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: September 23, 2026

SUBJECT: Weekly Environmental Conditions for Systems Operations

Summary

Weather Conditions and Forecast

Early Wednesday, southeastern Florida will experience heavy rainfall before a plume of deep tropical moisture moves offshore. By Thursday, a frontal boundary will move southward through Florida, reaching central portions of the Peninsula in the afternoon bringing substantially drier continental air southward. As a result, rainfall should decrease considerably around and north of Lake Okeechobee Thursday into the weekend. It is unclear whether the frontal boundary will completely clear the Peninsula by Saturday or stall close enough to the southern tip of Florida to maintain enough moisture for light showers over the Florida Keys and lower east coast. By early next week, some guidance suggests the frontal boundary could begin lifting northward. If this occurs, moisture could gradually return and rain chances would increase across the Florida Keys and portions of the lower east coast. Confidence in this part of the forecast remains relatively low. For the 7-day period ending next Tuesday morning, below-average total SFWMD rainfall is expected overall. However, areas south of Lake Okeechobee and along portions of the lower east coast could see above average rainfall.

Kissimmee

Releases were made from East Lake Toho and Lake Toho to lower stage back to the regulation schedule. Releases from Lakes Kissimmee-Cypress-Hatchineha followed the Headwaters Revitalization Schedule Increment 1 Temporary Deviation Discharge Plan. Weekly average discharge on September 20, 2026, was 690 cfs at S-65 and 740 cfs at S-65A. Mean weekly water depth on the Kissimmee River floodplain increased by 0.05 feet to 0.38 feet. The weekly average concentration of dissolved oxygen in the Kissimmee River decreased from 3.4 mg/L the previous week to 3.0 mg/L, which is above both the potentially lethal level of 1.0 mg/L and the stressful level of 2.0 mg/L for aquatic species.

Lake Okeechobee

Lake Okeechobee stage was 10.31 feet NAVD88 (11.62 ft NGVD29) on September 20, 2026, which was 0.26 feet higher than the previous week and 0.73 feet higher than a month ago. The Lake remains in the water shortage management band. Average daily

inflows (excluding rainfall) increased from 2,560 cfs the previous week to 4,570 cfs. Average daily outflows (excluding evapotranspiration) remained at 0 cfs for the third consecutive week. The September 19, 2026, satellite image from NOAA's Harmful Algal Bloom Monitoring System suggests moderate to high cyanobacteria potential in the western and central regions of the Lake. The September 14 - 16 phytoplankton monitoring found 10 of the 26 samples collected had detectable levels of cylindrospermopsin.

Estuaries

Total inflow to the St. Lucie Estuary averaged 2,523 cfs over the past week with no flow coming from Lake Okeechobee. Mean salinities decreased at all sites over the past week. Salinity in the middle estuary was in the optimal range (10-25) for adult eastern oysters.

Total inflow to the Caloosahatchee River Estuary averaged 5,293 cfs over the past week with no flow coming from Lake Okeechobee. Over the past week, surface salinities decreased at all sites in the estuary. Salinities were in the optimal range (0-10) for tape grass in the upper estuary. Salinities were in the lower stressed range for adult oysters at Cape Coral, the optimal range at Shell Point, and in the upper stressed range at Sanibel.

Stormwater Treatment Areas

For the week ending September 20, 2026, no Lake Okeechobee water was delivered to the FEBs/STAs. The total amount of Lake releases sent to the FEBs/STAs in WY2027 is approximately 9,500 acre-feet. The total amount of inflows to the STAs in WY2027 is approximately 304,000 acre-feet. Most online STA treatment cells are at or above target stage. STA-1E Central Flow-way is offline for post-construction vegetation grow-in. STA-1W Eastern Flow-way is offline for vegetation management activities. Operational restrictions are in effect in STA-1E Western Flow-way, STA-2 Flow-way 2, and STA-3/4 Eastern Flow-way for vegetation management activities. This week, there is no lake release capacity in the STAs.

Everglades

Rainfall in most of the Everglades Protection Area (EPA) was well above average last week; WCA-1 received over 5 inches. All regions experienced very high local maximums of ~ 5.5 to ~ 7.5 inches for the week. Ascensions in stage occurred across the EPA. WCA-1 is approaching its regulation line for this time. Ascension rates slowed in southern WCA-2A but remained elevated in the north. Water depths across WCA-3A continue to move towards the 20-year average but remain very shallow for this time of year. Most of the central Everglades remain below the 20th percentile. These dry conditions and stage deficits in WCA-3 can have ecological consequences system wide, including reduced prey production, increased risk of damaging wildfires, enhanced peat oxidation, and potential ridge and slough degradation as the dry season approaches. Taylor Slough water levels increased and are above the recent seasonal average (+2.5 inches). Florida Bay salinity decreased last week but remains elevated. Salinity remains well above the recent seasonal average bay-wide; the eastern region is now just below the hypersalinity threshold, while the central and western regions remain above it.

Supporting Information

Kissimmee Basin

Upper Kissimmee

On September 20, 2026, mean daily lake stages were 55.9 feet NAVD88 (0.1 feet above schedule) in East Lake Toho, 52.9 feet NAVD88 (0.1 feet above schedule) in Lake Toho, and 49.3 feet NAVD88 (1.3 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 September 20, 2026, mean weekly discharge was 690 cfs at S-65 and 740 cfs at S-65A. Mean weekly discharge from the Kissimmee River was 1,000 cfs at S-65D and 960 cfs at S-65E (**Table KB-2**). Mean weekly headwater stages were 45.3 feet NAVD88 at S-65A and 30.2 feet NAVD88 at S-65D. Mean weekly river channel stage increased by 1.7 feet to 33.2 feet NAVD88 (**Figure KB-4**). Mean weekly water depth on the Kissimmee River floodplain increased by 0.05 feet to 0.38 feet (**Table KB-2**, **Figure KB-5**). The weekly average concentration of dissolved oxygen in the Kissimmee River decreased from 3.4 mg/L the previous week to 3.0 mg/L (**Table KB-2**, **Figure KB-6**).

Water Management Recommendations

In KCH, follow the Headwaters Revitalization Schedule (HRS) Increment 1 Temporary Deviation Discharge Plan for S-65/S-65A (**Figure KB-7**). With KCH stage in Zone B2, target flows of 1,400 cfs; if stage increases into Zone B1, target flows between 1,400 and 3,000 cfs at S-65A using the Increment 1 Interpolation Tool to determine discharge relative to stage in KCH.

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)[a]	Schedule Type[b]	Sunday Schedule Stage (feet NAVD88)	Sunday Departure from Regulation (feet)	
							9/20/26	*9/13/26*
Lakes Hart and Mary Jane	S-62	LKMJ	65	59.1	R	59.0	0.1	0.1
Lakes Myrtle, Preston and Joel	S-57	S-57	7	60.0	R	59.9	0.1	-0.1
Alligator Chain	S-60	ALLI	160	62.2	R	62.1	0.1	-0.1
Lake Gentry	S-63	LKGT	260	59.9	R	59.9	0.0	0.1
East Lake Toho	S-59	TOHOE	200	55.9	R	55.8	0.1	0.2
Lake Toho	S-61	TOHOW S-61	940	52.9	R	52.8	0.1	0.2
Lakes Kissimmee, Cypress and Hatchineha	S-65	KUB011 LKIS5B	690	49.3	T	50.6	-1.3	-1.7

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.

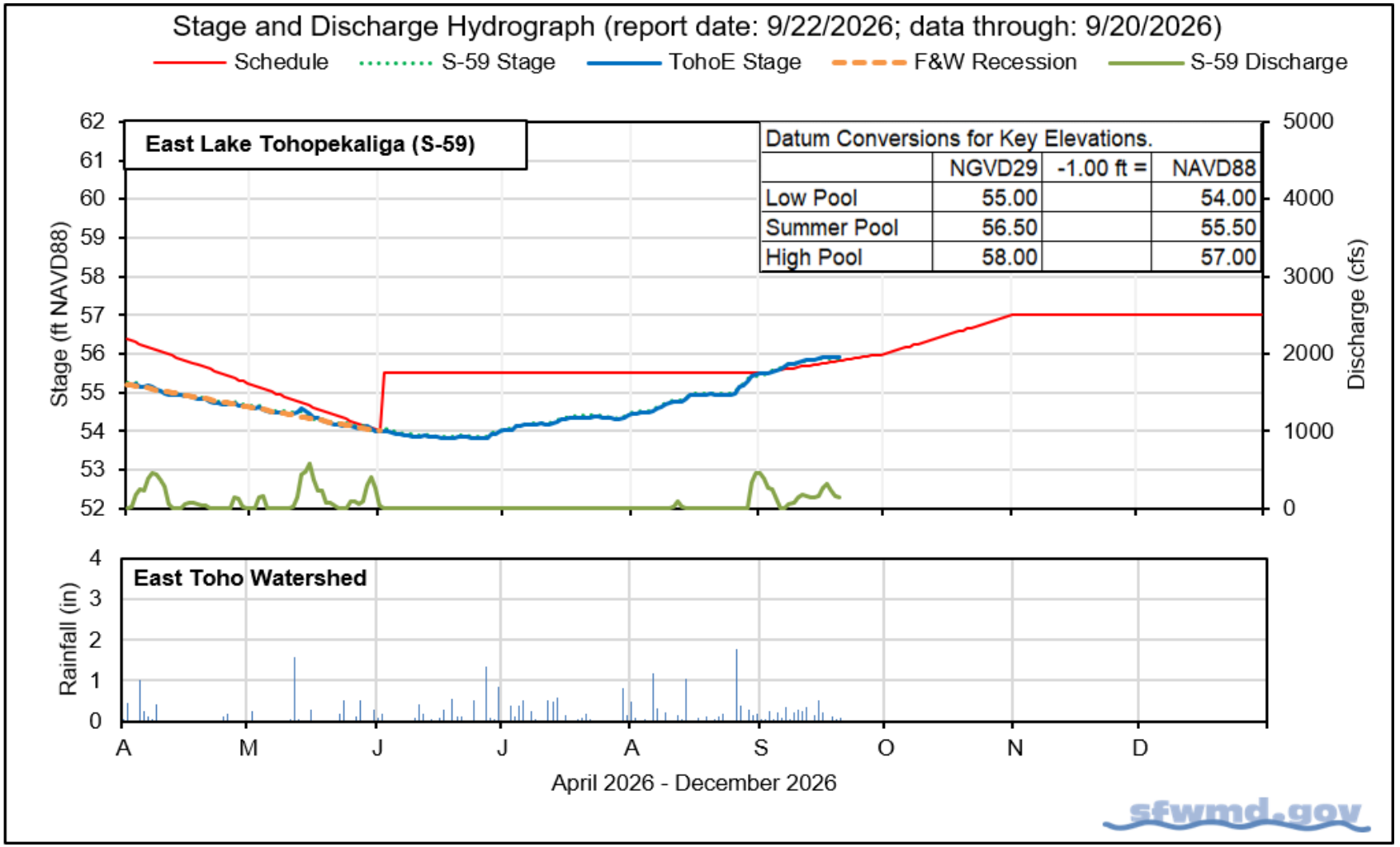


Figure KB-1. East Lake Toho regulation schedule, stage, discharge, and rainfall.

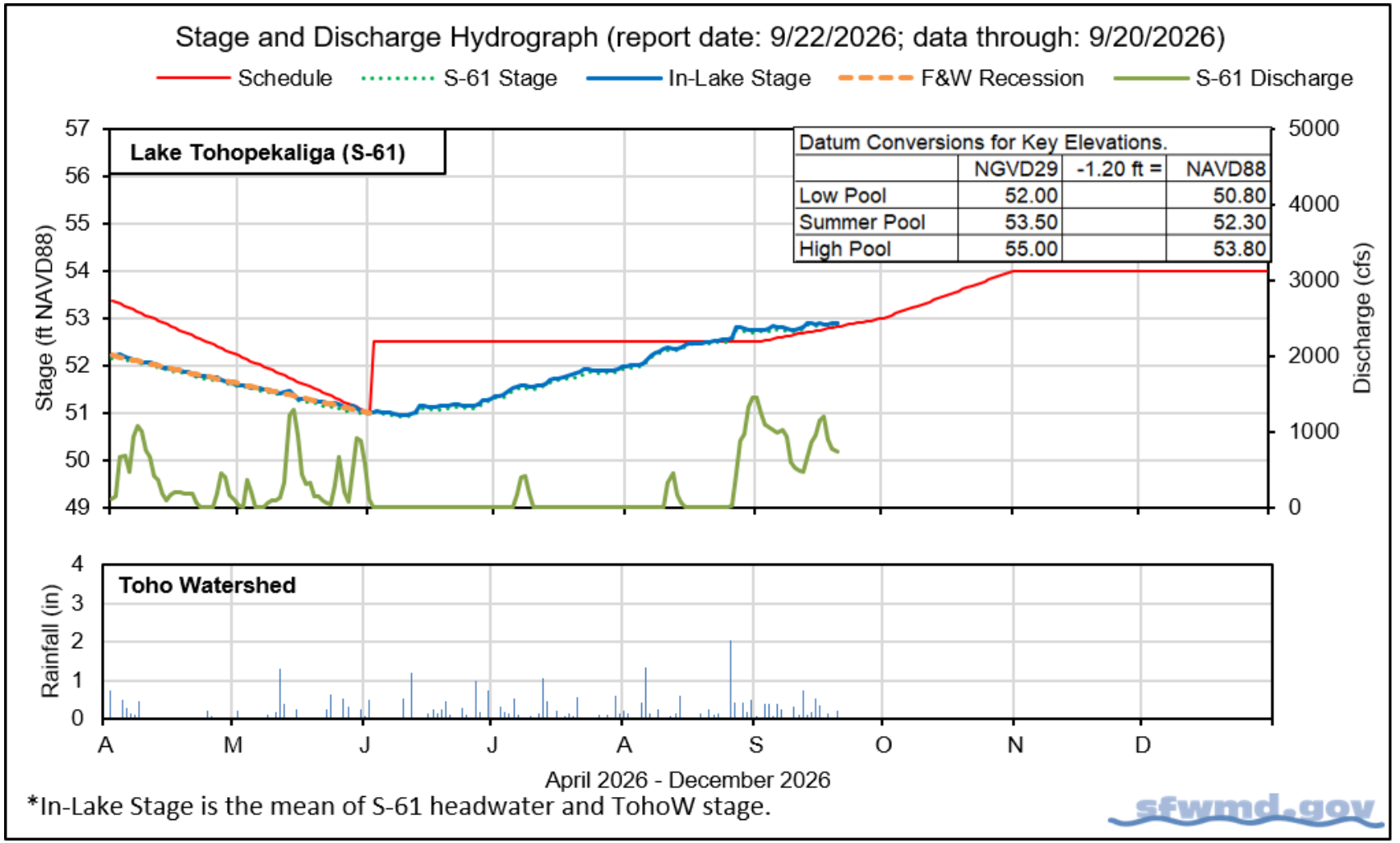


Figure KB-2. Lake Toho regulation schedule, stage, discharge, and rainfall.

