

Disclaimer: Information contained in the report addresses environmental conditions only and is not the official South Florida Water Management District operations recommendation or decision.

## **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:** February 19, 2025

**SUBJECT:** Weekly Environmental Conditions for Systems Operations

### **Summary**

#### **Weather Conditions and Forecast**

On Wednesday, a frontal boundary will lift into north Florida as a warm front ahead of a developing upper-air disturbance over the northern Gulf Coast. Southwesterly steering currents ahead of the next cold front will transport a tropical air mass northward into Florida, potentially fueling scattered showers and thunderstorms over the northern interior Wednesday evening. However, these showers will likely weaken or dissipate before reaching the lower east coast overnight. Following the frontal passage, northwesterly winds will keep conditions cool and dry through the weekend, though another frontal system could bring light rainfall to the area on Sunday. Below average total SFWMD rainfall is expected for the 7-day period ending next Tuesday morning.

#### **Kissimmee**

Releases were made as needed from East Lake Toho and Lake Toho to continue snail kite nesting season stage recessions to reach low pool by June 1, 2025. Weekly average discharge on February 16, 2025, was 840 cfs at S-65 and 730 cfs at S-65A, respectively. Mean weekly water depth on the Kissimmee River floodplain decreased by 0.16 feet to 0.35 feet. The weekly average concentration of dissolved oxygen in the Kissimmee River decreased from 7.3 mg/L the previous week to 6.1 mg/L, which is above both the potentially lethal level of 1.0 mg/L and the stressful level of 2.0 mg/L (**Figure KB-6**).

#### **Lake Okeechobee**

Lake Okeechobee stage was 12.73 feet NAVD88 (14.04 ft NGVD29) on February 16, 2025, which was 0.14 feet lower than the previous week and 0.56 feet lower than a month ago. Average daily inflows (excluding rainfall) decreased slightly from 960 cfs the previous week to 830 cfs. Average daily outflows (excluding evapotranspiration) decreased from 5,050 cfs the previous week to 4,810 cfs. The most recent non-obscured satellite image from February 15, 2025, suggests low bloom activity on Lake Okeechobee. The February 3-5 routine monitoring trips showed no dominant taxa and no detectable toxins at any of the 9 sites sampled, while 10 of 32 sites had chlorophyll *a* concentrations above the SFWMD recognized bloom threshold of 40 µg/L.

## **Estuaries**

Total inflow to the St. Lucie Estuary averaged 1,376 cfs over the past week with 452 cfs flow coming from Lake Okeechobee. Mean surface salinities increased, and bottom salinities decreased at all three sites within the estuary. Salinity in the middle estuary was in the optimal range (10-25) for adult eastern oysters.

Total inflow to the Caloosahatchee Estuary averaged 2,193 cfs over the past week with 1,457 cfs coming from Lake Okeechobee. Mean salinities remained below 1 at S-79 and Val I-75, decreased at Ft. Myers, and increased 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, February 16, 2025, 13,100 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 234,400 ac-feet. The total amount of inflows to the STAs in WY2025 is approximately 1,104,000 ac-feet. STA cells are near or above target stage except STA-5/6 EAV cells that are below target stage. STA-1E Central Flow-way is offline for construction activities, and STA-2 Flow-way 3 is offline for a SAV recovery drawdown. Operational restrictions are in effect in STA-1E Western Flow-way, STA-1W Northern Flow-way, STA-2 Flow-ways 2 and 4, and STA-3/4 Eastern Flow-way for vegetation management activities. This week, if LOSOM Recovery Operations to lower the lake level recommends Lake releases to the WCAs and conditions allow, releases will be sent to STA-3/4 and STA-5/6.

## **Everglades**

Last week, recession rates were again characterized in the good or fair range across the Everglades Protection Area (EPA); however central and southern WCA-3A (important regions for wading bird foraging as we move further into the dry season) rates remain elevated. Current recession rates in WCA-3A North remain moderate and conditions seem favorable for triggering white ibis nesting at the Alley North colony, but conditions are probably too shallow to support successful wood stork nesting in northern & central WCA-3A. Slower recession rates in these areas will benefit nesting wood storks and white ibis. Water depths in Taylor Slough and salinities in Florida Bay remain well positioned for this time of dry season. Florida Bay minimum flows and levels (MFL) metrics also remain well outside the thresholds of harm.

## **Biscayne Bay**

Total inflow to Biscayne Bay averaged 171 cfs, and the previous 30-day mean inflow averaged 292 cfs. The seven-day mean salinity was 26.6 at BBCW8 and 29.3 at BBCW10, both within the ideal salinity range for estuarine organisms in this region (salinity less than 35). Data were provided by Biscayne National Park.

## Supporting Information

### Kissimmee Basin

#### *Upper Kissimmee*

On February 16, 2025, mean daily lake stages were 55.7 feet NAVD88 (1.3 feet below schedule) in East Lake Toho, 52.6 feet NAVD88 (1.2 feet below schedule) in Lake Toho, and 48.7 feet NAVD88 (2.6 feet below the Increment 1 Temporary Deviation schedule) in Lakes Kissimmee-Cypress-Hatchineha (KCH) (**Table KB-1, Figures KB-1-3**).

#### *Lower Kissimmee*

For the week ending February 16, 2025, mean weekly discharge was 840 cfs at S-65 and 730 cfs at S-65A, respectively. Mean weekly discharge from the Kissimmee River was 920 cfs and 790 cfs at S-65D and S-65E, respectively (**Table KB-2**). Mean weekly headwater stages were 45.2 feet NAVD88 at S-65A and 24.6 feet NAVD88 at S-65D. Mean weekly river channel stage decreased by 1.5 feet to 33.7 feet NAVD88 (**Figure KB-4**). Mean weekly water depth on the Kissimmee River floodplain decreased by 0.16 feet to 0.35 feet (**Table KB-2, Figure KB-5**). The weekly average concentration of dissolved oxygen in the Kissimmee River decreased from 7.3 mg/L the previous week to 6.1 mg/L (**Table KB-2, Figure KB-6**).

#### ***Water Management Recommendations***

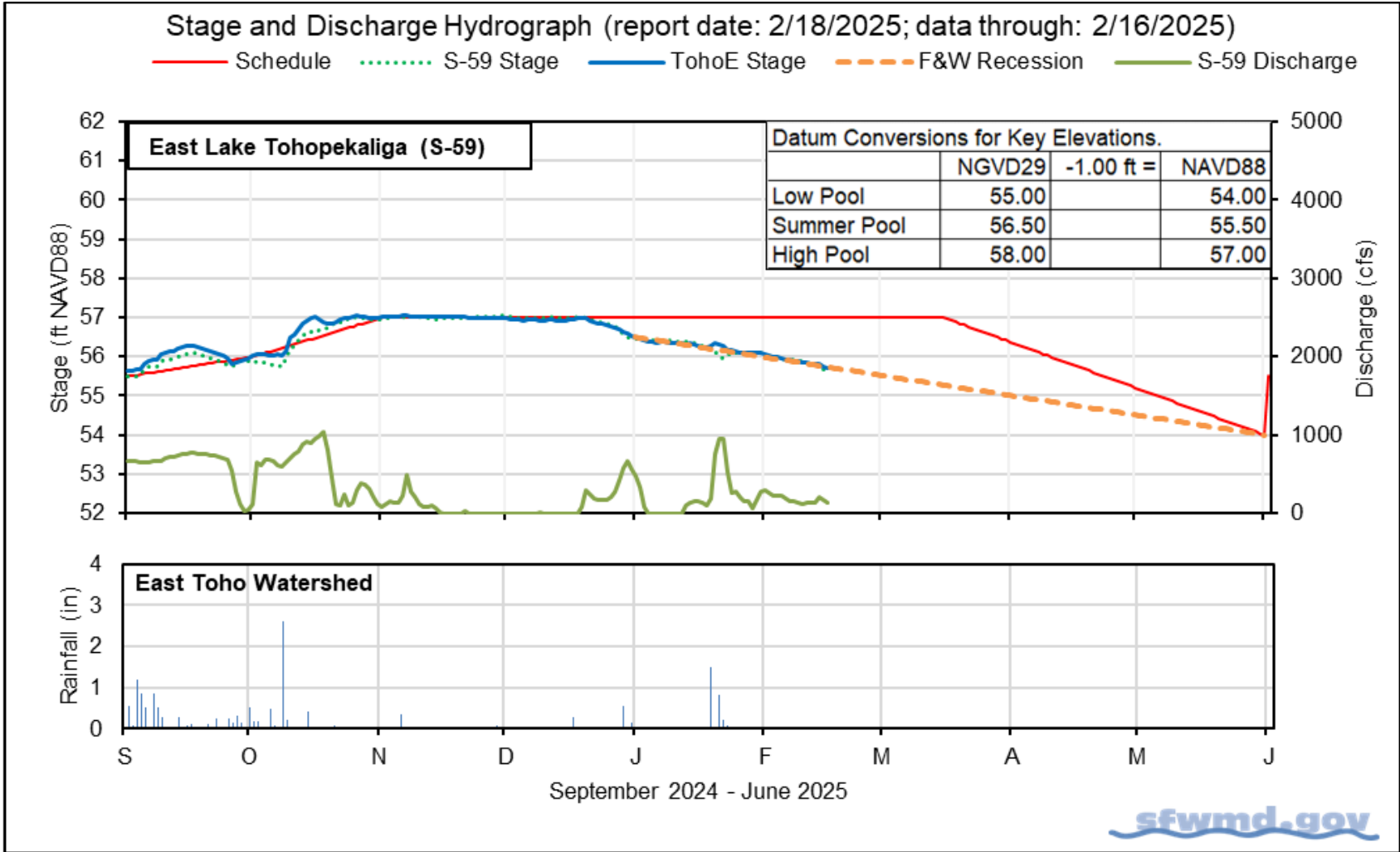
Continue the stage recessions in East Lake Toho and Lake Toho lakes to reach their low pools on June 1, 2025. Follow the Headwaters Revitalization Schedule (HRS) Increment 1 Temporary Deviation Discharge Plan for S-65/S-65A (**Figure KB-7**). Maintain at least minimum flow (250-300 cfs) at S-65A.

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

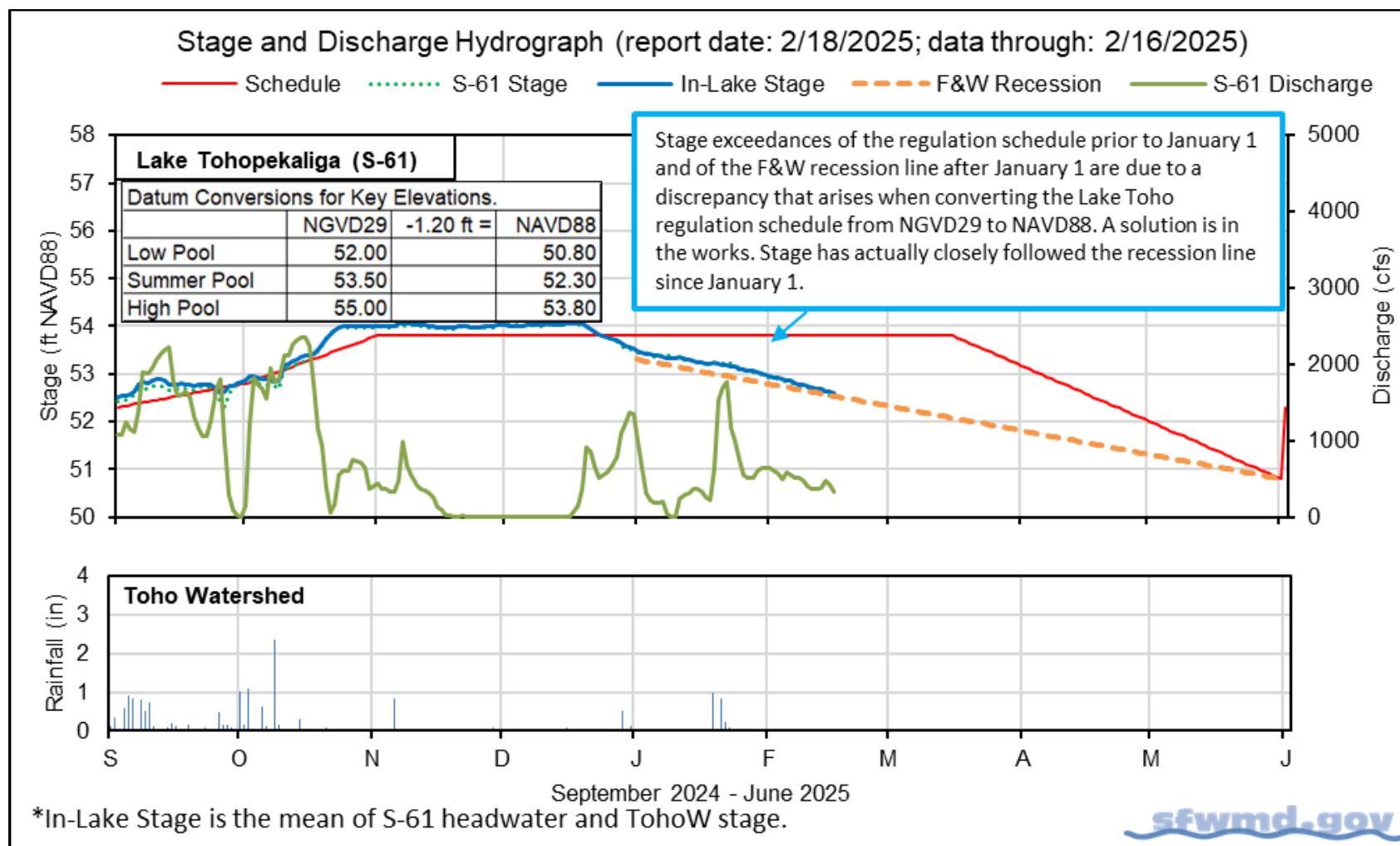
Water Body	Structure	Stage Monitoring Site	Weekly (7-Day) Average Discharge (cfs)	Sunday Lake Stage (feet NAVD88) <sup>a</sup>	Schedule Type <sup>b</sup>	Sunday Schedule Stage (feet NAVD88)	Sunday Departure from Regulation (feet)	
							2/16/25	2/9/25
Lakes Hart and Mary Jane	S-62	LKMJ	24	59.8	R	59.9	-0.1	0.0
Lakes Myrtle, Preston and Joel	S-57	S-57	9	60.2	R	60.2	0.0	0.0
Alligator Chain	S-60	ALLI	0	62.8	R	63.0	-0.2	-0.2
Lake Gentry	S-63	LKGT	0	60.4	R	60.4	0.0	0.0
East Lake Toho	S-59	TOHOE	150	55.7	R	57.0	-1.3	-1.1
Lake Toho	S-61	TOHOW S-61	390	52.6	R	53.8	-1.2	-1.0
Lakes Kissimmee, Cypress and Hatchineha	S-65	KUB011 LKIS5B	830	48.7	T	51.3	-2.6	-2.6

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.

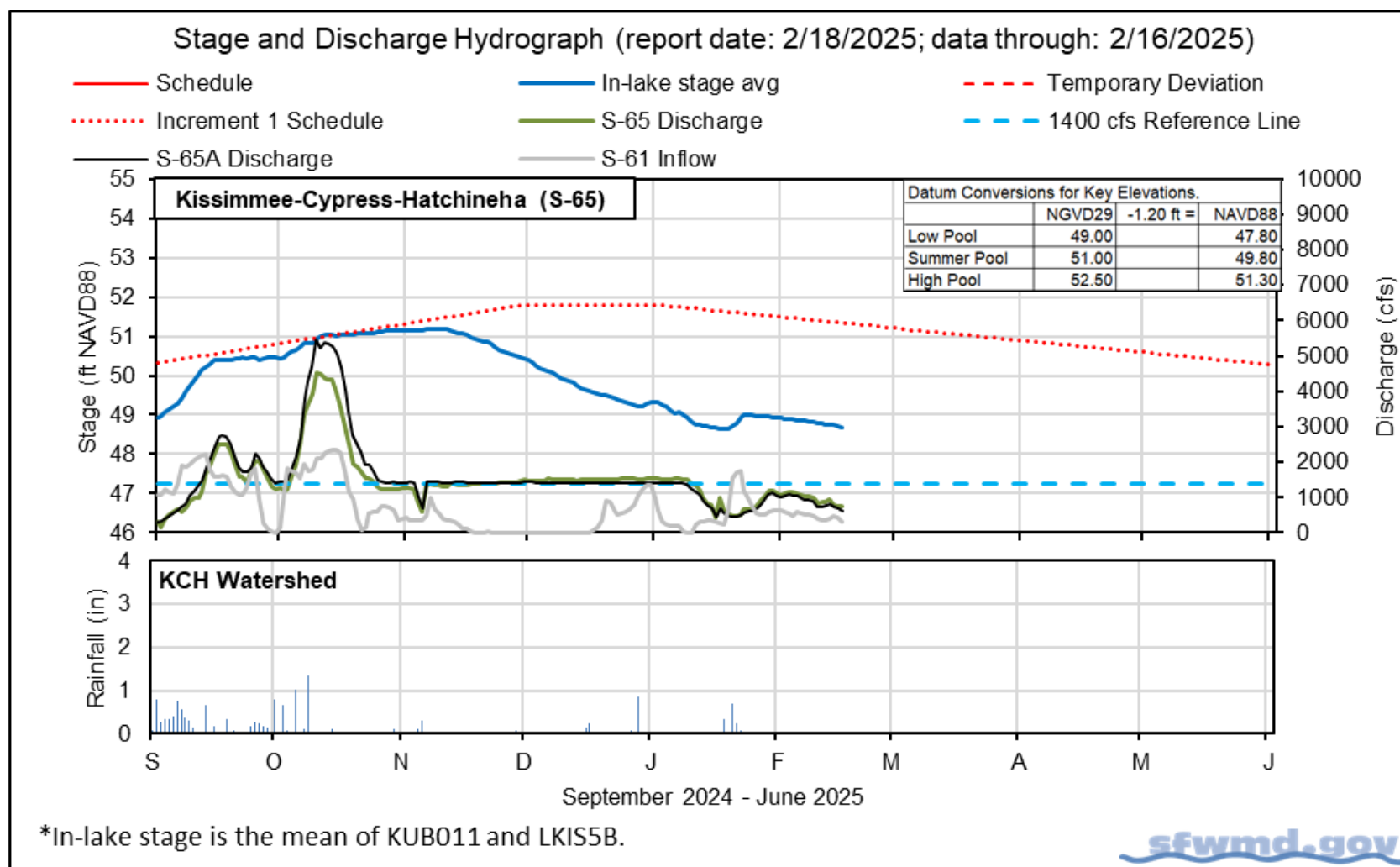
b. A: projected recession line; R: USACE regulation schedule; S: temporary recession target line; T: temporary schedule; NA: not applicable or not available.



**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	Weekly Average for Previous Seven Day Periods			
		2/16/25	2/16/25	2/9/25	2/2/25	1/26/25
Discharge	S-65	750	840	1,100	1,100	600
Discharge	S-65A <sup>a</sup>	610	730	990	1,000	560
Headwater Stage (feet NAVD88)	S-65A	45.1	45.2	45.2	45.3	45.2
Discharge	S-65D <sup>b</sup>	870	920	1,100	890	770
Headwater Stage (feet NAVD88)	S-65D <sup>c</sup>	24.5	24.6	24.6	24.6	24.6
Discharge (cfs)	S-65E <sup>d</sup>	650	790	920	840	720
Discharge (cfs)	S-67	0	0	0	0	1
Dissolved Oxygen (mg/L) <sup>e</sup>	Phase I, II/III river channel	6.3	6.1	7.3	9.3	8.7
River channel mean stage (feet NAVD88) <sup>f</sup>	Phase I river channel	33.4	33.7	35.2	34.6	33.3
Mean depth (feet) <sup>g</sup>	Phase I floodplain	0.31	0.35	0.51	0.45	0.42

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.

