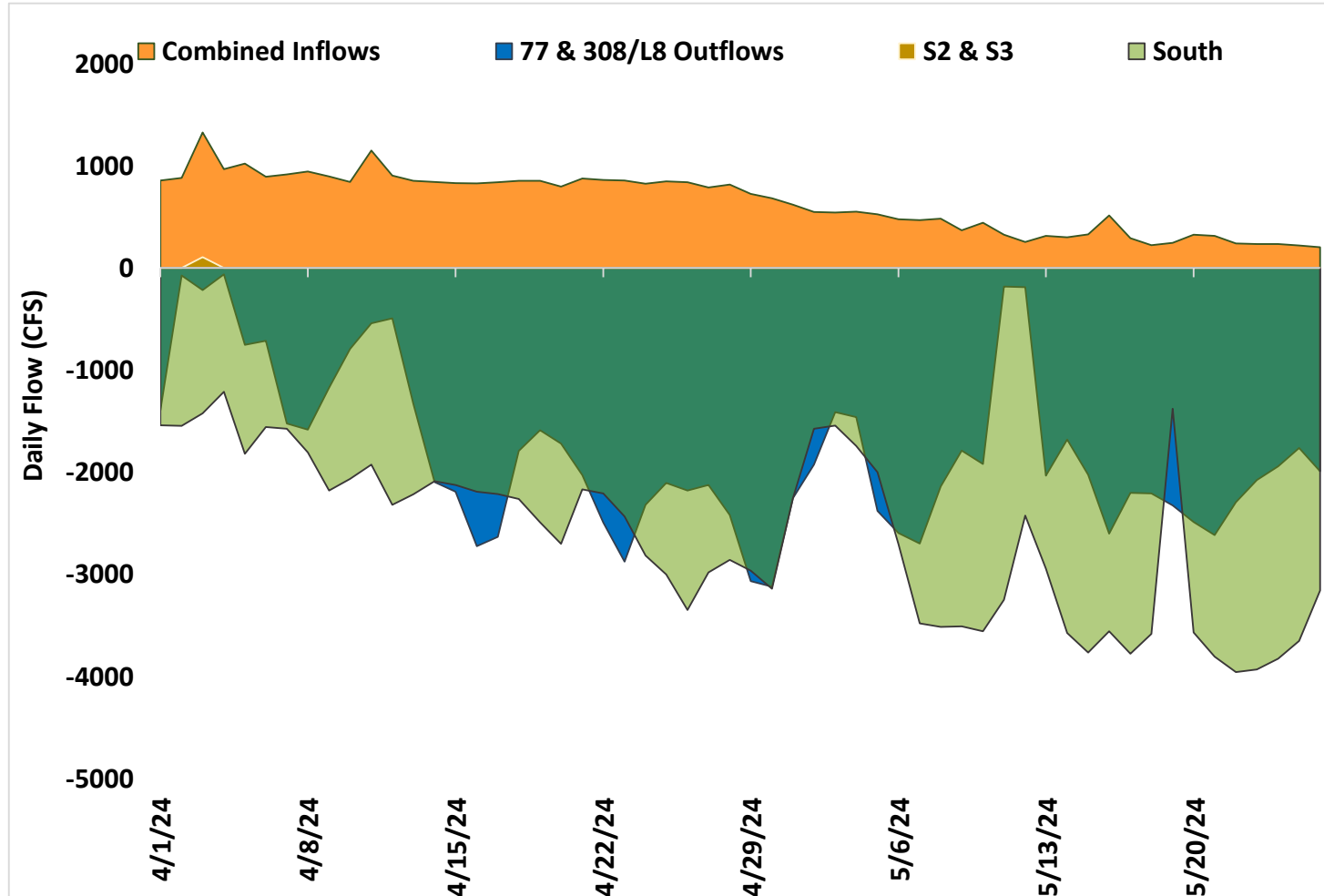


Figure LO-4. Major inflows (orange) to and outflows east and west (blue) from Lake Okeechobee. Outflows south are shown in green. Flows into Lake Okeechobee from the L-8 canal through S-271 (formerly Culvert 10A) or from the C-44 canal through the S-308 are included as inflows. Conversely, flows from Lake Okeechobee into the L-8 or C-44 canals are included with outflows. Inflows are shown as positive values; outflows are negative. Outflows through the S-77 (Caloosahatchee) and S-308 (C-44 Canal) structures are based on downstream gauges to include flows to lock openings for navigation.

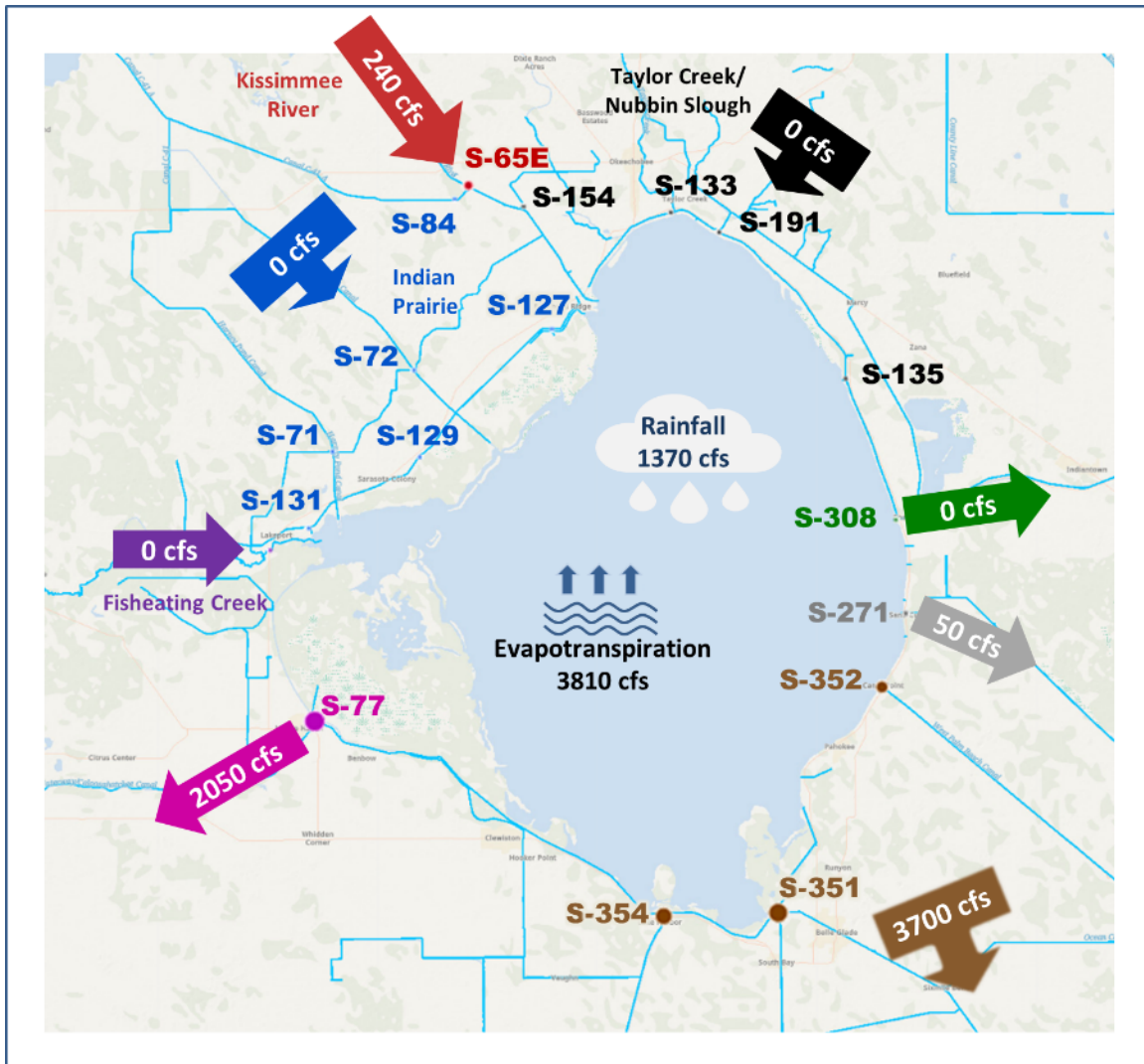


Figure LO-5. Inflows into Lake Okeechobee from Indian Prairie basins, Taylor Creek/Nubbin Slough, Kissimmee River and Fisheating Creek, and outflows to the west via S-77, to the east via S-308, to the south via S-351, S-352, S-354, and to southeast via S-271 (formerly Culvert 10A) for the week of May 20 - 26, 2024.

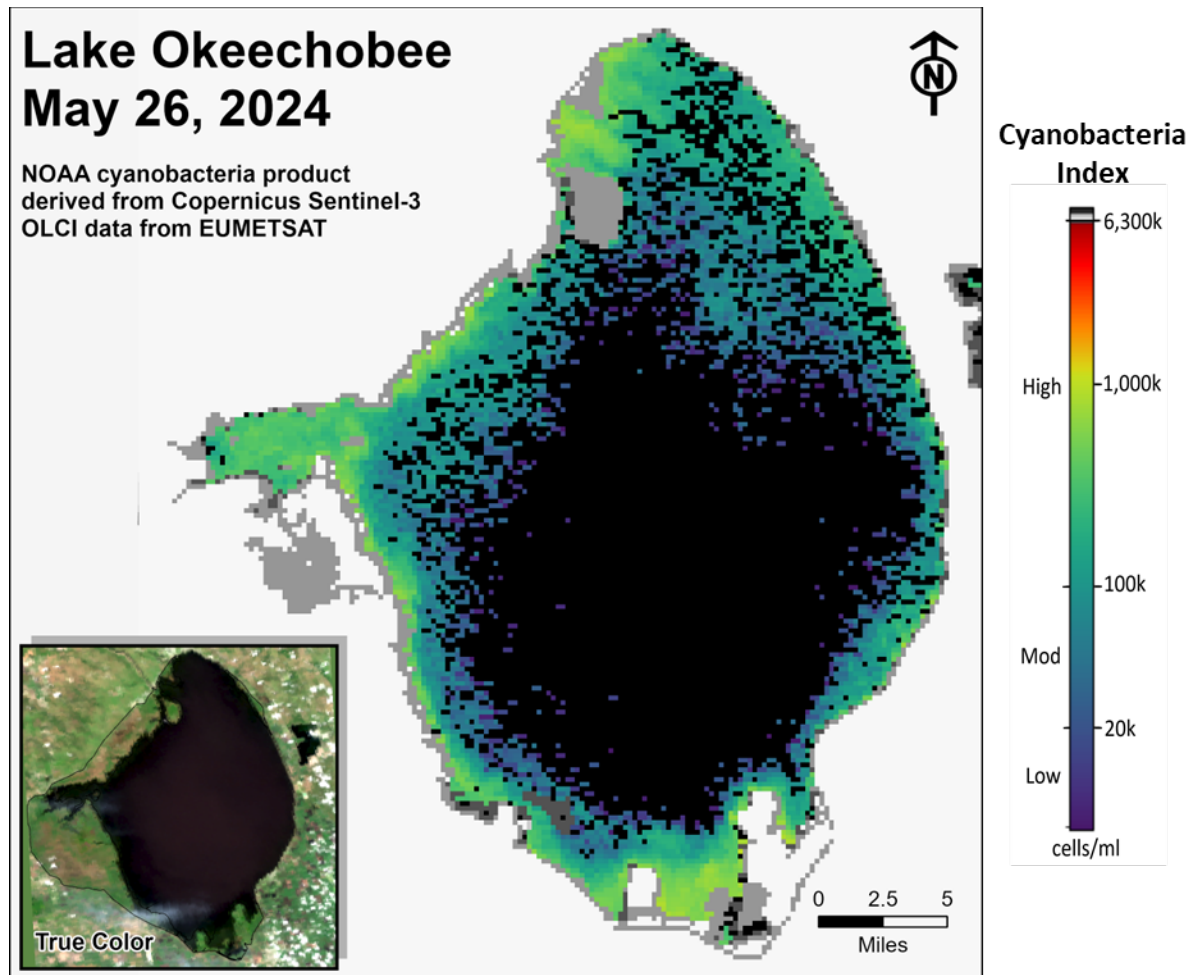


Figure LO-7. Cyanobacteria bloom index level on May 26, 2024, based on NOAA's harmful algal bloom monitoring system. Gray color indicates cloud cover. *Provisional NOAA image, subject to change*

Estuaries

St. Lucie Estuary

Over the past week, mean total inflow to the St. Lucie Estuary was 490 cfs (**Figures ES-1 and ES-2**), and the previous 30-day mean inflow was 320 cfs. For comparison, the historical provisional mean inflows from the contributing areas are shown in **Figure ES-2**.

Over the past week, salinities increased at all sites in the estuary (**Table ES-1 and Figure ES-3**). The seven-day moving average of the surface and bottom salinities at the US1 Bridge was 25.9. Salinity conditions in the middle estuary were estimated to be within the stressful range for adult eastern oysters (**Figure ES-4**). The mean larval oyster recruitment rate reported by the Fish and Wildlife Research Institute (FWRI) was 1.3 spat/shell for April, which indicates spring spawning has begun in the SLE (**Figure ES-5**).

Caloosahatchee River Estuary

Over the past week, mean total inflow to the Caloosahatchee River Estuary was 2,180 cfs (**Figures ES-6 and ES-7**), and the previous 30-day mean inflow was 2,070 cfs. For comparison, the historical provisional mean inflows from the contributing areas are shown in **Figure ES-7**.

Over the past week, surface salinities remained the same at S-79 and decreased at the remaining sites in the estuary (**Table ES-2 and Figures ES-8 and ES-9**). The seven-day mean salinities (**Table ES-2**) were in the optimal range (0-10) for tape grass in the upper estuary. The seven-day mean salinity values were within the optimal range for adult eastern oysters at Cape Coral and in the stressed range at Shell Point and Sanibel (**Figure ES-10**). The mean larval oyster recruitment rate reported by the Fish and Wildlife Research Institute was 1.5 spat/shell at Iona Cove and 16.5 spat/shell at Bird Island for April, which indicates spring spawning has begun in the CRE (**Figures ES-11 and ES-12**).