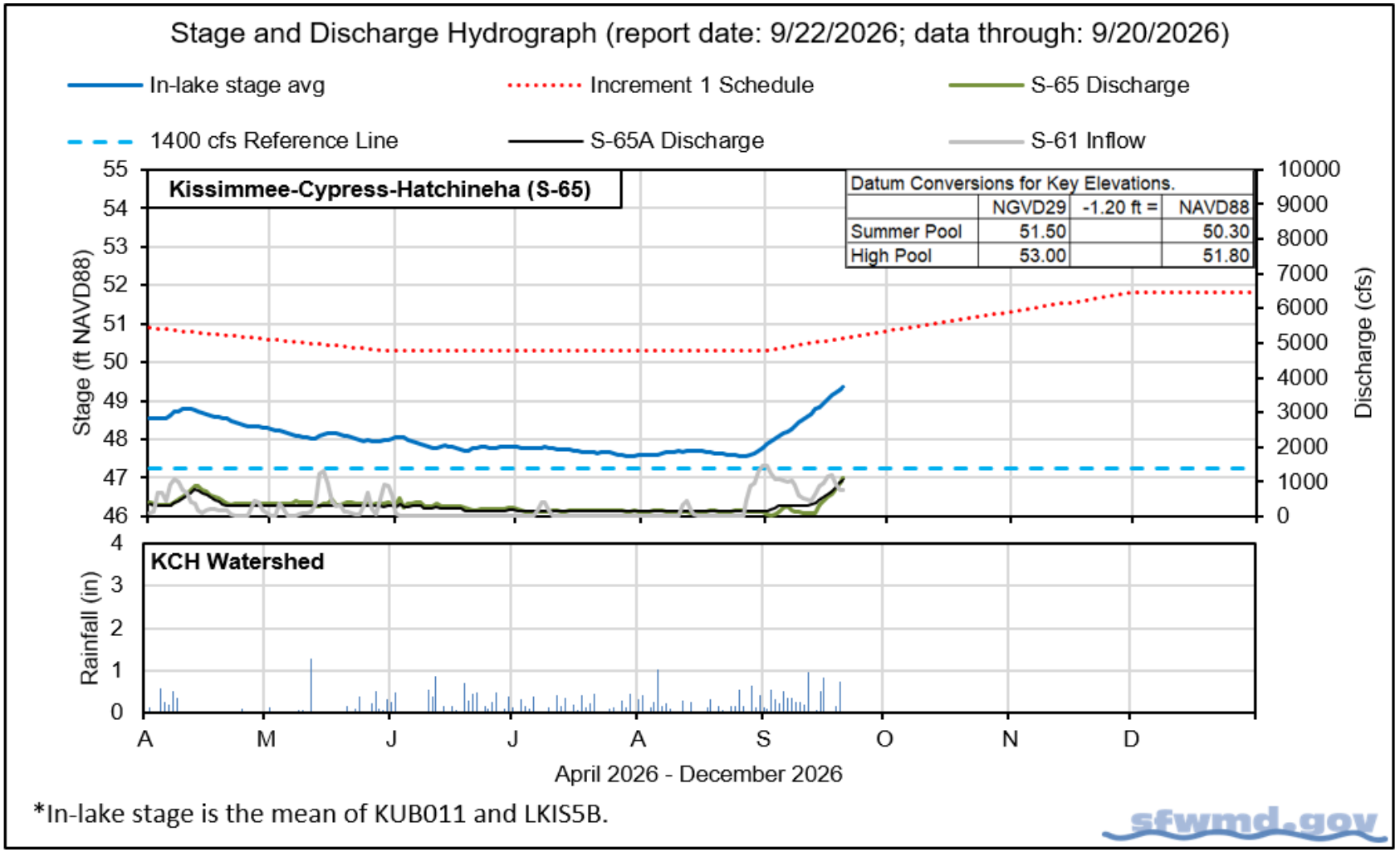


Figure KB-3. Lakes Kissimmee, Cypress and Hatchineha regulation schedule, stage, discharge, and rainfall.

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			
		9/20/26	9/20/26	9/13/26	9/6/26	8/30/26
Discharge	S-65	1,100	690	120	140	140
Discharge	S-65A[a]	1,100	740	330	240	150
Headwater Stage (feet NAVD88)	S-65A	45.3	45.3	45.3	45.3	45.2
Discharge	S-65D[b]	1,200	1,000	510	450	270
Headwater Stage (feet NAVD88)	S-65D[c]	24.7	30.2	28.9	28.0	27.5
Discharge (cfs)	S-65E[d]	1,100	960	540	510	220
Discharge (cfs)	S-67	0	0	0	0	0
Dissolved Oxygen (mg/L)[e]	Phase I, II/III river channel	2.9	3.0	3.4	4.2	4.9
River channel mean stage (feet NAVD88)[f]	Phase I river channel	34.1	33.2	31.5	30.6	29.8
Mean depth (feet)[g]	Phase I & II/III floodplain	0.40	0.38	0.33	0.33	0.33

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).

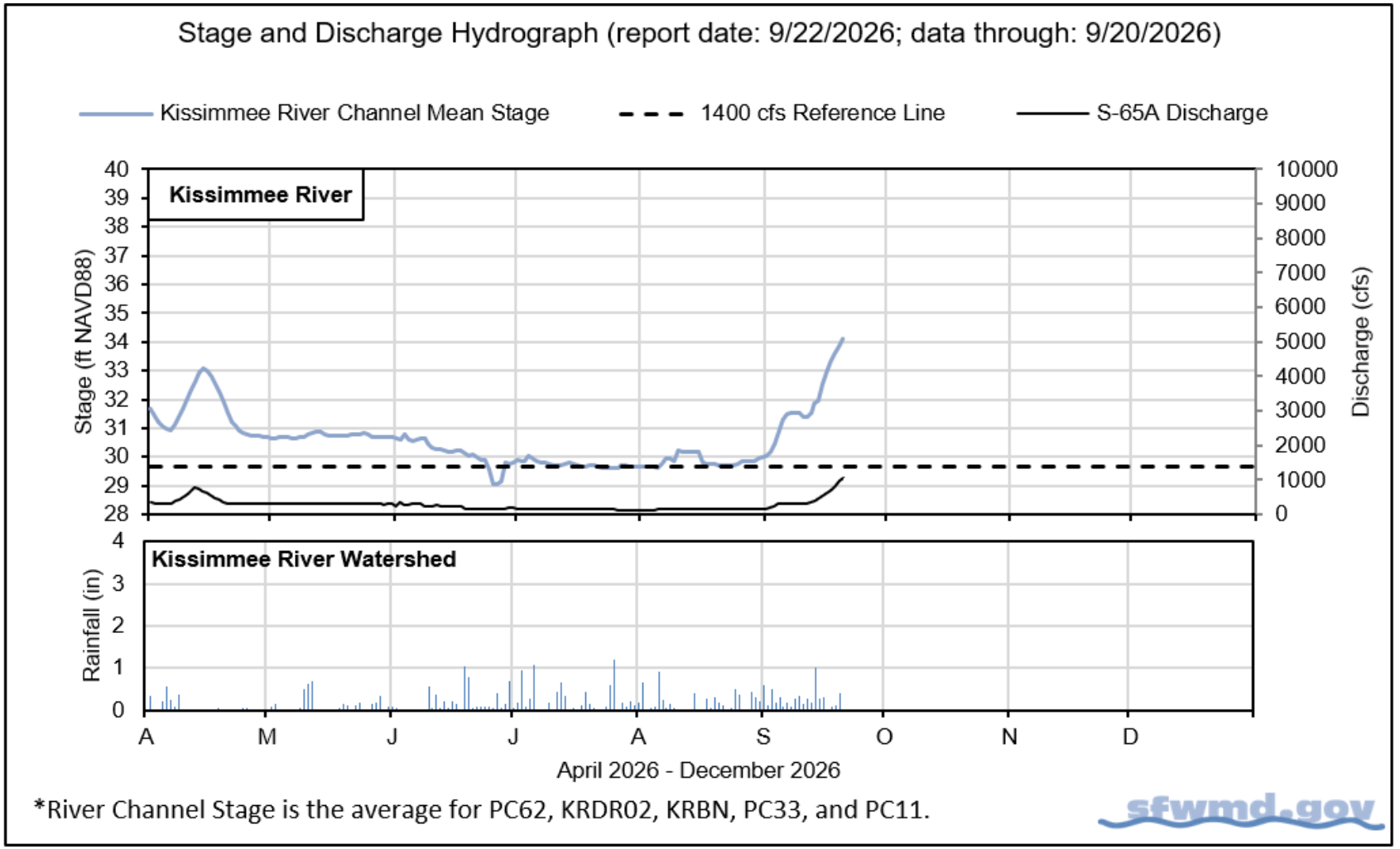


Figure KB-4. Kissimmee River stage, discharge, and rainfall.

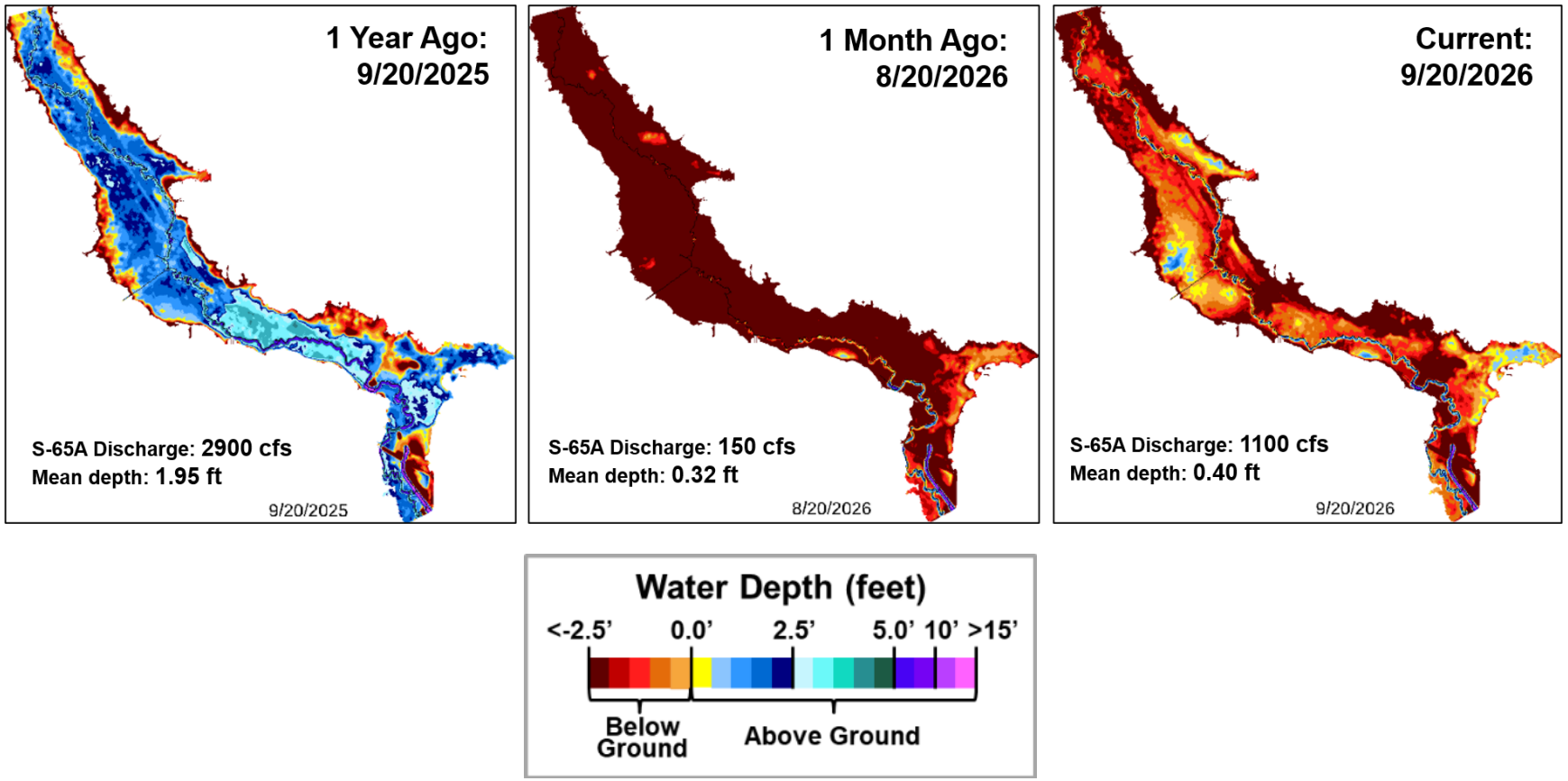
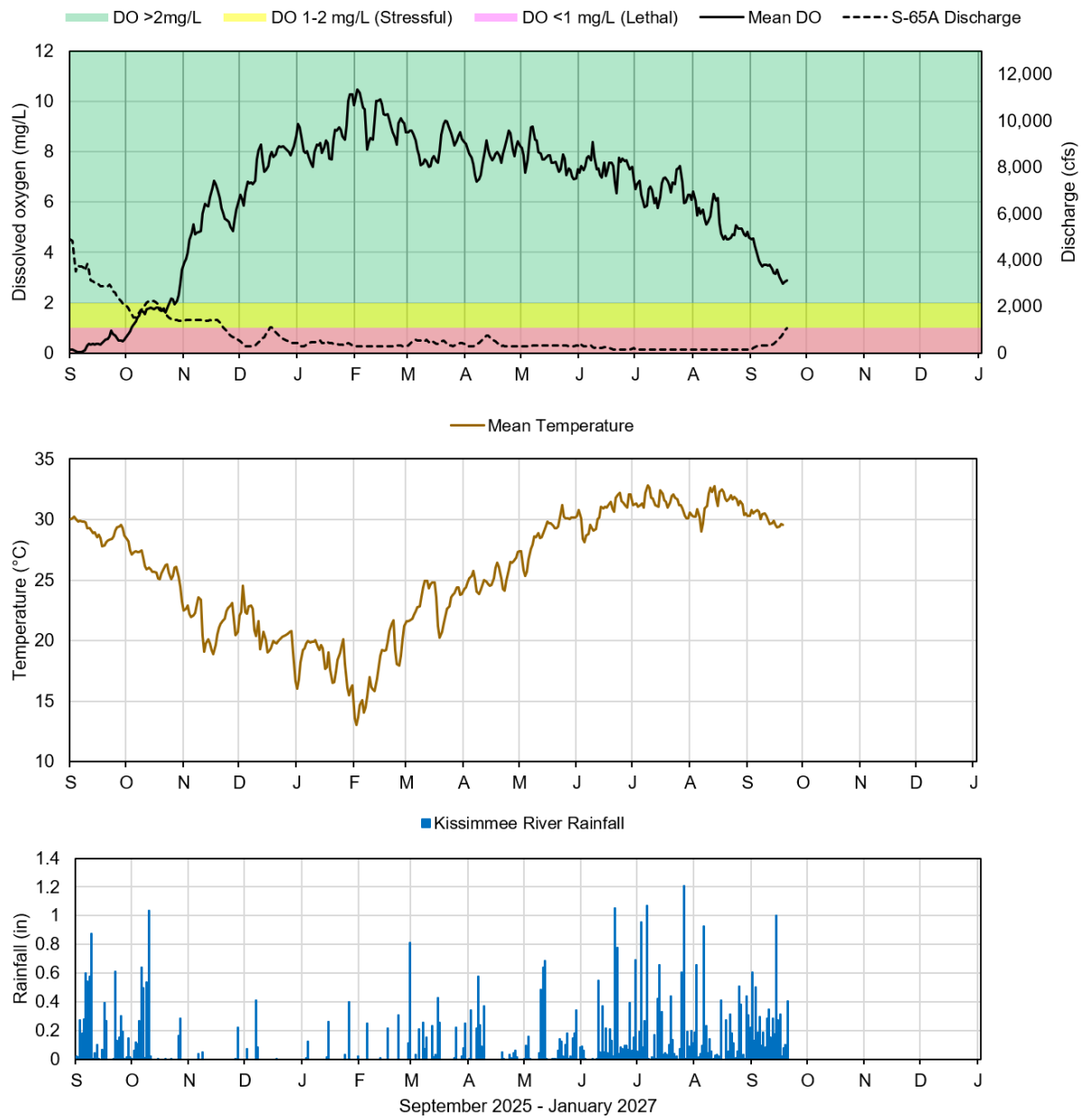


Figure KB-5. Phase I-II-III area Kissimmee River floodplain water depths (from left to right) one year ago, one month ago, and current.