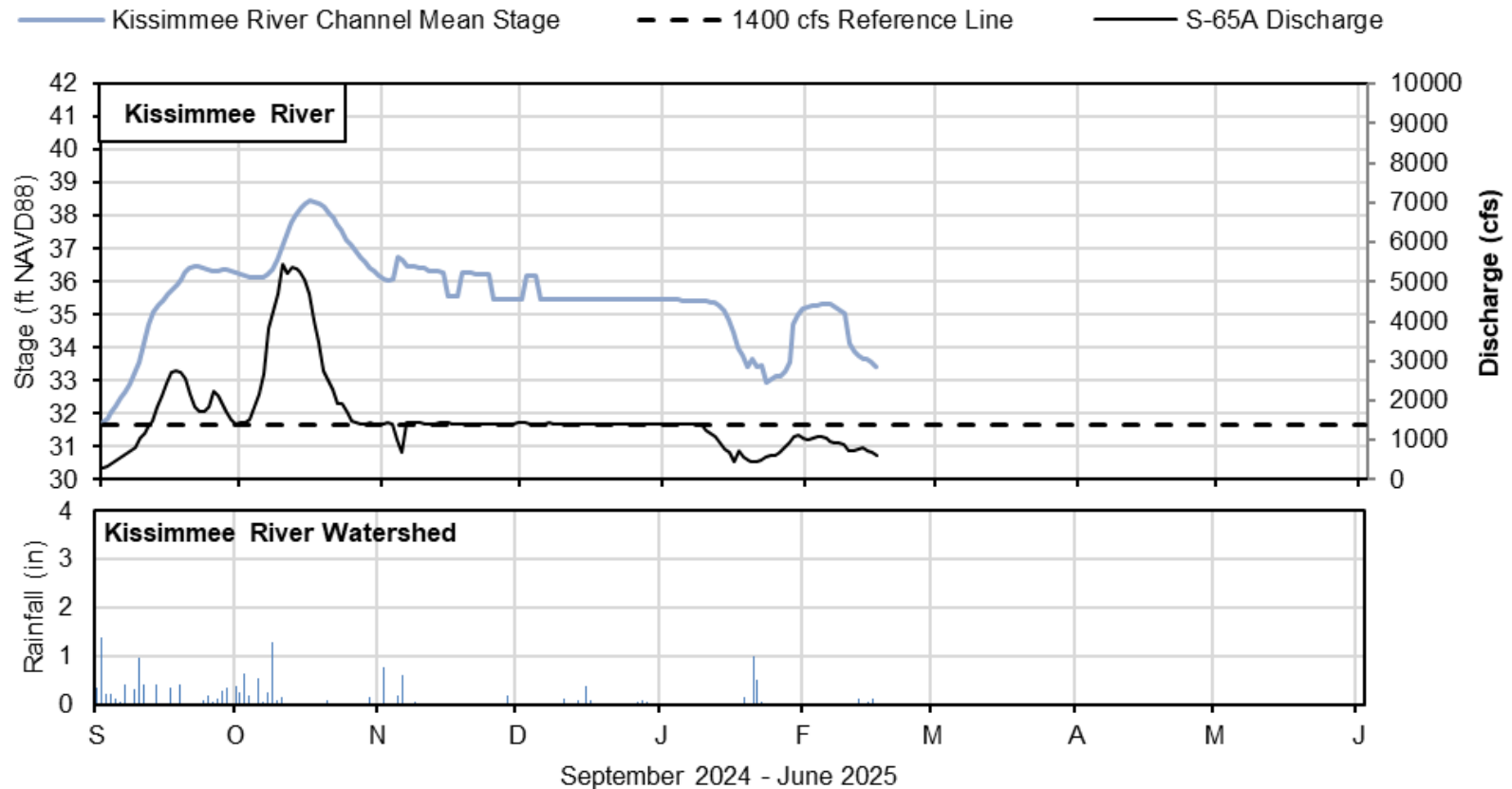
e. Dissolved oxygen is the average of values from sondes KRBN, PC62, PC33, PD62R, and PD42R.

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).



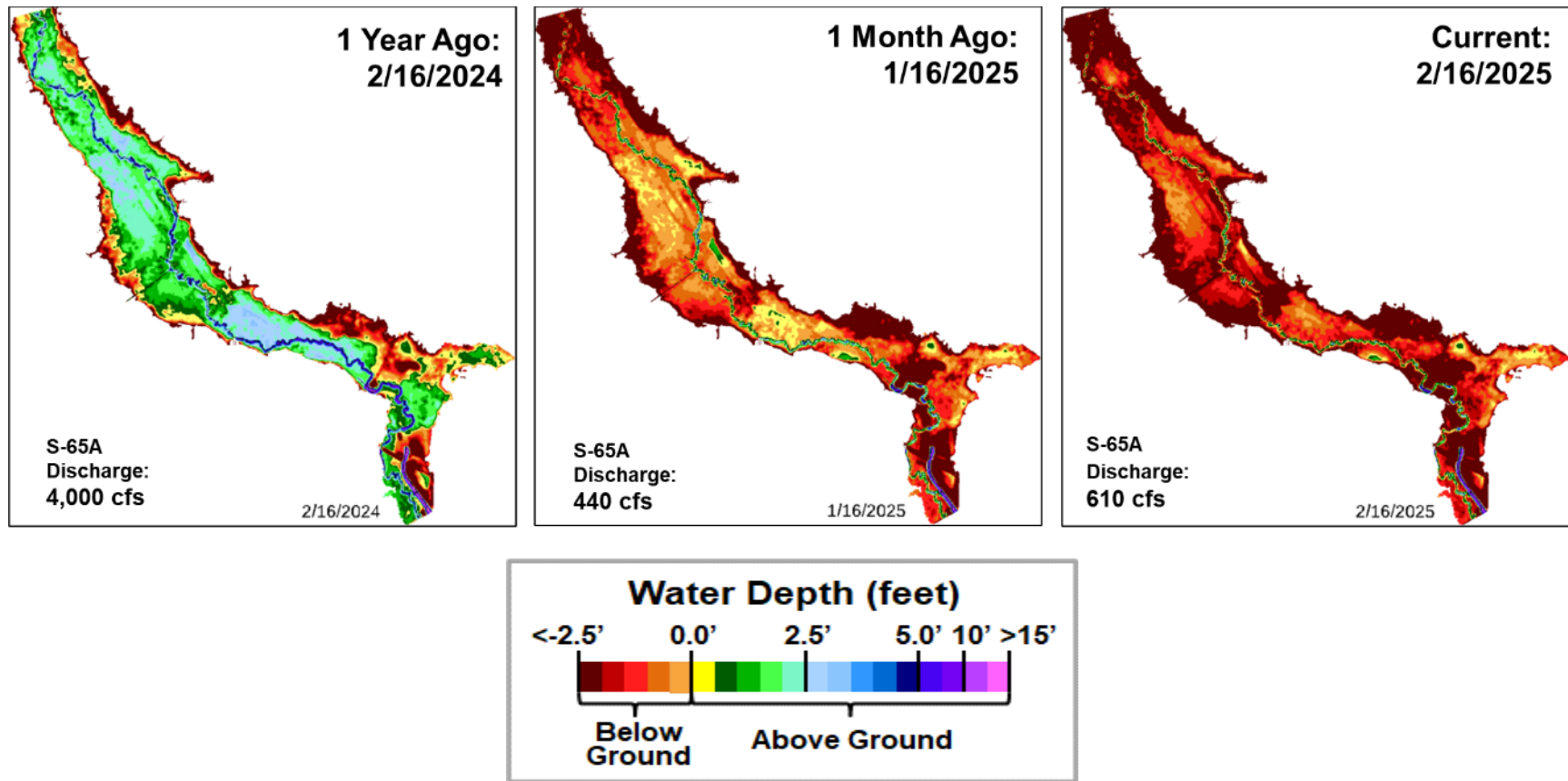
Stage and Discharge Hydrograph (report date: 2/18/2025; data through: 2/16/2025)



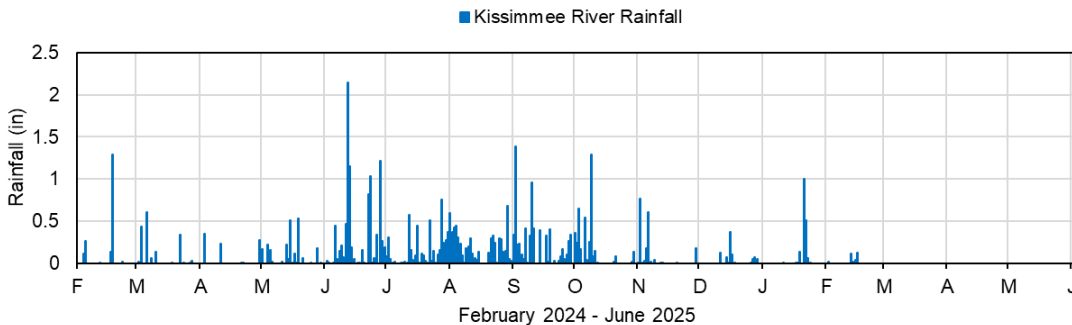
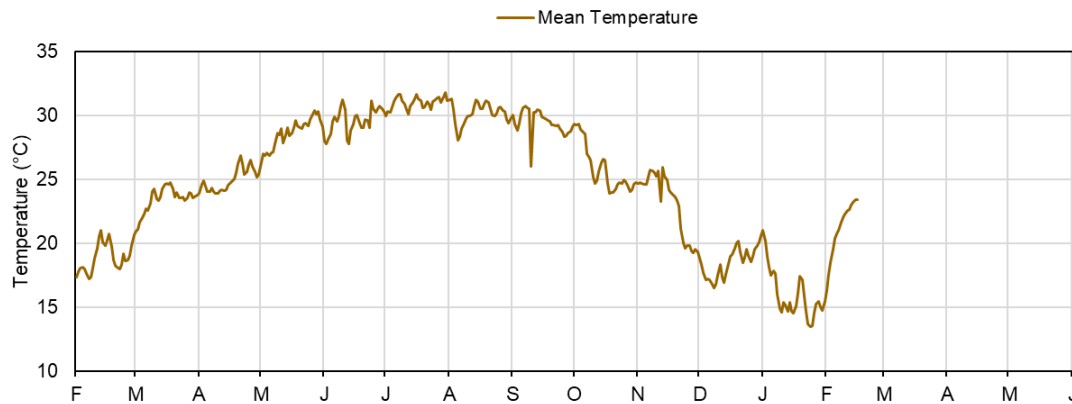
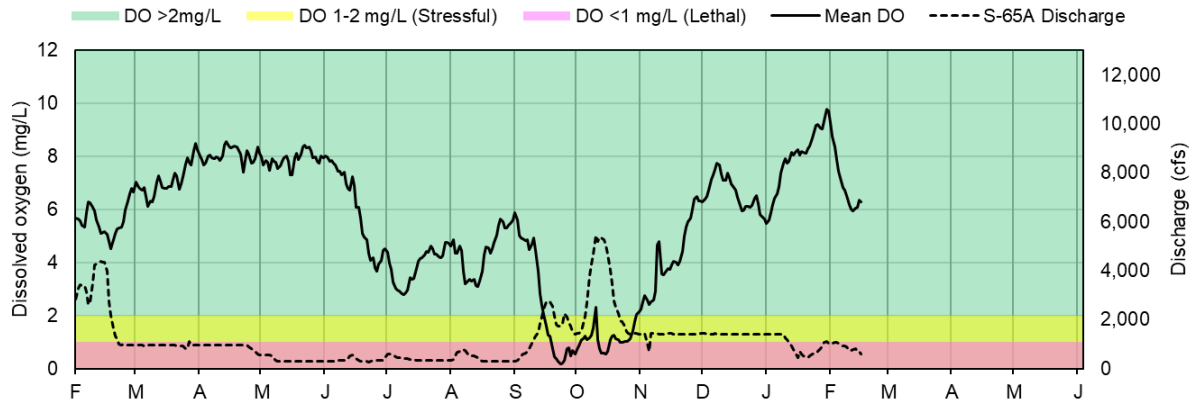
\*River Channel Stage is the average for PC62, KRDR02, KRBN, PC33, and PC11.

[sfwmd.gov](http://sfwmd.gov)

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



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



Report Date: 2/18/2025; data are through: 2/16/2025

[sfwmd.gov](http://sfwmd.gov)

**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.

# SOUTH FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

## HRS Increment 1 Temporary Deviation Discharge Plan for S-65/S-65A

**Discharge Guidance for Increment 1 Temporary Deviation Discharge Plan**

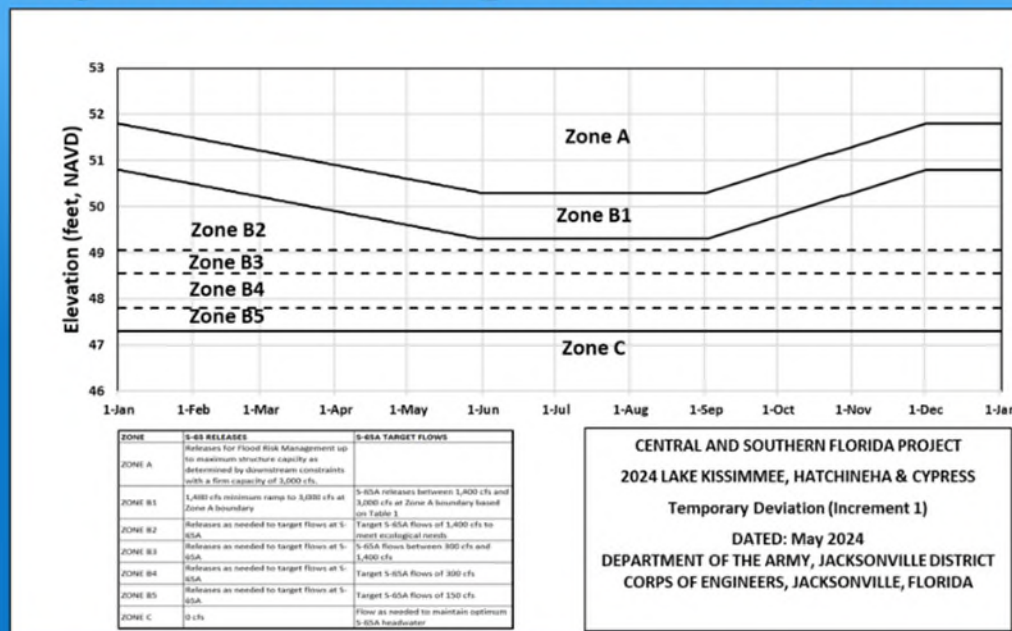
ZONE	S-65 RELEASES	S-65A TARGET FLOWS
ZONE A	Releases for Flood Risk Management up to maximum structure capacity as determined by downstream constraints with a firm capacity of 3,000 cfs.	
ZONE B1	1,400 cfs minimum ramp to 3,000 cfs at Zone A boundary	S-65A releases between 1,400 cfs and 3,000 cfs at Zone A boundary based on Table 1
ZONE B2	Releases as needed to target flows at S-65A	Target S-65A flows of 1,400 cfs to meet ecological needs
ZONE B3	Releases as needed to target flows at S-65A	S-65A flows between 300 cfs and 1,400 cfs
ZONE B4	Releases as needed to target flows at S-65A	Target S-65A flows of 300 cfs
ZONE B5	Releases as needed to target flows at S-65A	Target S-65A flows of 150 cfs
ZONE C	0 cfs	Flow as needed to maintain optimum S-65A headwater

**Table KB-3. Maximum Rate of Change Limits for S-65A**

MAXIMUM Release Rate of Change Limits for S-65A. In general recommended rates of change will be slower than shown in this table.

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

**sfwmd.gov**



CENTRAL AND SOUTHERN FLORIDA PROJECT  
2024 LAKE KISSIMMEE, HATCHINEHA & CYPRESS  
Temporary Deviation (Increment 1)

DATED: May 2024  
DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY, JACKSONVILLE DISTRICT  
CORPS OF ENGINEERS, JACKSONVILLE, FLORIDA

Slide Revised 7/29/2024

**Figure KB-7.** Headwaters Revitalization Schedule (HRS) Increment 1 Temporary Deviation Discharge Plan for S-65/S-65A.

## Lake Okeechobee

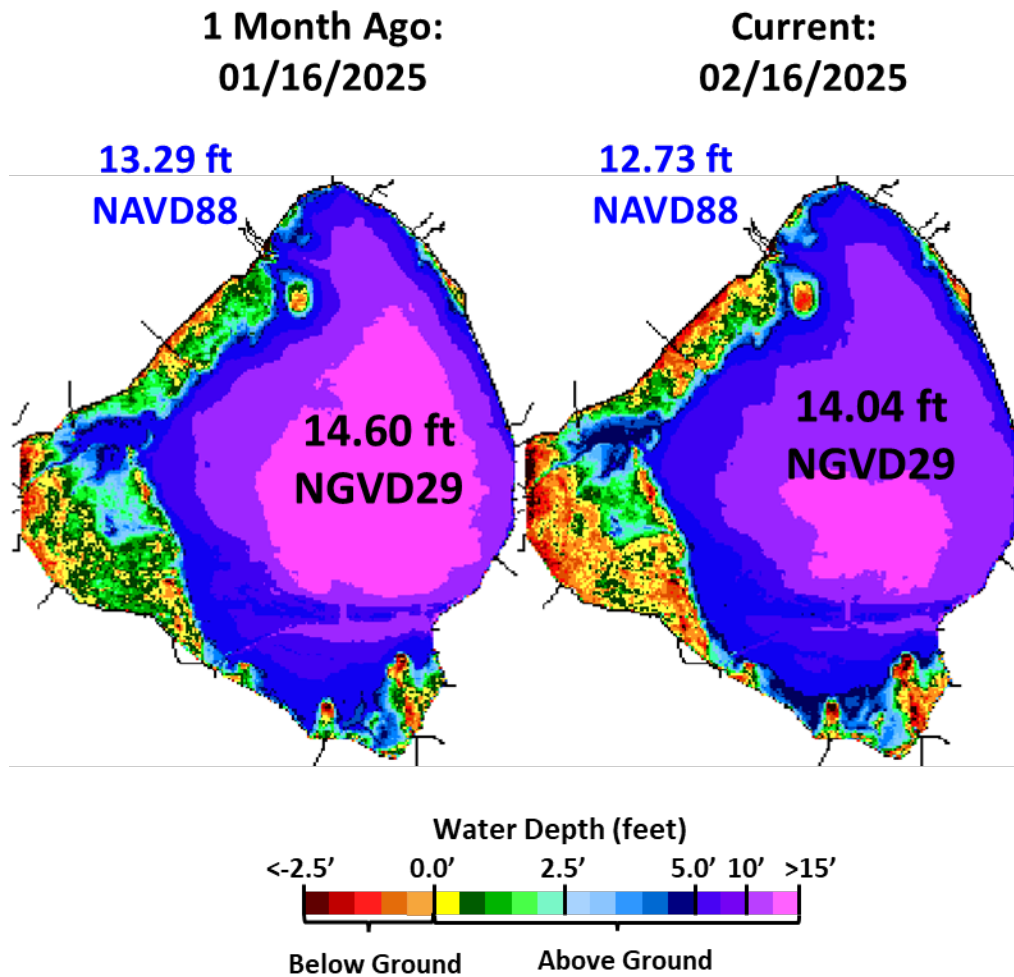
Lake Okeechobee stage was 12.73 feet NAVD88 (14.04 ft NGVD29) on February 16, 2025, which was 0.14 feet lower than the previous week and 0.56 feet lower than a month ago (**Figure LO-1**). Lake stage is in Zone D of the regulation schedule (**Figure LO-2**) and is 0.06 feet above the upper limit of the recovery ecological envelope (**Figure LO-3**). According to NEXRAD, 0.77 inches of rain fell directly over the Lake during the previous week.

Average daily inflows (excluding rainfall) decreased slightly from 960 cfs the previous week to 830 cfs. The largest single inflow came from the Kissimmee River via the S-65E structure (790 cfs). Average daily outflows (excluding evapotranspiration) decreased from 5,050 cfs the previous week to 4,810 cfs. **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.