Surface salinity at Val I-75 was forecasted for the next two weeks using an autoregression model (Qiu and Wan, 2013¹) coupled with a linear reservoir model for the tidal basin. Model scenarios included pulse releases at S-79 ranging from 450 to 2,000 cfs with estimated tidal basin inflows of 85 cfs. Model results from all scenarios predict daily salinity to be 0.6 or lower and the 30-day moving average surface salinity to be 0.4 or lower at Val I-75 at the end of the two-week period (**Table ES-3 and Figure ES-13**). This keeps predicted salinities in the upper estuary within the optimal salinity range (0-10) for tape grass.

¹ Qiu, C., and Y. Wan. 2013. Time series modeling and prediction of salinity in the Caloosahatchee River Estuary. *Water Resources Research* 49:5804-5816.

Red Tide

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Research Institute reported on May 24, 2023, that *Karenia brevis*, the Florida red tide dinoflagellate, was not observed in samples collected statewide. On the east coast, red tide was not observed in samples from St. Lucie, Martin, Broward, or Palm Beach counties.

Water Management Recommendations

Lake stage is in the Low Sub-Band. Tributary conditions are dry. The LORS2008 release guidance suggests up to 450 cfs release at S-79 to the Caloosahatchee River Estuary and up to 200 cfs release at S-80 to the St. Lucie Estuary.

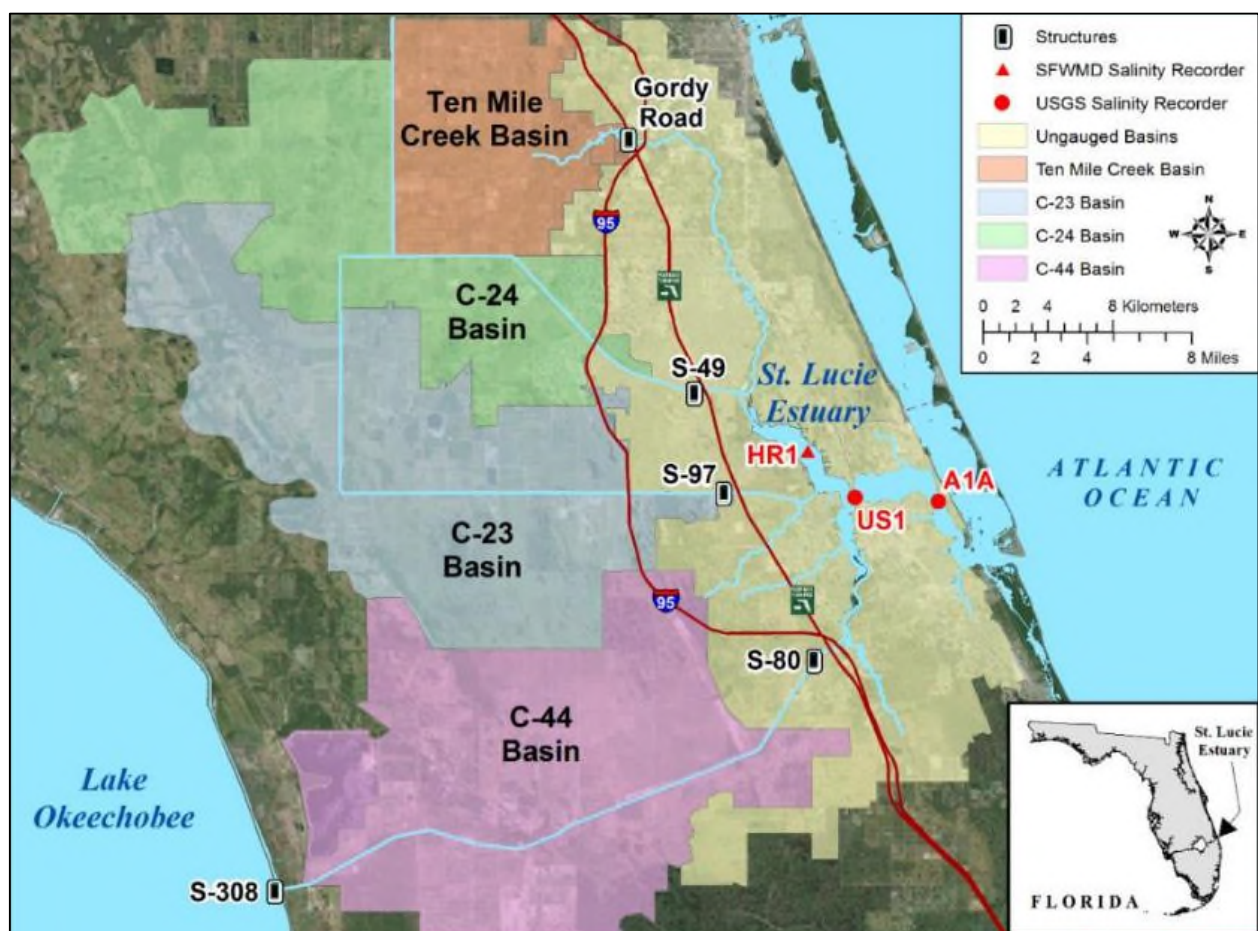


Figure ES-1. Basins, water control structures and salinity monitoring sites in the St. Lucie Estuary.

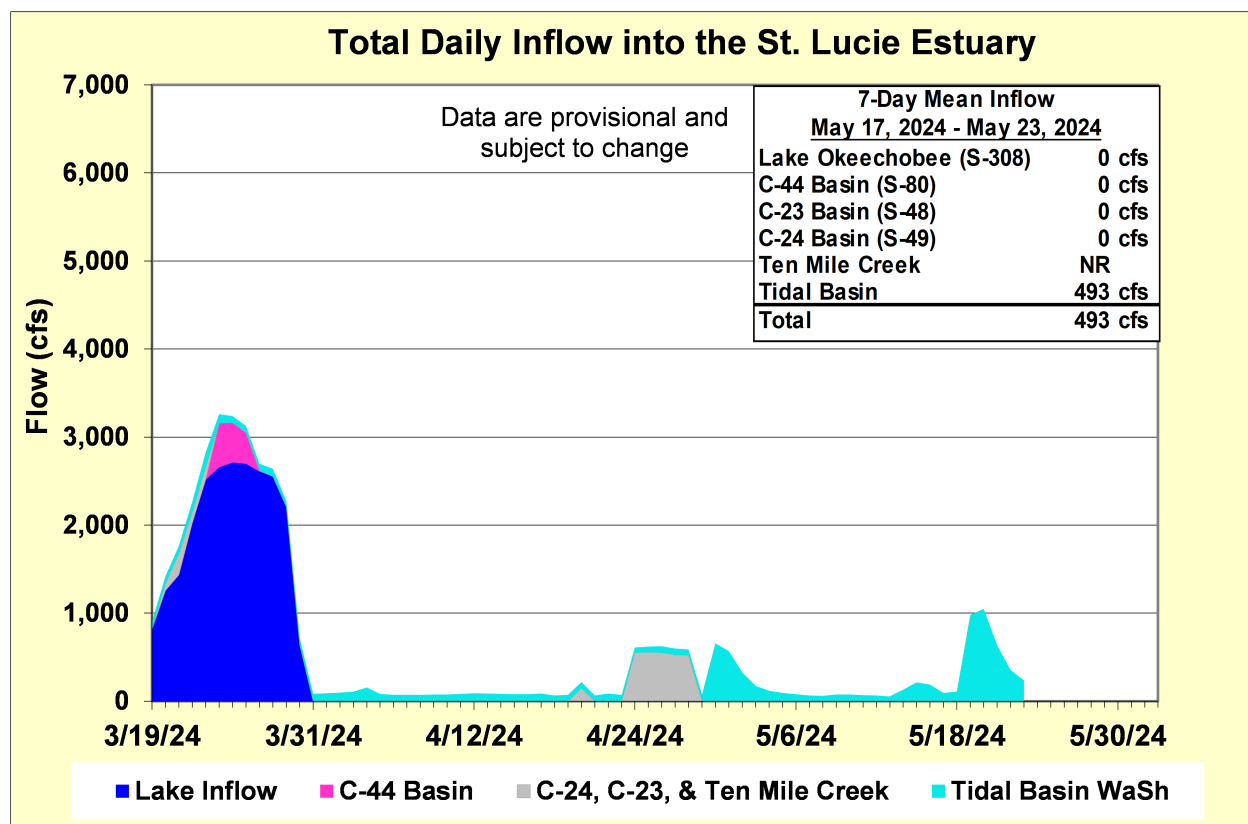


Figure ES-2. Total daily inflows from Lake Okeechobee and runoff from the C-44, C-23, C-24, Ten Mile Creek, and Tidal Basins into the St. Lucie Estuary.

Table ES-1. Seven-day mean salinity at oyster monitoring sites in the St. Lucie Estuary. Current means are in bold font; previous week's means are in parentheses. The envelope reflects the optimum salinity range for adult eastern oysters (*Crassostrea virginica*) in the estuary. Data are provisional.

Sampling Site	Surface	Bottom	Optimum Envelope
HR1 (North Fork)	22.0 (20.2)	24.3 (22.8)	10.0 – 25.0
US1 Bridge	25.7 (24.9)	26.1 (25.3)	10.0 – 25.0
A1A Bridge	31.3 (31.1)	32.3 (32.0)	10.0 – 25.0

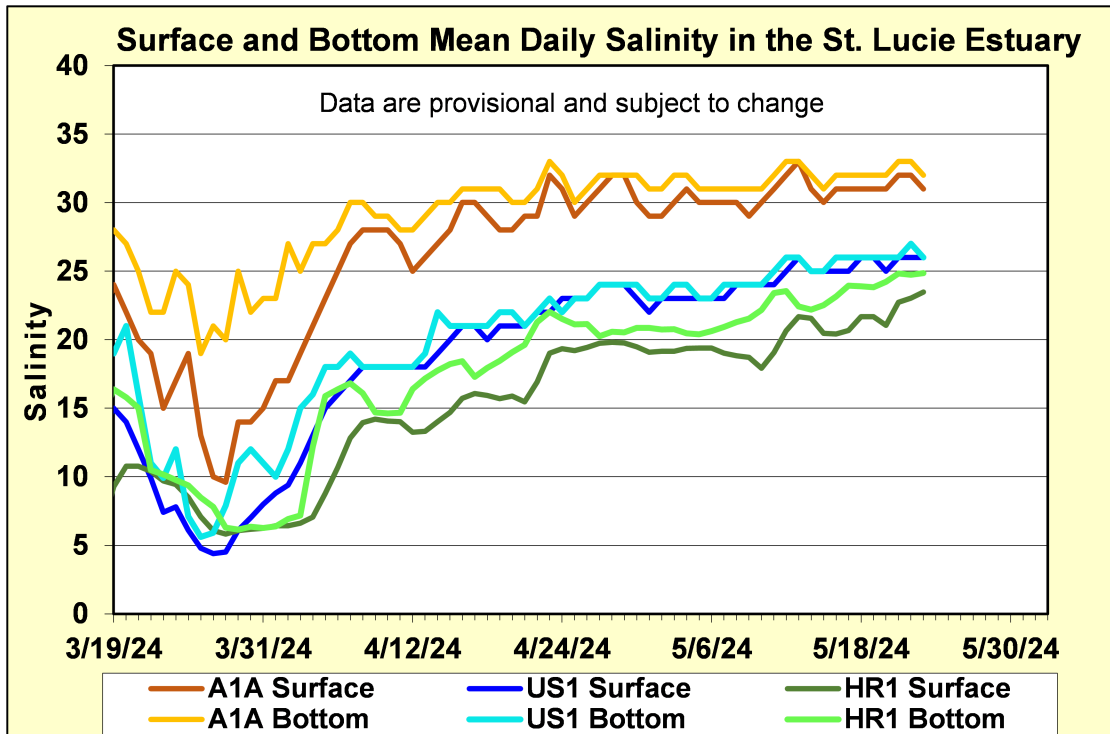


Figure ES-3. Mean daily salinity at the A1A, US1 and HR1 sites in the St. Lucie Estuary.

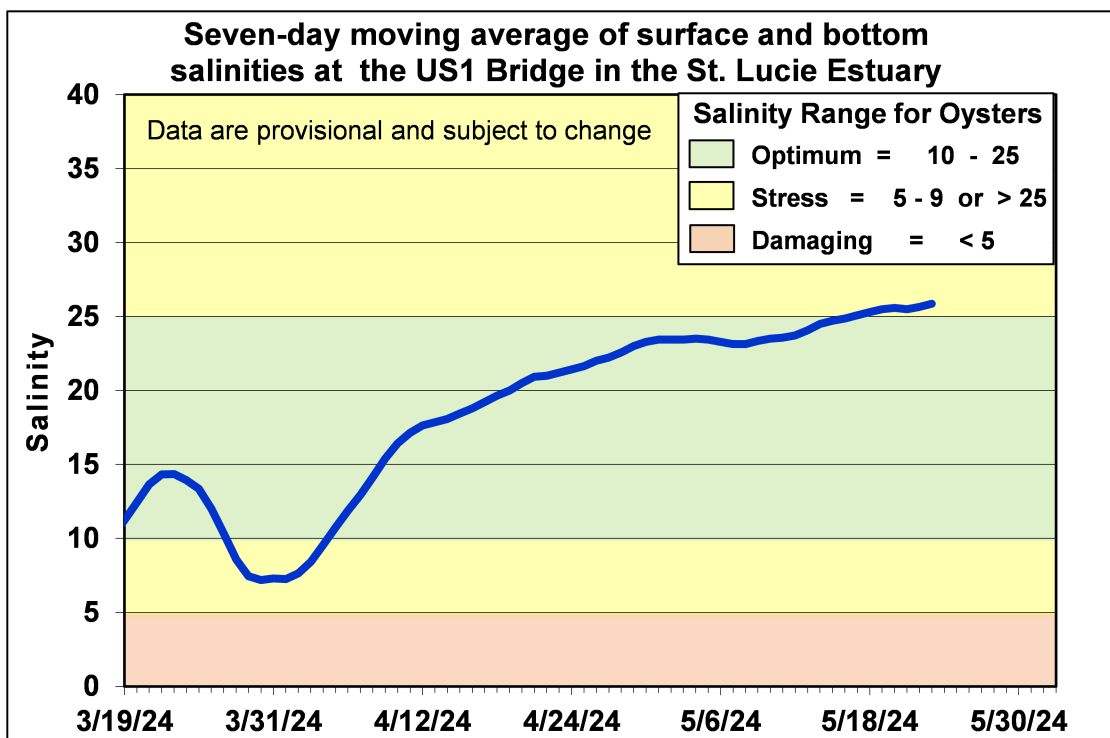


Figure ES-4. Seven-day moving average of the surface and bottom salinities at the US1 Bridge in the St. Lucie Estuary.