Report Date: 9/22/2026; data are through: 9/20/2026

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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

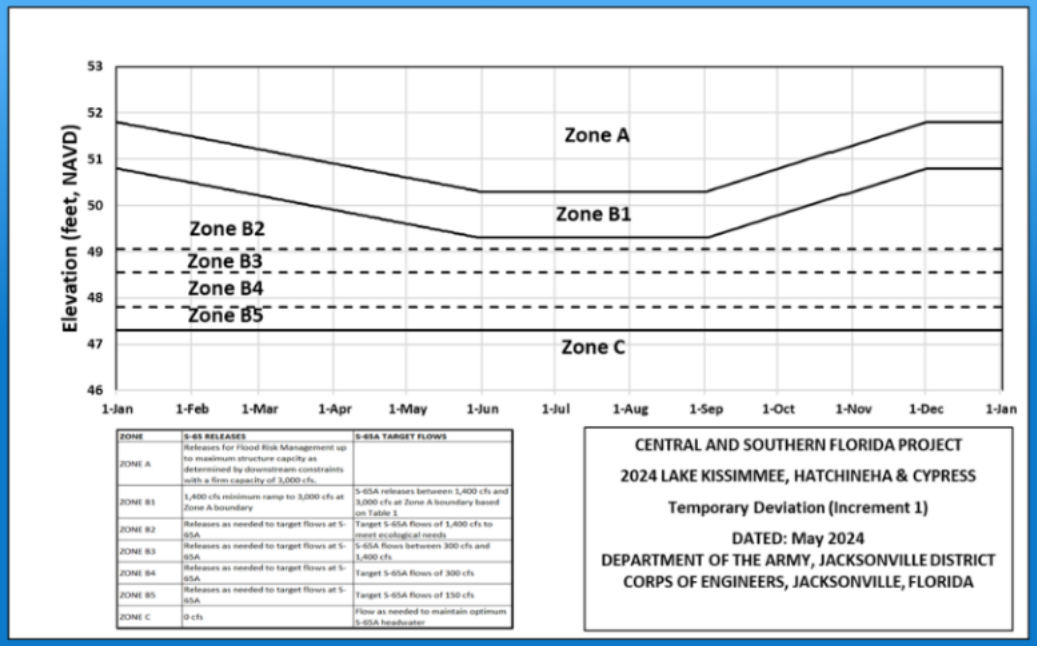
HRS Increment 1 Temporary Deviation Discharge Plan for S-65/S-65A

Discharge Guidance for Increment I Temporary Deviation Discharge Plan		
ZONE	**S-65 RELEASES**	**S-65A TARGET FLOWS**
ZONE A	Releases for Flood Risk Management up to maximum structure capcity 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 Chane 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



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

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.

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10

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

Lake Okeechobee

Lake Okeechobee stage was 10.31 feet NAVD88 (11.62 ft NGVD29) on September 20, 2026, which was 0.26 feet higher than the previous week and 0.73 feet higher than a month ago (**Figure LO-1**). Lake stage remains in the water shortage management band (1.17 feet below the upper limit, **Figure LO-2**) and is 1.05 feet below the ecological envelope (**Figure LO-3**). According to NEXRAD, 1.71 inches (approximately 63,700 acre-feet) of rain fell directly over the Lake during the previous week, and 0.88 inches (approximately 25,700 acre-feet) were lost to evapotranspiration.

Average daily inflows (excluding rainfall) increased from 2,560 cfs the previous week to 4,570 cfs. The largest inflows came from the Kissimmee River (960 cfs via S65E(X)) and Fisheating Creek (780 cfs). There was also backflow from the C-44 Canal (740 cfs via S-308) and the L-8 Canal (510 cfs via S-271). Average daily outflows (excluding evapotranspiration) remained at 0 cfs for the third consecutive week. **Figures LO-4 and LO-5** show the combined average daily inflows and outflows for the Lake over the past eight weeks, and the average inflows and outflows last week, respectively.

In the most recent non-obscured satellite image from September 19, 2026, NOAA's Harmful Algal Bloom Monitoring System suggests moderate to high cyanobacteria potential in the western and central regions of the Lake (**Figure LO-6**).

The routine water quality and phytoplankton monitoring sampling trips are on the bloom season (May-Oct) twice per month sampling schedule. Provisional phytoplankton results from the September 14 - 16 sampling event found 10 of the 26 phytoplankton samples collected had detectable levels of cylindrospermopsin. All detections were less than 1 µg/L, well below the USEPA recreational guidelines (**Figure LO-7**).

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

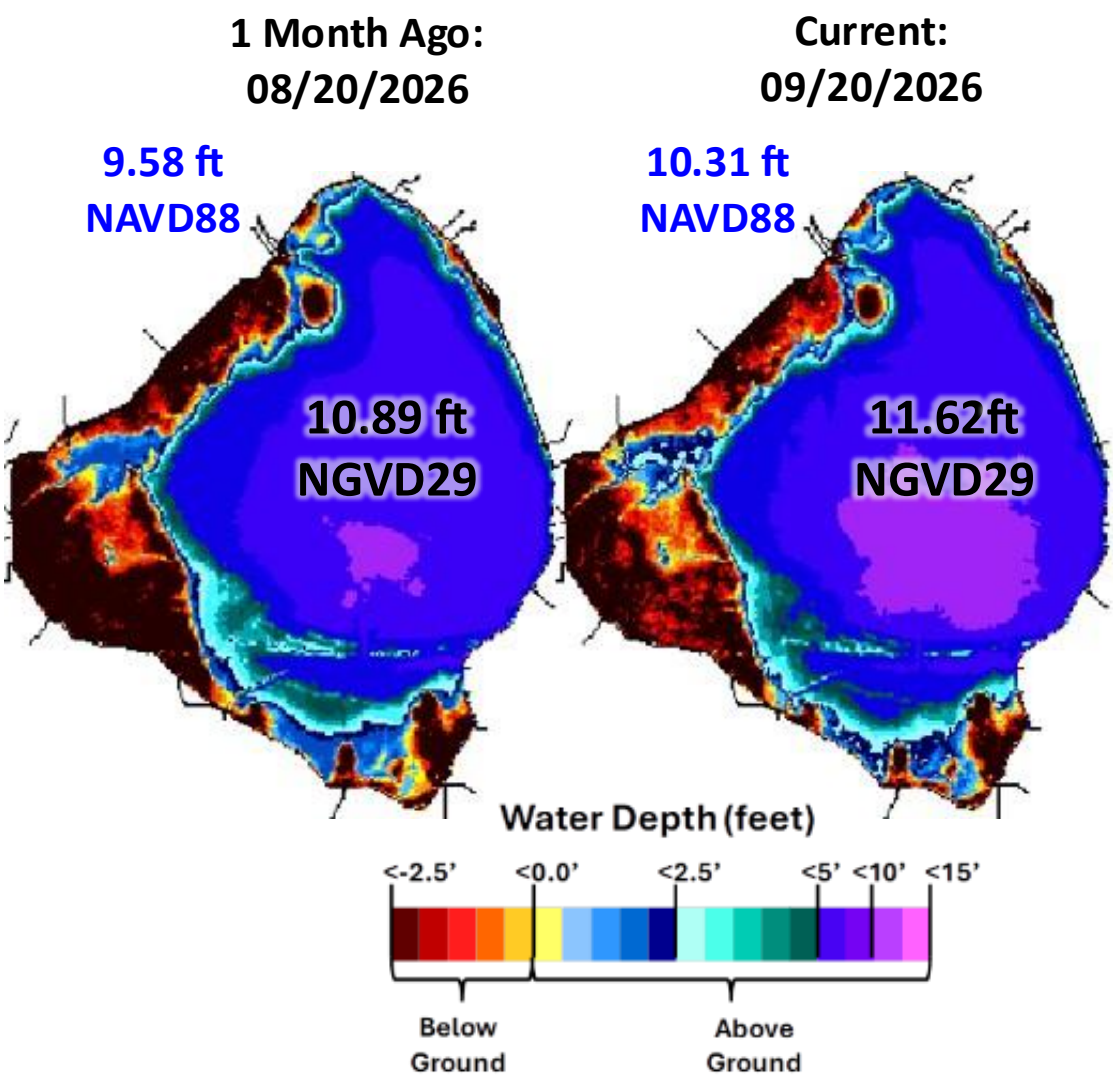

Figure LO-1. Lake Okeechobee water depth estimates based on South Florida Water Depth Assessment Tool (SFWDAT).

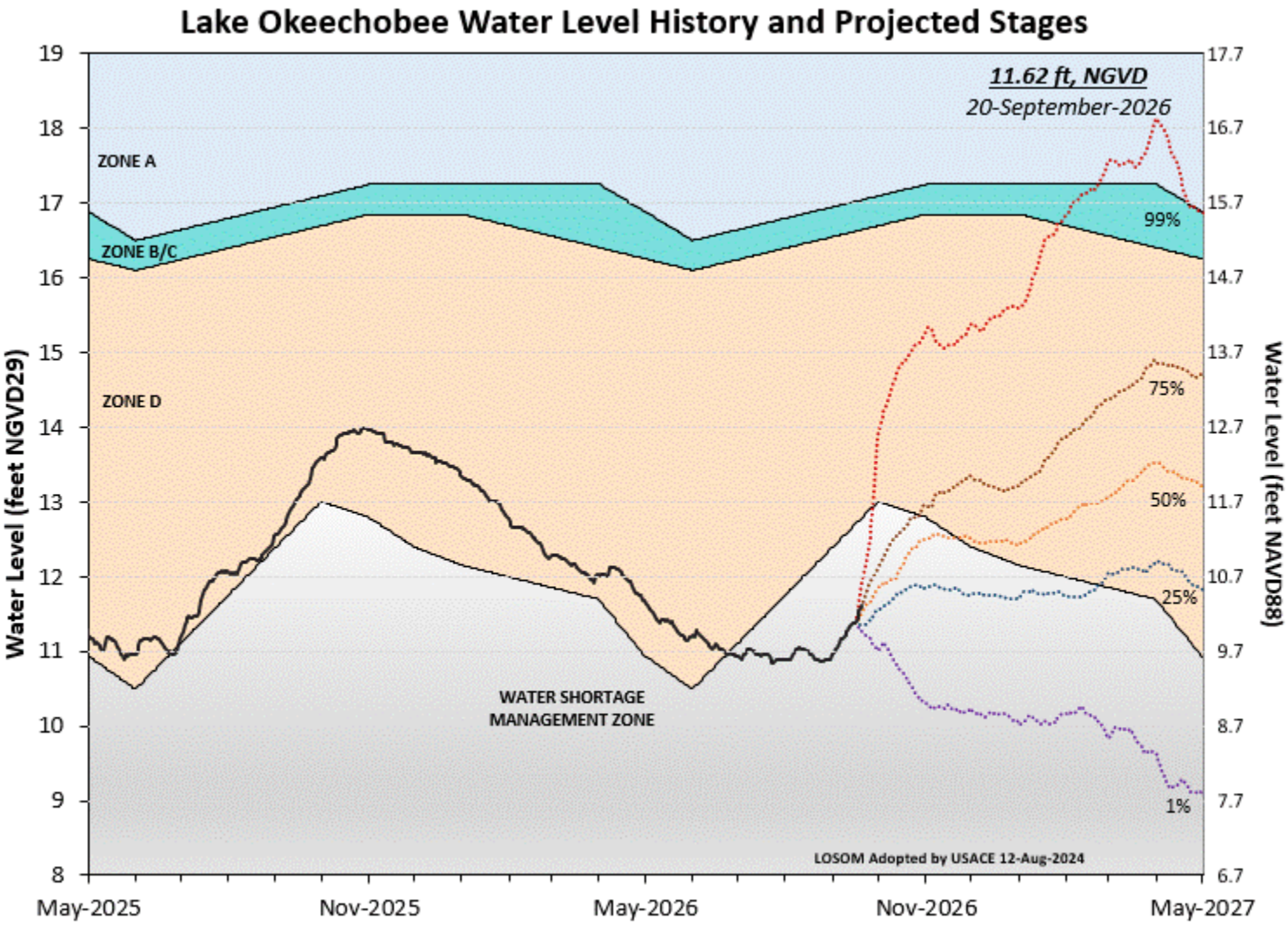

Figure LO-2. Recent Lake Okeechobee stages with projected stages based on a conditional position analysis. Note: stages are in NGVD29, approximate NAVD88 values are shown for reference.

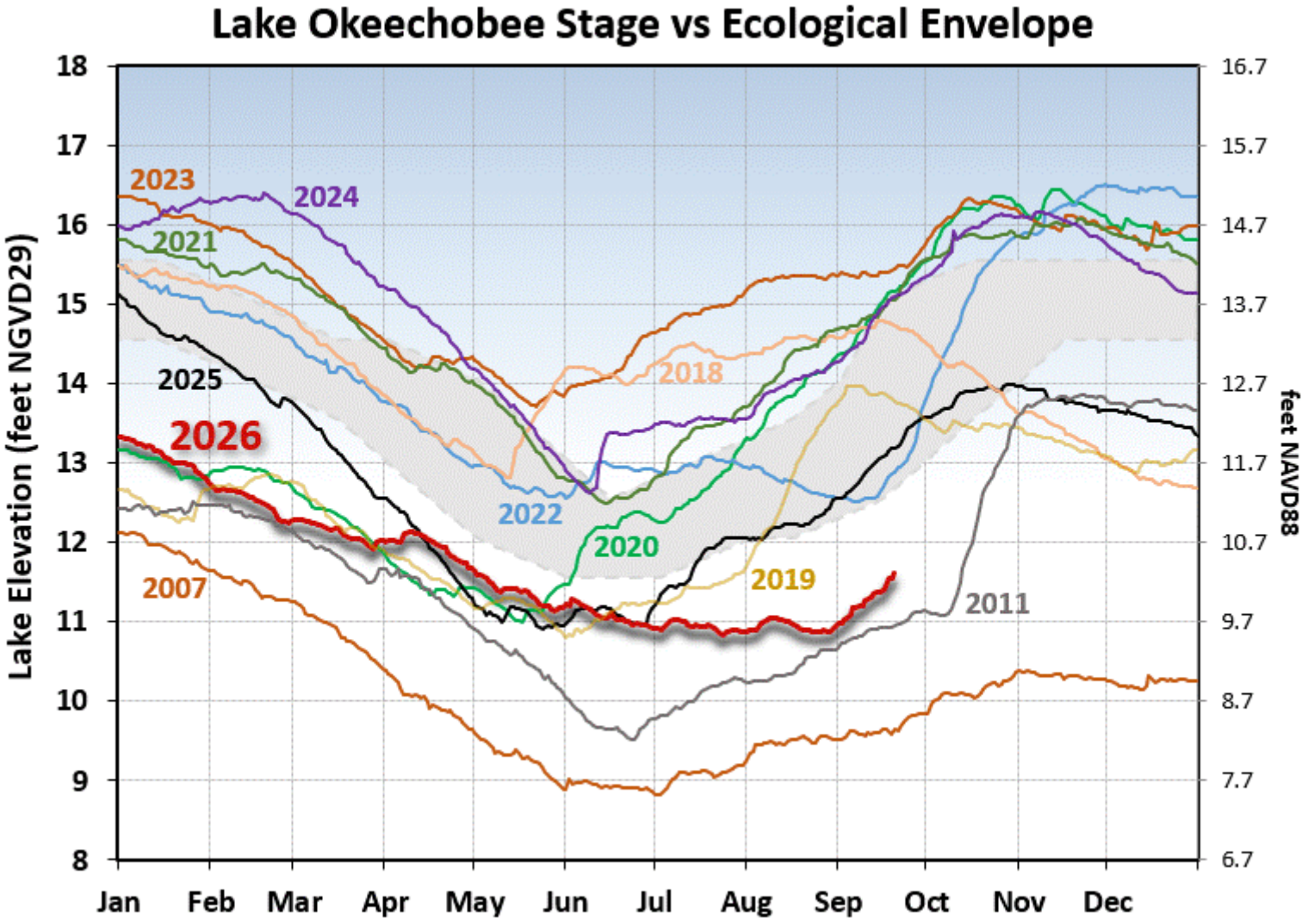

Figure LO-3. The current and select prior year's annual lake stage hydrographs in comparison to the Lake Okeechobee ecological envelope (light grey).