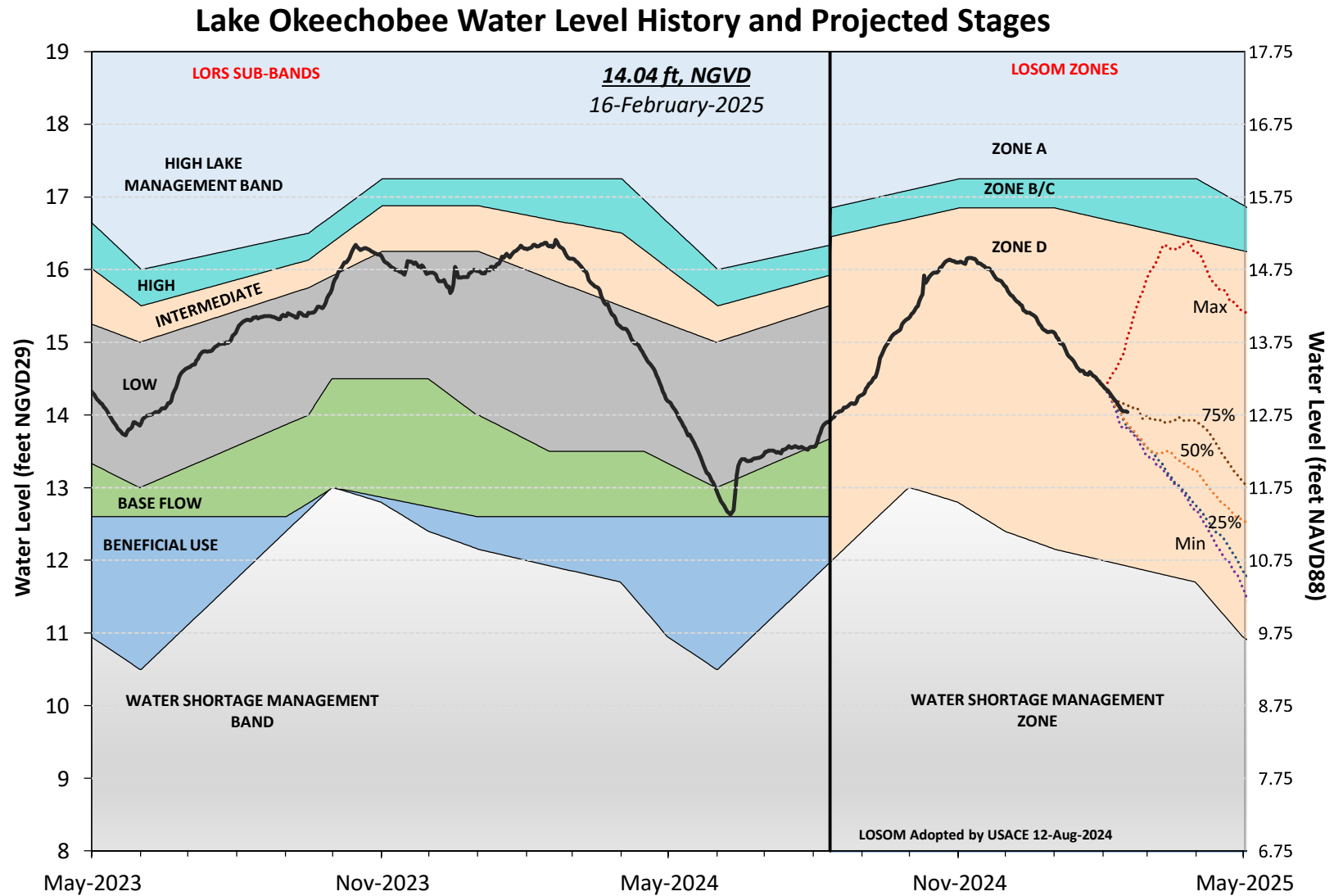
In the most recent non-obscured satellite image from February 15, 2025, NOAA's Harmful Algal Bloom Monitoring System suggests low bloom activity on Lake Okeechobee (**Figure LO-6**).

The provisional results from the February 3-5, 2025, routine water quality and phytoplankton monitoring sampling trips showed no dominant taxa and no detectable toxins at any of the 9 sites sampled. Of the 32 sites sampled for water quality parameters, 16 had a chlorophyll *a* concentration between 20-40 µg/L, and 10 had concentrations above the SFWMD recognized bloom threshold of 40 µg/L (**Figure LO-7**).

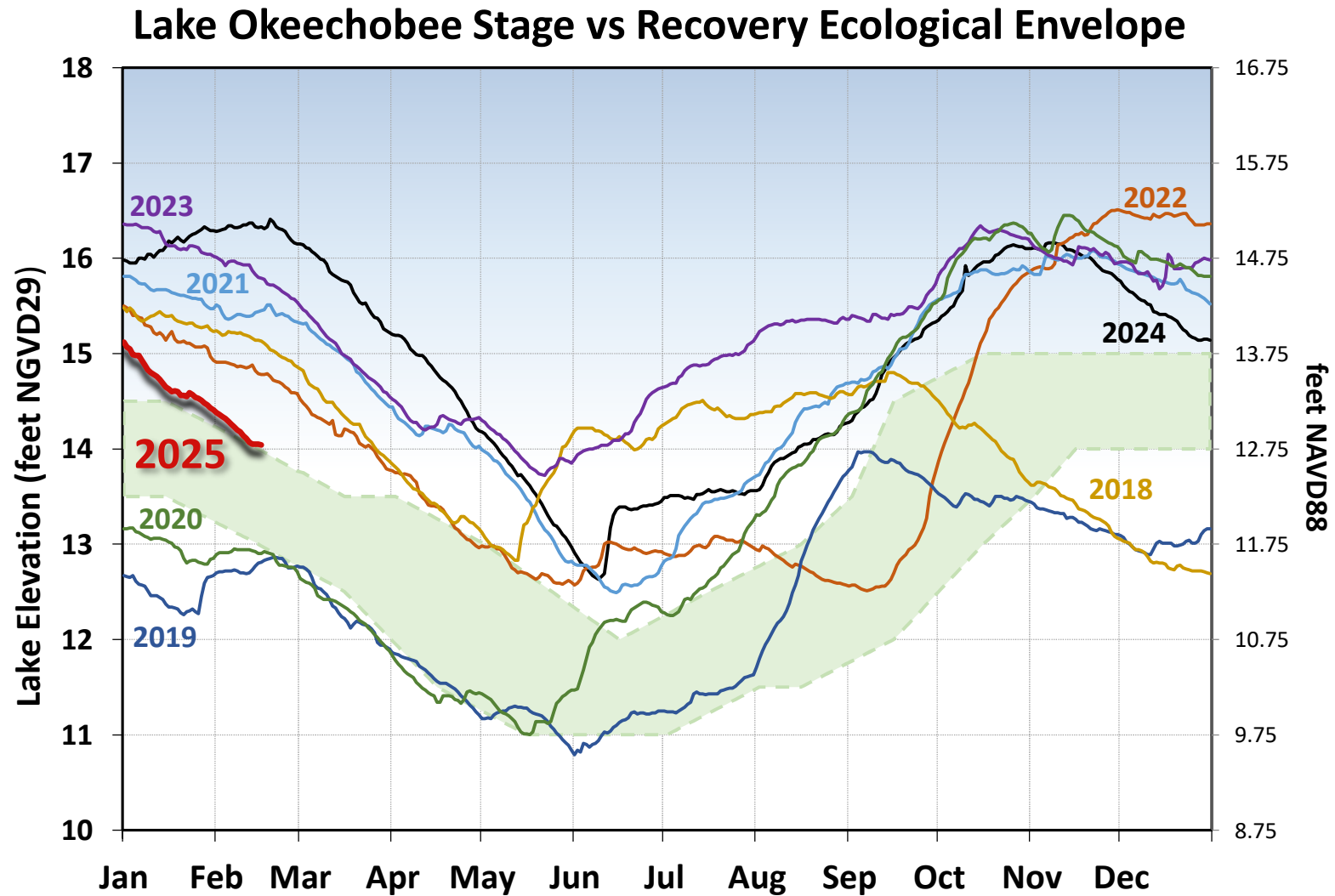
Note: All data presented in this report are provisional and are subject to change.



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

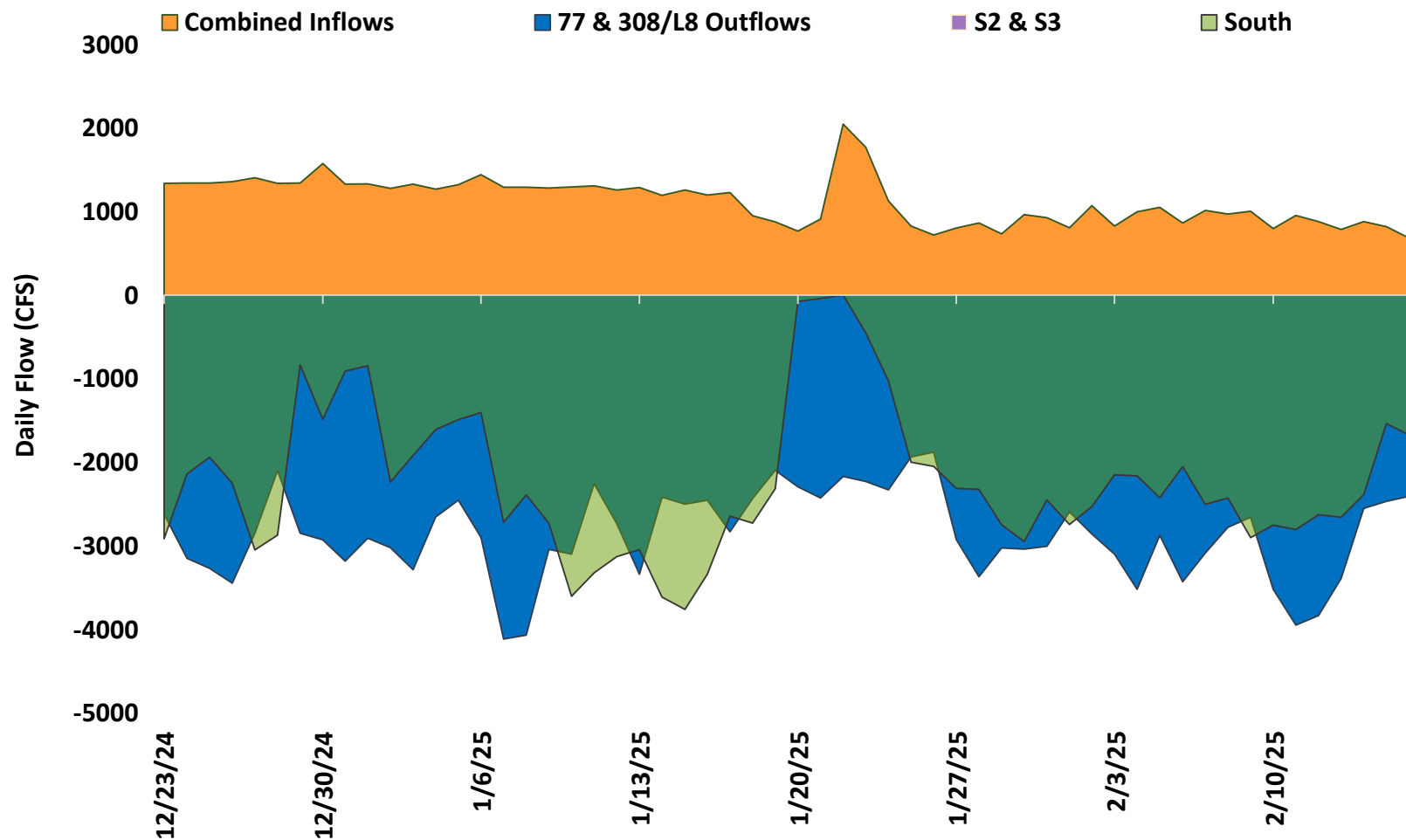


**Figure LO-2.** Recent Lake Okeechobee stages with projected stages based on a dynamic position analysis.  
Note: stages are in NGVD29, approximate NAVD88 values are shown for reference.

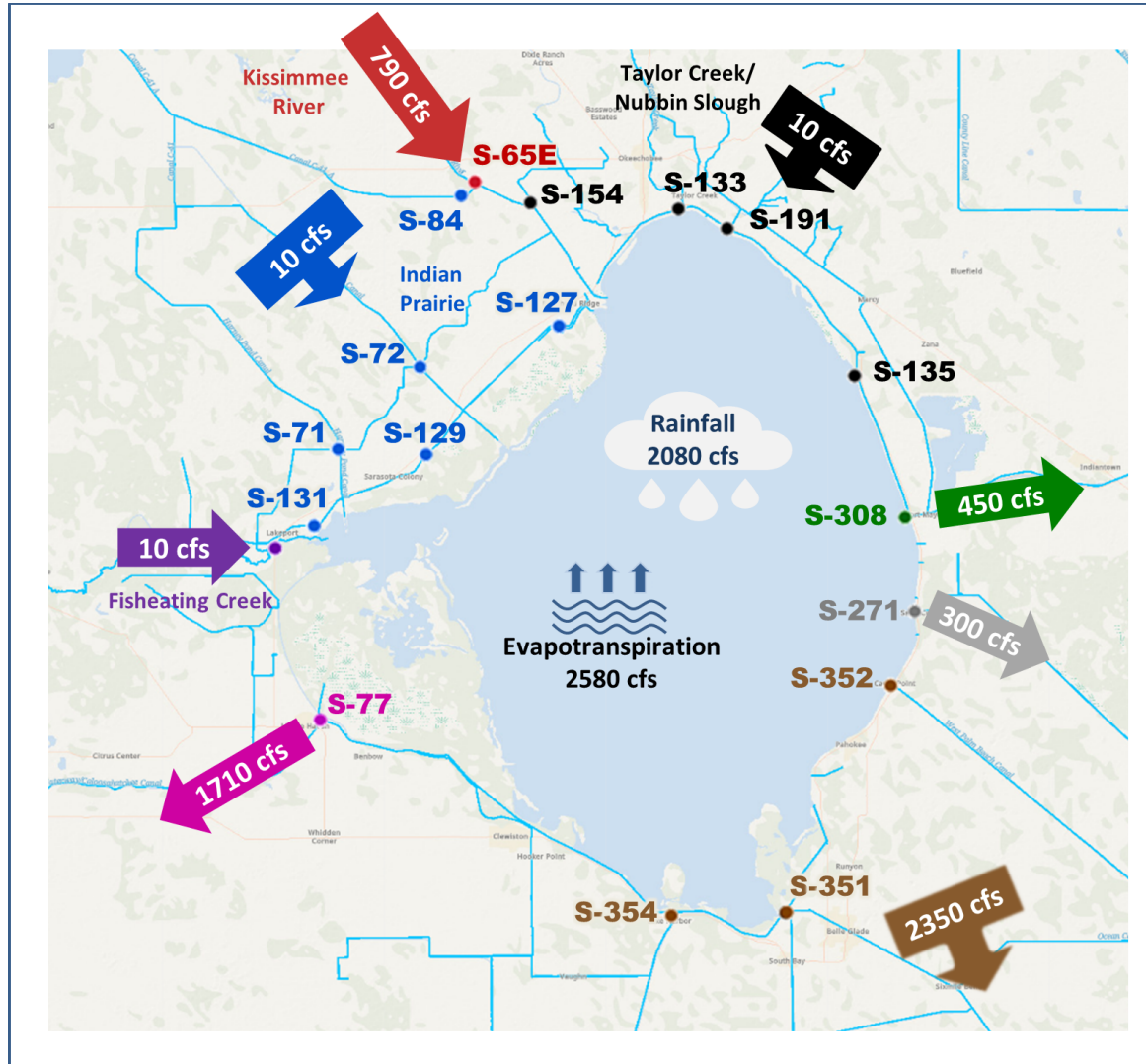


**Figure LO-3.** The current and seven prior year's annual stage hydrographs for Lake Okeechobee in comparison to the recovery envelope (light green). A shift from the normal ecological envelope to the recovery envelope occurred because the 30-day minimum lake stage (elevations exposed for at least 30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

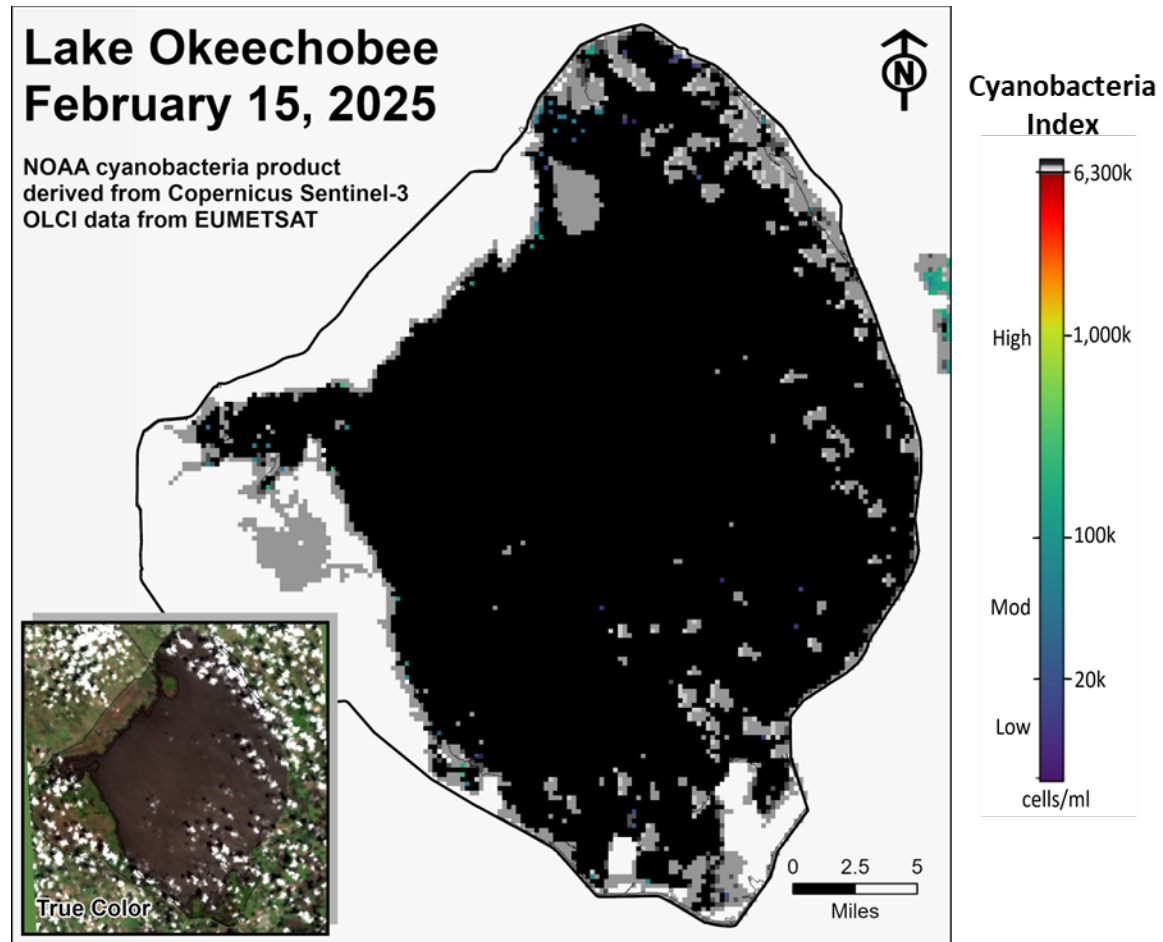




**Figure LO-4.** Major inflows (orange) to and outflows east and west (blue) from Lake Okeechobee. Outflows south are shown in green. Flows into Lake Okeechobee from the L-8 canal through S-271 (formerly Culvert 10A) or from the C-44 canal through the S-308 are included as inflows. Conversely, flows 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 February 10 - 16, 2025.

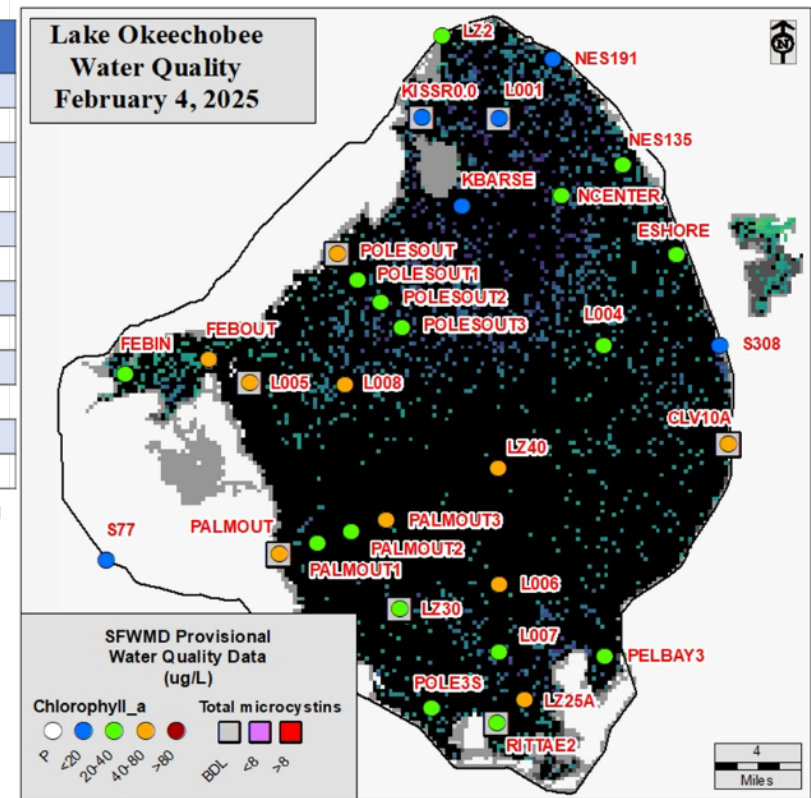


**Figure LO-6.** Cyanobacteria bloom index level on Lake Okeechobee, based on NOAA's harmful algal bloom monitoring system. Gray color indicates cloud cover. \*Provisional NOAA image, subject to change\*.