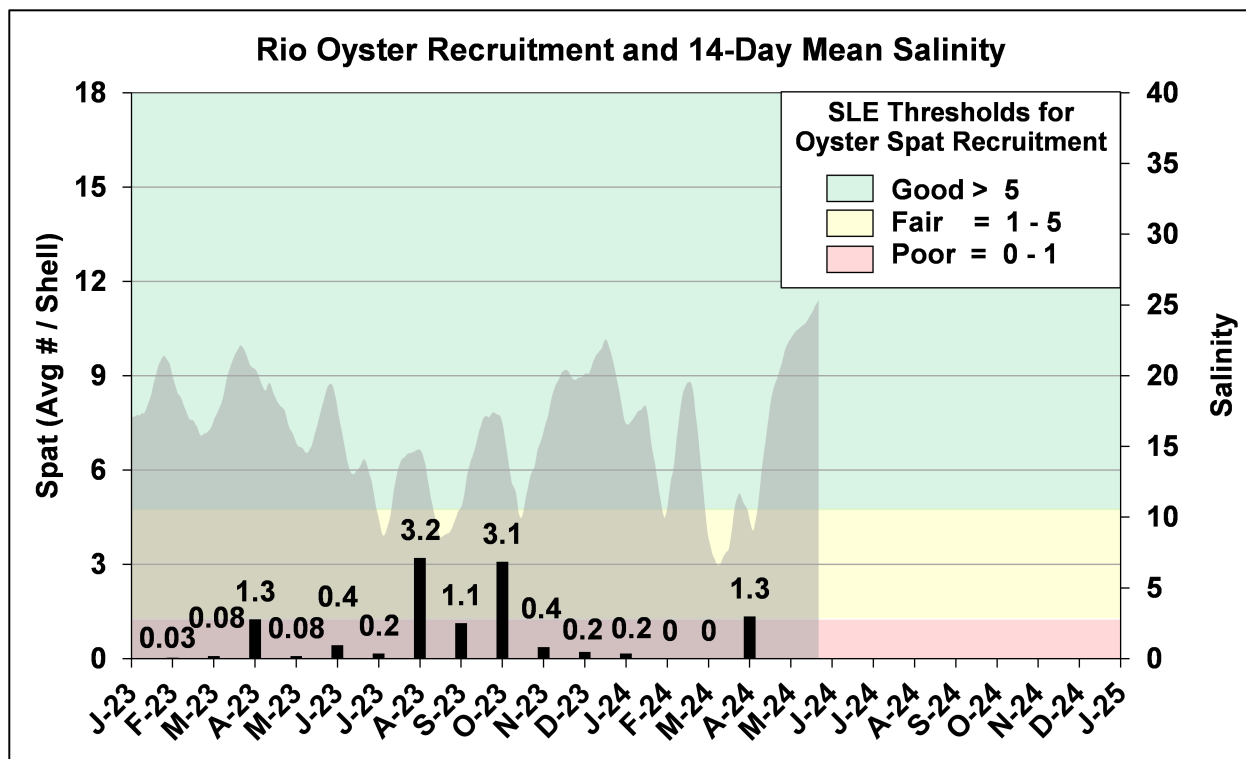


Figure ES-5. Mean oyster recruitment at the Rio oyster monitoring station and 14-day mean salinity at US1 Bridge.

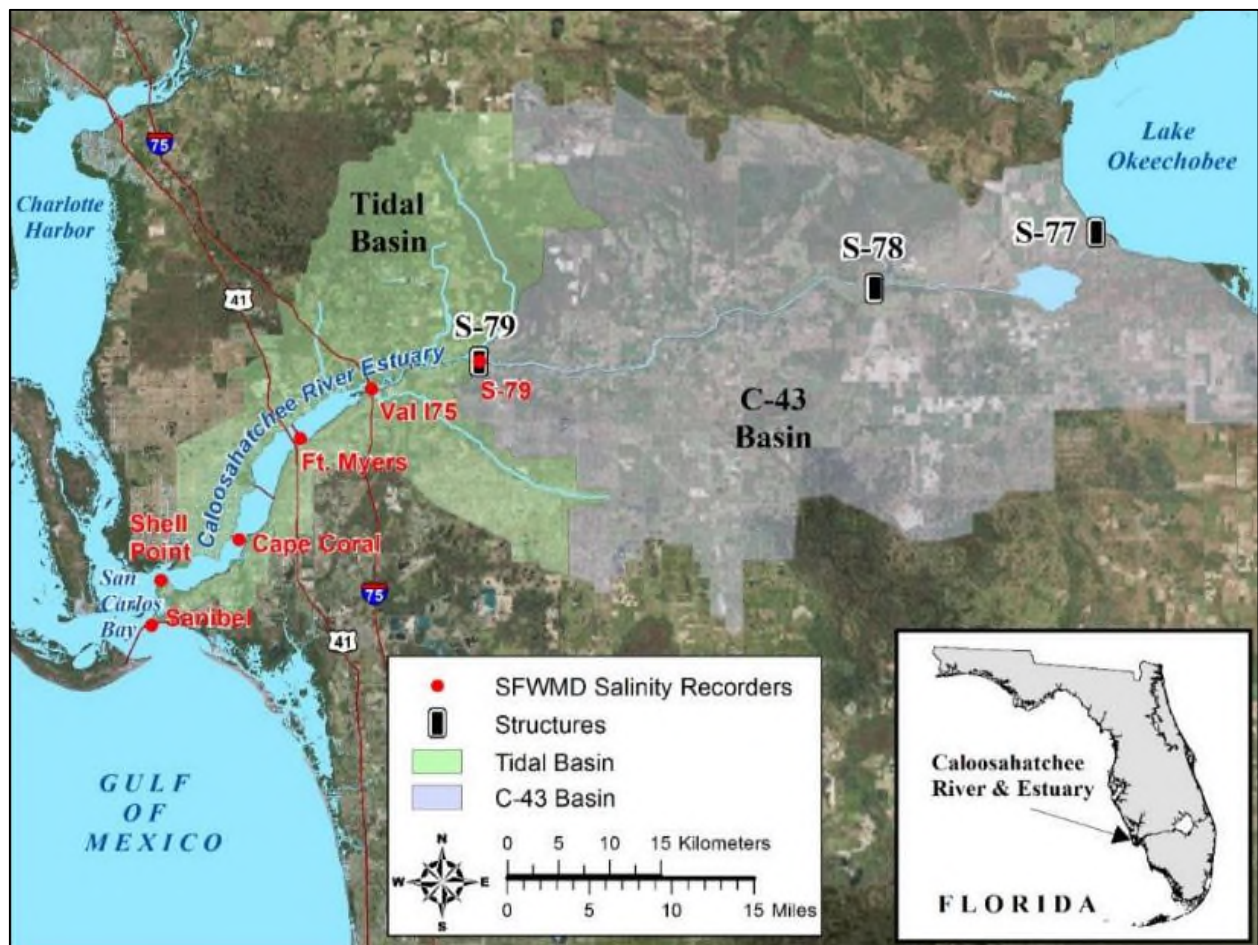


Figure ES-6. Basins, water control structures and salinity monitoring sites in the Caloosahatchee River Estuary.

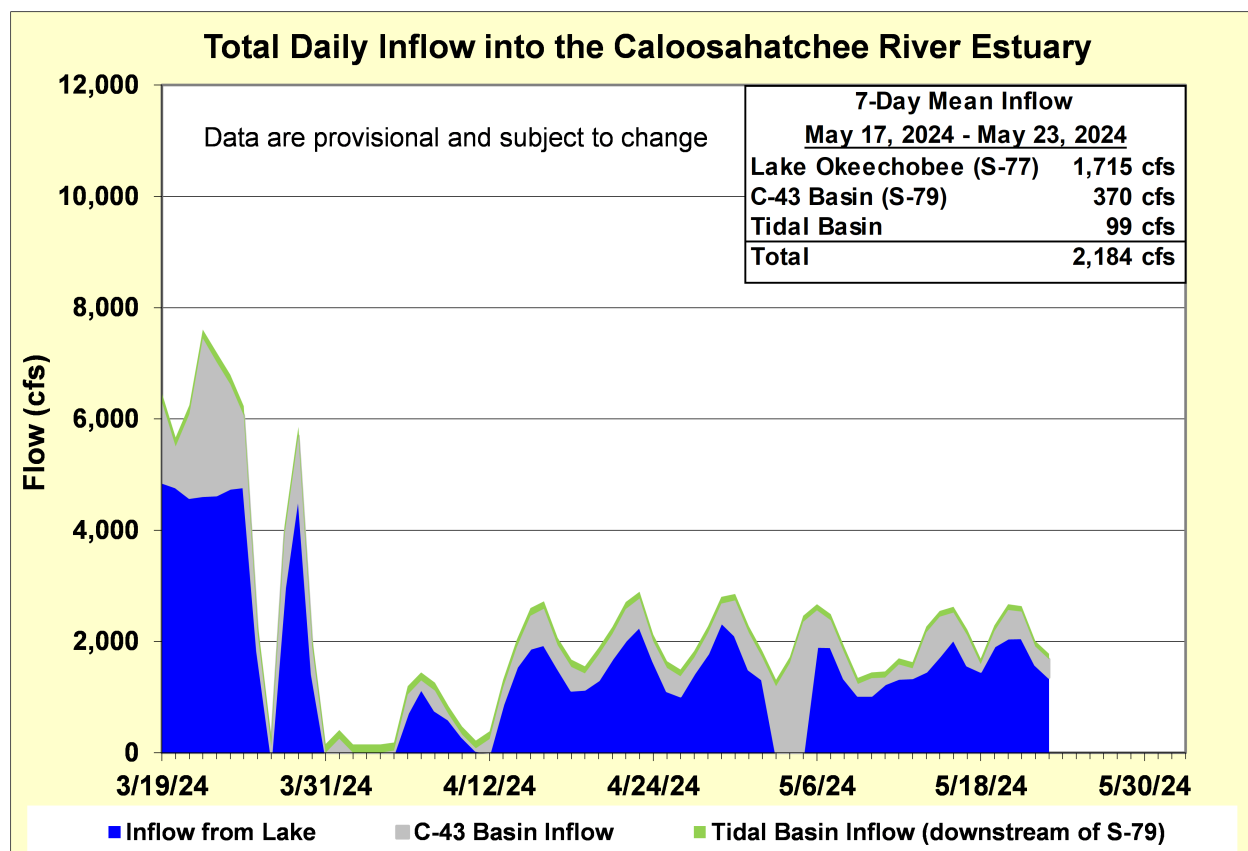


Figure ES-7. Total daily inflows from Lake Okeechobee, and runoff from the C-43 and Tidal basins into the Caloosahatchee River Estuary.

Table ES-2. Seven-day mean salinity at six monitoring sites in the Caloosahatchee River Estuary. Current means are in bold font; previous week's means are in parentheses. The envelope in the upper estuary sites is for the protection of tape grass and the envelope in the lower estuary is the optimum salinity range for adult eastern oysters (*Crassostrea virginica*). Data are provisional.

Sampling Site	Surface	Bottom	Optimum Envelope
S-79 (Franklin Lock)	0.2 (0.2)	0.2 (0.2)	0.0 – 10.0
Val I-75	0.2 (0.4)	0.2 (0.4)	0.0 – 10.0
Fort Myers Yacht Basin	1.3 (3.8)	1.7 (4.2)	0.0 – 10.0
Cape Coral	9.5 (13.9)	11.6 (15.5)	10.0 – 25.0
Shell Point	26.8 (27.9)	27.6 (28.2)	10.0 – 25.0
Sanibel	31.3 (32.3)	33.0 (32.6)	10.0 – 25.0

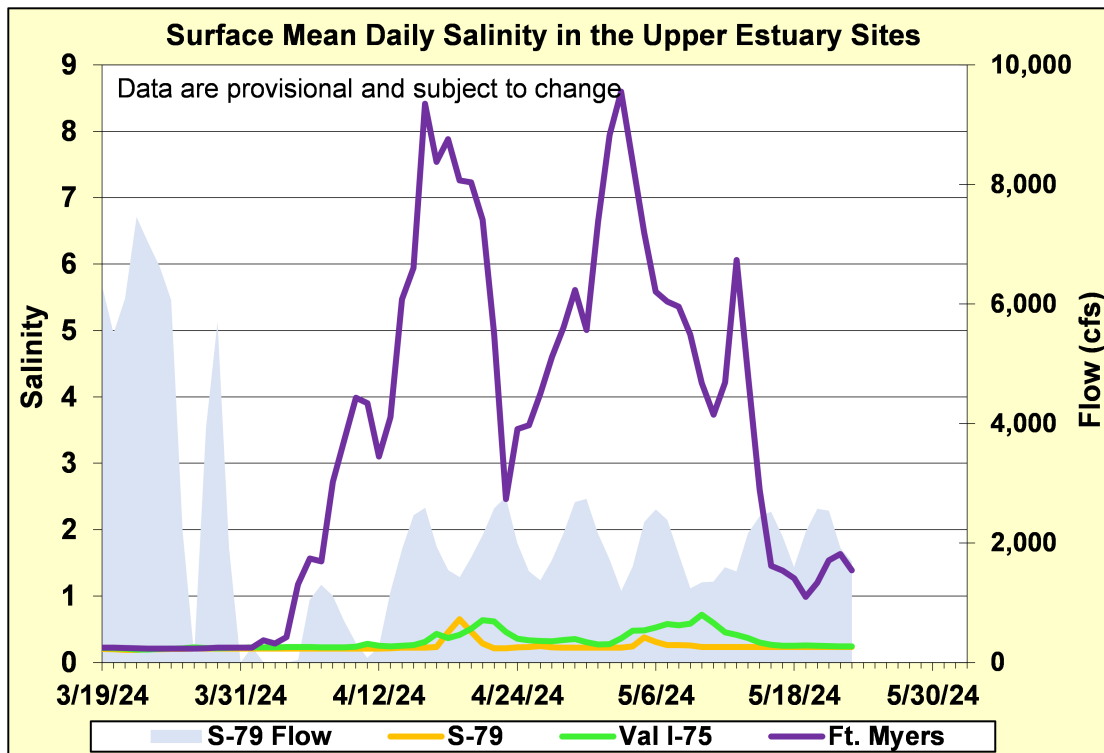


Figure ES-8. Mean daily salinity at upper Caloosahatchee River Estuary monitoring sites and mean daily flow at S-79.