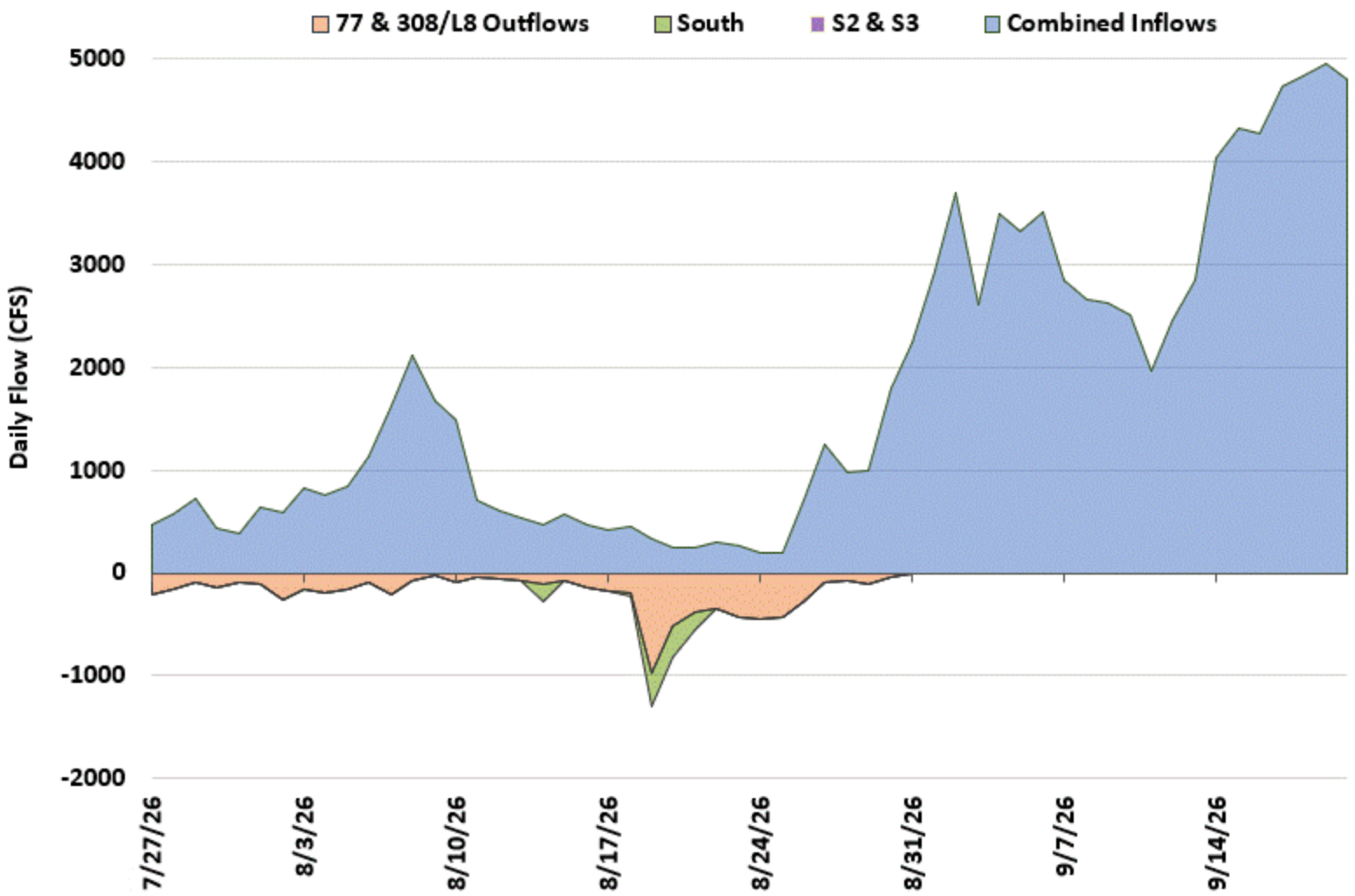

Figure LO-4. Major inflows (orange) to and outflows east and west (blue) from Lake Okeechobee. Outflows south are shown in green. Flows into Lake Okeechobee from the L-8 canal through S-271 (formerly Culvert 10A) or from the C-44 canal through the S-308 are included as inflows. Conversely, flows from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

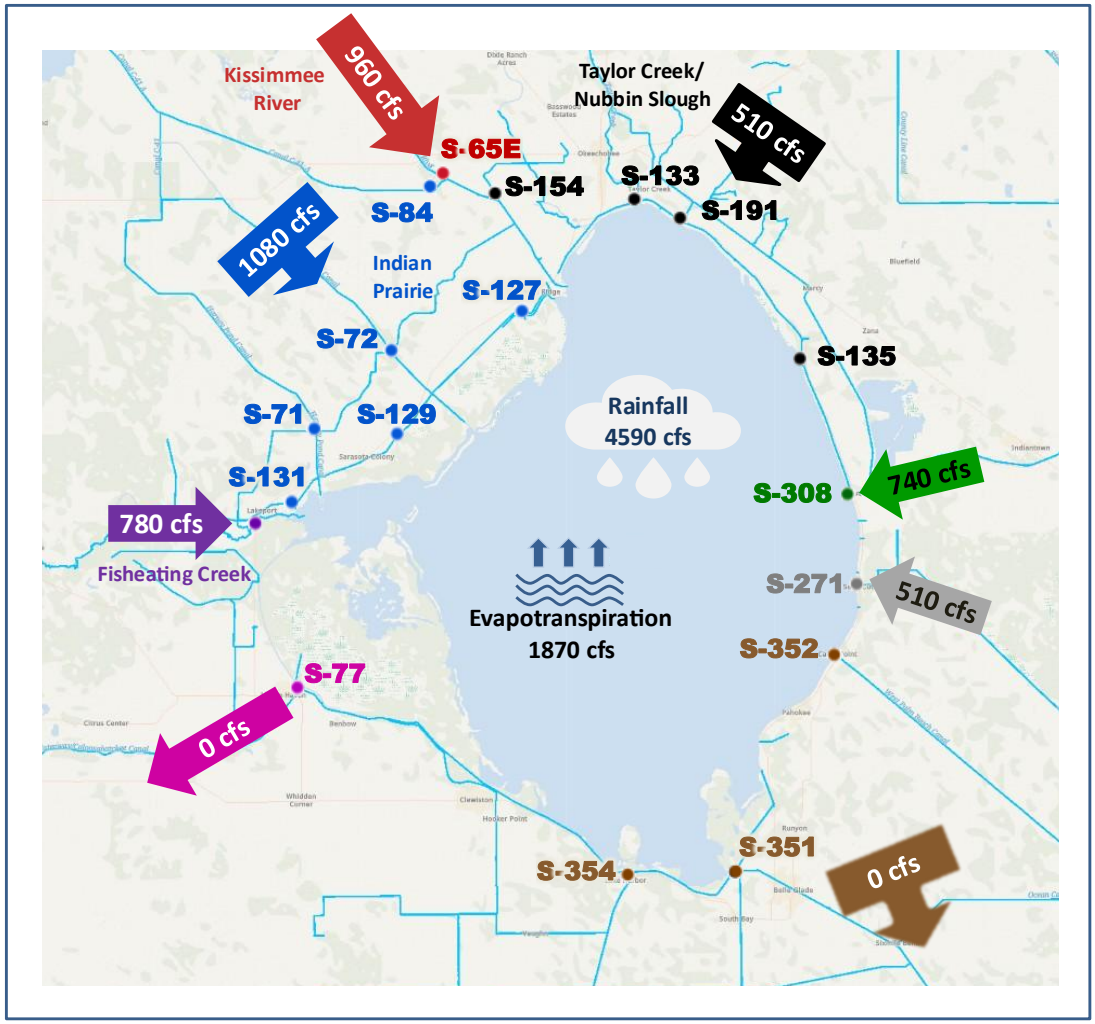

Figure LO-5. Inflows into Lake Okeechobee from Indian Prairie basins, Taylor Creek/Nubbin Slough, Kissimmee River and Fisheating Creek (currently no flow data available for FECR), and outflows to the west via S-77, to the east via S-308, to the south via S-351, S-352, S-354, and to southeast via S-271 (formerly Culvert 10A) for the week of September 14 - 20, 2026.

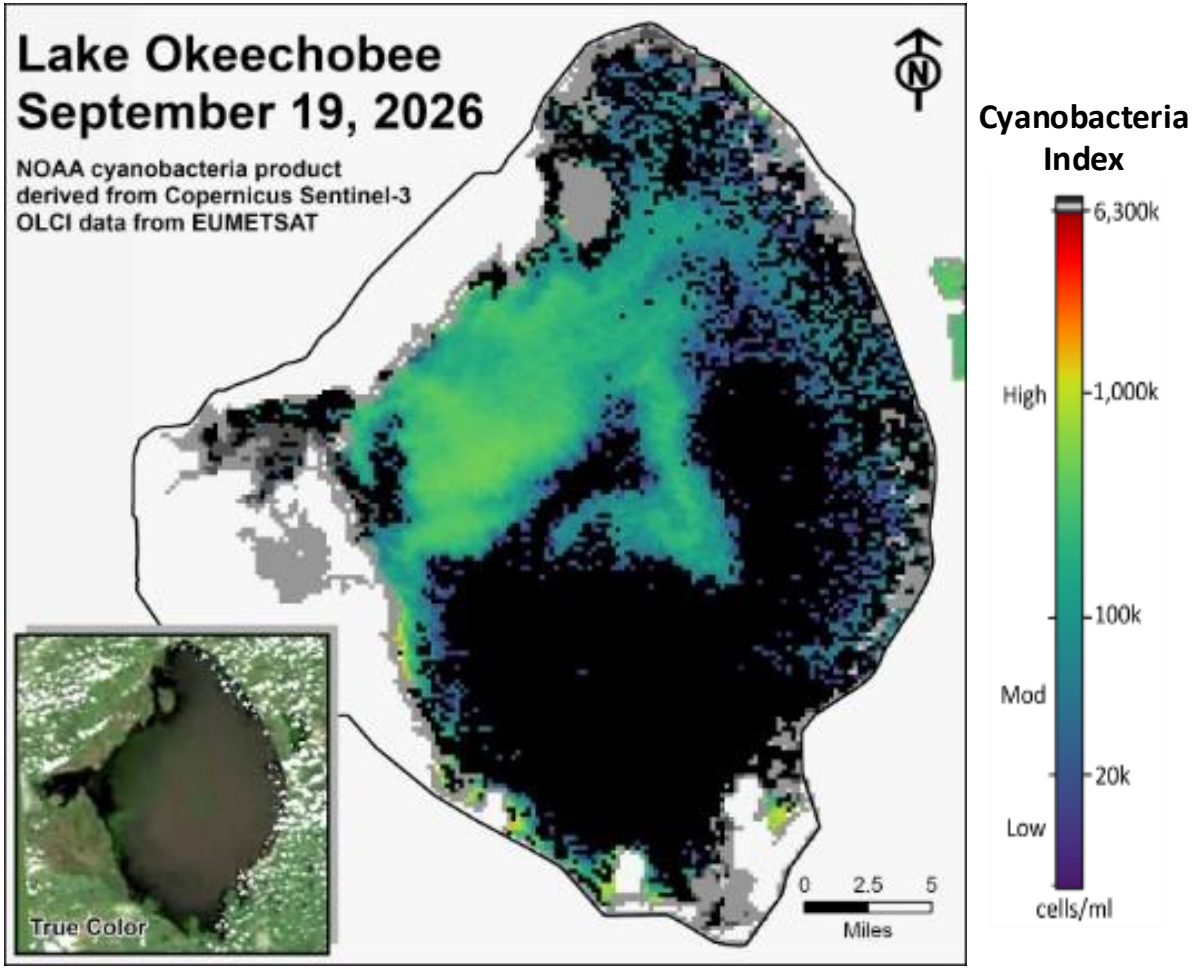

Figure LO-6. Cyanobacteria bloom index level on Lake Okeechobee, based on NOAA's harmful algal bloom monitoring system. Gray color indicates cloud cover. *Provisional NOAA image, subject to change*.

Collection Date: September 14-16, 2026

Station	CHL*a* (ug/L)	TOXIN (ug/L)	TAXA
FEBIN			
FEBOUT			
KISSR0.0		BDL	*mixed*
L005		0.2	*Dolic/Raphi*
LZ2		BDL	*Planktol*
KBARSE		0.6	*Micro/Raphi*
RITTAE2			
PELBAY3			
POLE3S			
LZ25A			
PALMOUT		0.1	*mixed*
PALMOUT1		BDL	*mixed*
PALMOUT2		BDL	*mixed*
PALMOUT3		BDL	*mixed*
POLESOUT		0.9	*Raphi/Plank*
POLESOUT1		0.8	*Raphi/Plank*
POLESOUT2		0.7	*Raphi/Plank*
POLESOUT3		0.6	*Raphi/Plank*
EASTSHORE		BDL	*Dolic/Dinop*
NES135		0.1	*Planktol*
NES191		BDL	*Botryoco*

Station	CHL*a* (ug/L)	TOXIN (ug/L)	TAXA
L001		BDL	*Micro/Plank*
L004		BDL	*Microcys*
L006		BDL	*Microcys*
L007		BDL	*mixed*
L008		0.2	*Raphi/Plank*
LZ30		BDL	*mixed*
LZ40		BDL	*Microcys*
CLV10A		BDL	*mixed*
NCENTER		0.2	*Micro/Raphi*
S308C		BDL	*mixed*
S77		BDL	*mixed*

- SFWMD considers >40µg/L Chlorophyll*a* an algal bloom
- BDL – Below Detectable Limit of **0.2** µg/L (Cyl = 0.1 µg/L)
- ND – No Dominant taxa
- F – Flagged Sample
- Blank – Not sampled
- Station bold font – crew observed possible BGA
- Chlorophyll *a* (CHL*a*) analyzed by SFWMD
- Toxin & Taxa analyzed by FDEP:
  Microcys = Microcystis; Raphi = Raphidiopsis;
  Planktol = Planktolyngbya; Dolicho = Dolichospermum;
  Botry = Botryococcus; Dinop = Dinophyceae

Toxins include cylindrospermopsin* and/or microcystins

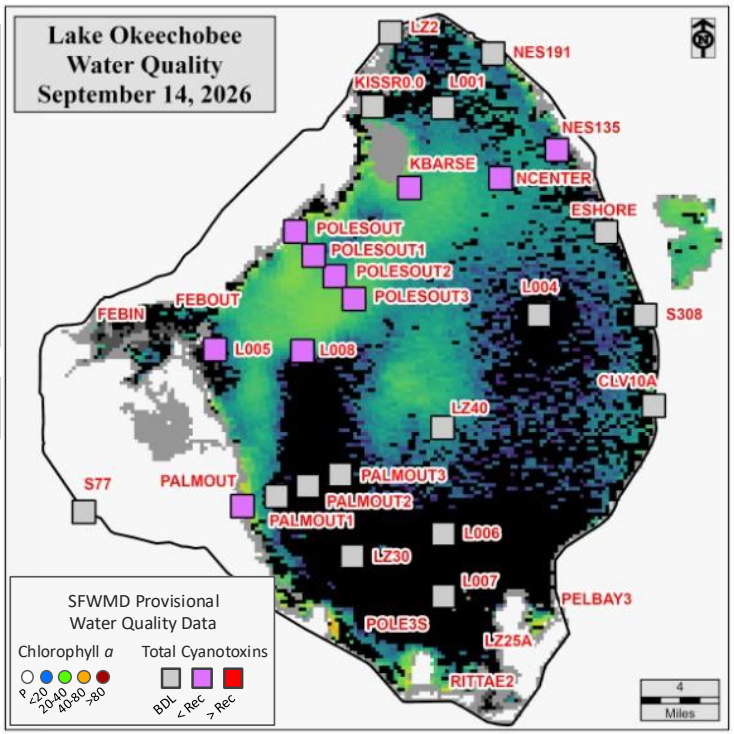

Figure LO-7. Dominant taxa, cyanotoxins (µg/L) and chlorophyll *a* (µg/L) concentration data from September 14-16, 2026. Sampling locations, chlorophyll *a*, and total toxin concentrations are overlaid on the September 14, 2026, image from NOAA's harmful algal bloom monitoring system. Gray color indicates cloud cover.