Collection Date: February 3-5, 2025

Station	CHLa (ug/L)	TOXIN (ug/L)	TAXA	Station	CHLa (ug/L)	TOXIN (ug/L)	TAXA
FEBIN	34.9	NS	NS	L001	13.4		
FEBOUT	58.6	NS	NS	L004	33.7		
KISSR0.0	16.5	BDL	<i>mixed</i>	L006	51.5		
L005	49.0	BDL	<i>mixed</i>	L007	28.0		
LZ2	31.2	BDL	<i>mixed</i>	L008	60.4		
KBARSE	7.4			LZ30	29.4	BDL	<i>mixed</i>
RITTAE2	34.0	BDL	<i>mixed</i>	LZ40	42.5		
PELBAY3	29.7			CLV10A	44.8	BDL	<i>mixed</i>
POLE3S	20.9			NCENTER	22.4		
LZ25A	54.3						
PALMOUT	45.1	BDL	<i>mixed</i>	S308C	4.1	BDL	<i>mixed</i>
PALMOUT1	30.2			S77	19.3		
PALMOUT2	37.7						
PALMOUT3	42.2						
POLESOUT	54.1	BDL	<i>mixed</i>				
POLESOUT1	22.2						
POLESOUT2	24.4						
POLESOUT3	27.9						
EASTSHORE	35.2						
NES135	27.7						
NES191	13.6						

- SFWMD considers >40 µg/L Chlorophyll *a* (Chla) an algal bloom
  - BDL – Below Detectable Limit of 0.25 µg/L
  - ND – No Dominant taxa
  - P – Pending (white squares)
  - NS – Not Sampled
  - Station bold font – crew observed possible BGA
  - Chlorophyll *a* analyzed by SFWMD
  - Toxin and Taxa analyzed by FDEP:
- Microcys* = *Microcystis*; *Raphidio* = *Raphidiopsis*;  
*Planktol* = *Planktolyngbya*; *Dolicho* = *Dolichospermum*;  
*Pseud* = *Pseudanabaena*; *Cylindro* = *Cylindrospermopsis*



**Figure LO-7.** Dominant taxa, total microcystin (µg/L) and chlorophyll *a* (µg/L) concentration data from February 3-5, 2024. Sampling locations, chlorophyll *a*, and total microcystin concentrations are overlaid on the February 4, 2024, image from NOAA's harmful algal bloom monitoring system. Gray color indicates cloud cover.

## Estuaries

### *St. Lucie Estuary*

Over the past week, mean total inflow to the St. Lucie Estuary was 1,376 cfs (**Figures ES-1 and ES-2**), and the previous 30-day mean inflow was 706 cfs. For comparison, the historical provisional mean inflows from the contributing areas are shown in **Figure ES-2**.

Over the past week, surface salinities increased, and bottom salinities decreased at all three sites within 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 10.8. Salinity conditions in the middle estuary were estimated to be within the optimal range for adult eastern oysters (**Figure ES-4**). The mean larval oyster recruitment rate reported by the Fish and Wildlife Research Institute (FWRI) was 0.02 spat/shell for January, which is higher than the previous month (**Figure ES-5**).

### *Caloosahatchee River Estuary*

Over the past week, mean total inflow to the Caloosahatchee River Estuary was 2,193 cfs (**Figures ES-6 and ES-7**), and the previous 30-day mean inflow was 2,043 cfs. For comparison, the historical provisional mean inflows from the contributing areas are shown in **Figure ES-7**.

Over the past week, salinities remained below 1 at S-79 and Val I-75, decreased at Ft. Myers, and increased 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 upper stressed range at Shell Point and Sanibel (**Figure ES-10**). The FWRI reported no recruitment of oyster spat at both Iona Cove and Bird Island for January, which is a decrease at both sites from the previous month (**Figures ES-11 and ES-12**).

Surface salinity at Val I-75 was forecast for the next two weeks using an autoregression model (Qiu and Wan, 2013<sup>1</sup>) 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 55 cfs. Model results from all scenarios predict daily salinity to be 0.4 or lower and the 30-day moving average surface salinity to be 0.3 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.

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

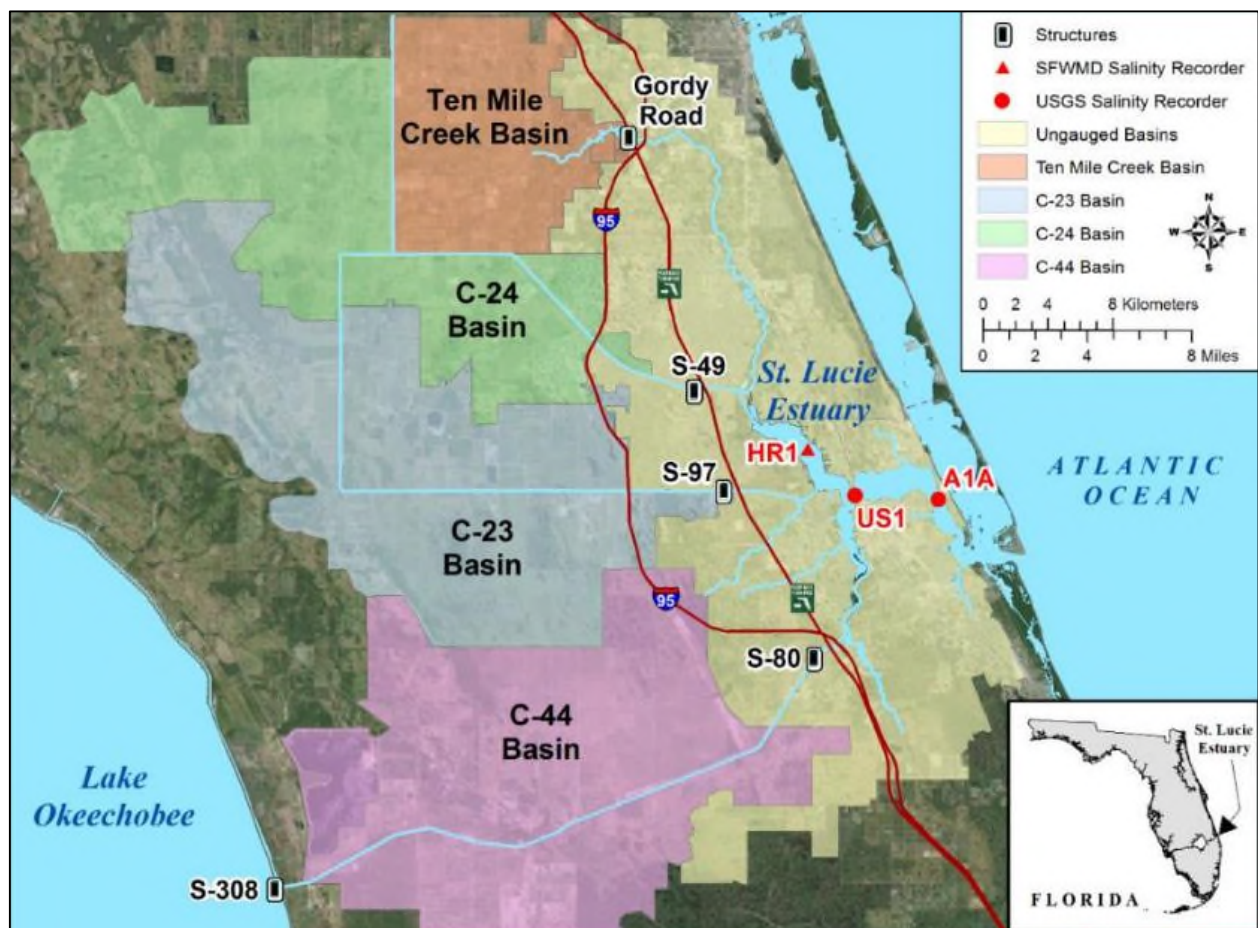


## Red Tide

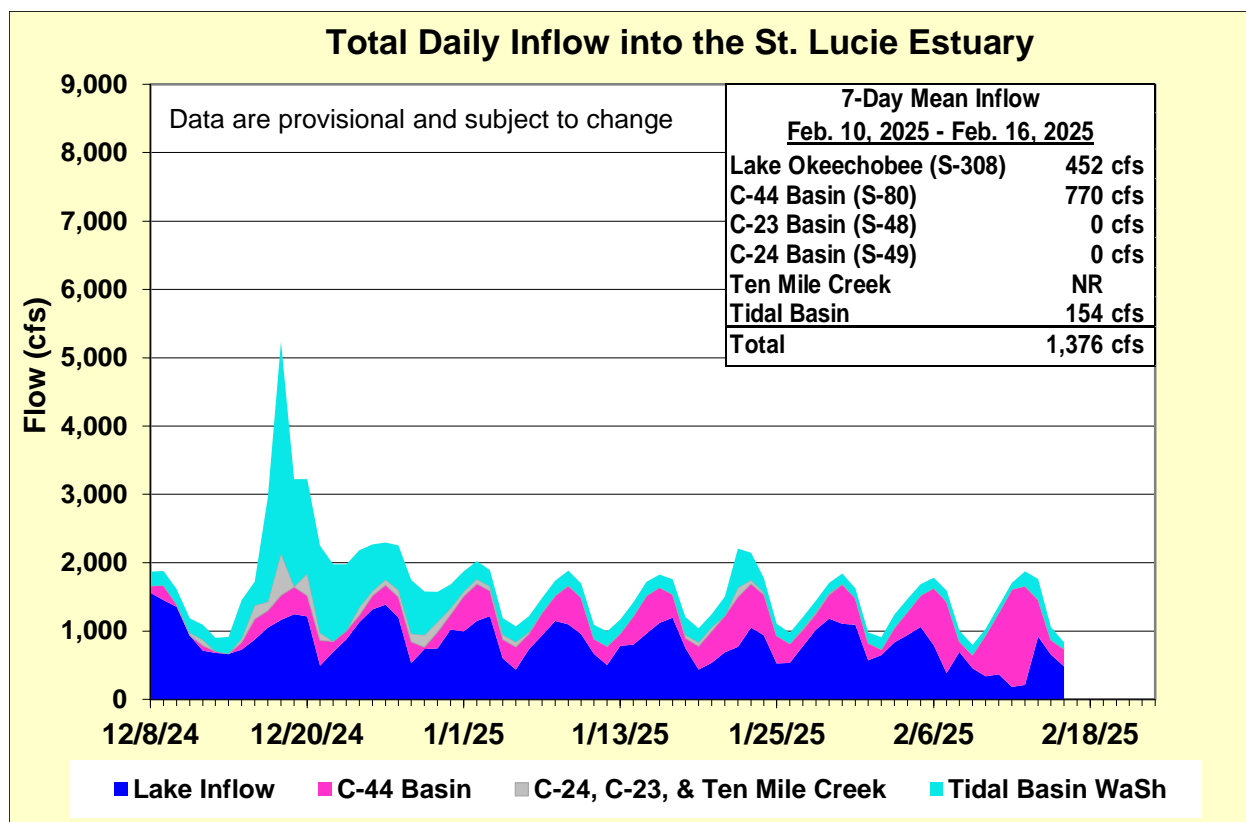
The FWRI reported on February 14, 2025, that *Karenia brevis*, the Florida red tide dinoflagellate, was observed at bloom concentrations in samples collected from Charlotte, Lee, and Collier counties over the past week. On the east coast, red tide was not observed in samples from St. Lucie, Martin, Palm Beach or Miami-Dade counties.

## Water Management Recommendations

Lake stage is in Zone D. Current climatological and hydrological conditions are normal. The LOSOM release guidance suggests up to 2,100 cfs release at S-79 to the Caloosahatchee River Estuary and up to 1,400 cfs total flow for S-80, S-97, S-49, and Gordy Road combined to the St. Lucie Estuary.



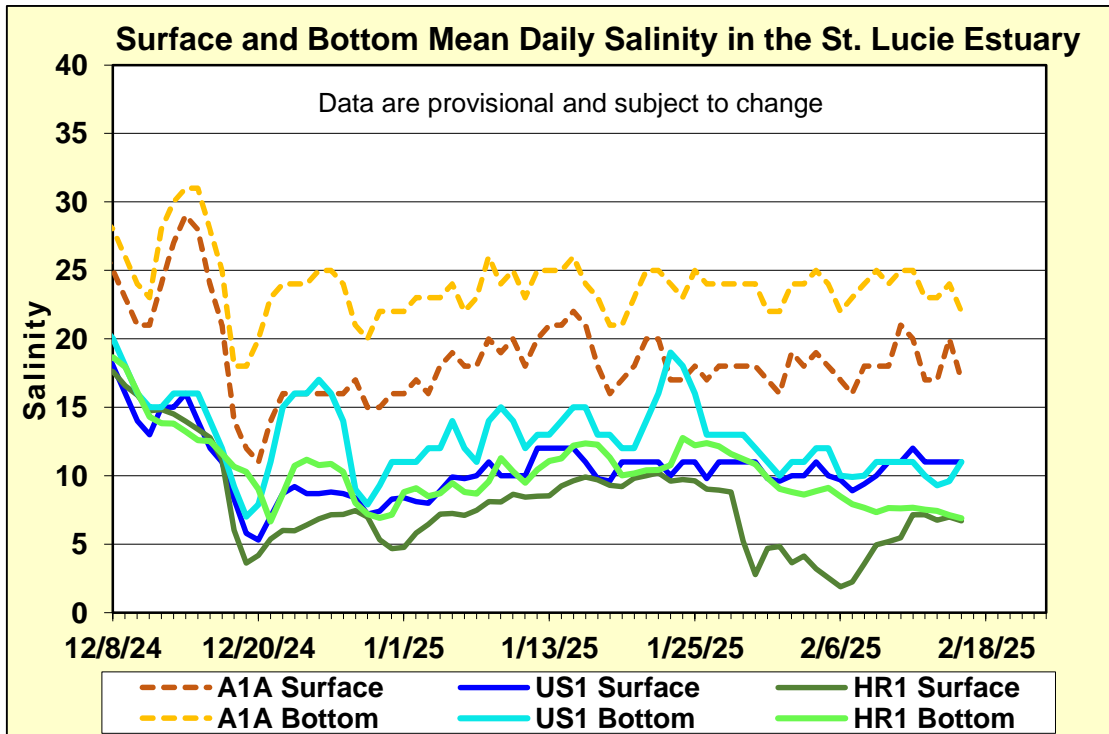
**Figure ES-1.** Basins, water control structures and salinity monitoring sites in the St. Lucie Estuary.



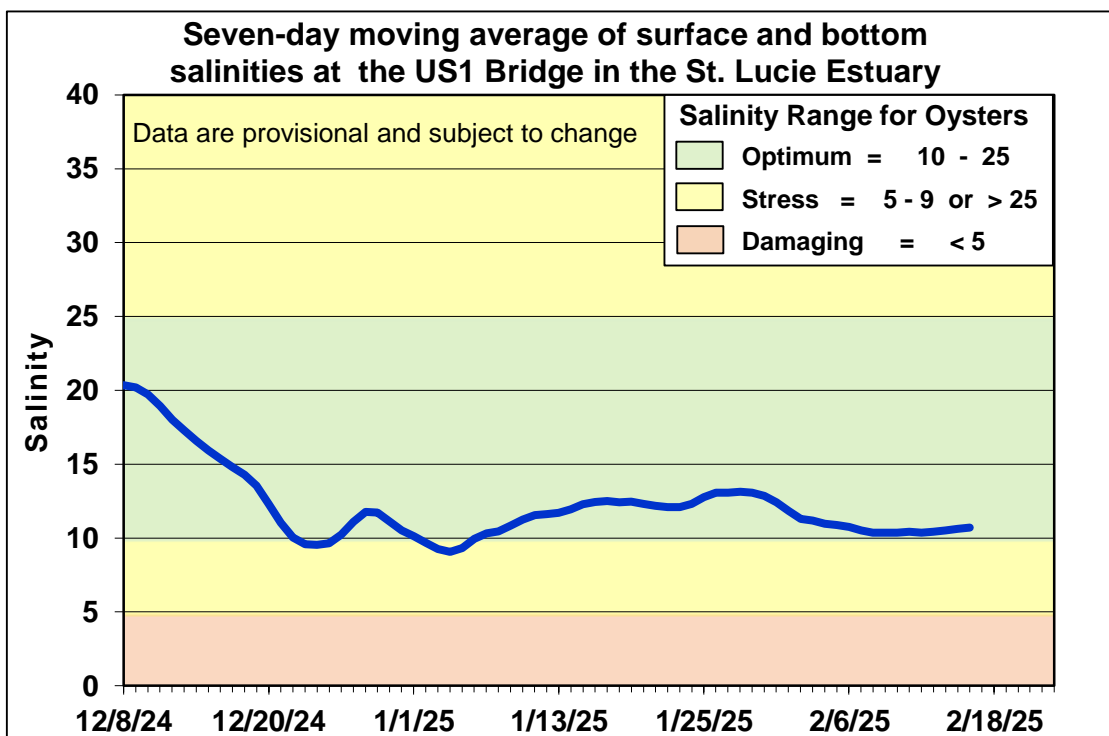
**Figure ES-2.** Total daily inflows from Lake Okeechobee and runoff from the C-44, C-23, C-24, Ten Mile Creek, and Tidal Basins into the St. Lucie Estuary.