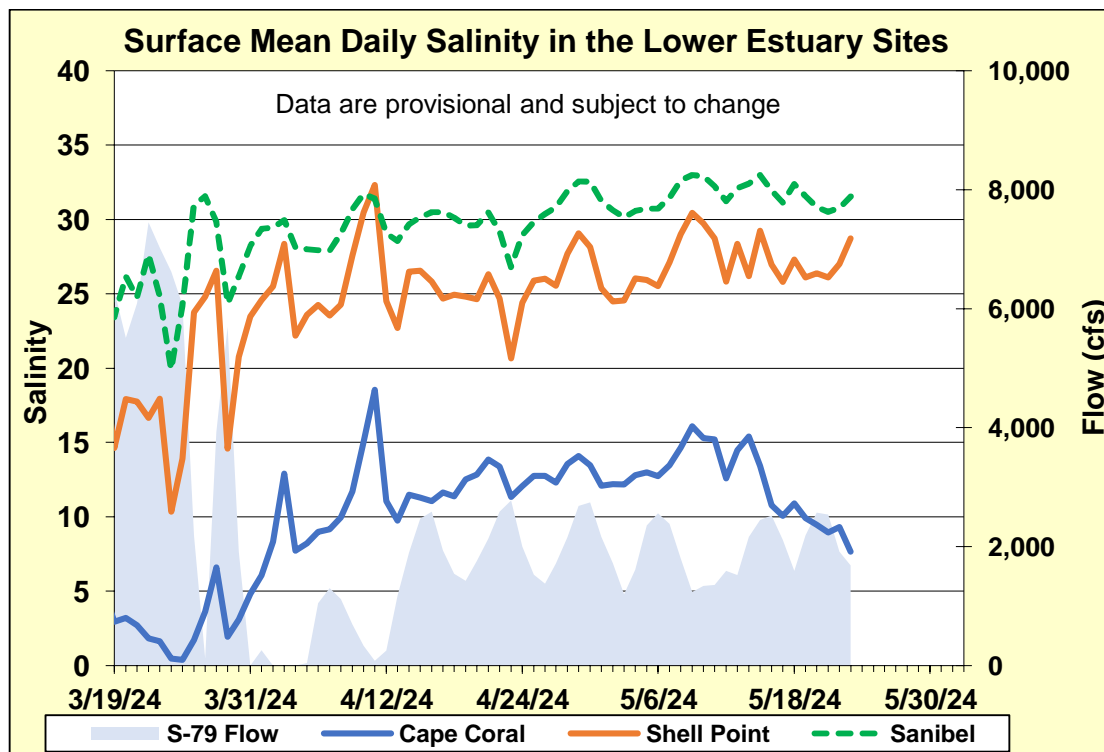


Figure ES-9. Mean daily surface salinity at lower Caloosahatchee River Estuary monitoring sites and mean daily flow at S-79.

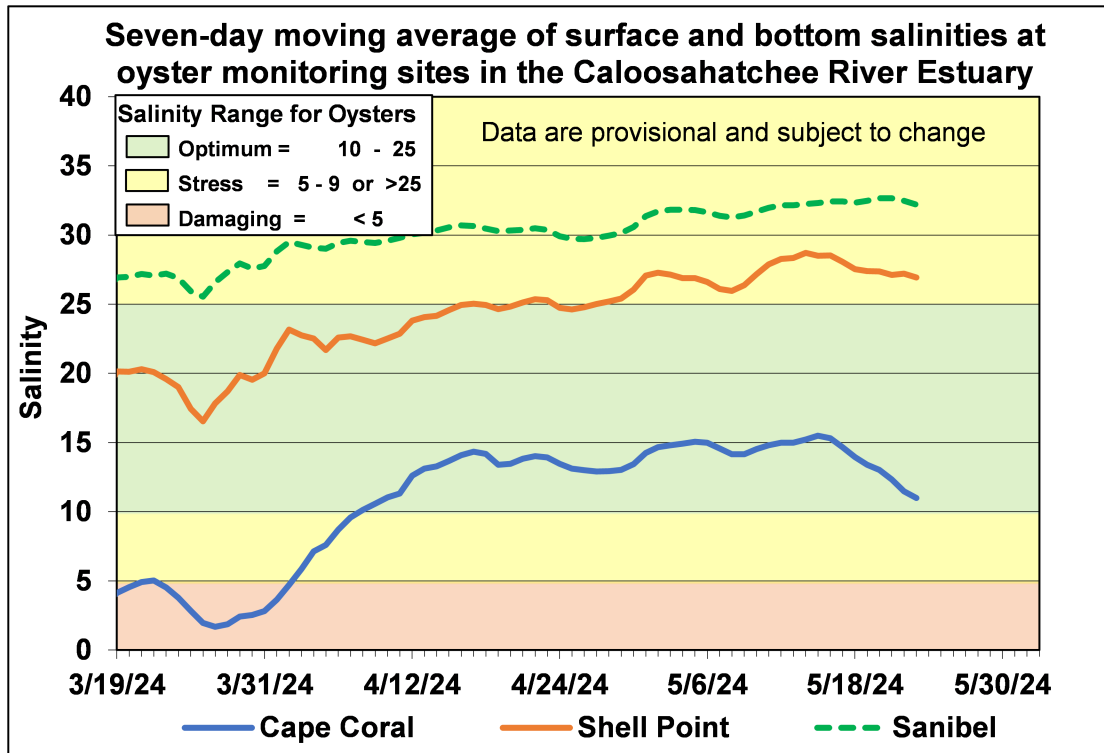


Figure ES-10. Seven-day moving average of surface and bottom salinities at Cape Coral, Shell Point and Sanibel monitoring sites in the Caloosahatchee River Estuary.

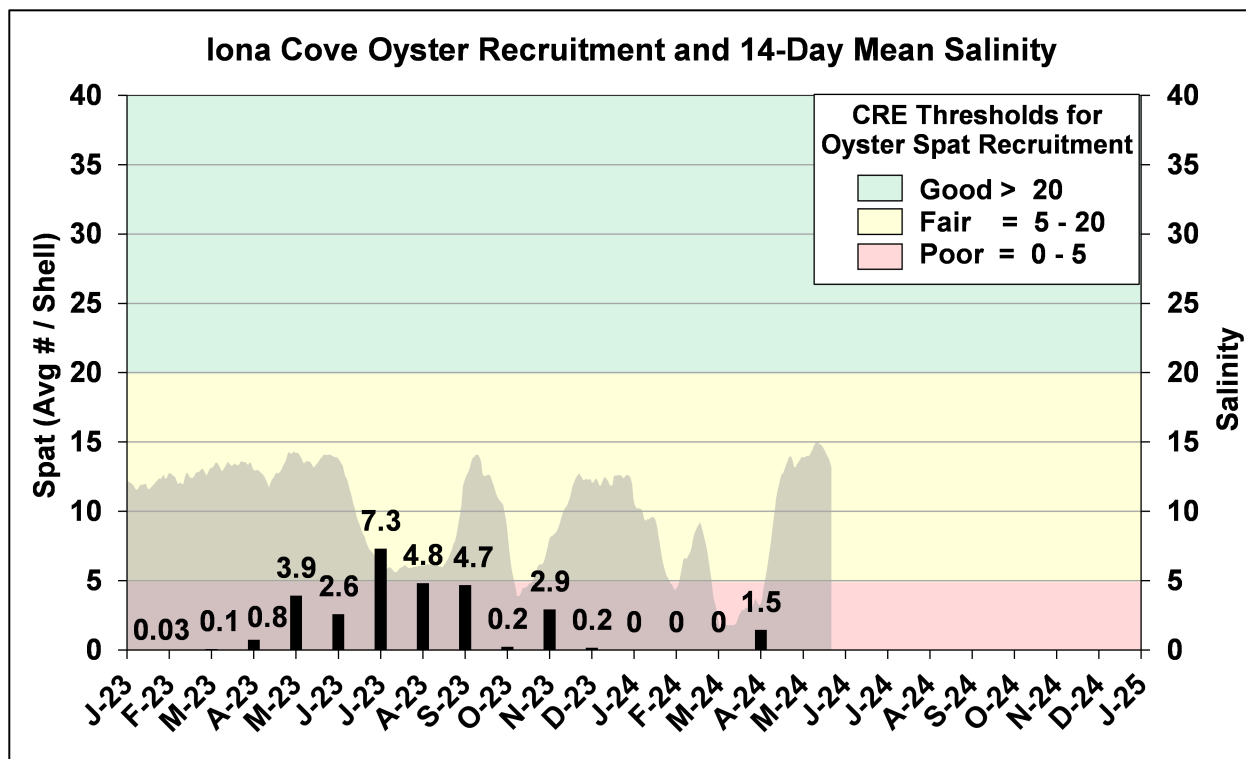


Figure ES-11. Mean oyster recruitment at the Iona Cove oyster monitoring station and 14-day mean salinity at Cape Coral.

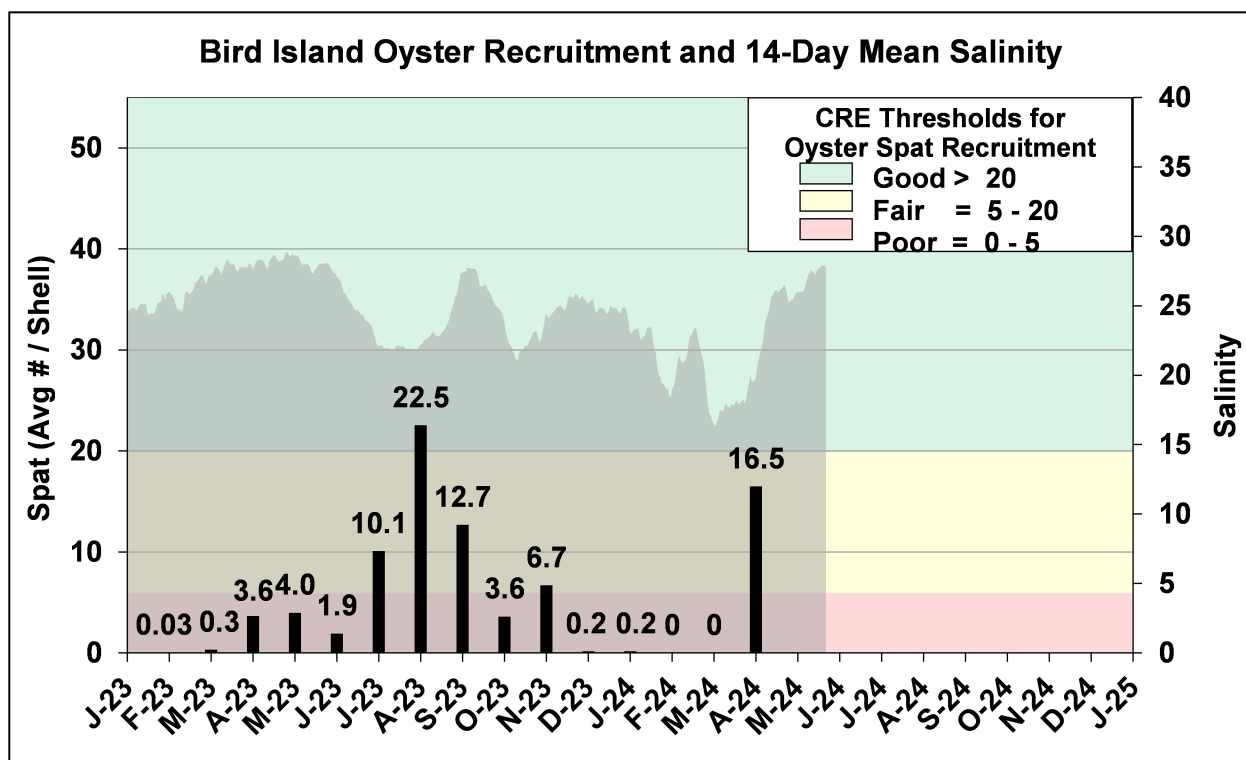


Figure ES-12. Mean oyster recruitment at the Bird Island oyster monitoring station and 14-day mean salinity at Shell Point.

Table ES-3. Predicted salinity at Val I-75 in the Caloosahatchee River Estuary at the end of the forecast period for various S-79 flow release scenarios.

Scenario	Simulated S-79 Flow (cfs)	Tidal Basin Runoff (cfs)	Daily Salinity	30-Day Mean Salinity
A	450	85	0.6	0.4
B	750	85	0.4	0.4
C	2000	85	0.3	0.3

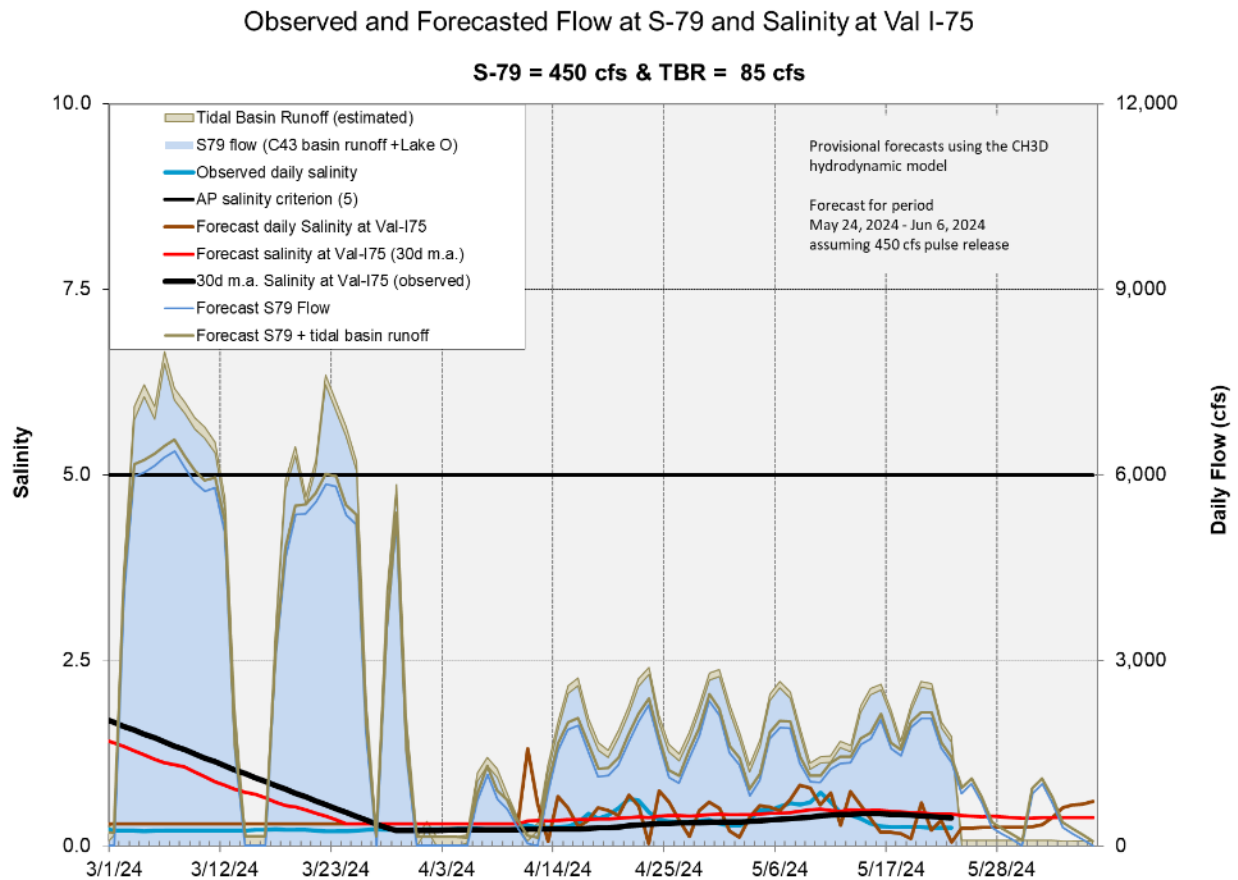


Figure ES-13. Forecasted Val I-75 site surface salinity assuming 450 cfs pulse release at S-79.