Estuaries

St. Lucie Estuary

Over the past week, mean total inflow to the St. Lucie Estuary was 2,523 cfs (**Figures ES-1** and **ES-2**), and the previous 30-day mean inflow was 1,314 cfs. For comparison, the historical provisional mean inflows from contributing areas are shown in **Figure ES-2**.

Over the past week, surface salinities decreased at all sites in the estuary (**Table ES-1** and **Figure ES-3**). The seven-day moving average water column salinity at the US1 Bridge was 10.7. 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) for August was 1.6 spat/shell at Rio, which is a decrease from the previous month (**Figure ES-5**).

Caloosahatchee River Estuary

Over the past week, mean total inflow to the Caloosahatchee River Estuary was 5,293 cfs (**Figures ES-6** and **ES-7**), and the previous 30-day mean inflow was 3,521 cfs. The S-79 flow is a six-day mean as no flow data were available for September 20, 2026. For comparison, the historical provisional mean inflows from the contributing areas are shown in **Figure ES-7**.

Over the past week, surface salinities decreased at all sites in the estuary (**Table ES-2** and **Figures ES-8** and **ES-9**). During the past week, the surface sonde located at Shell Point went offline, and surface salinity values had to be estimated. The seven-day mean water column salinity (**Table ES-2**) was in the optimal range (0–10) for tape grass in the upper estuary. The seven-day mean salinity values were within the lower stressed range for adult eastern oysters at Cape Coral, the optimal range at Shell Point and in the upper stressed range at Sanibel (**Figure ES-10**). The mean larval oyster recruitment rates reported by the FWRI in August were 3.4 spat/shell at Iona Cove and 9.6 spat/shell at Bird Island, which is no change at Iona Cove and an increase at Bird Island compared to 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[1]) 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 939 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 0.5 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] Qui, 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 September 18, 2026, that *Karenia brevis*, the Florida red tide dinoflagellate, was not observed in any samples collected within the District region.

Water Management Recommendations

Lake stage is in the Water Shortage Management Zone. Current climatological and hydrological conditions are normal. The LOSOM release guidance suggests no releases at S-79 to the Caloosahatchee River Estuary and no releases at S-80 to the St. Lucie Estuary.

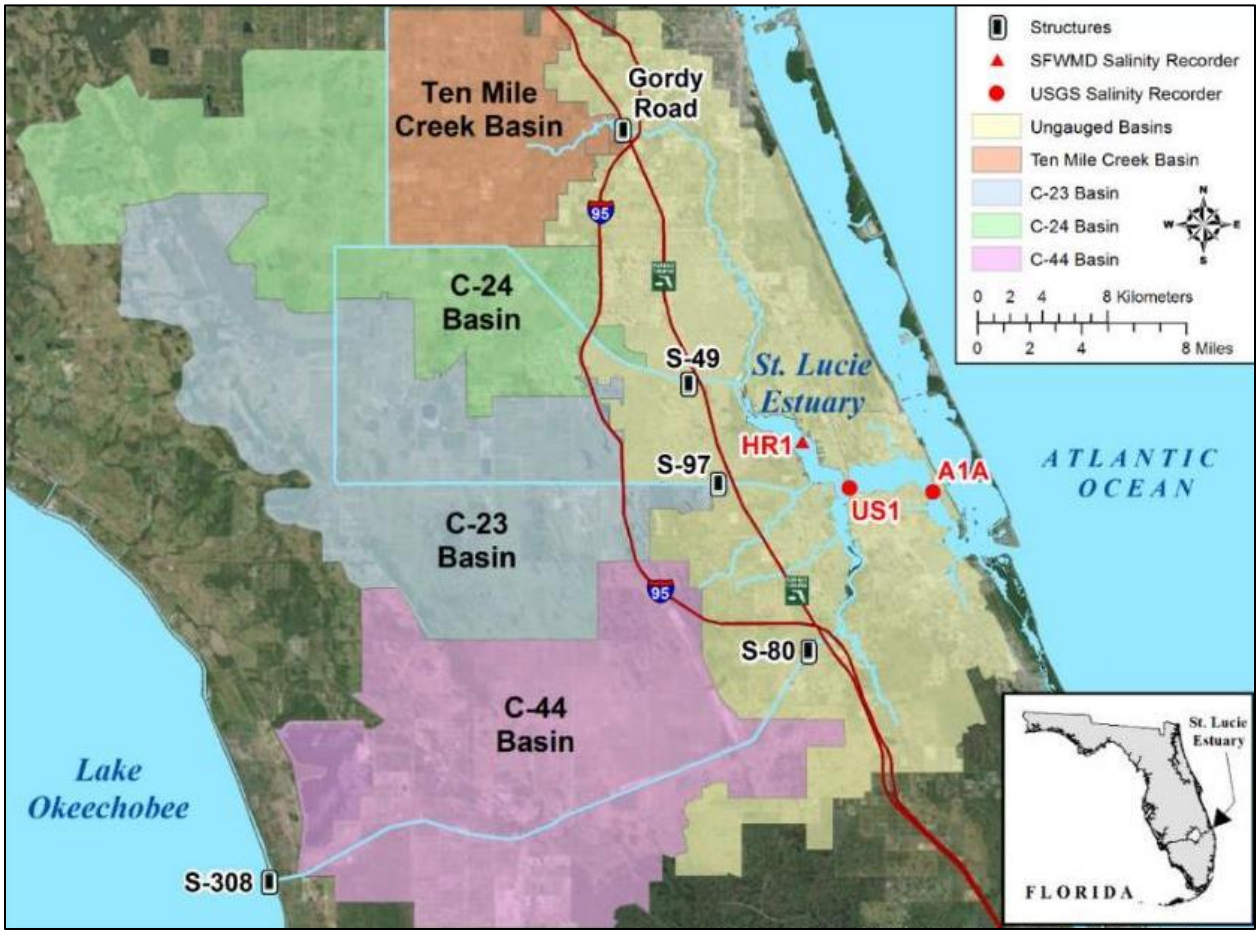

Figure ES-1. Basins, water control structures and salinity monitoring sites in the St. Lucie Estuary.

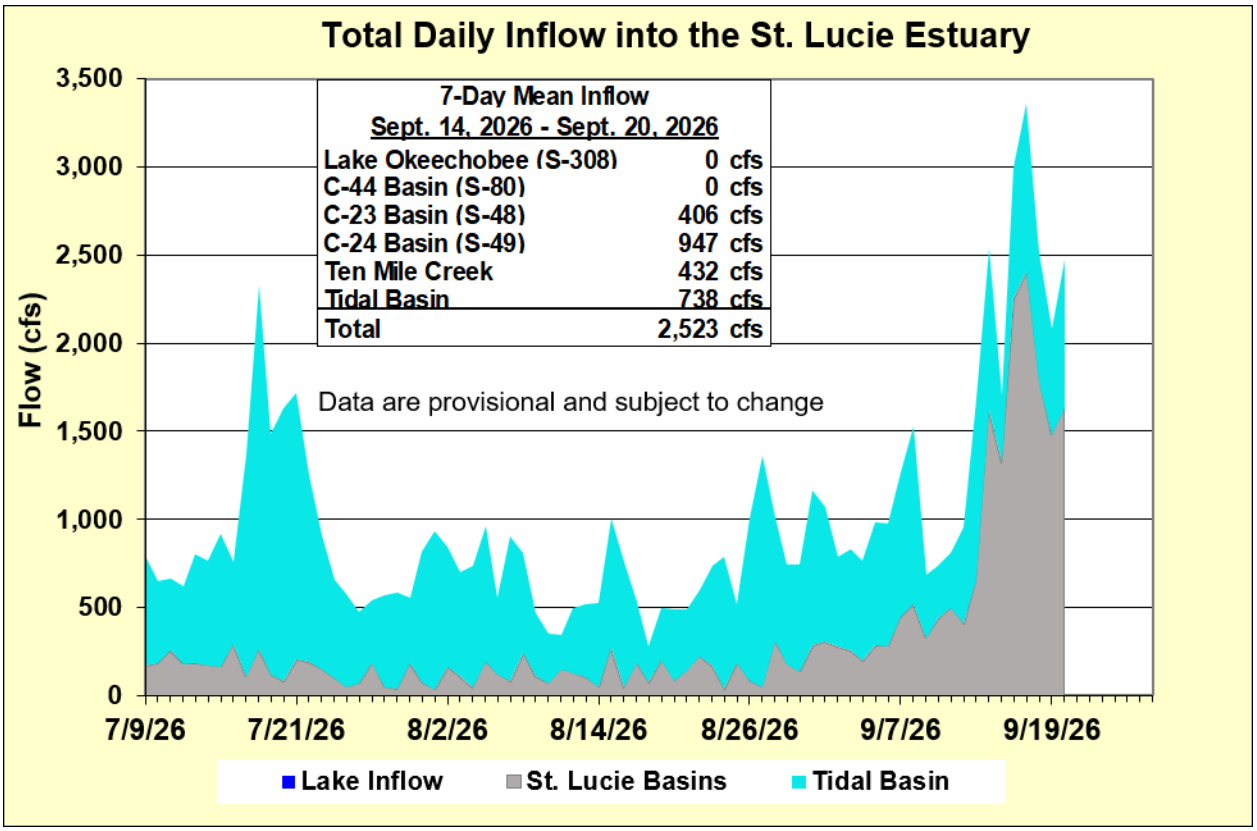

Figure ES-2. Total daily inflows from Lake Okeechobee and runoff from the C-44, C-23, C-24, Ten Mile Creek, and Tidal Basins into the St. Lucie Estuary.

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)	**3.7** (8.2)	**11.4** (13.6)	10.0 – 25.0
US1 Bridge	**8.8** (14.3)	**12.6** (16.3)	10.0 – 25.0
A1A Bridge	**17.6** (23.6)	**33.6** (27.9)	10.0 – 25.0

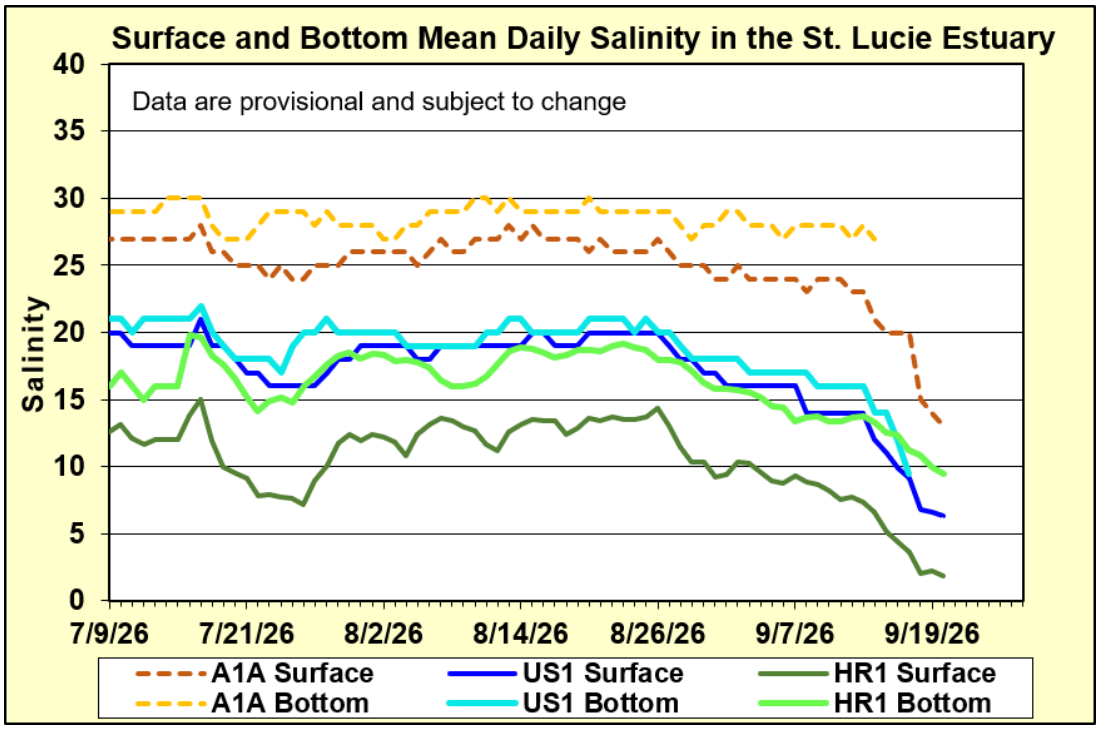

Figure ES-3. Mean daily salinity at the A1A, US1, and HR1 sites in the St. Lucie Estuary. Salinity data missing for the A1A Bottom sonde from 9/15-9/20/2025 and for the US1 Bottom sonde from 9/18-9/20/2025.

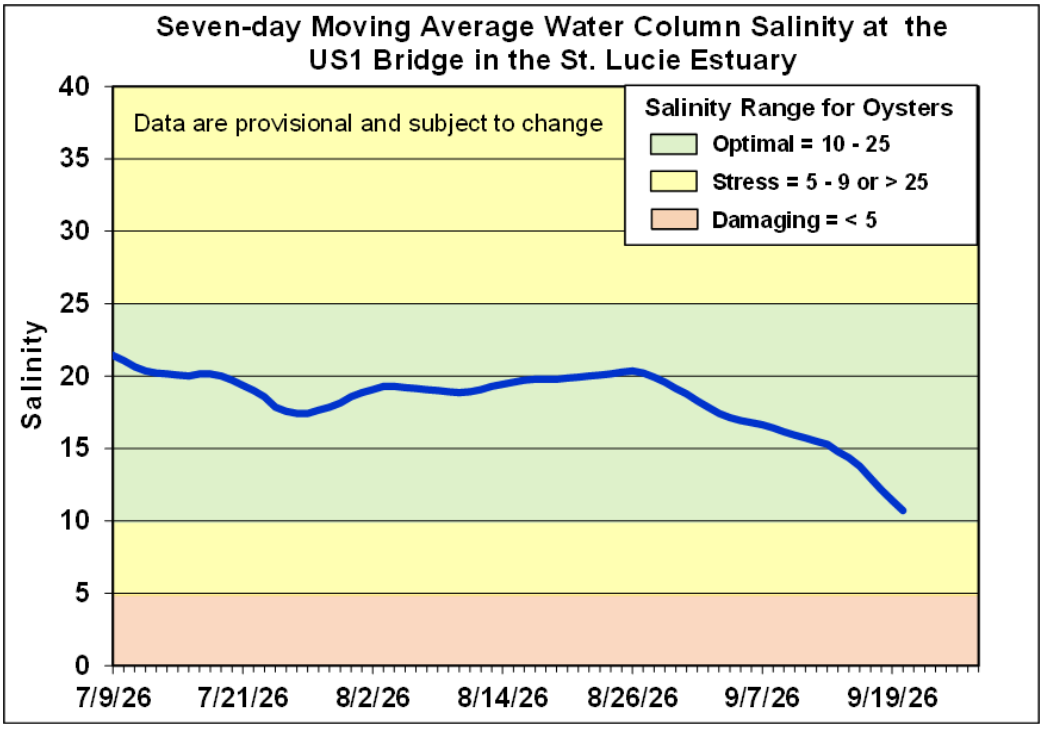

Figure ES-4. Seven-day moving average of the surface and bottom salinities at the US1 Bridge in the St. Lucie Estuary.