**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)	<b>6.5</b> (3.2)	<b>7.4</b> (8.3)	10.0 – 25.0
US1 Bridge	<b>11.1</b> (9.9)	<b>10.4</b> (10.8)	10.0 – 25.0
A1A Bridge	<b>18.6</b> (17.7)	<b>23.7</b> (23.9)	10.0 – 25.0

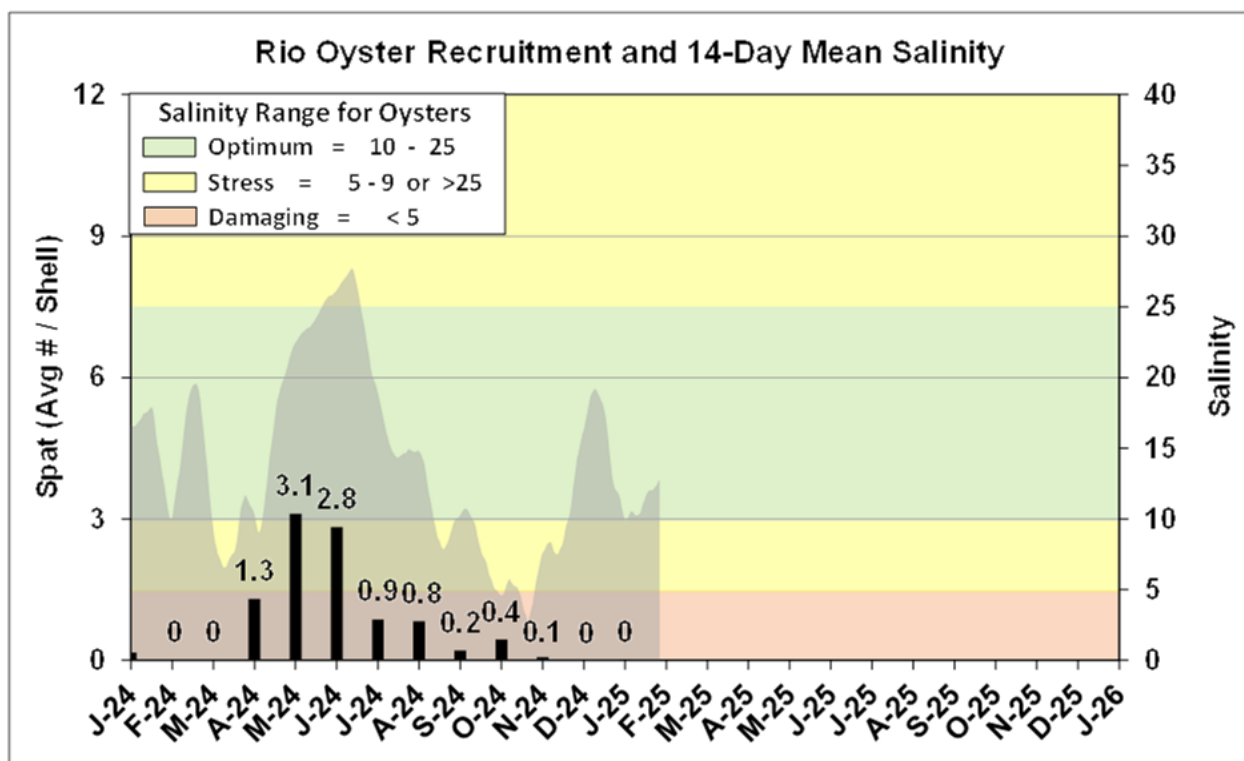


**Figure ES-3.** Mean daily salinity at the A1A, US1, and HR1 sites in the St. Lucie Estuary.

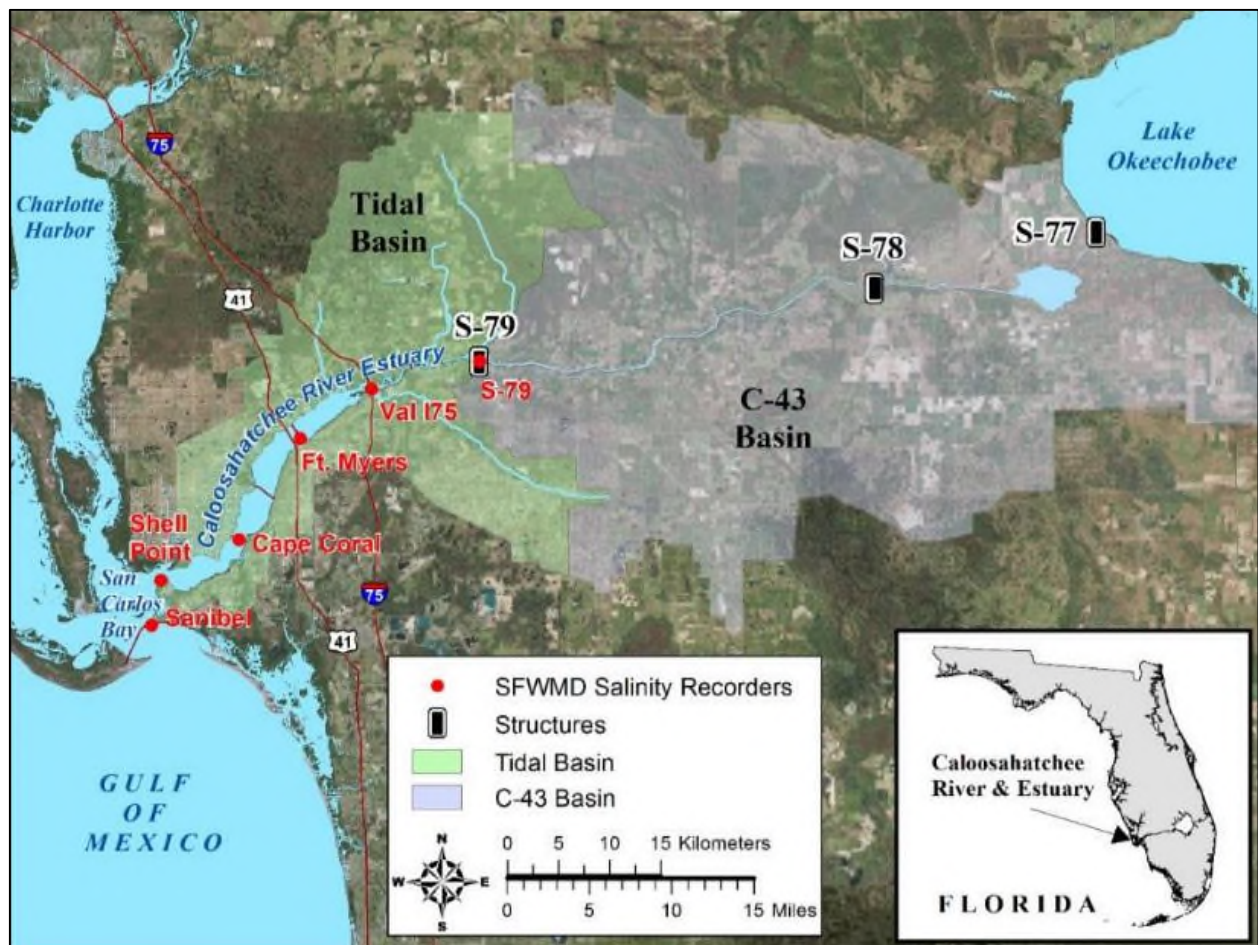


**Figure ES-4.** Seven-day moving average of the surface and bottom salinities at the US1 Bridge in the St. Lucie Estuary.

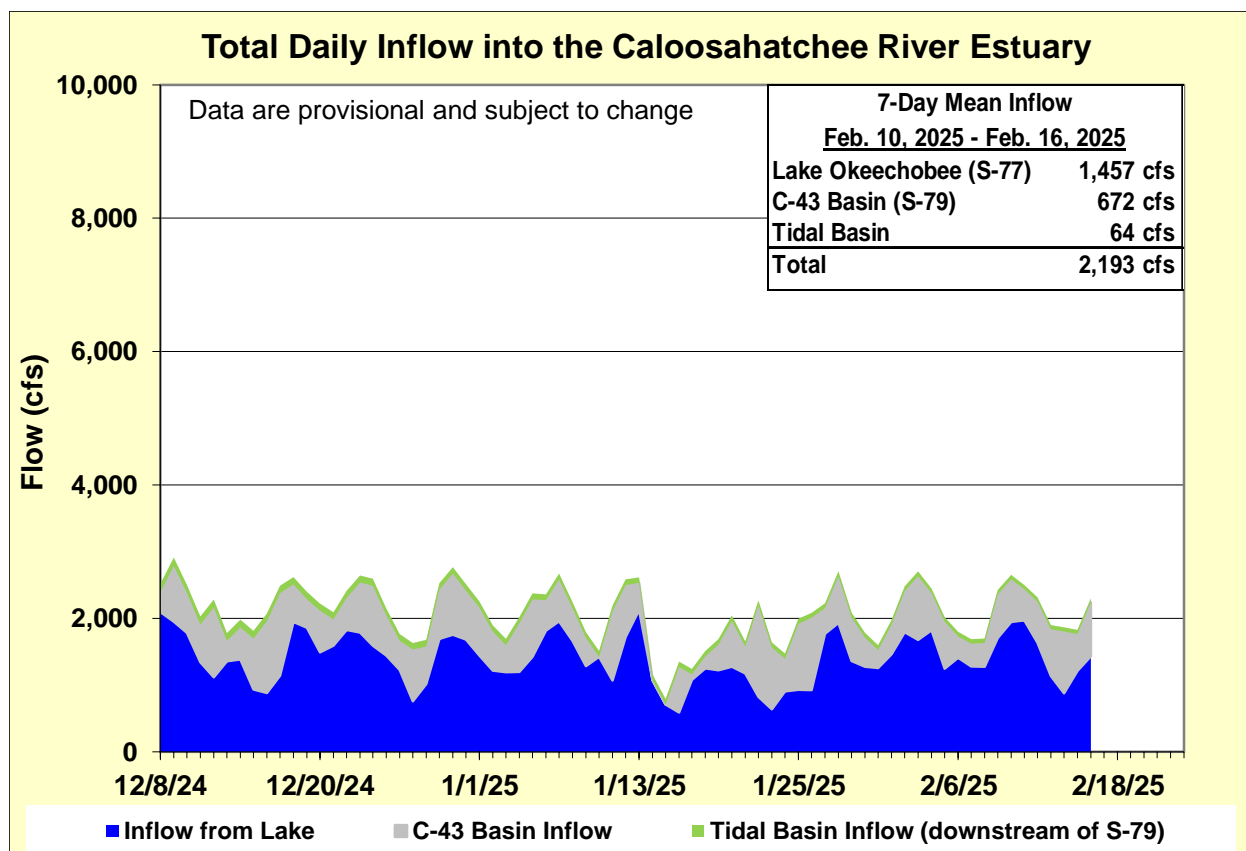




**Figure ES-5.** Mean oyster recruitment at the Rio oyster monitoring station and 14-day mean salinity at US1 Bridge.



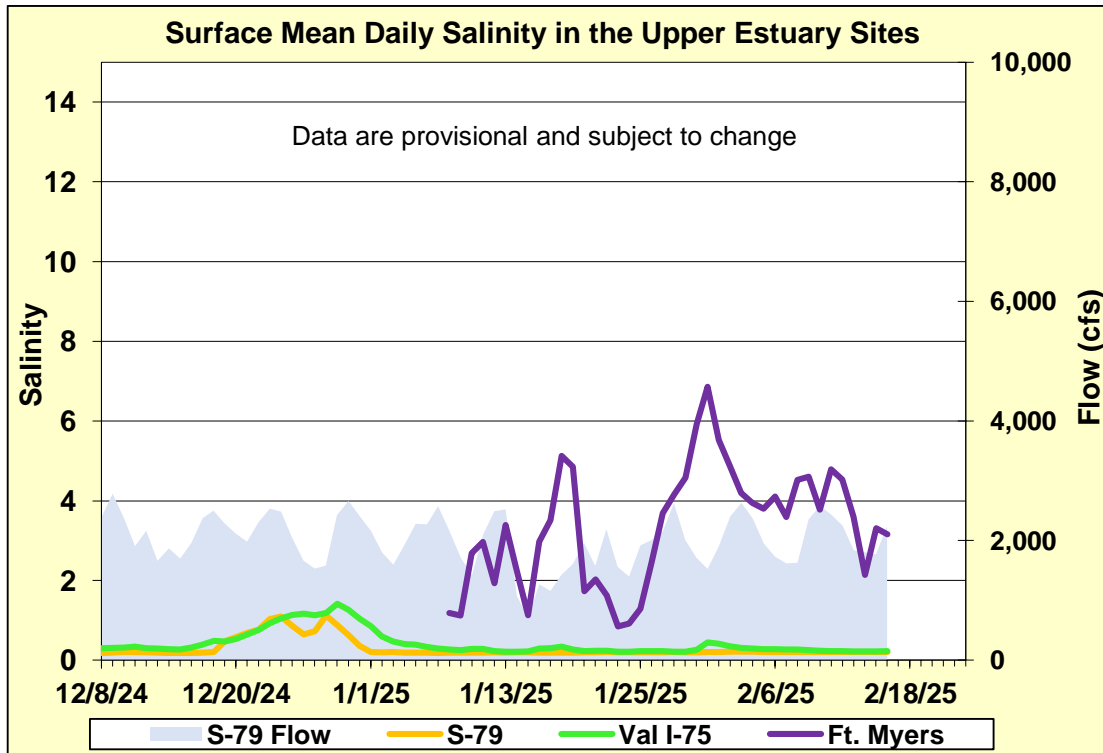
**Figure ES-6.** Basins, water control structures, and salinity monitoring sites in the Caloosahatchee River Estuary.



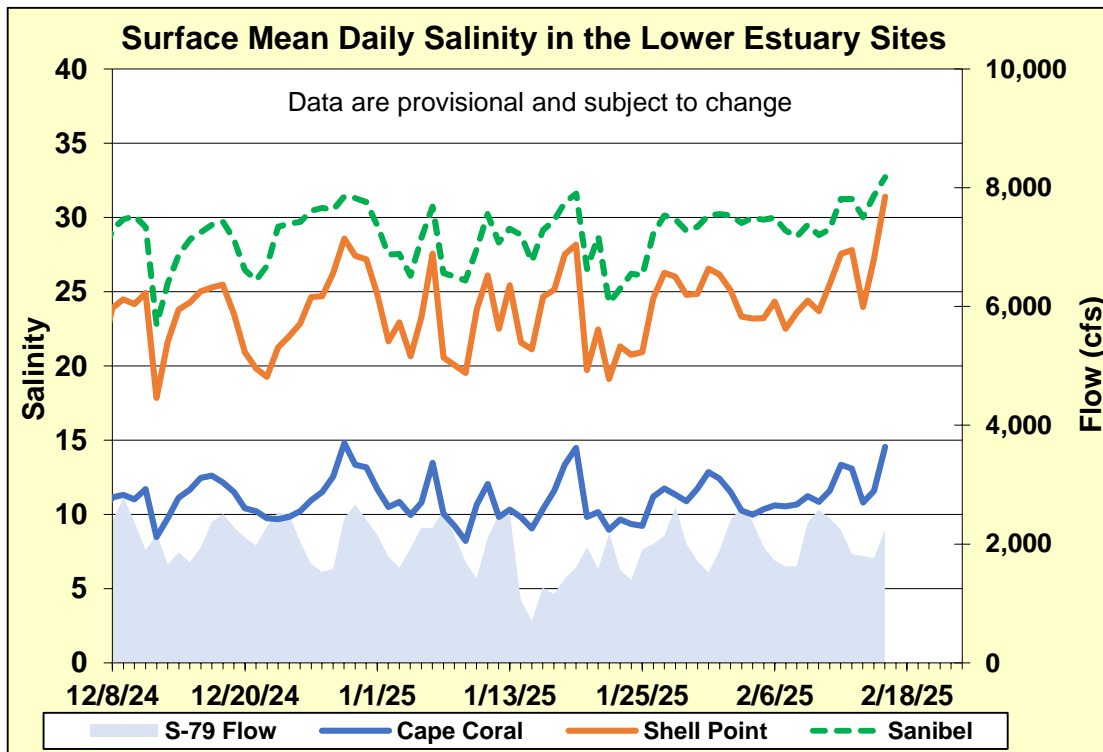
**Figure ES-7.** Total daily inflows from Lake Okeechobee, and runoff from the C-43 and Tidal basins into the Caloosahatchee River Estuary.

**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.

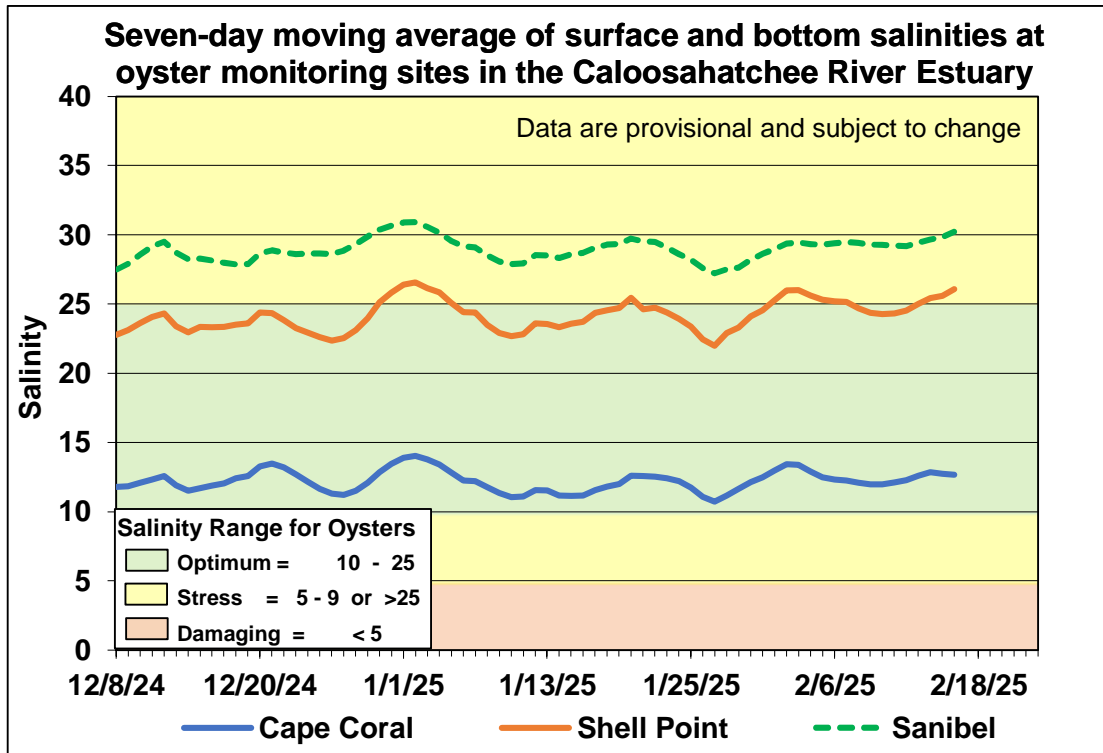
Sampling Site	Surface	Bottom	Optimum Envelope
S-79 (Franklin Lock)	<b>0.2</b> (0.2)	<b>0.2</b> (0.2)	0.0 – 10.0
Val I-75	<b>0.2</b> (0.3)	<b>0.2</b> (0.3)	0.0 – 10.0
Fort Myers Yacht Basin	<b>3.6</b> (4.1)	<b>5.1</b> (7.4)	0.0 – 10.0
Cape Coral	<b>12.3</b> (10.5)	<b>13.8</b> (13.4)	10.0 – 25.0
Shell Point	<b>26.7</b> (23.5)	<b>27.4</b> (25.0)	10.0 – 25.0
Sanibel	<b>30.7</b> (29.5)	<b>30.6</b> (29.0)	10.0 – 25.0



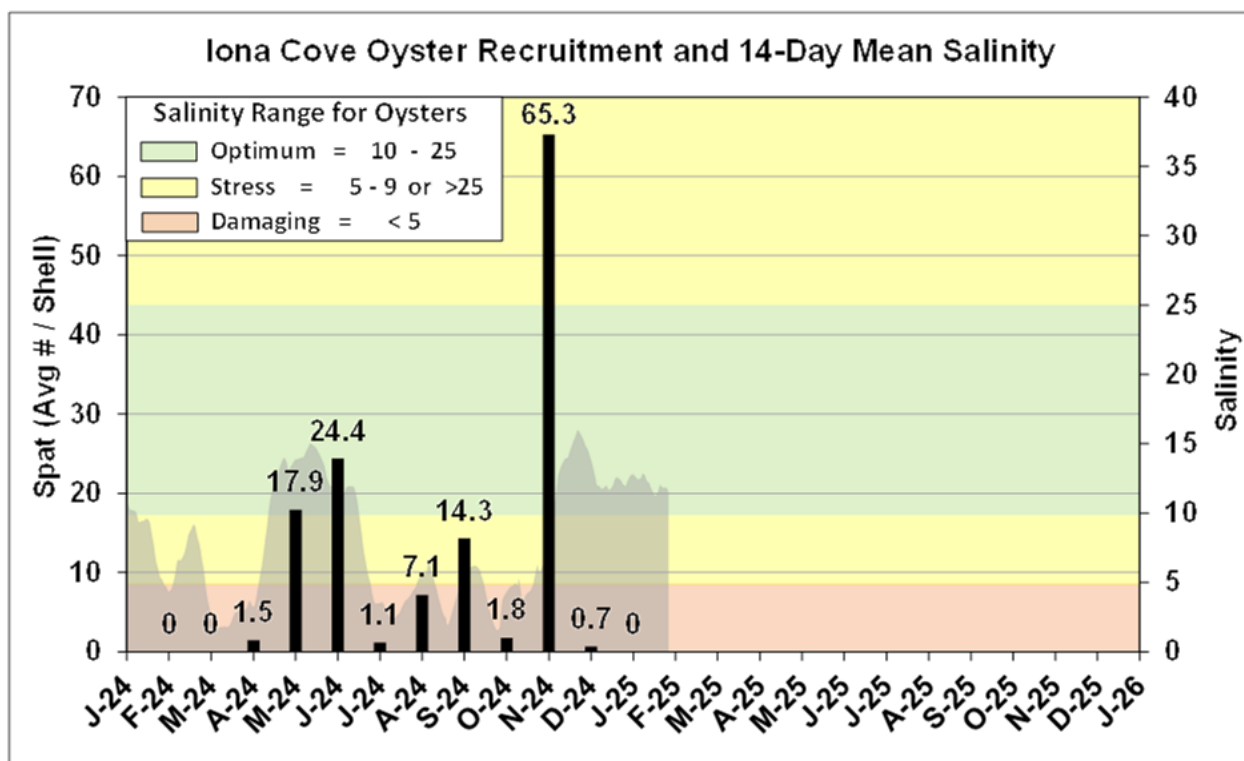
**Figure ES-8.** Mean daily salinity at upper Caloosahatchee River Estuary monitoring sites and mean daily flow at S-79.