Stormwater Treatment Areas

STA-1E: STA-1E Eastern Flow-way is offline for rehydration and vegetation establishment following erosion repair. An operational restriction is in place in STA-1E Western Flow-way for post-construction vegetation grow-in. Online treatment cells are at or near target stage. Vegetation in the Central flow-way is highly stressed. The 365-day phosphorus loading rate (PLR) for the Central Flow-way is high. (**Figure S-1**).

STA-1W: The Northern and Eastern Flow-ways, and Cells 6, 7, and 8 contain nests of Migratory Bird Treaty Act protected species. Treatment cells are at or near target stage. Vegetation in the flow-ways is highly stressed. The 365-day PLR for the Eastern Flow-way is very high, the 365-day PLR for the Western Flow-way is high, and the 365-day PLR for the Northern Flow-ways is below $1.0 \text{ g/m}^2/\text{year}$ (**Figure S-1**).

STA-2: Operational restrictions are in place in Flow-ways 2 and 4 for vegetation management activities, and in Flow-way 5 for construction activities. Flow-ways 2, 3, and 4 contain nests of Migratory Bird Treaty Act protected species. Online treatment cells are at or near target stage. Vegetation in Flow-ways 2, 3, and 4 is stressed, and in 5 is highly stressed. The 365-day PLRs for Flow-ways 3, 4, and 5 are below $1.0 \text{ g/m}^2/\text{year}$. The 365-day PLRs for Flow-way 1 and 2 are high (**Figure S-2**).

STA-3/4: An operational restriction is in place in the Eastern Flow-way for post-drawdown vegetation grow-in. Treatment cells are at or near target stage. Vegetation in the Central Flow-way is highly stressed and in the Eastern Flow-way is stressed. The 365-day PLRs for the Central and Western Flow-ways are below $1.0 \text{ g/m}^2/\text{year}$ (**Figure S-2**).

STA-5/6: An operational restriction is in place in Flow-way 4 for vegetation management (prescribed burn). Treatment cells are at or near target stage. All treatment cells have highly stressed or stressed vegetation conditions. The 365-day PLRs for Flow-ways 1, 4, 6, 7, and 8 are below $1.0 \text{ g/m}^2/\text{year}$, and the 365-day PLRs for Flow-ways 2, 3, and 5 are high. (**Figure S-3**).

For definitions on STA operational language see glossary following figures.