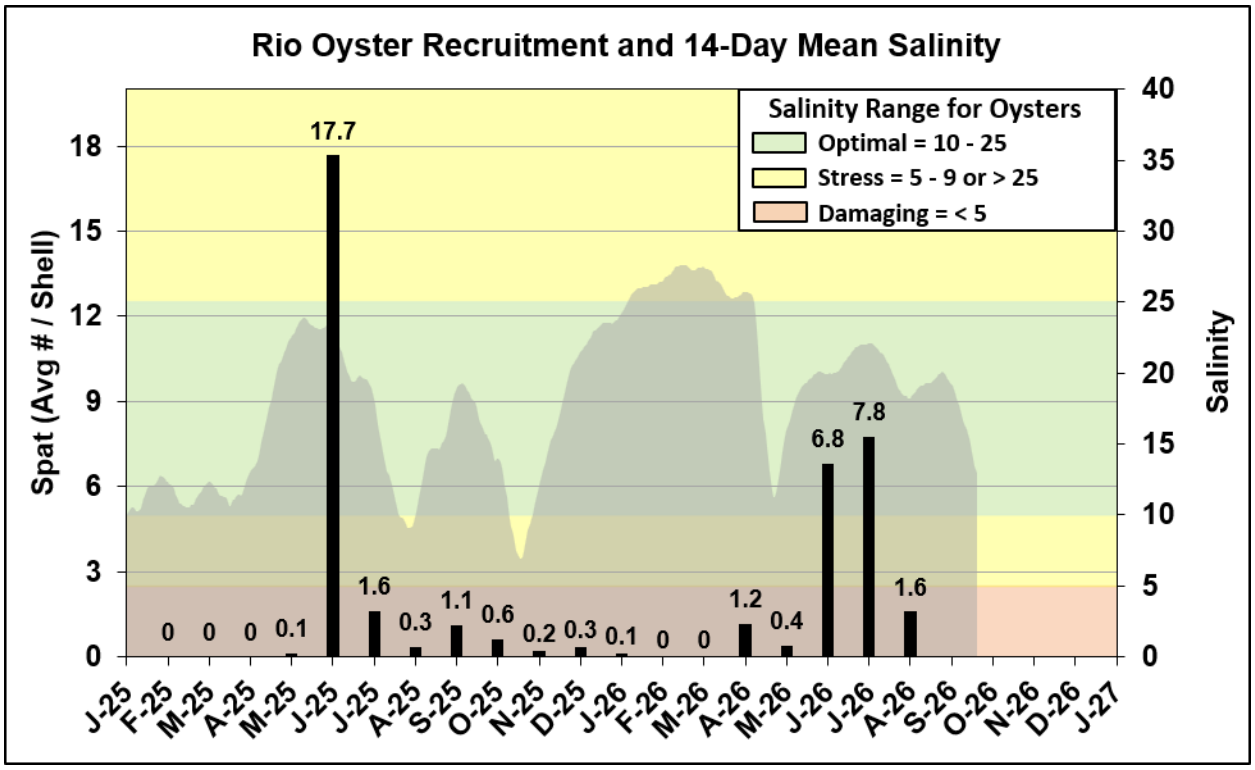

Figure ES-5. Mean oyster recruitment at the Rio oyster monitoring station and 14-day mean salinity at US1 Bridge.

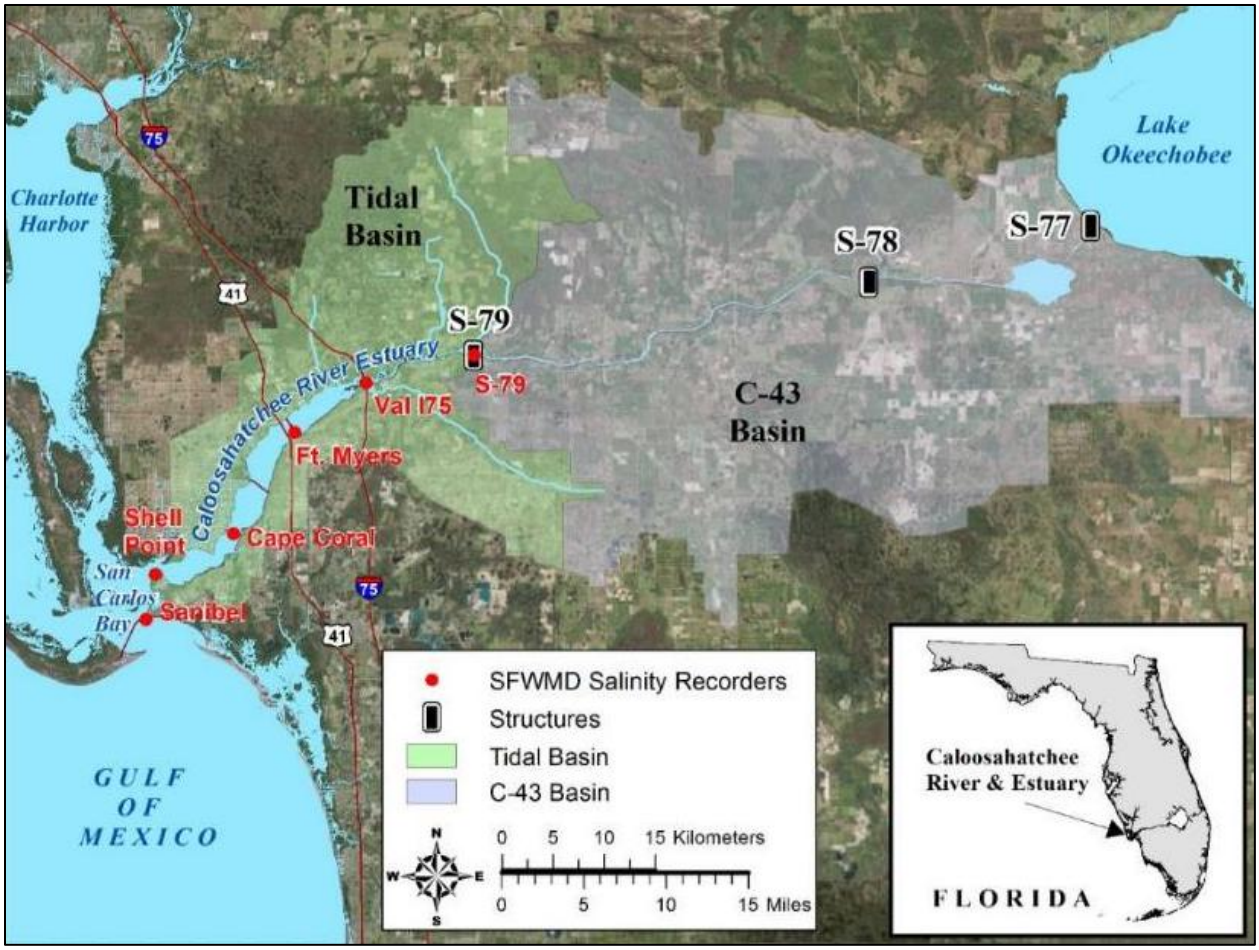

Figure ES-6. Basins, water control structures, and salinity monitoring sites in the Caloosahatchee River Estuary.

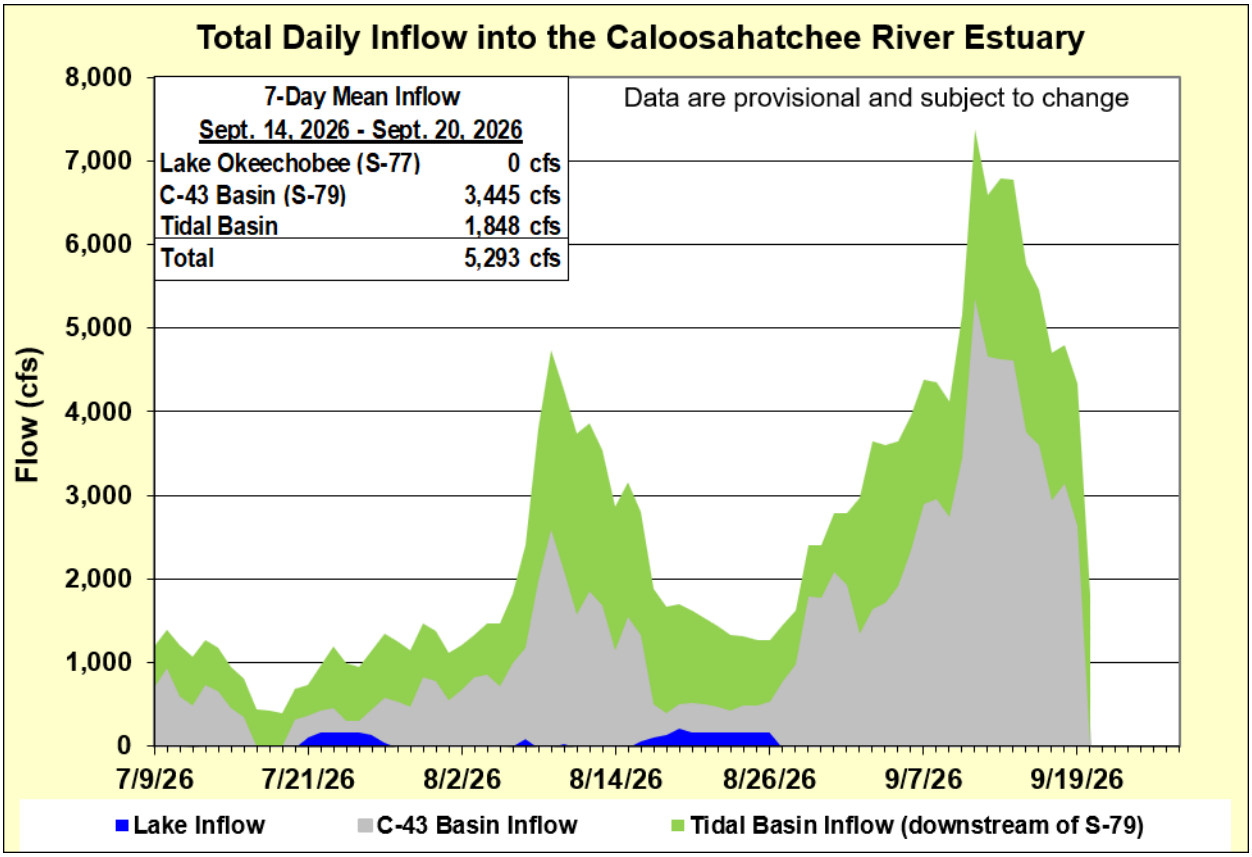

Figure ES-7. Total daily inflows from Lake Okeechobee, and runoff from the C-43 and Tidal basins into the Caloosahatchee River Estuary.

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** (0.3)	**0.2** (0.3)	0.0 – 10.0
Val I-75	**0.3** (0.5)	**0.2** (0.5)	0.0 – 10.0
Fort Myers Yacht Basin	**0.7** (3.7)	**1.7** (5.1)	0.0 – 10.0
Cape Coral	**5.9** (10.9)	**9.2** (12.2)	10.0 – 25.0
Shell Point	**20.4** (26.2)	**23.8** (25.9)	10.0 – 25.0
Sanibel	**29.5** (34.1)	**36.4** (32.9)	10.0 – 25.0

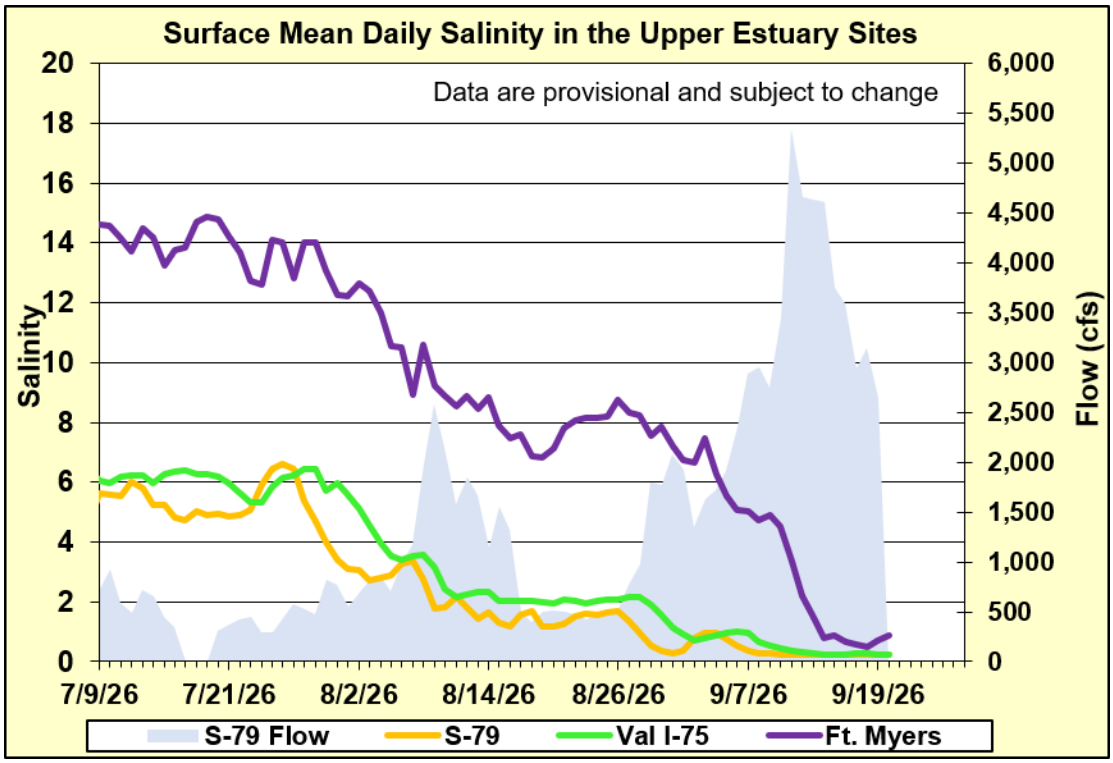

Figure ES-8. Mean daily salinity at upper Caloosahatchee River Estuary monitoring sites and mean daily flow at S-79.