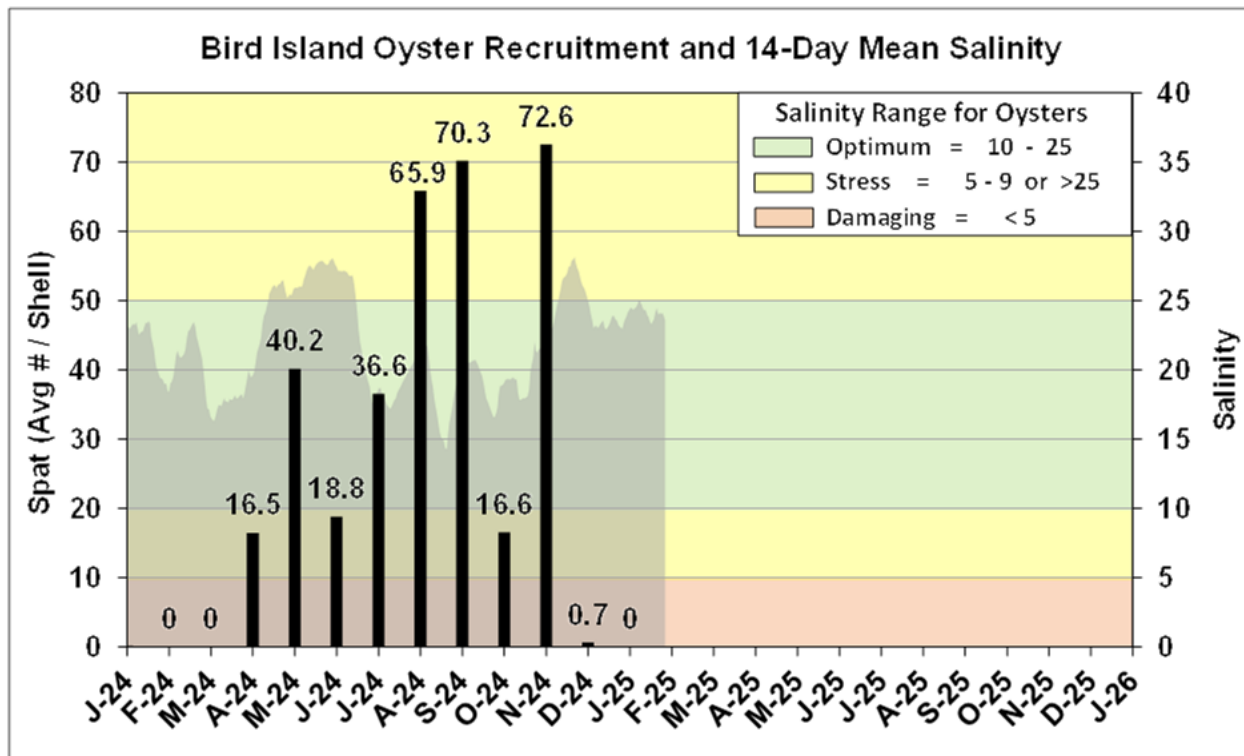
**Figure ES-9.** Mean daily surface salinity at lower Caloosahatchee River Estuary monitoring sites and mean daily flow at S-79.



**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.



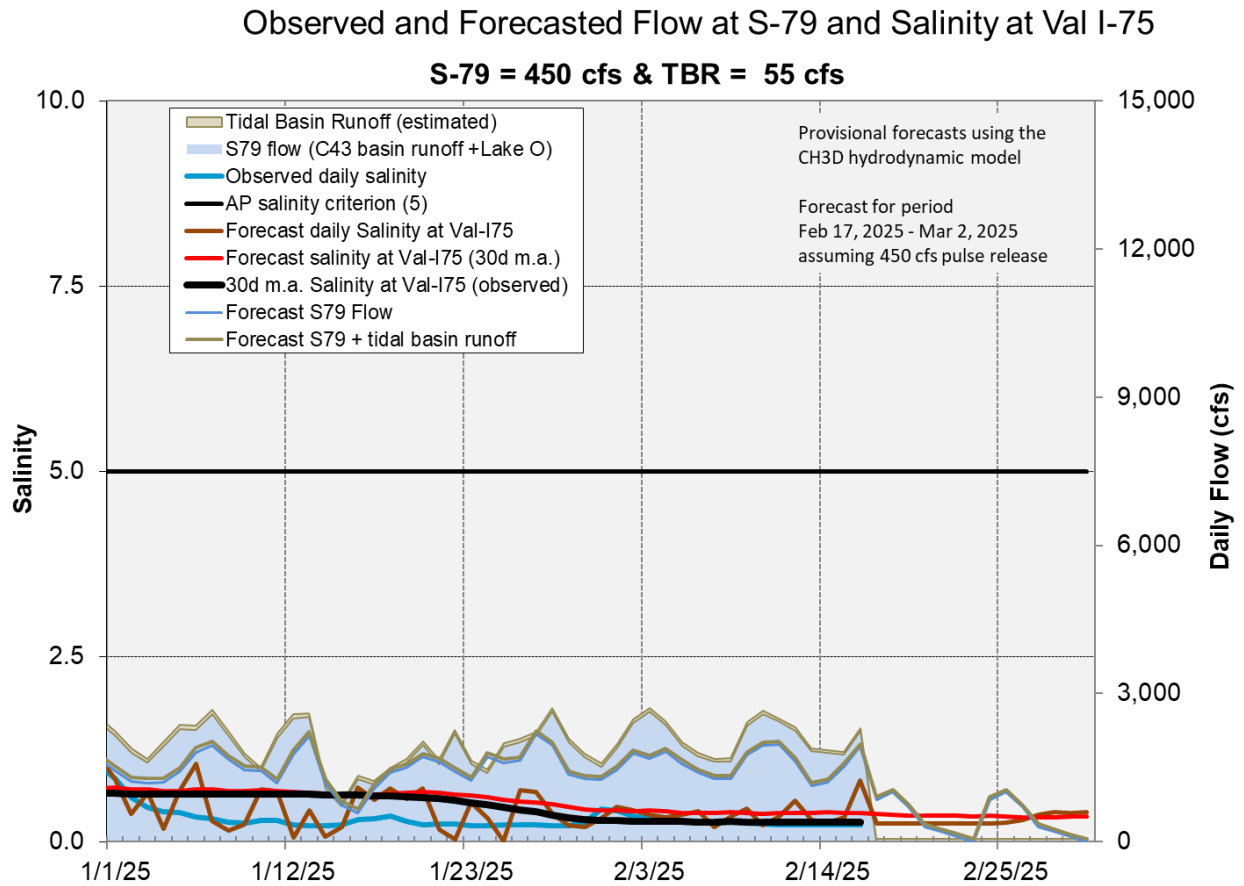
**Figure ES-11.** Mean oyster recruitment at the Iona Cove oyster monitoring station and 14-day mean salinity at Cape Coral.



**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	55	0.4	0.3
B	650	55	0.3	0.3
C	1200	55	0.3	0.3
D	2000	55	0.3	0.3



**Figure ES-13.** Surface salinity forecast at the Val I-75 site assuming a 450 cfs pulse release at S-79.

## Stormwater Treatment Areas

**STA-1E:** STA-1E Central Flow-way is offline for construction activities. An operational restriction is in place in the Western Flow-way for post-construction vegetation grow-in. Online treatment cells are near target stage. The 365-day PLR for the Western Flow-way is below 1.0 g/m<sup>2</sup>/year (**Figure S-1**).

**STA-1W:** An operational restriction is in place in the Northern Flow-way for vegetation management activities. Treatment cells are above target stage. Vegetation in the Western and Eastern flow-ways is highly stressed. The 365-day PLRs for the Eastern, Western, and Northern Flow-ways are high (**Figure S-1**).

**STA-2:** STA-2 Flow-way 3 is offline for a SAV recovery drawdown. Operational restrictions are in place in Flow-ways 2 and 4 for vegetation management activities. Online treatment cells are near target stage. Vegetation in Flow-ways 2 is stressed, and in 5 is highly stressed. The 365-day PLRs for Flow-ways 1, 4, and 5 are below 1.0 g/m<sup>2</sup>/year. The 365-day PLR for Flow-way 2 is high (**Figure S-2**).

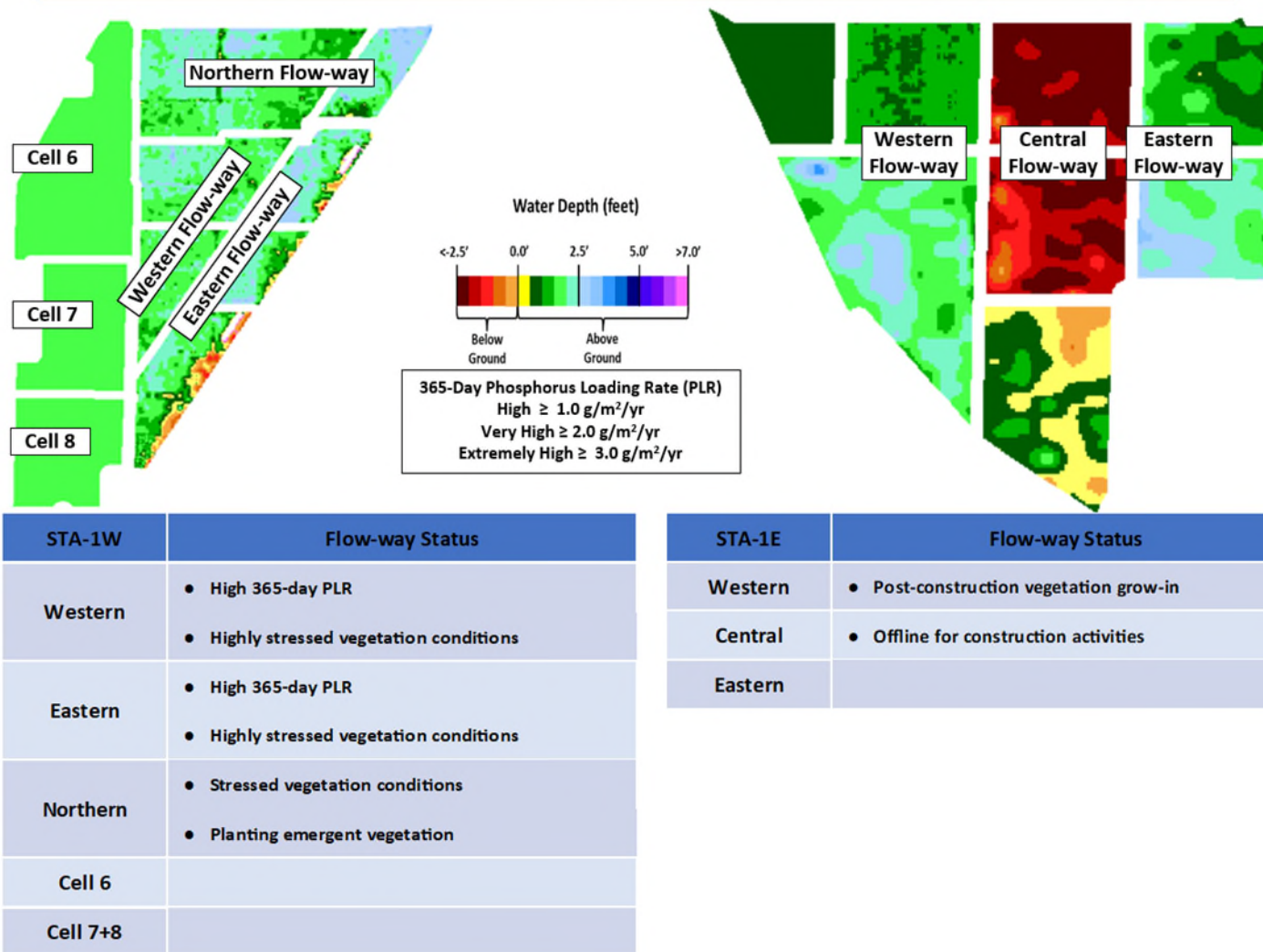
**STA-3/4:** An operational restriction is in place in the Eastern Flow-way for post-drawdown vegetation grow-in. Treatment cells are near or above target stage. Vegetation in the Central Flow-way is highly stressed. The 365-day PLRs for the Central and Western Flow-ways are high (**Figure S-2**).

**STA-5/6:** Treatment cells are near or below target stage. All treatment cells have highly stressed or stressed vegetation conditions. The 365-day PLRs for Flow-ways 1, 2, 6, 7, and 8 are below 1.0 g/m<sup>2</sup>/year, and the 365-day PLRs for Flow-ways 3, 4, and 5 are high. (**Figure S-3**).

For definitions on STA operational language see glossary following figures.

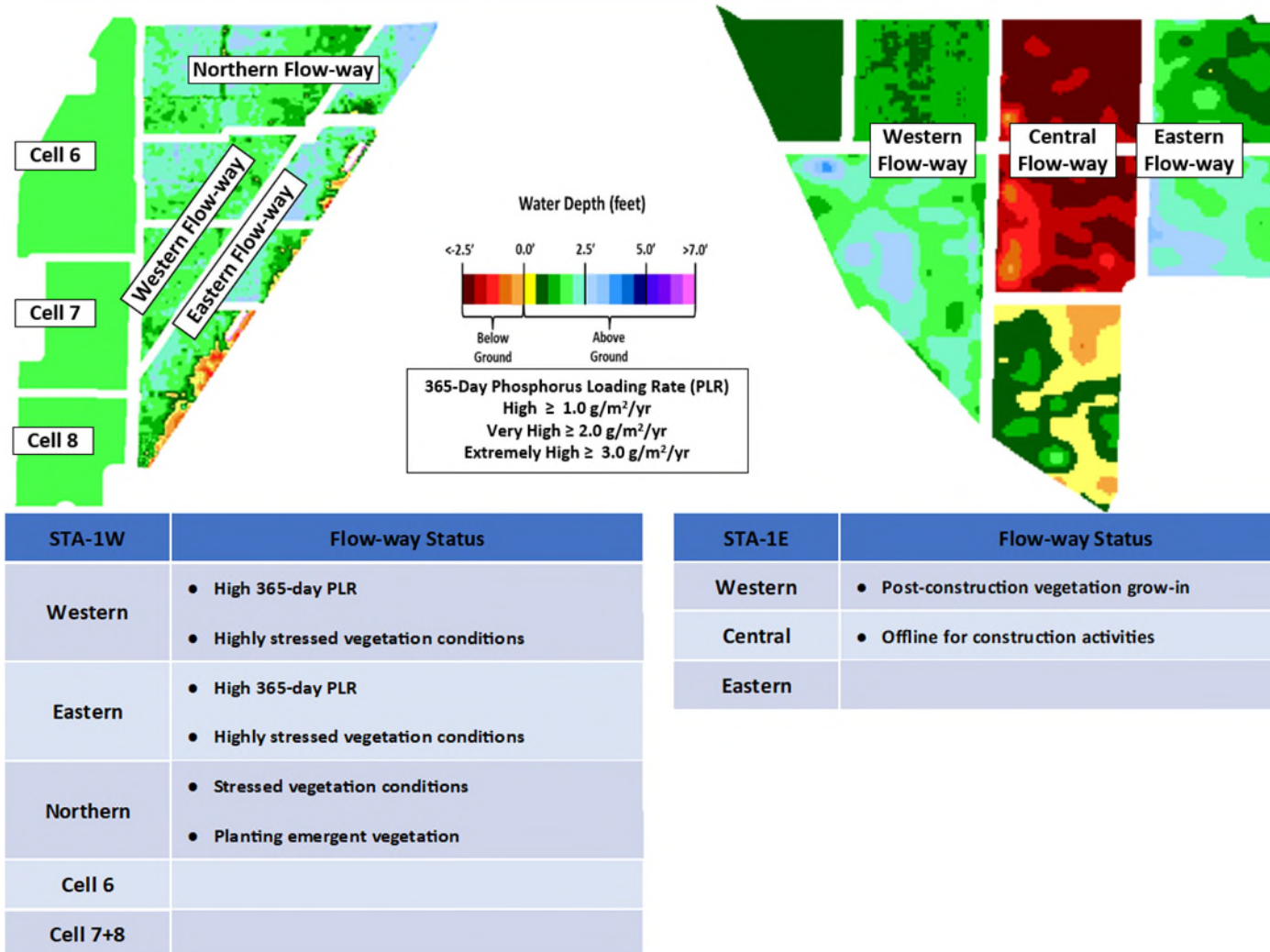


## Eastern Flow Path Weekly Status Report – 2/10/2025 through 2/16/2025



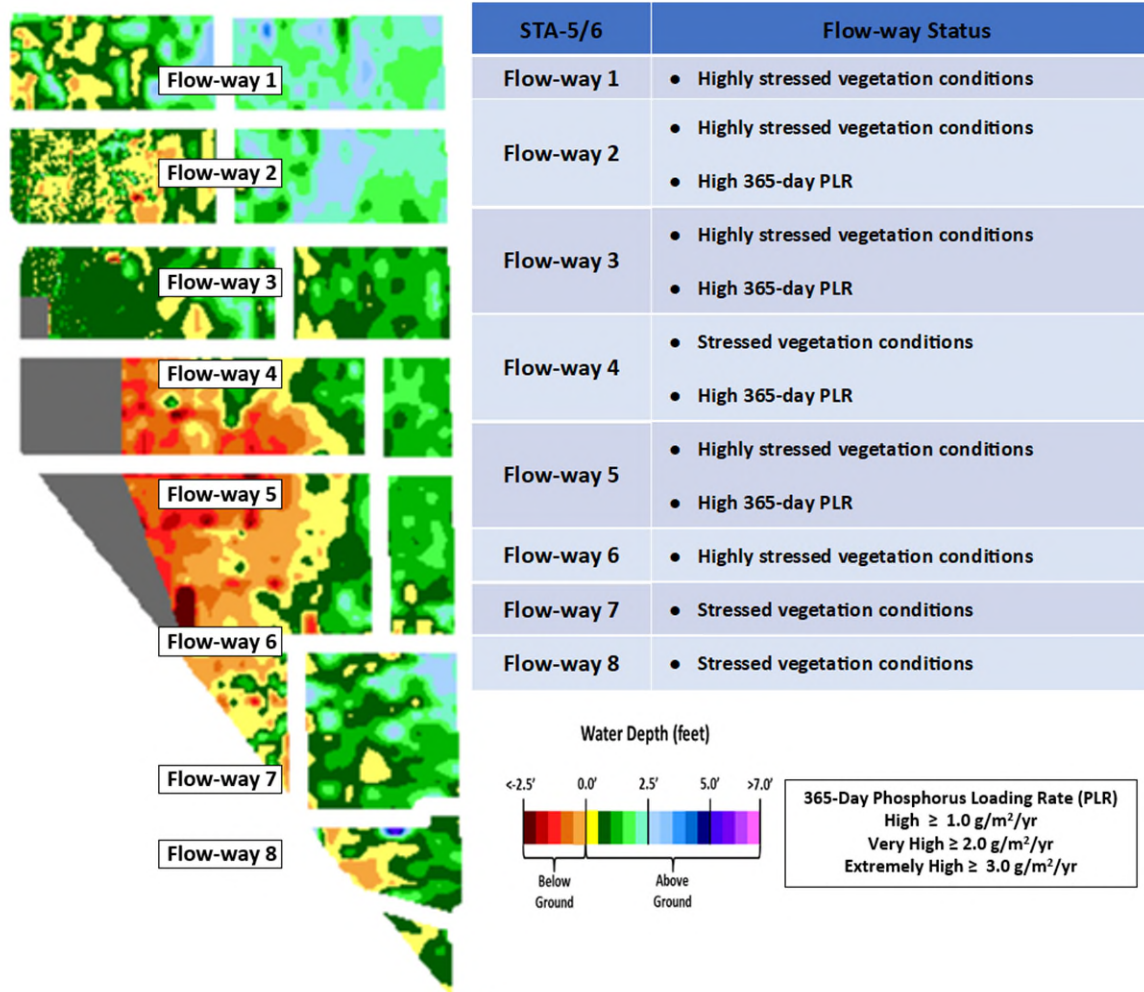
**Figure S-1.** Eastern Flow Path Weekly Status Report

## Eastern Flow Path Weekly Status Report – 2/10/2025 through 2/16/2025



**Figure S-2.** Central Flow Path Weekly Status Report

## Western Flow Path Weekly Status Report – 2/10/2025 through 2/16/2025



**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***

Well below average amounts rainfall occurred throughout the Everglades Protection Area (EPA) last week. WCA-1: Stage change was minimal within the Refuge with the 3-gauge average now below the A1 zone regulation line by 0.08 on Friday, February 14, 2025. WCA-2A: Stage recession at gauge 2A-17 increased last week. The average on Friday was around 1.01 feet above the Zone A line. WCA-3A: The 3-Gauge average recession rate increased slightly last week; stages remain below the Zone A regulation line by about 0.77 feet on Friday. WCA-3A North: Stage at Gauge 62 (NW corner) receded slowly last week with the average on Friday 0.8 feet below the Upper Schedule. See figures **EV-1** through **EV-4**.