Eastern Flow Path Weekly Status Report – 5/20/2024 through 5/26/2024

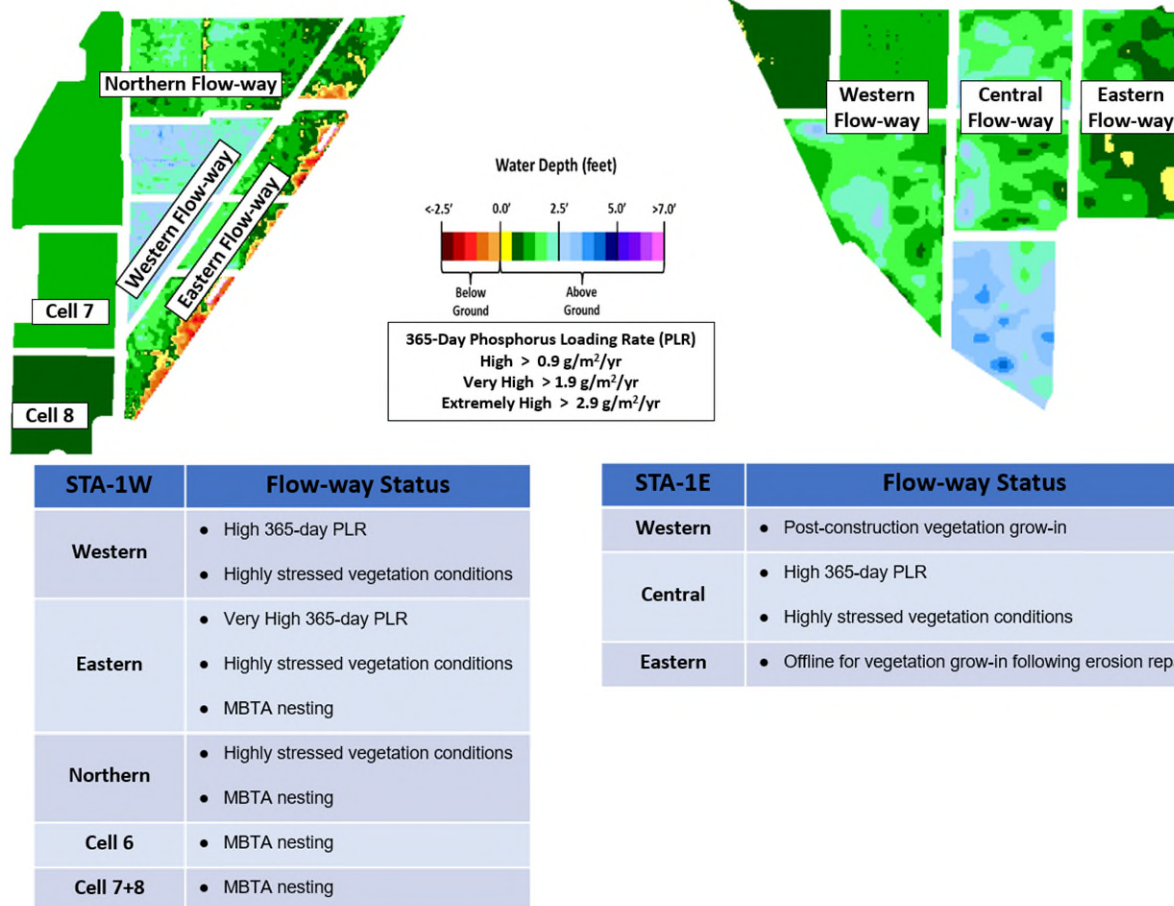


Figure S-1. Eastern Flow Path Weekly Status Report

Central Flow Path Weekly Status Report – 5/20/2024 through 5/26/2024

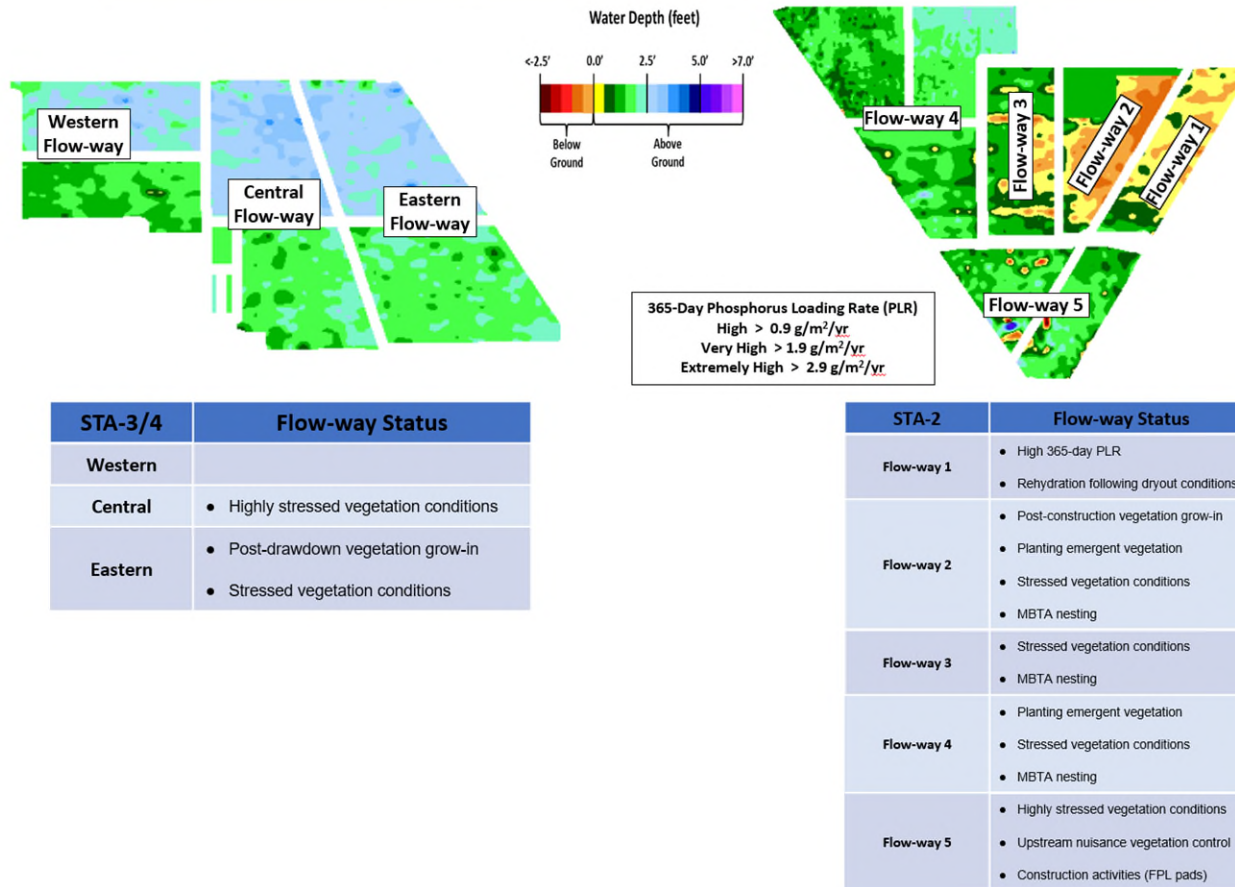


Figure S-2. Central Flow Path Weekly Status Report

Western Flow Path Weekly Status Report – 5/20/2024 through 5/26/2024

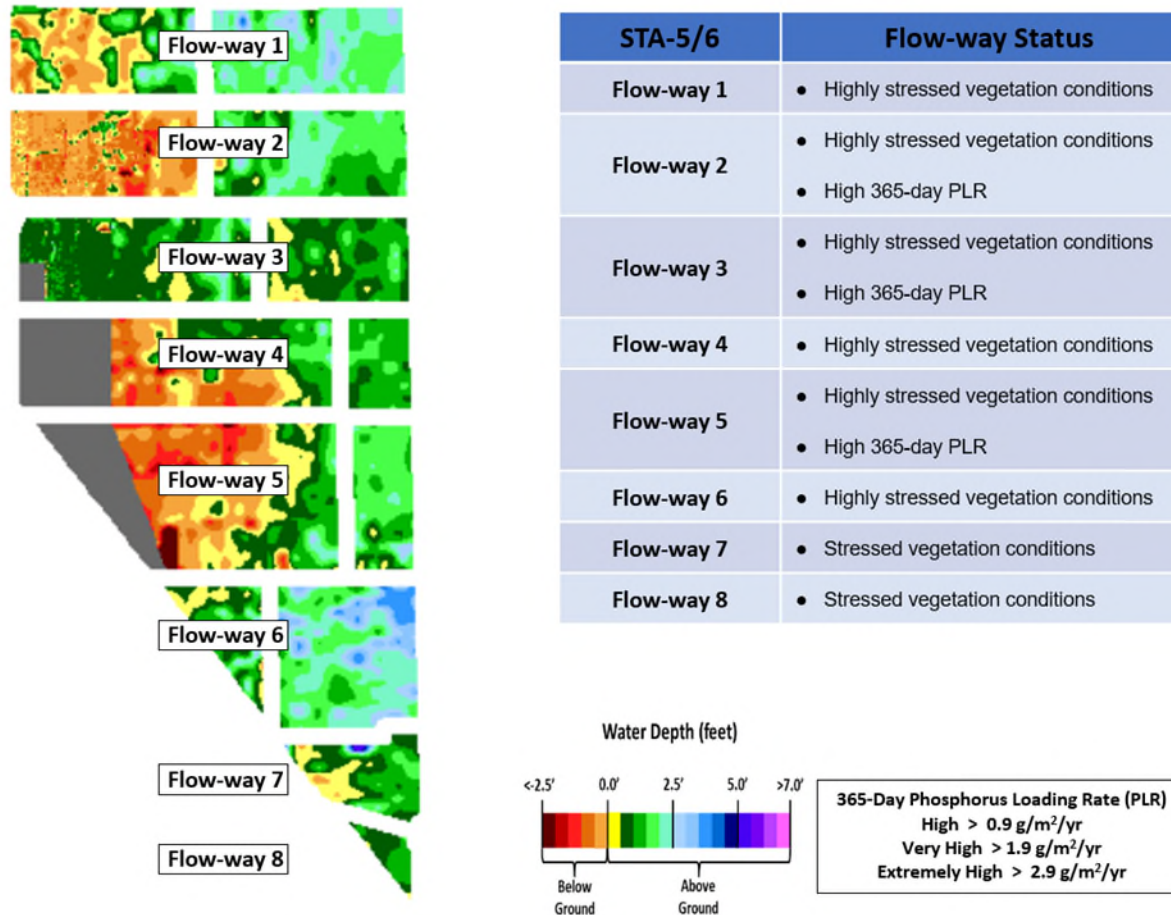


Figure S-3. Western Flow Path Weekly Status Report

Basic Concepts and Definitions for STA Weekly Status Report

- **Inflow:** Sum of flow volume at all inflow structures to an STA.
- **Lake Inflow:** Portion of the STA total inflow volume that originates from Lake Okeechobee.
- **Outflow:** Sum of flow volume at outflow structures from an STA.
- **Total Phosphorus (TP):** Total mass of phosphorus in all its forms; including particulate, dissolved, etc.
- **Inflow Concentration:** TP concentration is the mass of TP in micrograms per liter of water, $\mu\text{g/L}$ or ppb. Inflow concentration refers to the flow-weighted mean TP from all inflow structures over a period of time.
- **Outflow Concentration:** The flow-weighted mean TP from all outflow structures over a period of time. The outflow concentration represents the reduction of inflow TP achieved by STA treatment of the inflow water.
- **WQBEL:** The STA outflow concentration that is required upon completion of the Restoration Strategies projects by December 2025. The outflow concentration shall not exceed 13 ppb as an annual flow weighted mean in more than 3 out of 5 water years on a rolling basis and shall not exceed 19 ppb as an annual flow weighted in any water year.
- **Flow-Way (FW):** One or more treatment cells connected in series. Cells typically have emergent aquatic vegetation (EAV) in the front portion of the flow-way followed by a mix of EAV and submerged aquatic vegetation (SAV)
- **Vegetation Status:** Healthy means the vegetation condition is good and will allow the STA to perform as designed. Stressed means the vegetation is showing signs of poor health, such as browning or areas of vegetation die-off, or the cell contains undesirable vegetation such as floating exotic vegetation requiring treatment. The TP reduction capability of the STA is affected when the vegetation condition is poor.
- **Phosphorus Loading Rate (PLR):** Mass of inflow TP in grams, divided by total treatment area of STA in square meters, per year. In general, a 365-day value of less than 1.0 is needed for an STA to perform optimally. A PLR of 2.0 is considered very high and a PLR of 3.0 is considered extremely high. The TP reduction capability of the STA is affected when the PLR is high, very high and extremely high.
- **Online:** Online status means the FW can receive and treat inflow.
- **Online with Restriction:** The FW can receive and treat inflow, but the amount of flow or water level may be limited temporarily. For example, a vegetation rehabilitation effort may require reduced flows through an area while the new plants are establishing, or nesting by protected species may require a certain water level not to be exceeded.
- **Offline:** The FW is unable to receive and treat inflow due to repairs, construction, or other prohibitive reasons.
- **Depth:** Difference between the average surface water level in a cell and the average ground elevation in that cell. Target depths, or depths between flow events, are between 1.25 ft to 1.5 ft. As depth approaches or drops below zero, an increasing percentage of the cell is considered dry and STA conditions deteriorate. An increase in depth above target depth is expected with increasing flow. However, as depth increases much above the target depth and is sustained over a period of time, it can be detrimental to vegetation health and overall STA treatment performance.
- **Note:** The data provided in this summary report were developed using a combination of provisional and quality-assured flow and water quality data. In some cases, best professional judgment was used to estimate missing data and revise questionable data. Values provided are not considered final but are appropriate for use in STA operational decision-making.

Everglades

Water Conservation Area Regulation Schedules

More widespread but still below average amounts of rain fell across the Everglades last week and recessions remained somewhat elevated. WCA-1: Stage within the Refuge remains below schedule and is receding quickly. On Monday stage at the 1-8C gauge was 0.98 feet below the now flat Zone A1 regulation line. WCA-2A: Stage at the S-11B_H gauge receded over most of last week. The average on Monday was 0.40 feet below the flat regulation line and 0.10 above the water supply floor. WCA-3A: The 3-Gauge average stage remained in Zone B last week, continuing to recede faster than the slope of the schedule line. The average stage on Monday was around 0.50 feet below the falling Zone A regulation line. WCA-3A North: Stage at Gauge 62 (NW corner) remained below the Upper schedule last week and recedes quickly. The average on Monday was around 1.40 feet below that schedule line. Figure **EV-4** has not been updating due to data transfer issues. See figures **EV-1** through **EV-4**.

Water Depths

The SFWDAT model output for 5/26/24 illustrates a hydropattern in the WCAs that is drying down from northwest to south in each basin. Ponded conditions are now absent along the northern reaches of the L-67s in WCA-3A. In southern WCA-3A the spatial extent of ponding there continues to contract as the drying front approaches that region. Hydrologic connectivity remains in Shark River Slough but has dried down to the west while a slight potential remains in Taylor Slough. Current WDAT water depth estimates are much drier when compared to one month ago across the EPA and ENP, most significantly in BCNP. The comparison to modeled conditions a year ago also illustrates a much drier condition with only southern WCA-3A and -3B with the potential to be slightly deeper than one year ago. (**Figure EV-5 and Figure EV-6**).

Comparing current conditions to the 20-year percentiles on May 26: Depth conditions remain above the 80th percentile for this time of the year in WCA-3B and central ENP. Depths remain near the 10th percentile across much of WCA-1 and fall below that metric in northern WCA-2A (**Figure EV-7**).

Taylor Slough and Florida Bay

Stage changes were variable across Taylor Slough over the past week, and on average there was no change from the week prior. Changes ranged from -0.11 feet at Craighead Pond (CP) in the southern slough, to +0.16 feet at Taylor Slough Bridge (TSB) and E112 in the northern slough (**Figure EV-8 and Figure EV-9**). Taylor Slough water levels remain above the recent average for this time of year by 6.1 inches compared to before the Florida Bay initiative (starting in 2017), a decrease of 1.1 inches relative to last week's comparison. The stage at Craighead Pond (CP) is approximately equal to estimated historical levels and the stage at Taylor Slough Bridge (TSB) is below historical levels by 1.19 feet.

Average Florida Bay salinity was 29.6, an increase of 1.7 from last week. Salinity increased at all sites, with changes ranging from +0.7 at Duck Key (DK) in the eastern

region, to +3.5 at Garfield Bight (GB) in the western nearshore region (**Figure EV-8**). Salinity remains below the 25th percentile for all three regions, as well as near or below estimated historical levels (**Figure EV-10**). Average Florida Bay salinity remains below its recent average for this time of year by 7.0, an increase of 1.7 from last week's comparison.

Salinity at the TR station in the mangrove zone (tracked for the Florida Bay MFL) was 14.4. The 30-day moving average was 5.8, an increase of 3.3 from last week (**Figure EV-11**). The 365-day moving sum of flow from the five creeks was 433,020 acre-feet, a decrease of 7,951 acre-feet from last week (**Figure EV-11**).

Average rainfall across Taylor Slough and Florida Bay was 0.66 inches over the past week (5/20-5/27), based on the 18 gauges used for this report. Rainfall ranged from 0.01 inches at Whipray Basin (WB) in the central region to 1.79 inches at Highway Creek (HC) in the eastern nearshore region (**Figure EV-12**). Wind directions and speeds in Florida Bay ranged from 0.2 mph W to 14.5 mph S, both on 5/21(**Figure EV-12**).

Weekly total creek flow was unable to be assessed due to missing data on 5/23, but flows were likely net negative for the week (**Figure EV-13**). Average daily flow from the five major creeks (McCormick, Taylor, Mud, Trout, West Highway), excluding 5/23, totaled –959 acre-feet last week, and was 3,918 acre-feet below historical levels.

Implications for water management

The ecology of northern WCA-2A would benefit from inflows directed as northerly as possible as stage in that region has fallen below ground. Inflows into this region will increase residence time and sheet flow through the Everglades. Given that dry conditions would have to persist until July for WOST chicks to fledge, wetter conditions in the near future may at least encourage some WOST to abandon their nests before eggs hatch, saving energy. Hydrologic connectivity has decreased in ENP but inputs continue to maintain some water moving southward, helping to prevent ecologically undesirable salinity swings in Florida Bay nearshore areas. Individual regional recommendations can be found in **Table EV-2**.

Table EV-2. Previous week's rainfall and water depth changes in Everglades basins.

Everglades Region	Rainfall (inches)	Stage change (feet)
WCA-1	0.26	–0.17
WCA-2A	0.42	–0.14
WCA-2B	0.50	–0.22
WCA-3A	0.59	–0.11
WCA-3B	0.23	–0.13
ENP	0.56	–0.16

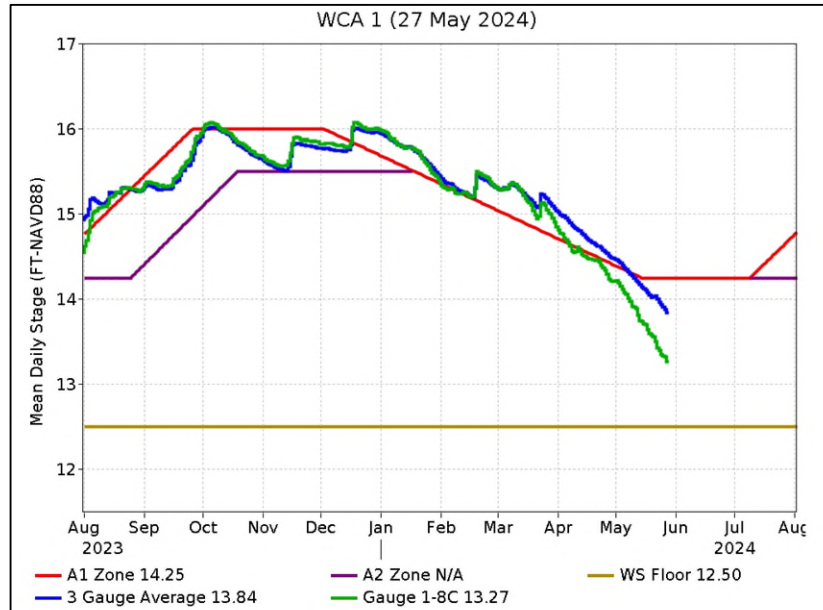


Figure EV-1. WCA-1 stage hydrographs and regulation schedule.

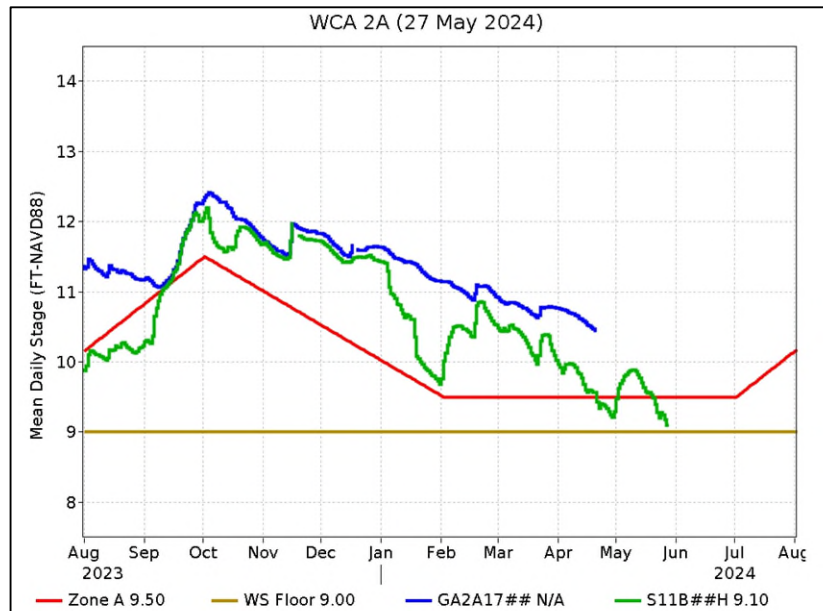


Figure EV-2. WCA-2A stage hydrographs and regulation schedule.

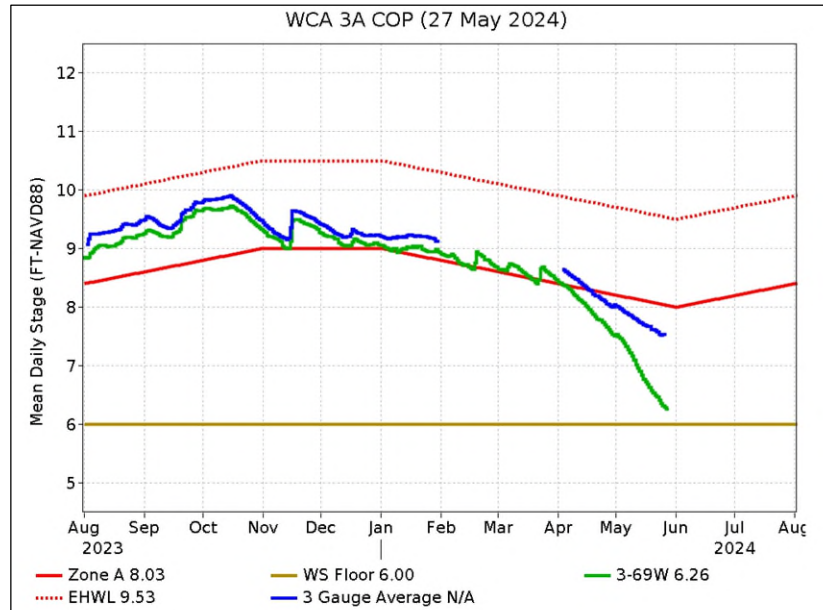


Figure EV-3. WCA-3A stage hydrographs (three-gauge average, 3-69W) and regulation schedule.