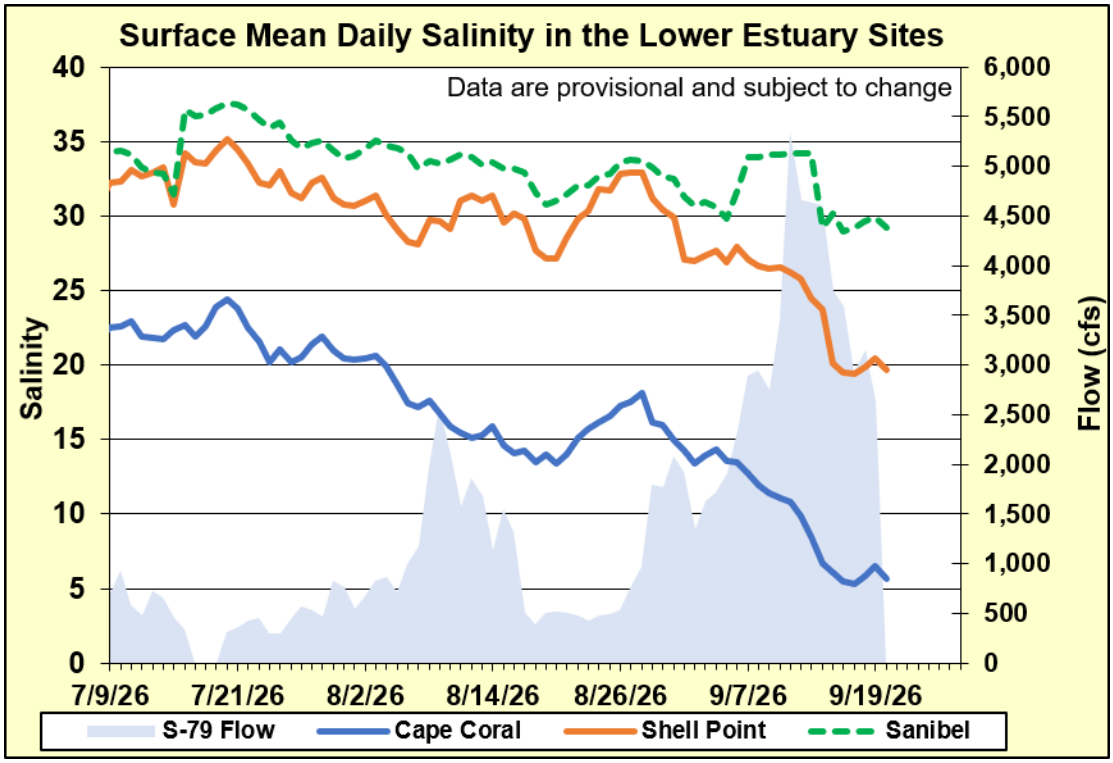

Figure ES-9. Mean daily surface salinity at lower Caloosahatchee River Estuary monitoring sites and mean daily flow at S-79.

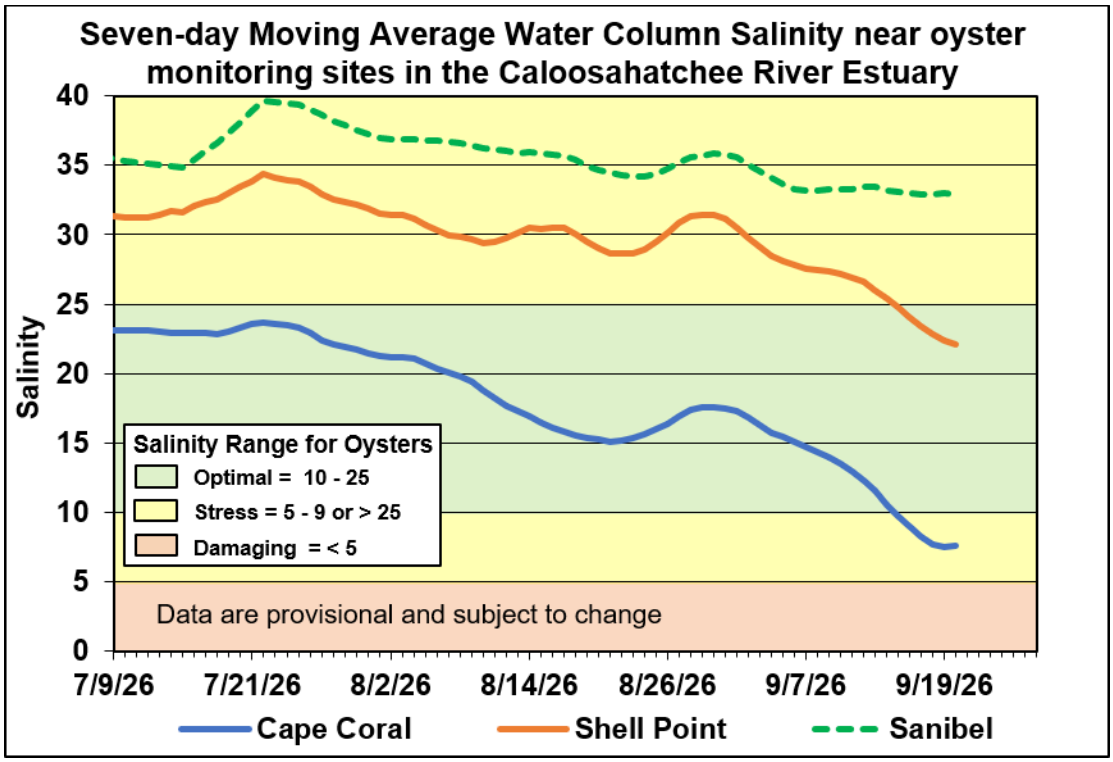

Figure ES-10. Seven-day moving average of surface and bottom salinities at Cape Coral, Shell Point, and Sanibel monitoring sites in the Caloosahatchee River Estuary.

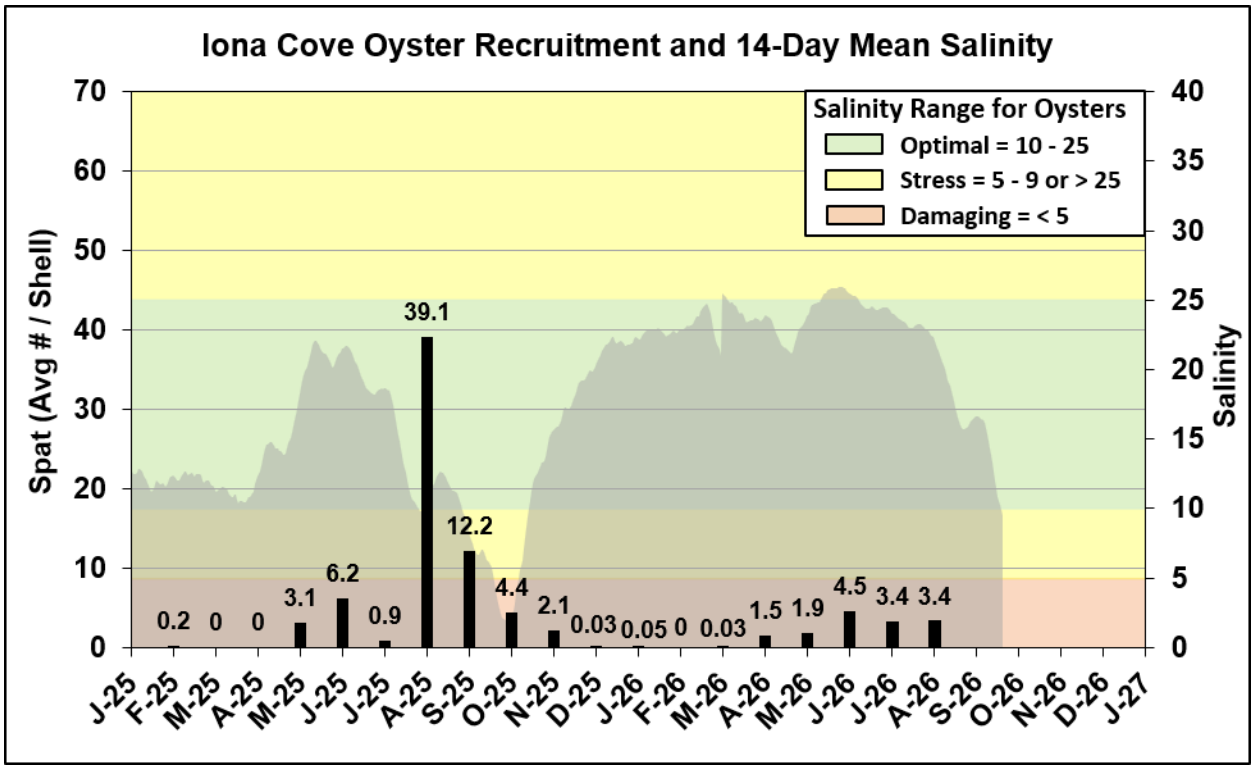

Figure ES-11. Mean oyster recruitment at the Iona Cove oyster monitoring station and 14-day mean salinity at Cape Coral.

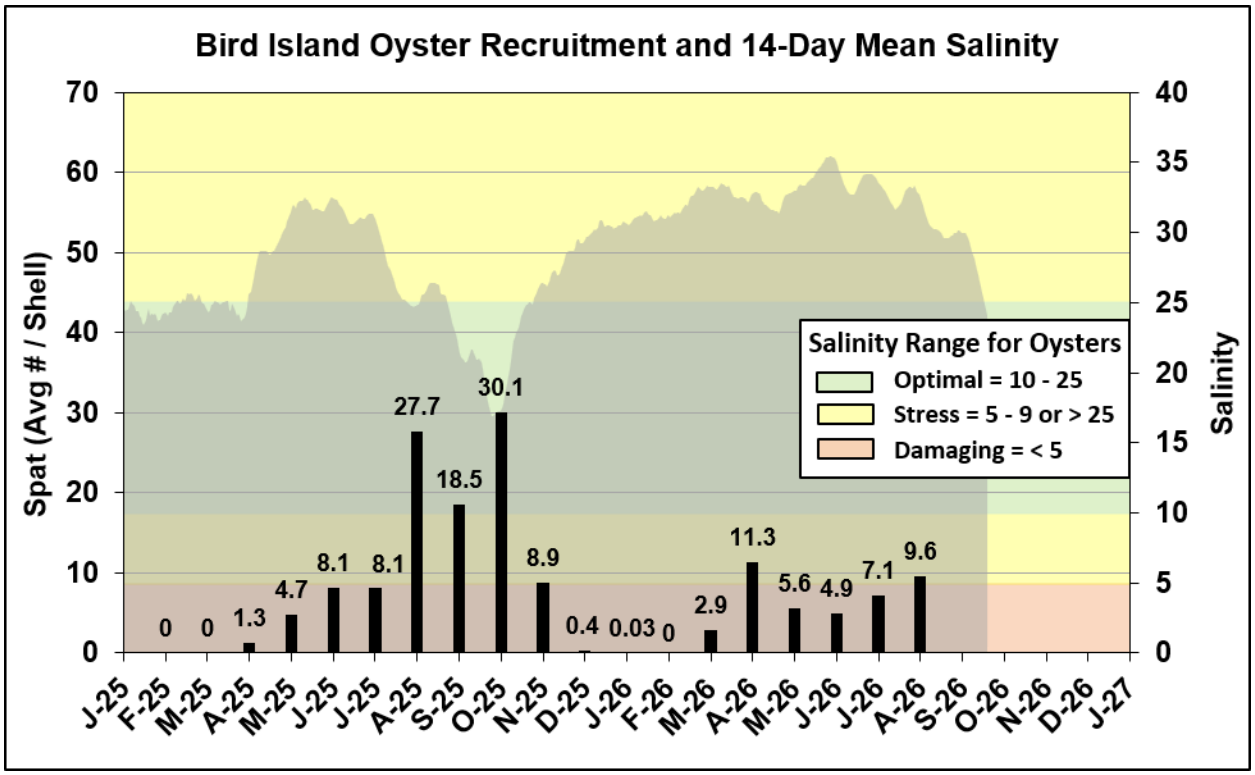

Figure ES-12. Mean oyster recruitment at the Bird Island oyster monitoring station and 14-day mean salinity at Shell Point.

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	939	0.6	0.5
B	750	939	0.3	0.4
C	1,000	939	0.3	0.4
D	1,500	939	0.3	0.4
E	2,000	939	0.3	0.4

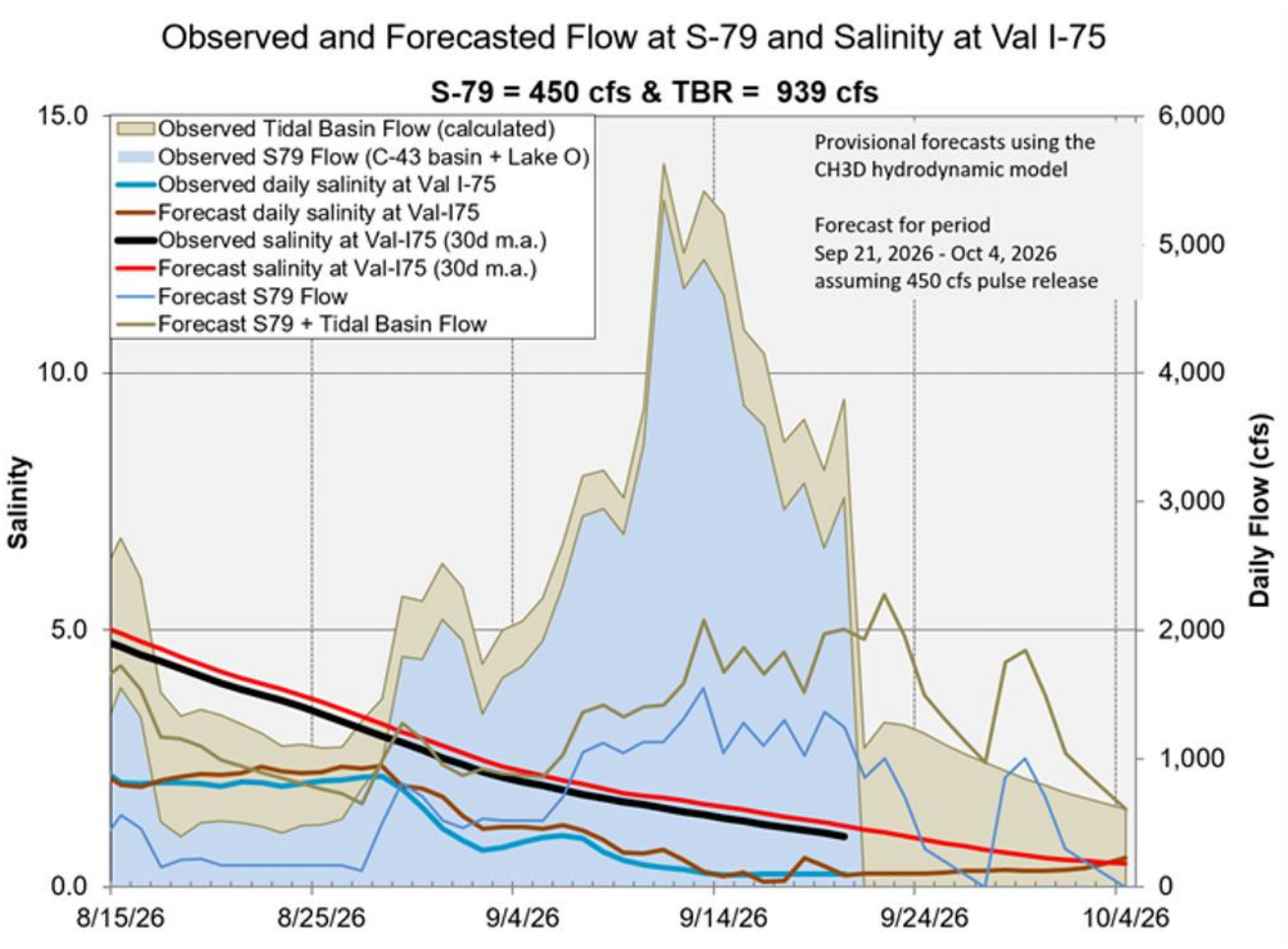

Figure ES-13. Surface salinity forecast at the Val I-75 site assuming a 450 cfs pulse release at S-79.

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 at or above target stage. The 365-day PLRs for the Western and Eastern Flow-way are below 1.0 g/m^2/year (**Figure S-2**).

STA-1W: STA-1W Eastern Flow-way is offline for vegetation management activities. Treatment cells are at or above target stage. Vegetation in the Western and Eastern Flow-ways is highly stressed. The 365-day PLRs for the Northern and Western Flow-ways are below 1.0 g/m^2/year (**Figure S-2**).