### ***Water Depths***

The SFWDAT model output for February 16, 2025, illustrates shallower conditions across WCA-3A. Northern WCA-3A continues to dry out and approaches the soil surface. The ponded conditions in southern WCA3A are now absent. Most of the Big Cypress Basin, both to the north and south of Tamiami trail, has water depth below soil surface, with some areas now significantly so. Hydrologic connectivity within the major sloughs of Everglades National Park (ENP) has diminished over the past two months, especially in the west, but remains conducive for water flow to the south. Water depth in the eastern half of WCA-3A South is now well below average, in the 10<sup>th</sup> percentile, while Shark River Slough in ENP remains near the 70<sup>th</sup> percentile. See figures **EV-5** through **EV-6**.

### ***Taylor Slough and Florida Bay***

All stages across Taylor Slough decreased over the past week, with an average decrease of 0.11 feet. Changes ranged from -0.17 feet at CT50R to -0.06 feet at EPSW, both in the C-111 area (**Figure EV-8 and Figure EV-9**). Taylor Slough water levels remain above the recent average for this time of year by 5.2 inches compared to before the Florida Bay initiative (starting in 2017), a decrease of 1.0 inch relative to last week's comparison. The Craighead Pond (CP) and Taylor Slough Bridge (TSB) stages remain below the estimated historical (circa 1900) average by 0.40 and 0.86 feet, respectively.

Average Florida Bay salinity was 26.1, an increase of 1.0 from last week. Salinity increased at most sites with changes ranging from -1.6 at Buoy Key (BK) in the western region to +4.9 at Joe Bay (JB) in the eastern nearshore region (**Figure EV-8**). Salinity is above the estimated historical average and within the WY2001-2016 Interquartile Range (IQR) in the eastern and western regions, and at the 25<sup>th</sup> percentile in the central region (**Figure EV-10**). Average Florida Bay salinity remains below its recent average for this time of year by 1.0, an increase of 0.1 relative to last week's comparison.

Salinity at the Taylor River (TR) station in the mangrove zone (tracked for the Florida Bay MFL) was 0.5. The 30-day moving average was 0.4 (**Figure EV-11**), with no change from last week. The 365-day moving sum of flow from the five major creeks (McCormick Creek, Taylor River, Mud Creek, Trout Creek, West Highway Creek) was 304,628 acre-feet, a decrease of 9,546 acre-feet from last week (**Figure EV-11**).

Little to no rain fell across Taylor Slough and Florida Bay the past week, based on the 18 gauges used for this report. Rainfall ranged from 0.0 inches at 16 stations to 0.03 inches at CP in the southern slough (**Figure EV-12**). Wind directions and speeds in Florida Bay ranged from 2.4 mph SW on February 16<sup>th</sup> to 24.0 mph E on February 15<sup>th</sup> (**Figure EV-12**).

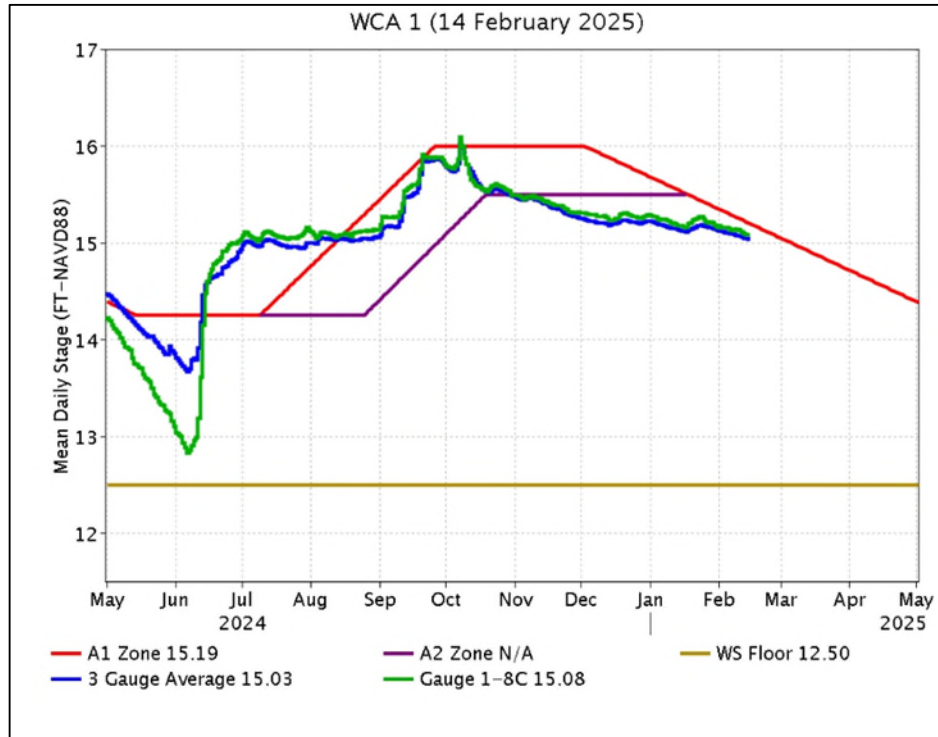
Average daily flow from the five major creeks totaled –463 acre-feet, with net negative flows over the past week. Total daily creek flow ranged from –1,800 acre-feet on February 12<sup>th</sup> to 787 acre-feet on February 14<sup>th</sup> (**Figure EV-13**). Average daily flow was 3,950 acre-feet below estimated historical levels (circa 1900).

### ***Implications for water management***

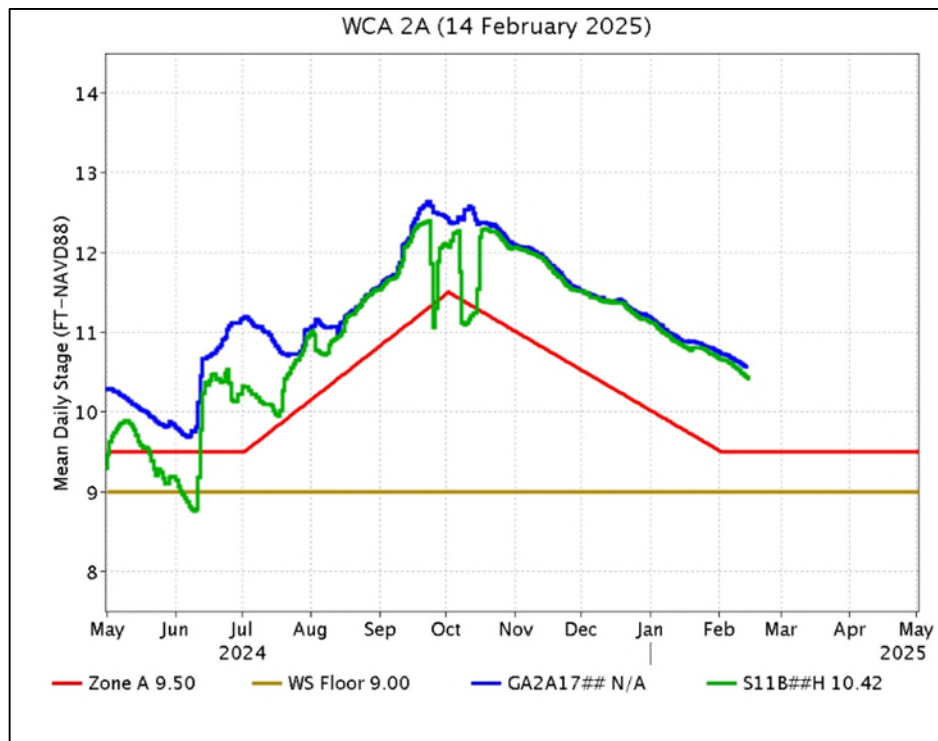
The ecology of the Everglades benefits from recession rates from 0.0 to 0.12 feet per week this time of year, with an ecologically ideal rate near 0.06 given the drier than average rainfall amounts predicted. Maintaining a hydroperiod supportive of upcoming wading bird nesting at the critical Alley North colony in WCA-3A North is critical to the overall ecology of the region. Continuing to support a below average recession rate in this region will be beneficial to wading bird nesting success at this Colony, made more ecologically important as wading birds have experienced poor nesting the last three years. Florida Bay salinity is at a good position as we continue into the dry season and will continue to benefit from maintaining freshwater input to the system when available. Maintaining higher water depths in central WCA-3A now can help support wading bird nesting success throughout the nesting season. Conserving water in WCA-3A might be a concern if Florida Bay salinities are seen to rise rapidly and approach hypersalinity. Current favorable salinity levels in Florida Bay may provide an opportunity to deliver broader landscape-wide ecological benefits across the EPA while balancing ecological priorities. Individual regional recommendations can be found in **Table EV-2**.

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

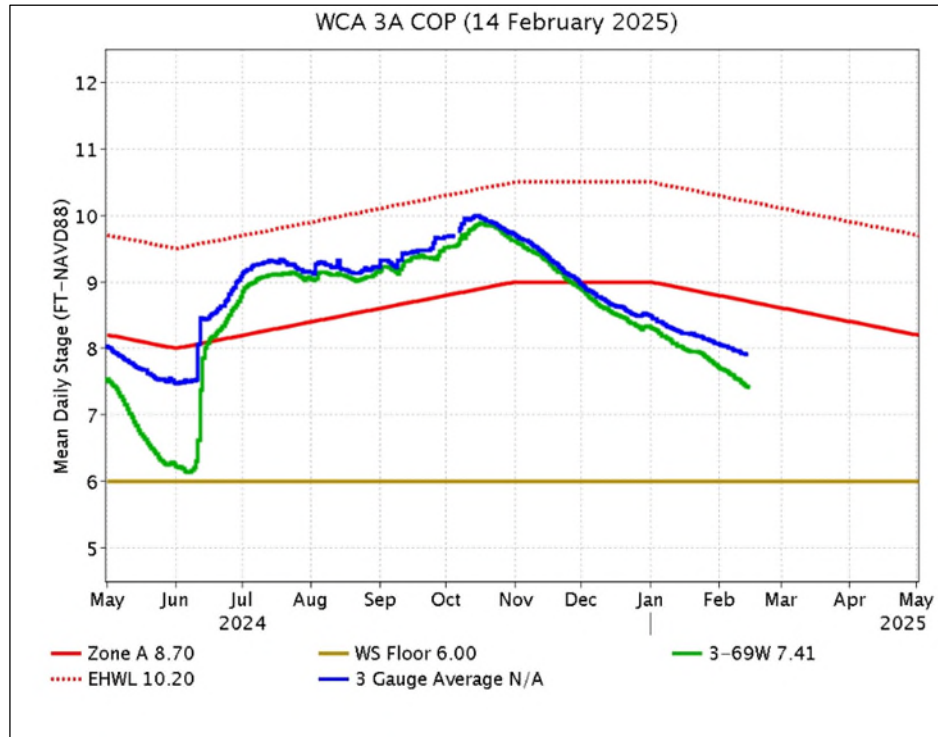
Everglades Region	Rainfall (inches)	Stage change (feet)
WCA-1	0.02	–0.06
WCA-2A	0.02	–0.14
WCA-2B	0.02	–0.20
WCA-3A	0.01	–0.09
WCA-3B	0.01	
ENP	0.01	–0.14



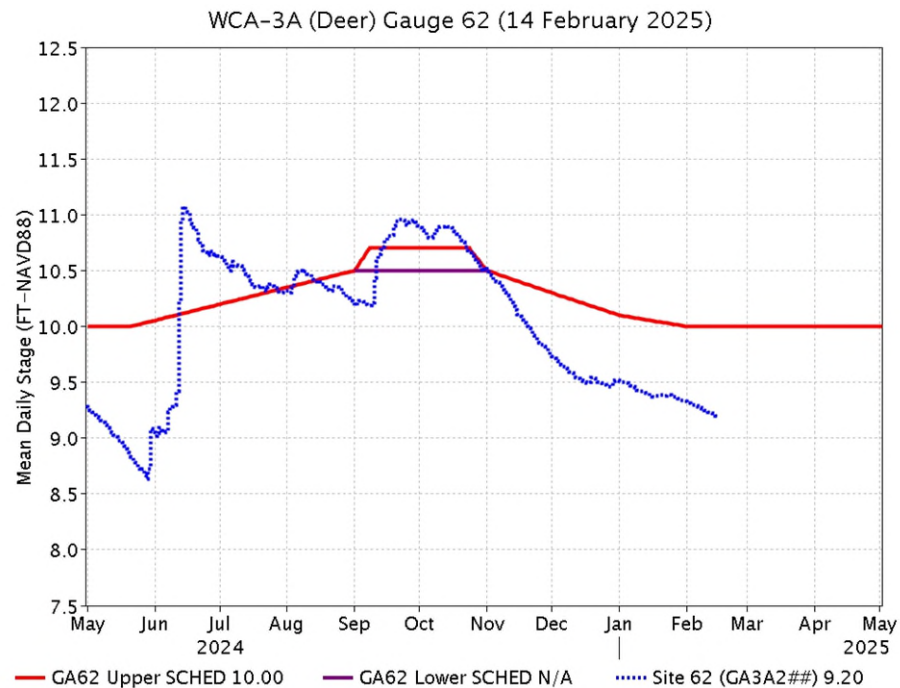
**Figure EV-1.** WCA-1 stage hydrographs and regulation schedule.