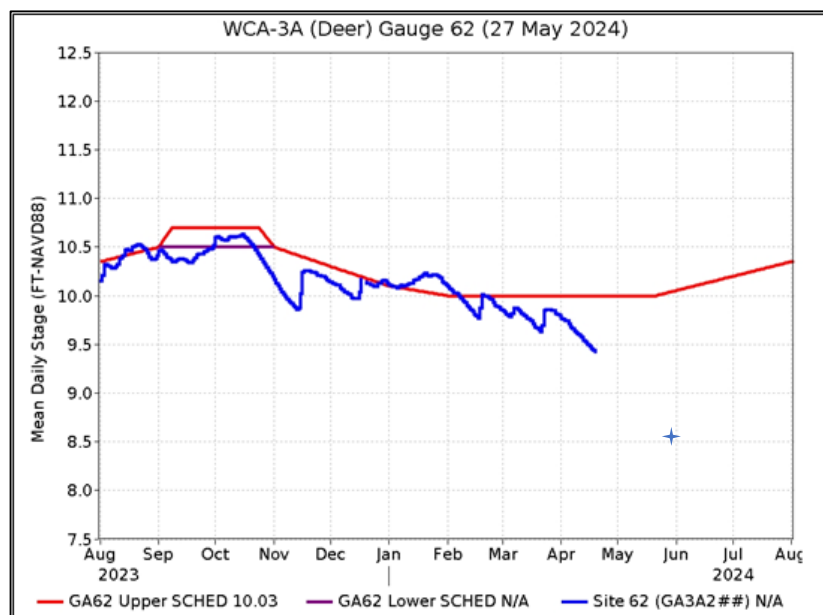


Figure EV-4. WCA-3A stage hydrograph (Deer gauge; Site 62) and GA62 regulation schedule. Figure has not been updating due to data issues. Star represents stage on Sunday.

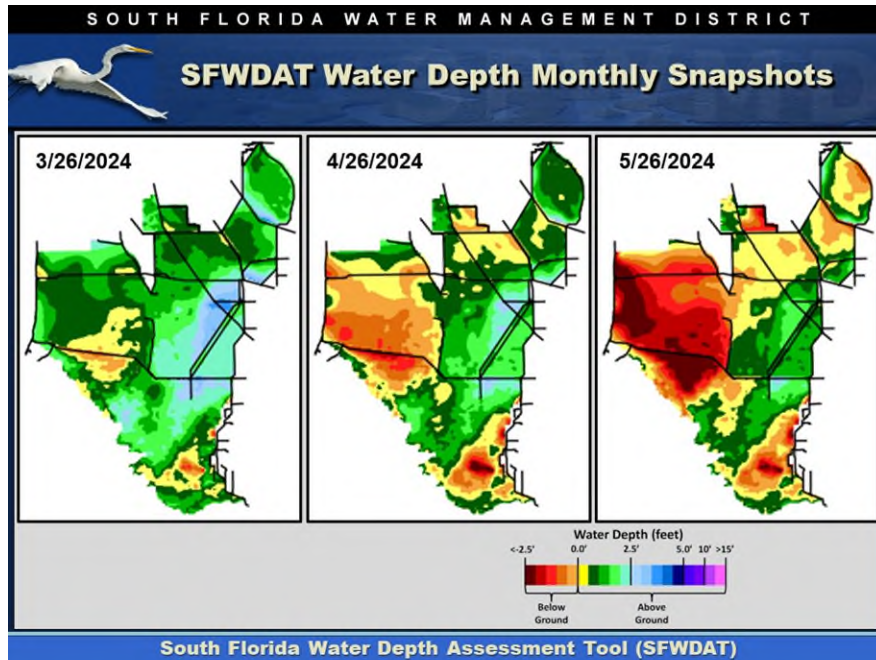


Figure EV-5. Everglades water depths from two months ago (left), one month ago (center) and present (right), based on SFWDAT.

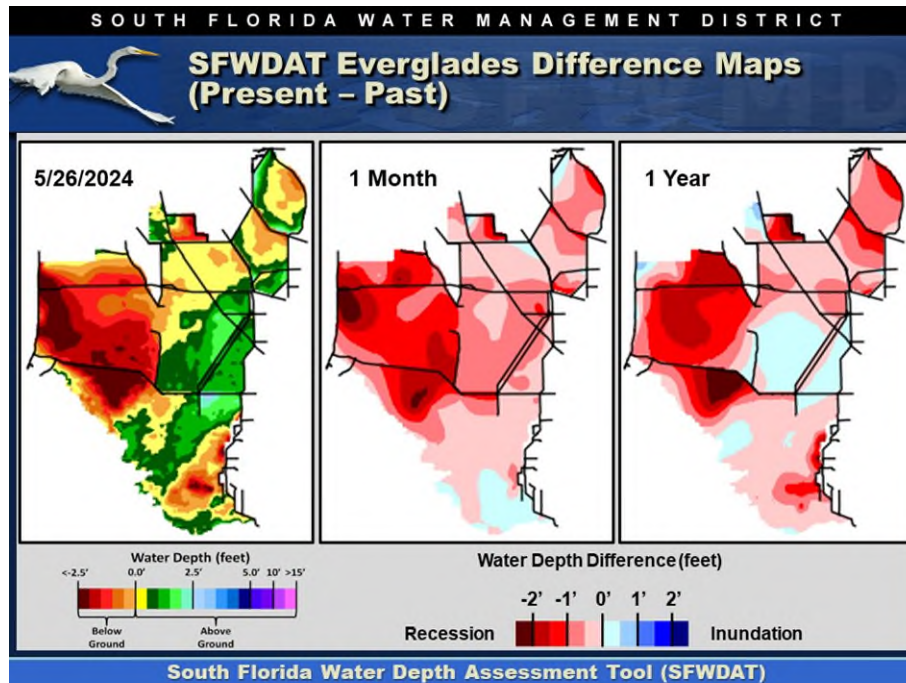


Figure EV-6. Present Everglades water depths (left) and water depth changes from one month (center) and one year (right) ago, based on SFWDAT.

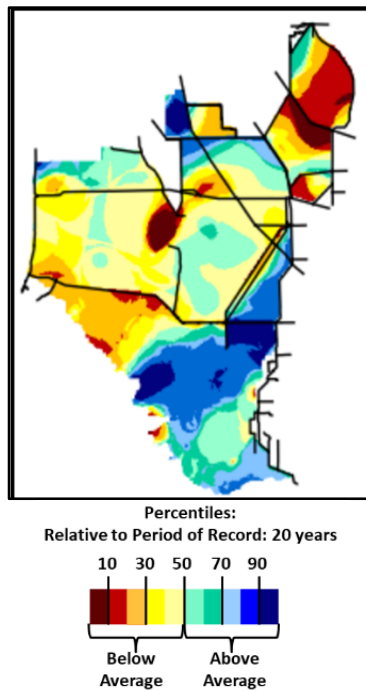


Figure EV-7. Present water depths (5/26/2024) compared to the day of year average over the previous 20 years.

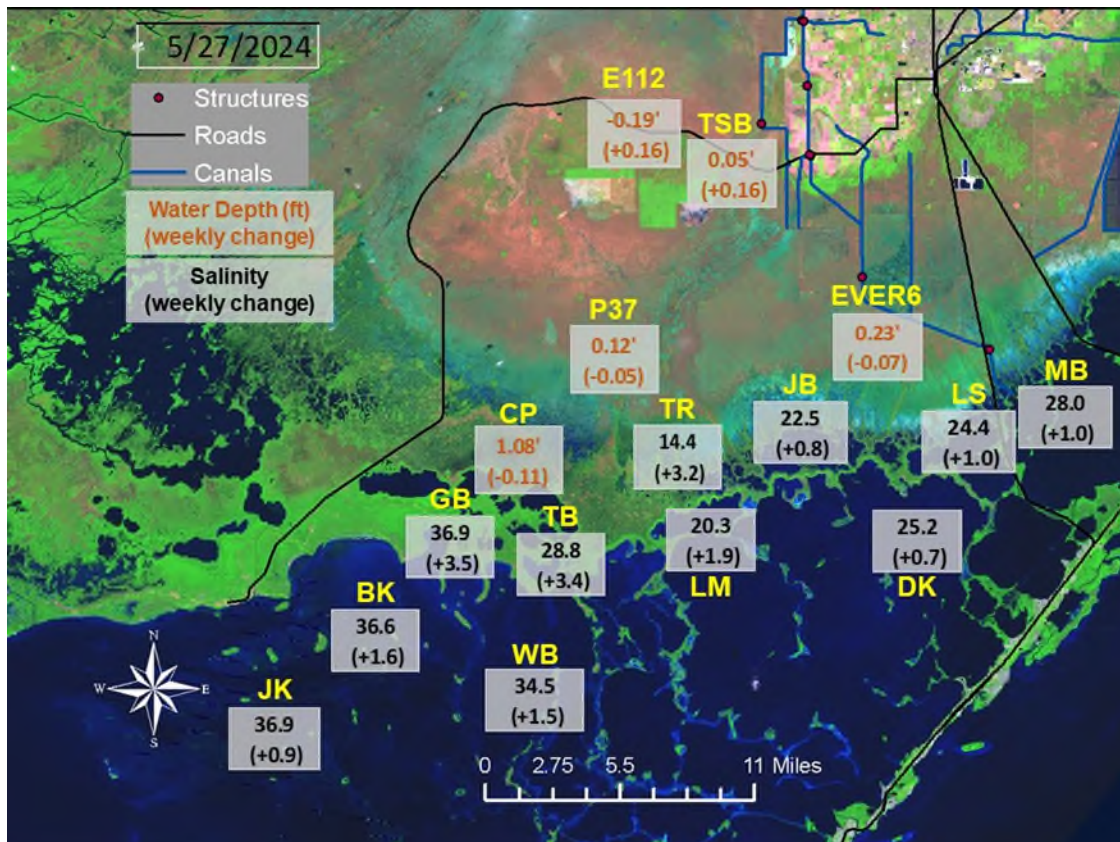


Figure EV-8. Taylor Slough water depths with changes since a week ago and Florida Bay salinities with changes since a week ago.

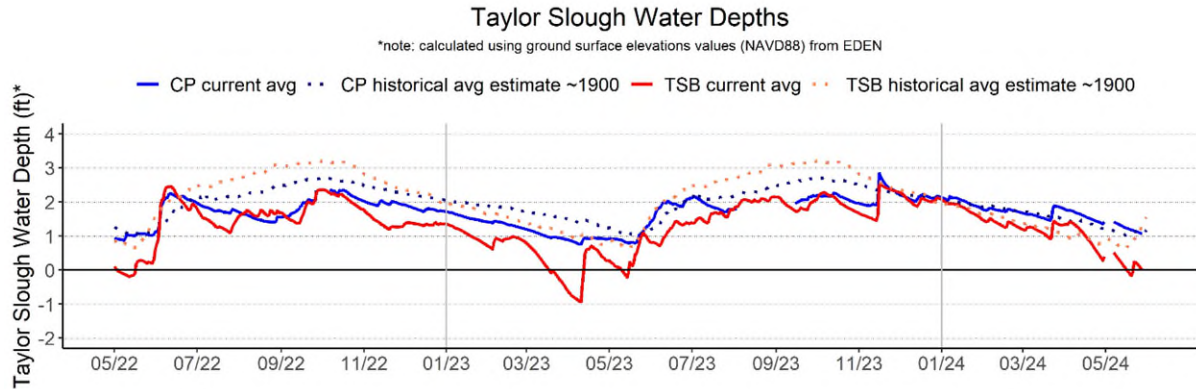


Figure EV-9. Taylor Slough water depth time series for Taylor Slough Bridge (TSB; northern slough) and Craighead Pond (CP; southern slough).

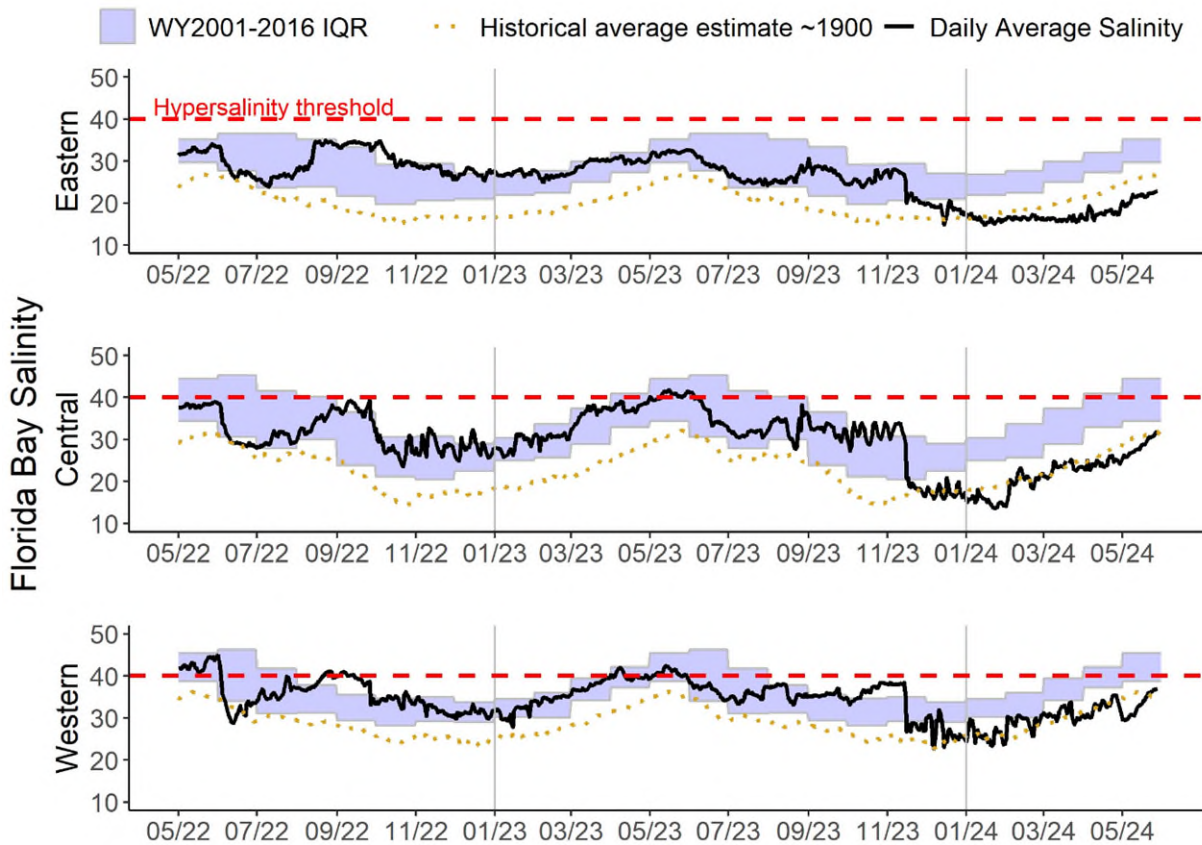


Figure EV-10. Eastern (top panel), Central (middle panel) and Western (bottom panel) Florida Bay daily average salinities with WY2001-2016 interquartile (25-75 percentile) ranges and estimated historical daily average salinities (~1900 CE). The hypersalinity threshold indicates the level at which salinities start to become harmful to seagrass.