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

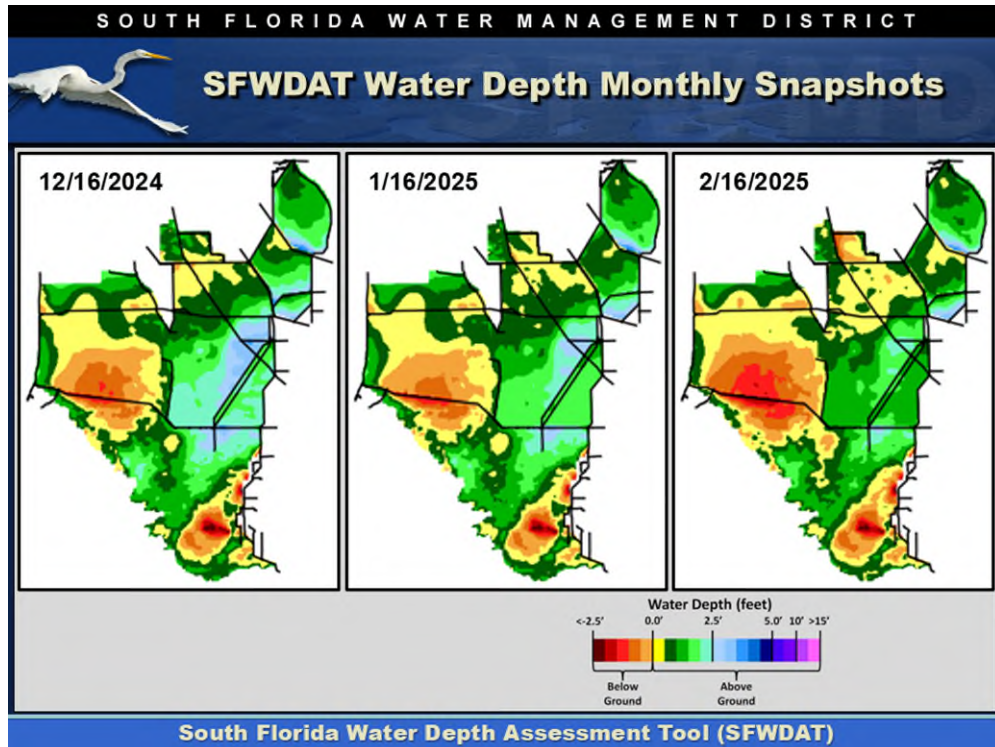


**Figure EV-3.** WCA-3A stage hydrographs (three-gauge average, 3-69W) and regulation schedule.

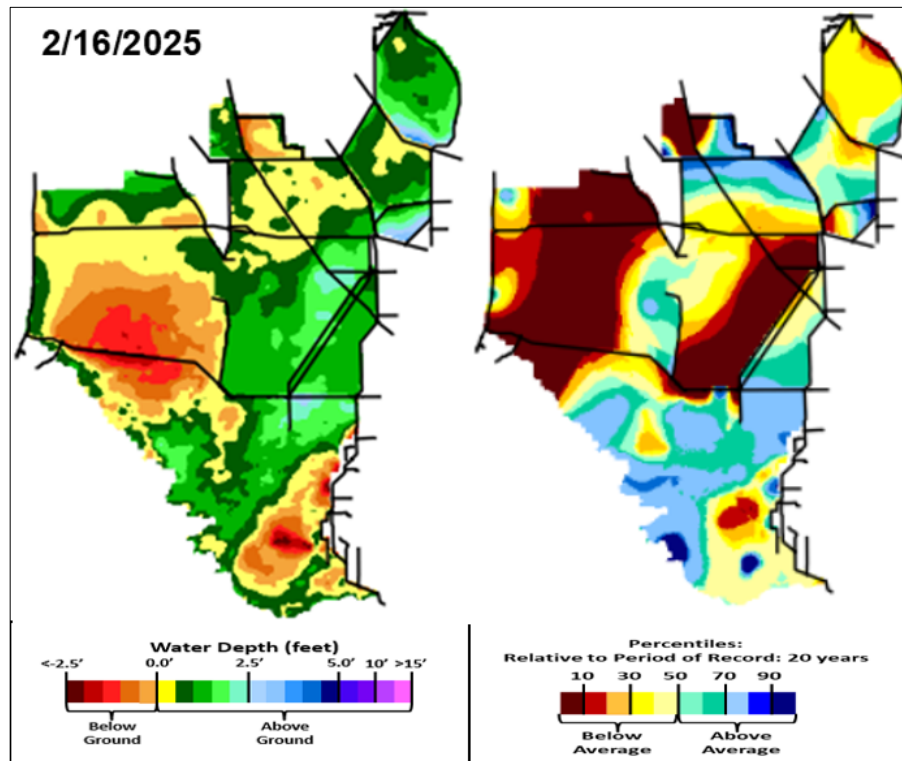


**Figure EV-4.** WCA-3A stage hydrograph (Deer gauge; Site 62) and GA62 regulation schedule.

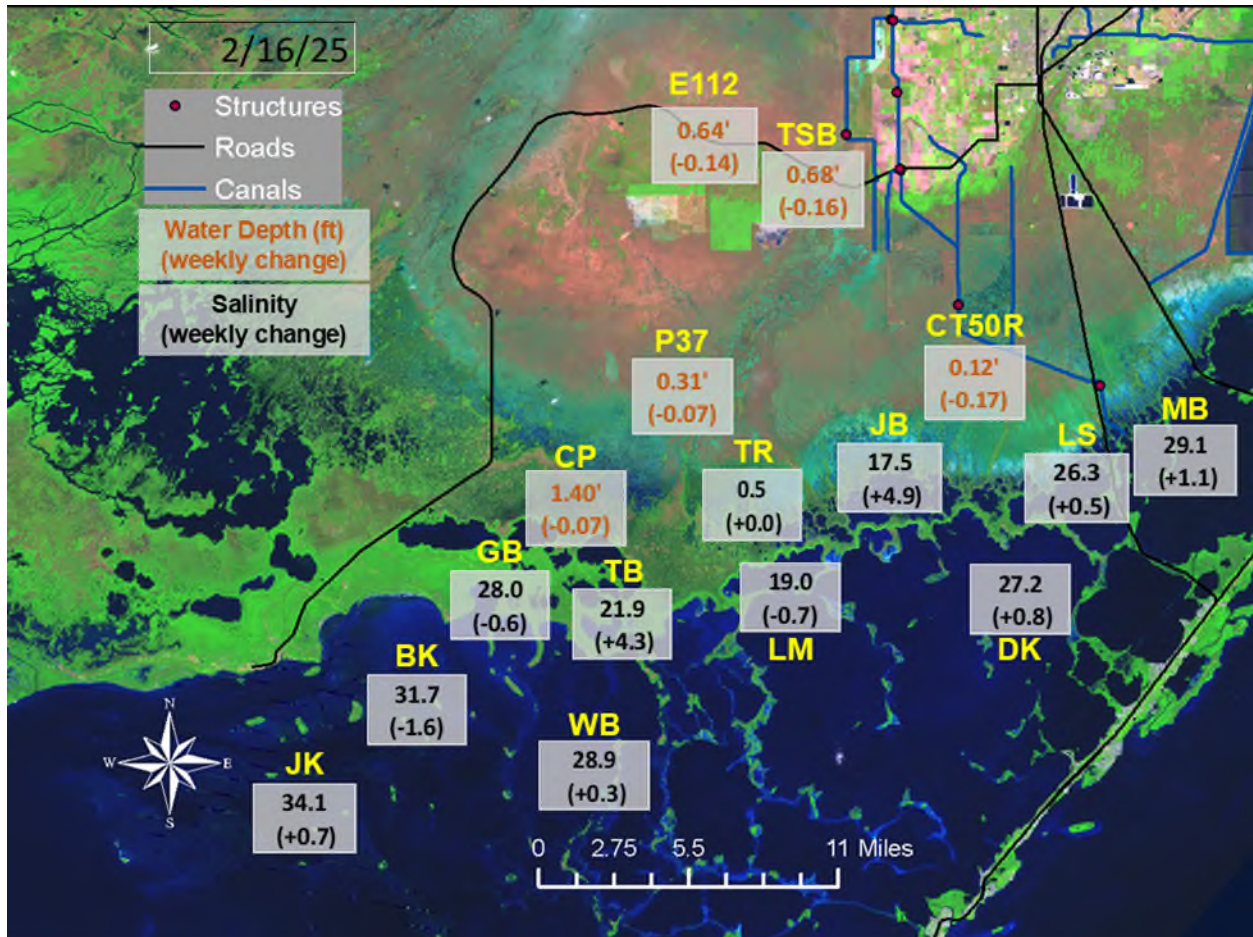




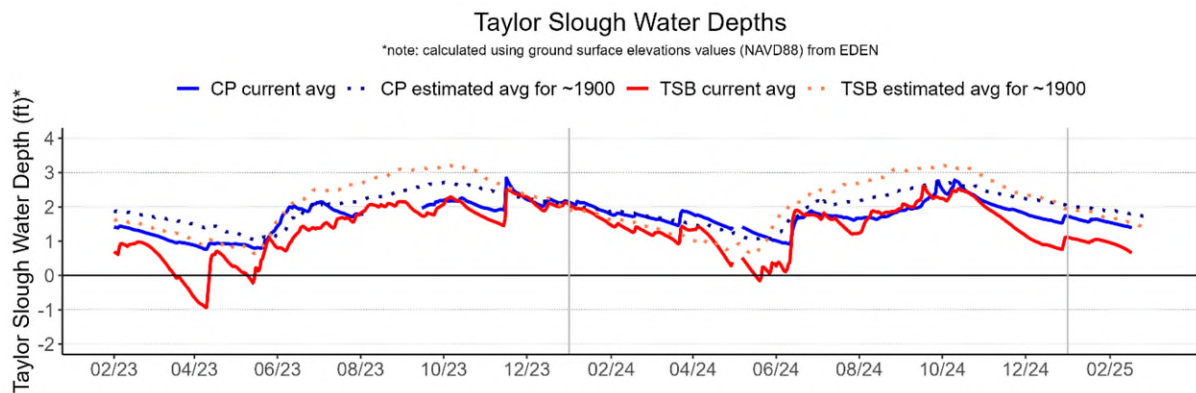
**Figure EV-5.** Everglades water depths from two months ago (left), one month ago (center) and present (right), based on SFWDAT.



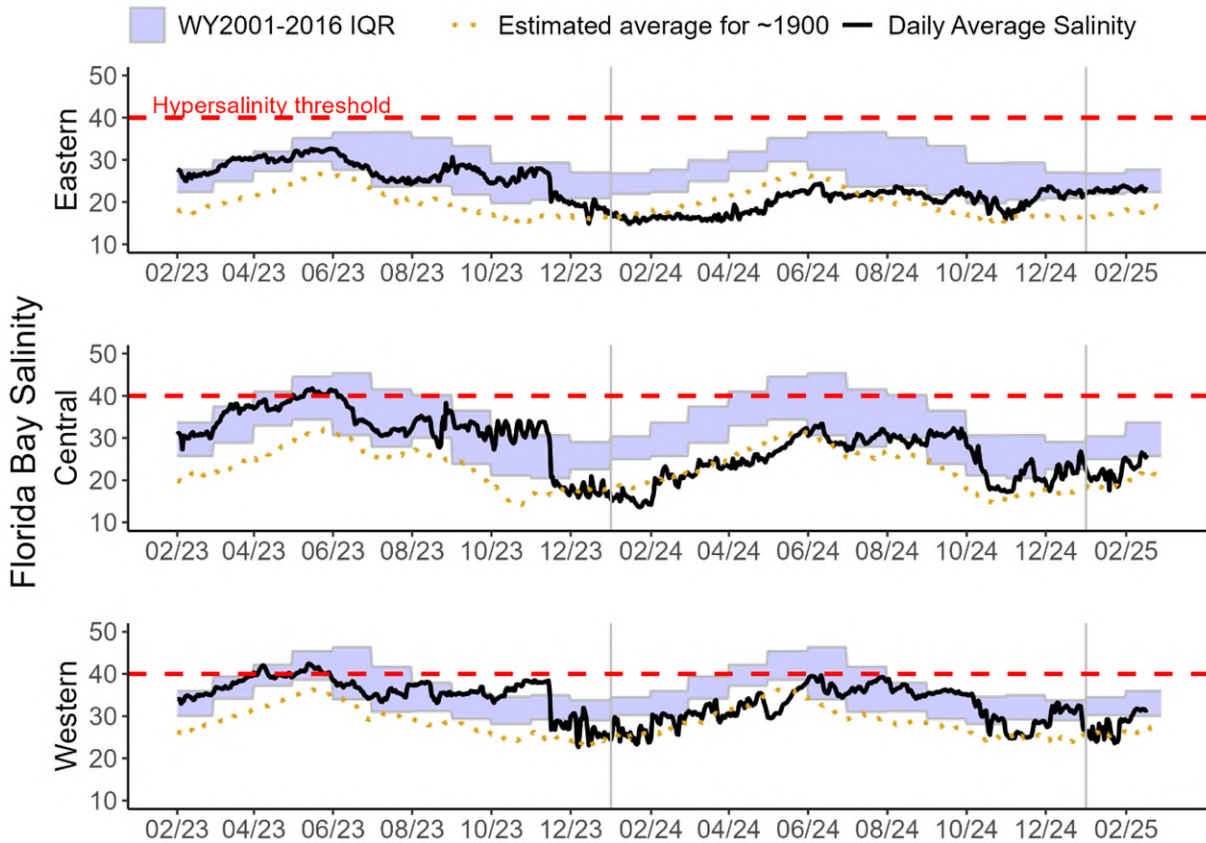
**Figure EV-6.** Present water depths (February 16, 2025) compared to the day of year average over the previous 20 years.



**Figure EV-8.** Taylor Slough water depths and Florida Bay salinities with changes since January 16<sup>th</sup>.

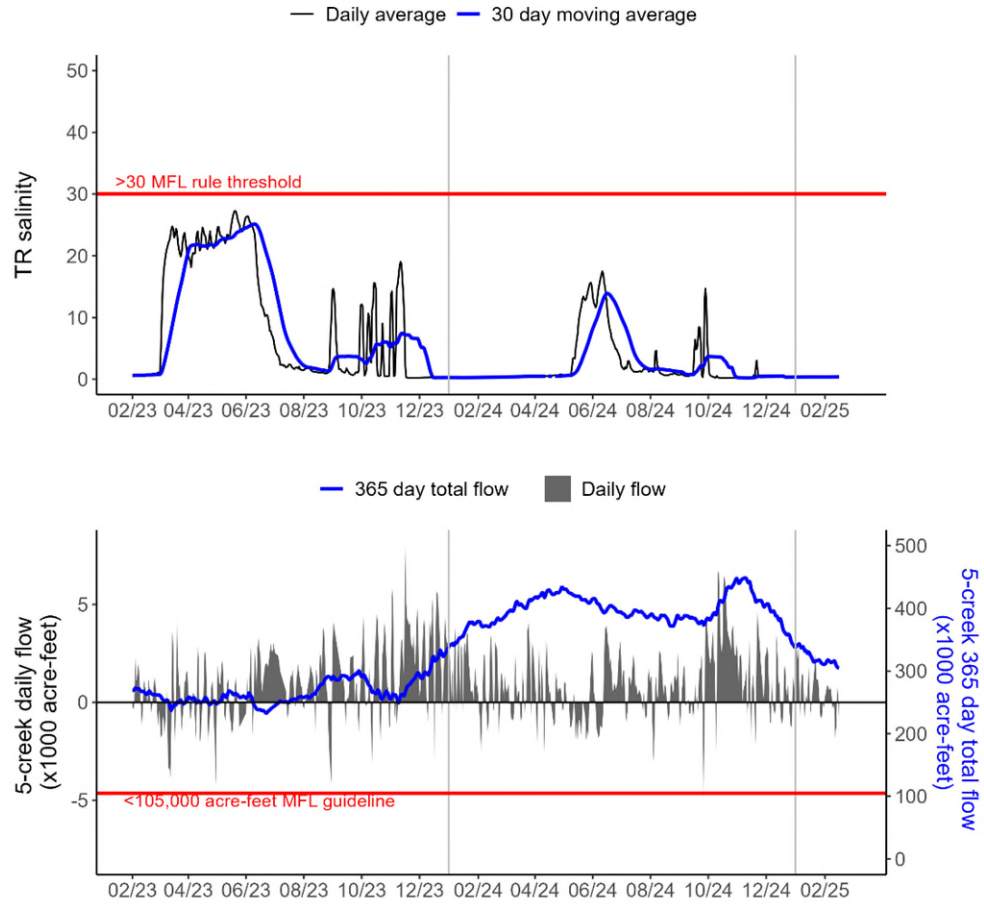


**Figure EV-9.** Taylor Slough water depth time series for Taylor Slough Bridge (TSB; northern slough) and Craighead Pond (CP; southern slough).

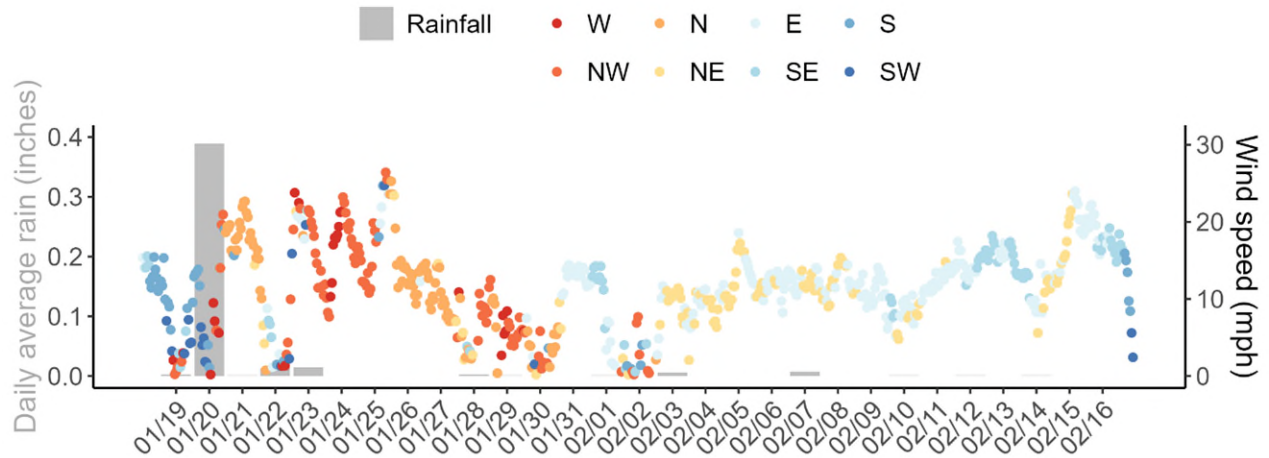


**Figure EV-10.** Eastern (top panel), Central (middle panel) and Western (bottom panel) Florida Bay daily average salinities with WY2001-2016 interquartile (25-75 percentile) ranges (IQR) and estimated historical daily average salinities. The hypersalinity threshold indicates the level at which salinities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

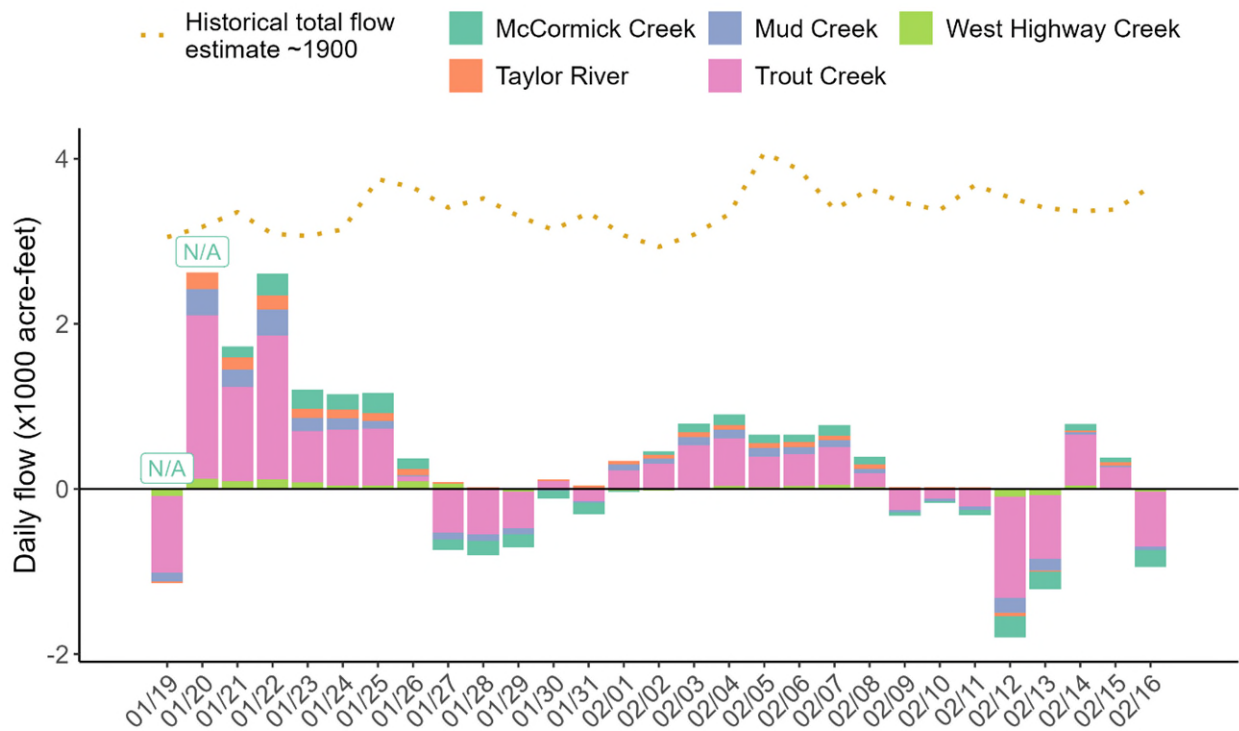




**Figure EV-11.** Salinity at Taylor River (TR; top) and creek inflow to Florida Bay (bottom) from the five major creeks (McCormick Creek, Taylor River, Mud Creek, Trout Creek, and West Highway Creek). The 30-day moving average salinity and 365-day total creek flow are tracked for the Florida Bay MFL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



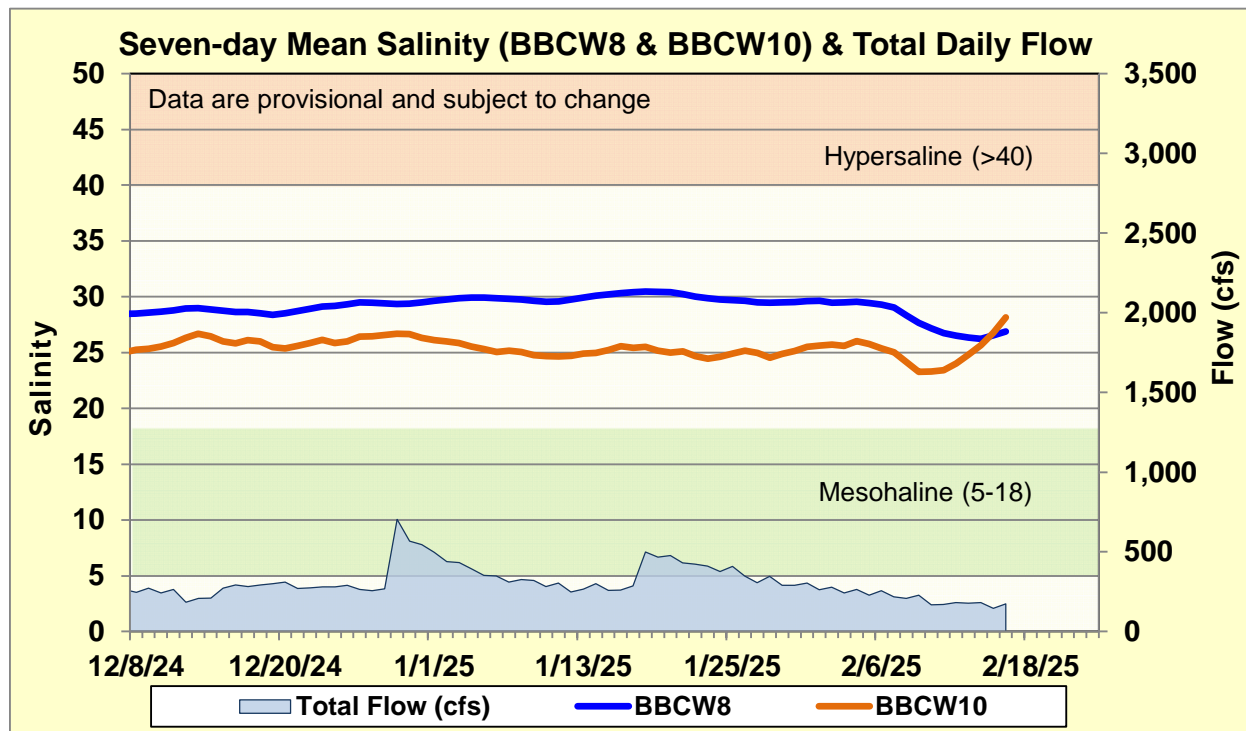
**Figure EV-13.** Daily average creek flow summed between five creeks with estimated historical daily flow over the past four weeks.

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

<b>SFWMD Everglades Ecological Recommendations, February 16, 2025 (red is new)</b>			
	Weekly change	Recommendation	Reasons
<b>WCA-1</b>	Stage decreased by 0.06 feet	Recession rate of less than 0.06 feet per week.	Protect within basin and downstream habitat and wildlife.
<b>WCA-2A</b>	Stage decreased by 0.14 feet	Recession rate of less than 0.12 feet per week.	Protect within basin and downstream habitat and wildlife.
<b>WCA-2B</b>	Stage increased by 0.20 feet	Recession rate of less than 0.12 feet per week.	Protect within basin and downstream habitat and wildlife.
<b>WCA-3A NE</b>	Stage decreased by 0.08 feet	Recession rate of less than 0.06 feet per week.	Protect within basin and downstream habitat and wildlife.
<b>WCA-3A NW</b>	Stage decreased by 0.06 feet	Recession rate of less than 0.06 feet per week.	
<b>Central WCA-3A S</b>	Stage decreased by 0.10 feet	<u>Recession rate of less than 0.06 feet per week.</u>	Protect within basin and downstream habitat and wildlife.
<b>Southern WCA-3A S</b>	Stage decreased by 0.12 feet		
<b>WCA-3B</b>	Stage decreased by 0.09 feet	Recession rate of less than 0.12 feet per week.	Protect within basin wildlife.
<b>ENP-SRS</b>	Stage decreased by 0.14 feet	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.
<b>Taylor Slough</b>	Stage changes ranged from -0.17 feet' to -0.06 feet	Move water southward as possible.	When available, provide freshwater to promote water movement.
<b>FB- Salinity</b>	Salinity changes ranged from -1.6 to +4.9	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 171 cfs, and the previous 30-day mean inflow was 292 cfs. The seven-day mean salinity was 26.6 at BBCW8 and 29.3 at BBCW10, both within the ideal salinity range for estuarine organisms in this region (salinity less than 35). 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.