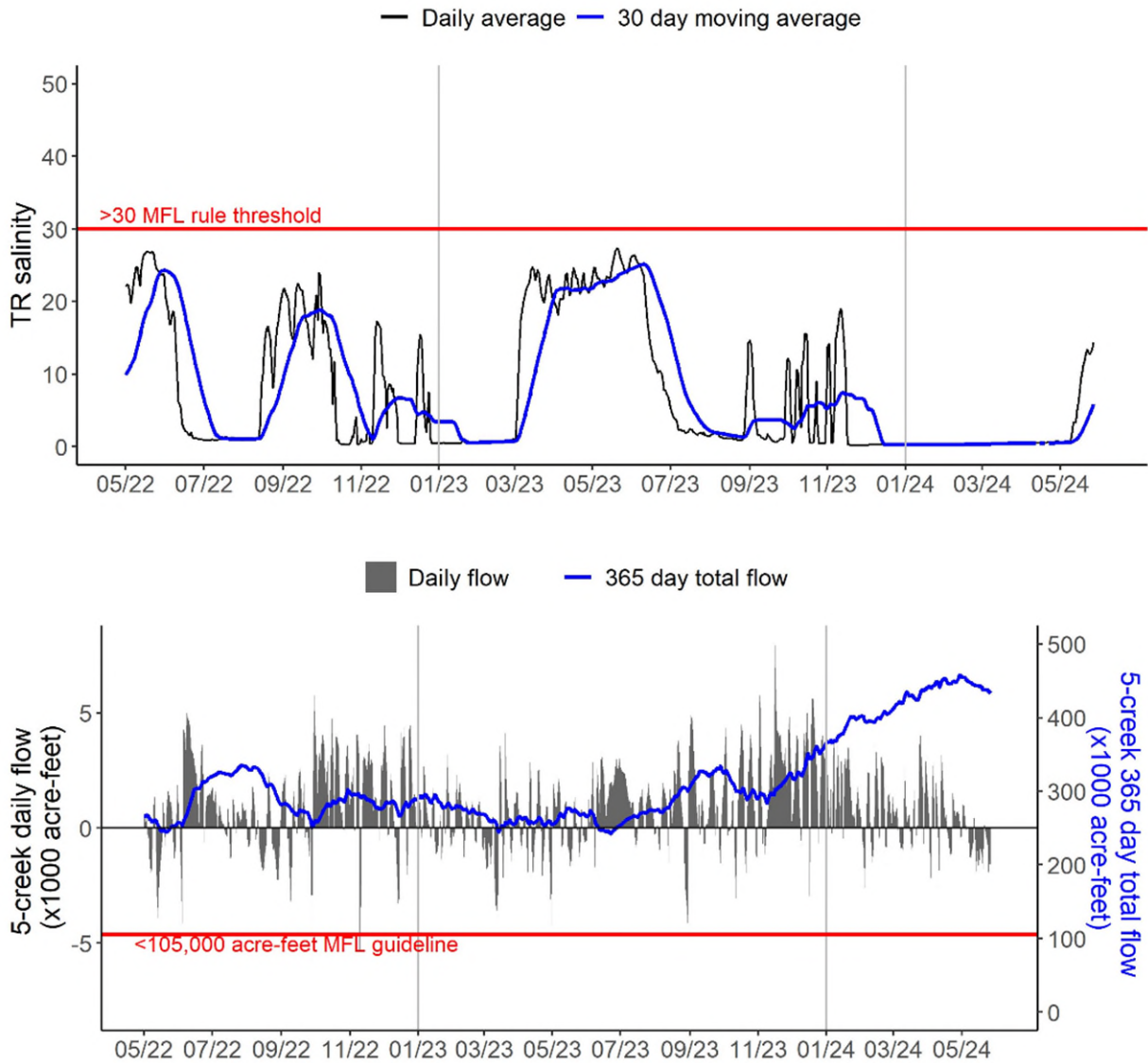


Figure EV-11. Salinity at Taylor River (TR; top) and creek inflow to Florida Bay (bottom) from the five major creeks (McCormick Creek, Taylor River, Mud Creek, Trout Creek, and West Highway Creek). The 30-day moving average salinity and 365-day total creek flow are tracked for the Florida Bay MFL criteria.

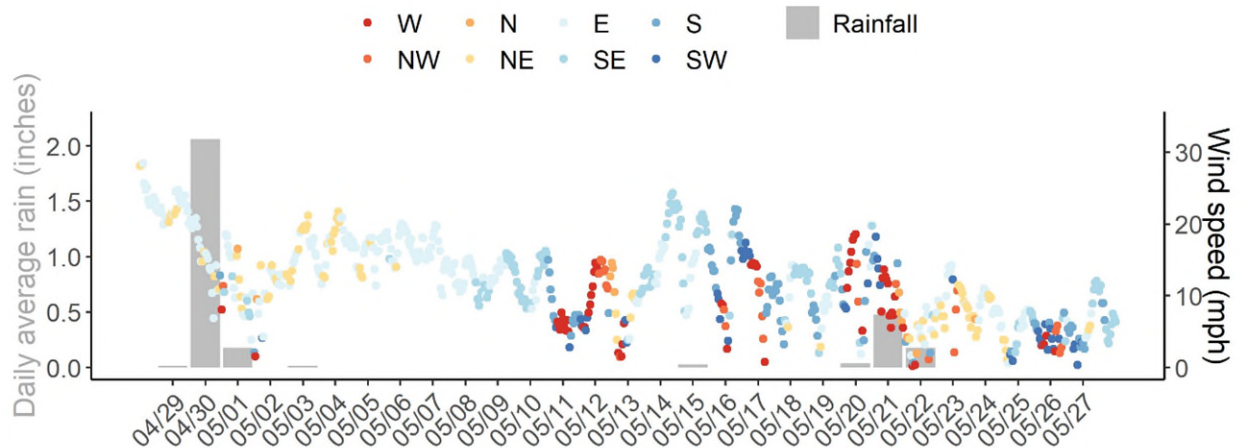


Figure EV-12. Daily average rain across Taylor Slough and Florida Bay, along with hourly average wind speed and direction (measured at Long Key) in Florida Bay over the past four weeks.

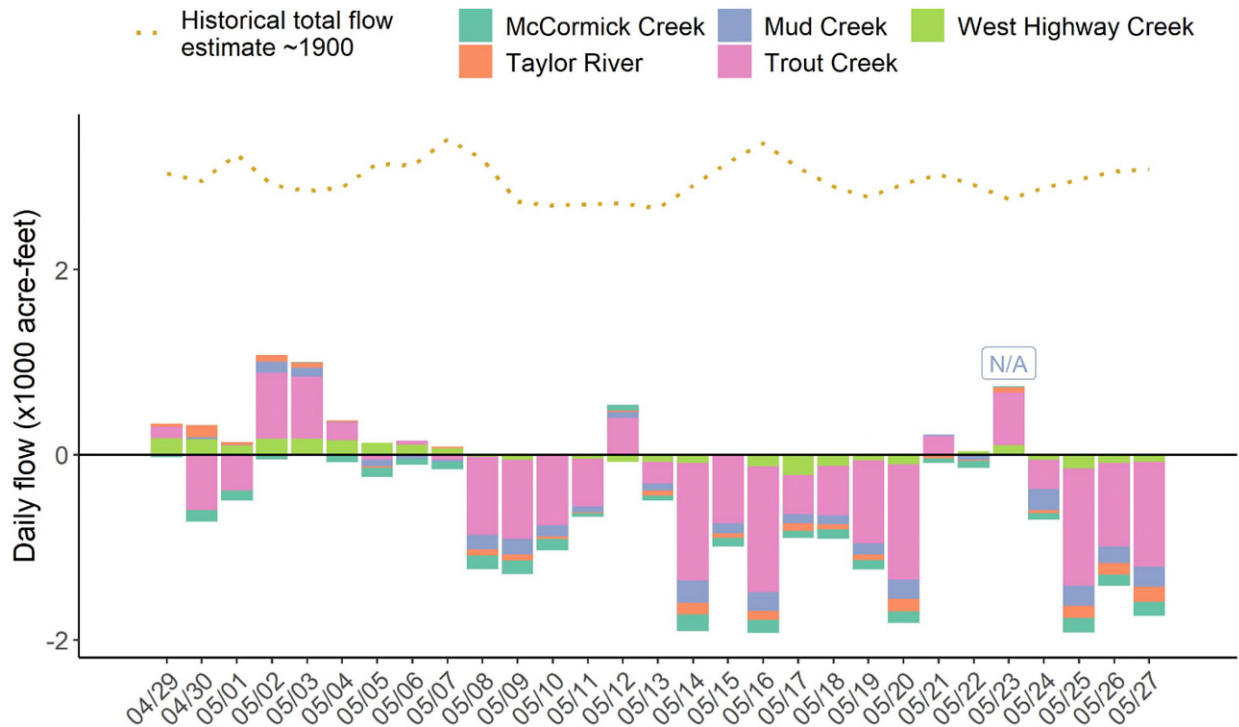


Figure EV-13. Daily average creek flow summed between five creeks with estimated historical daily flow (~1900 CE) over the past four weeks.

Table EV-2. Weekly water depth changes and water management recommendations

SFWMD Everglades Ecological Recommendations, May 28, 2024 (red is new)			
	Weekly change	Recommendation	Reasons
WCA-1	Stage decreased by 0.17'	Recession rate of less than 0.12' per week.	Protect within basin and downstream habitat and wildlife.
WCA-2A	Stage decreased by 0.14'	Recession rate up to 0.12' per week.	Protect within basin and downstream habitat and wildlife.
WCA-2B	Stage decreased by 0.22'	Recession rate of less than 0.12' per week.	Protect within basin and downstream habitat and wildlife.
WCA-3A NE	Stage decreased by 0.16'	Recession rate of less than 0.12' per week.	Protect within basin and downstream habitat and wildlife (fish/crayfish reproduction, wading bird foraging and nesting).
WCA-3A NW	Stage decreased by 0.19'	Recession rate of less than 0.12' per week.	
Central WCA-3A S	Stage was unchanged	Maintain the current recession rate of less than 0.12' per week.	Protect within basin wildlife (fish/crayfish reproduction). Slowing the recession rate in this region may prevent late/doomed nesting attempts.
Southern WCA-3A S	Stage decreased by 0.09'		
WCA-3B	Stage decreased by 0.13'	Recession rate of less than 0.12' per week.	Protect within basin and downstream habitat and wildlife.
ENP-SRS	Stage decreased by 0.16'	Make discharges to ENP according to COP and TTFF protocol while adaptively considering upstream and downstream ecological conditions.	Protect within basin and upstream habitat and wildlife (wading bird nesting).
Taylor Slough	Stage changes ranged from -0.11' to +0.16'	Move water southward as possible.	When available, provide freshwater to promote water movement.
FB- Salinity	Salinity changes ranged from +0.7 to +3.5	Move water southward as possible.	When available, provide freshwater to promote water movement.

Biscayne Bay

As shown in **Figure BB-1**, mean total inflow to Biscayne Bay was 60 cfs, and the previous 30-day mean inflow was 110 cfs. The seven-day mean salinity was 30.1 at BBCW8 (within the ideal salinity range for estuarine organisms in this region - salinity less than 35) and 37.6 at BBCW10 (slightly above the ideal salinity range for estuarine organisms in this region). Data were provided by Biscayne National Park.

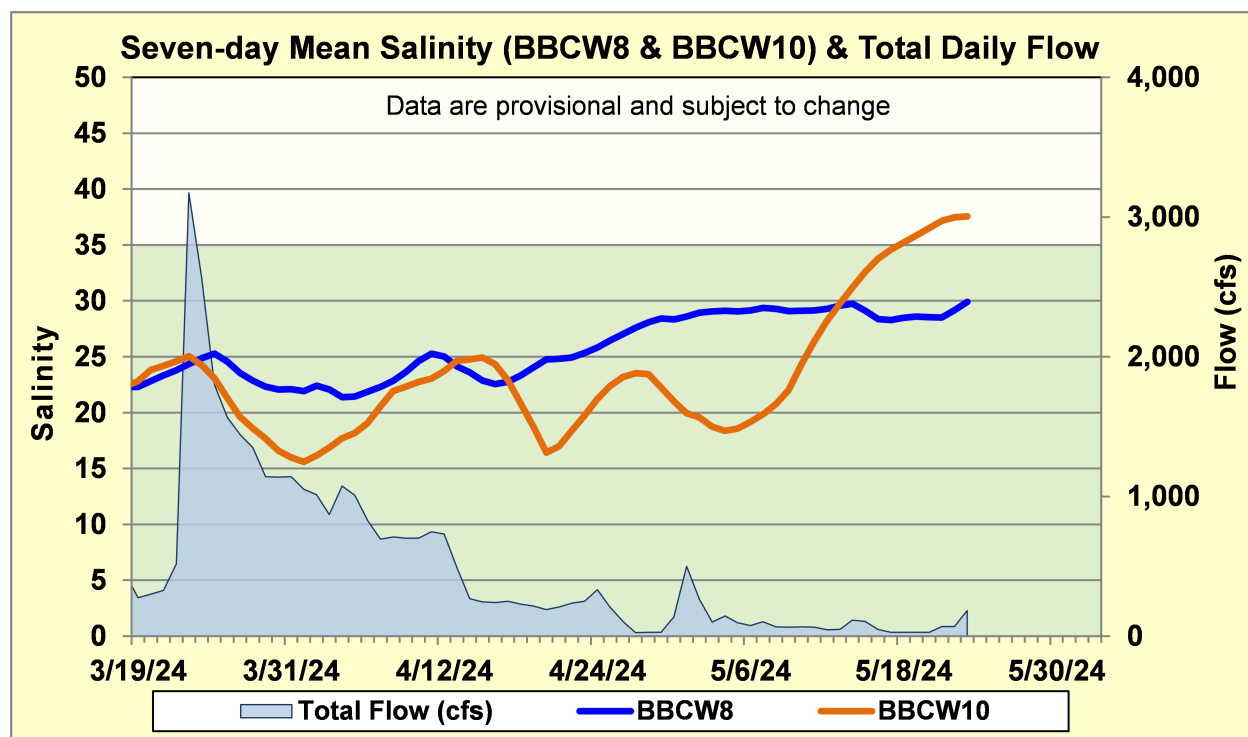


Figure BB-1. Seven-day mean salinity at BBCW8 and BBCW10 and total daily flow in Biscayne Bay. Total daily flow was calculated using flow from structures S20G, S20F, S21, S21A, S123, and S700P.