STA-2: Treatment cells are at or above target stage. An operational restriction is in place in Flow-way 2 for vegetation management activities. The 365-day PLRs for all Flow-ways are below 1.0 g/m^2/year (**Figure S-3).**

STA-3/4: An operational restriction is in place in the Eastern Flow-way for vegetation management activities. Treatment cells are above target stage. Vegetation in the Central Flow-way is highly stressed. The 365-day PLRs for the Eastern, Central, and Western Flow-ways are below 1.0 g/m^2/year (**Figure S-3**).

STA-5/6: Treatment cells are at or above target stage. All treatment cells have highly stressed vegetation conditions. The 365-day PLRs for all Flow-ways are below 1.0 g/m^2/year. (**Figure S-4**).

For definitions on STA operational language see glossary following figures.

Everglades Stormwater Treatment Areas - STAs

- Total WY2027 inflows to STAs (5/1/2026 to 9/20/2026): ~304,000 ac-ft
- Lake Okeechobee releases to FEBs/STAs
  - 9/14/2026 to 9/20/2026: 0 ac-ft
  - WY 2027: ~ 9,500 ac-ft
- Extensive vegetation management activities underway to address stressed and highly stressed vegetation in EAV cells
- All treatment cells are at or above target water depth

Estimated Inflow and Outflow Volumes
Sep. 14th, 2026 - Sep. 20th, 2026 *Includes preliminary data*

	Total Inflow (acre-feet)	Total Outflow (acre-feet)
STA-1E	11,000	12,000
STA-1W	17,000	13,000
STA-2	21,000	23,000
STA-3/4	29,000	30,000
STA-5/6	4,700	950

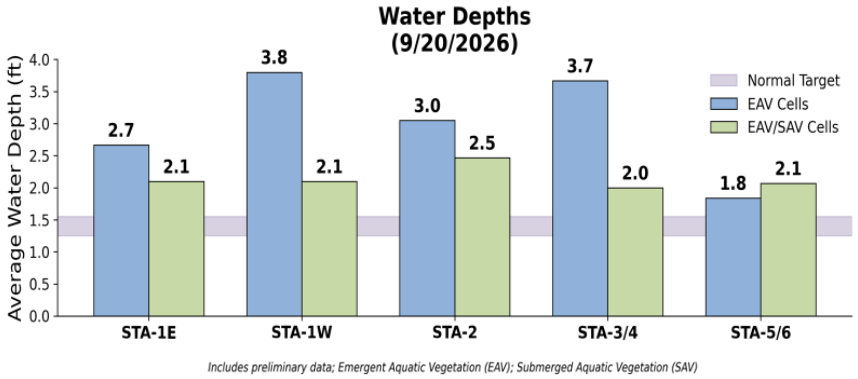

Figure S-1. STA depths and flow volumes

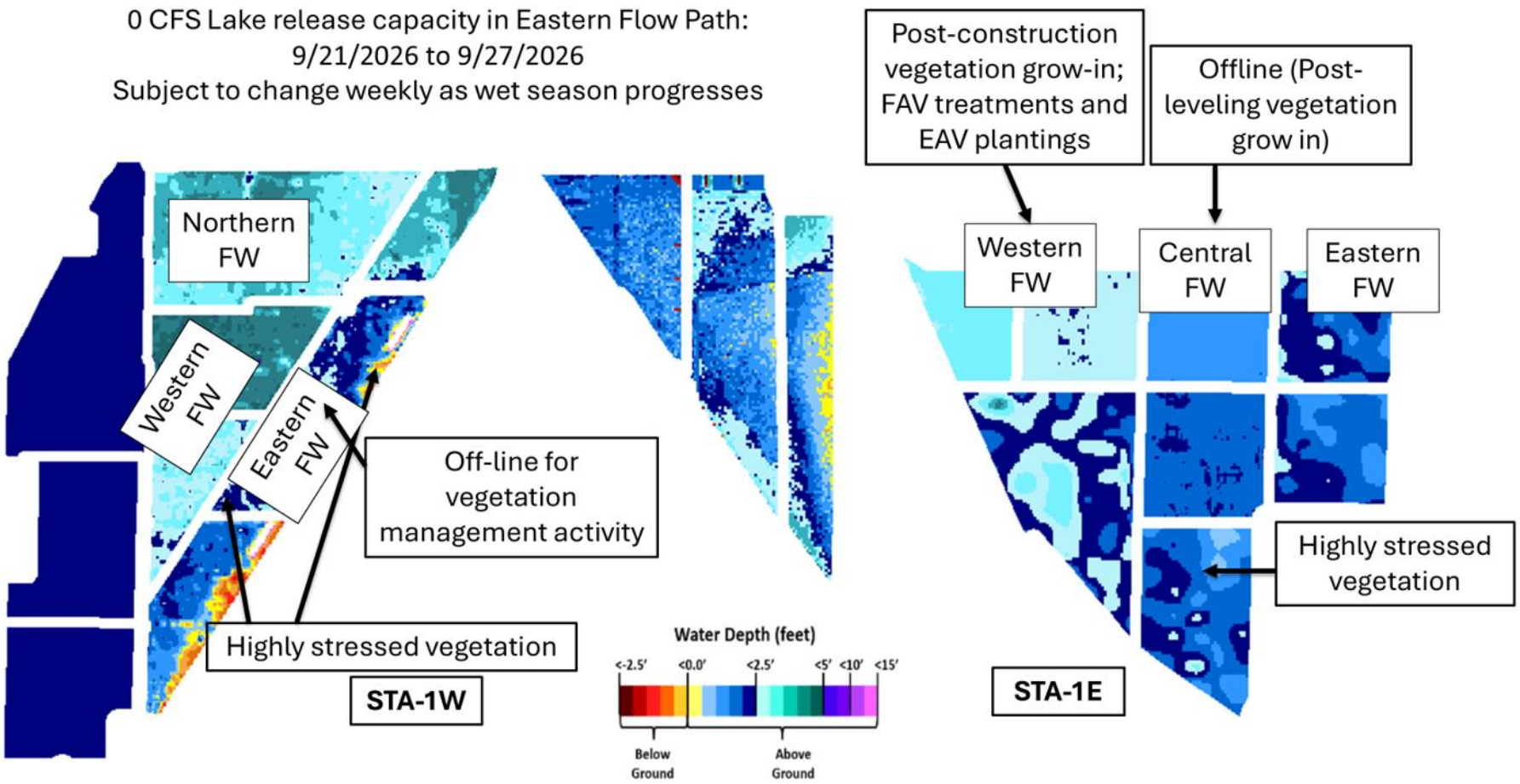

Figure S-2. Eastern Flow Path Weekly Status Report

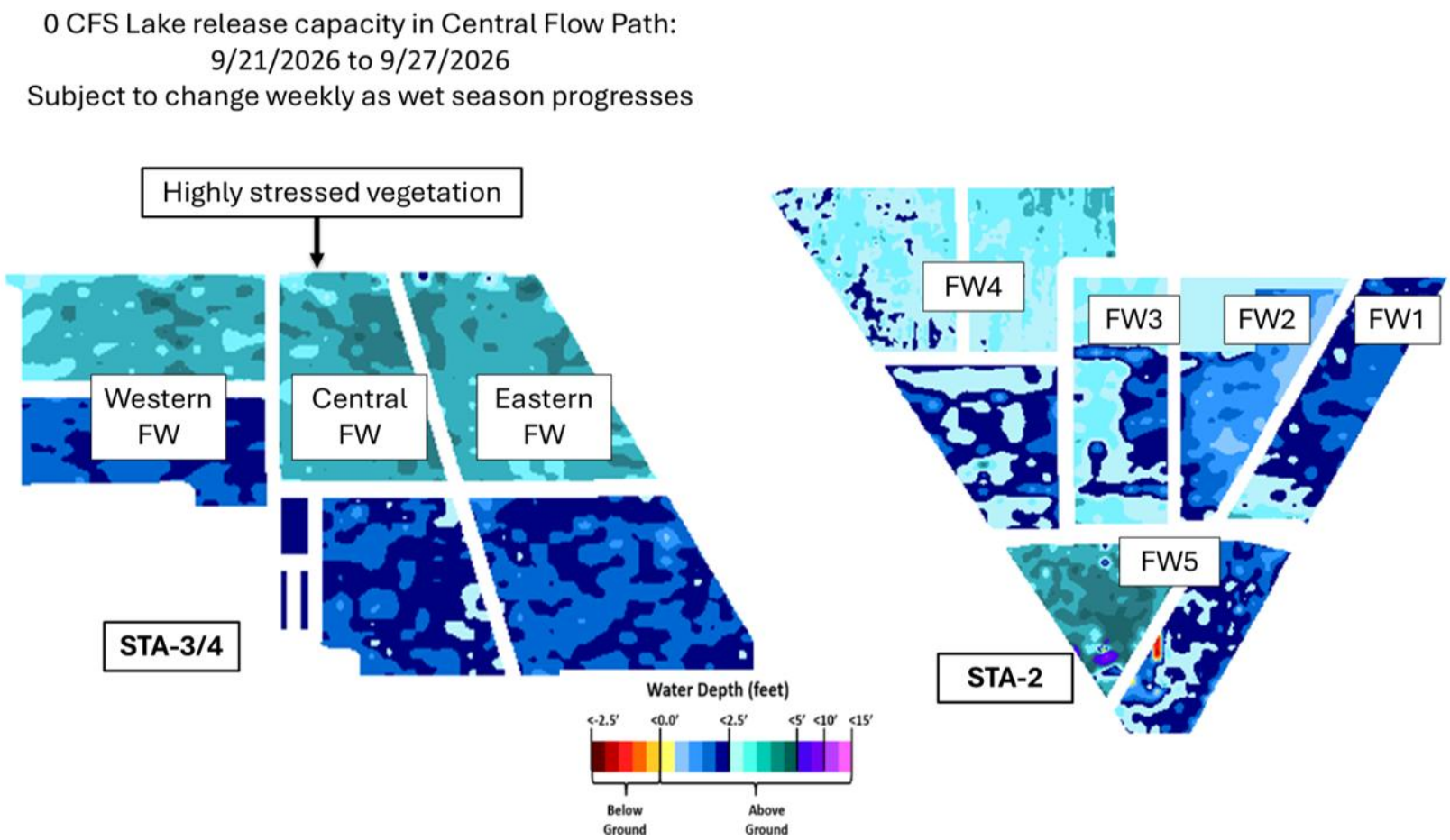

Figure S-3. Central Flow Path Weekly Status Report

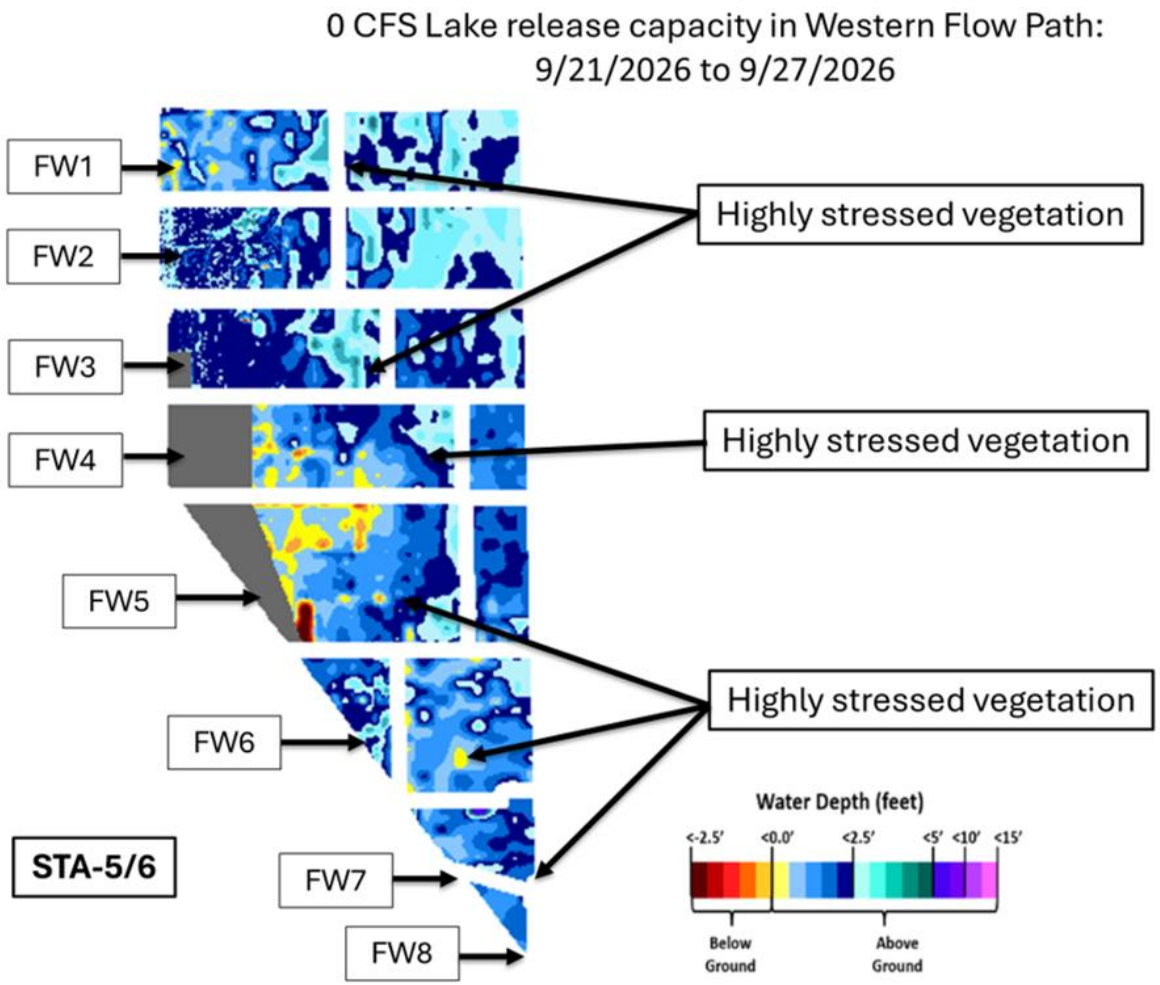

Figure S-4. Western Flow Path Weekly Status Report

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, µg/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 Areas

Regulation Schedules

WCA-1: Stage rose quickly at the 1-8C gauge last week but remained below the A-1 regulation line by 0.27 feet on Sunday, September 20, 2026 (**Figure EV-1**).

WCA-2A: Water depth at the 2-17 gauge continued to increase quickly last week. Stage was above the regulation line on Sunday by 1.01 feet (**Figure EV-2**).

WCA-3A: The 3-gauge average stage remains well within Zone B, with a more gradual incline over the week than the northern basins. On Sunday, stages were 0.99 feet below the Zone A regulation line. Stage at Gauge 62 (NW corner) continues to increase, below the Upper Schedule line by 0.43 feet on Monday (**Figures EV-3** and **EV-4)**.

Water Depths

The SFWDAT model output for September 20, 2026, illustrates a significant increase in water depths across WCA-1 and WCA-2A compared to a month ago. Rapid accensions in south central WCA-2A slowed with conditions now above the 75th percentile in the southcentral of that basin and close to the 75th percentile in the north. Water levels continue increasing in NE WCA-3A but remain below the 10th percentile across WCA-3A. Water depths remain low in WCA-3B; below the 20th percentile across most of that sub-basin. The Big Cypress basin is also showing a stable wetting trend, although there are issues with the model output in this region. In Everglades National Park (ENP) connectivity in both Taylor Slough (TS) and Shark River Slough (SRS) improved over the last month, with greater potential for connectivity in the west compared to last week. Water depths remain in the 10th – 30th percentile for this time of year across most the central Everglades Protection Area (EPA) impacting soil, flora, and fauna. (**Figures EV-5** and **EV-6)**. Recurring below average water depths in the central Everglades are illustrating the system level importance of maintaining water in the sloughs and low-water refugia for wildlife and vegetation needs.

Taylor Slough and Florida Bay

Most stages increased across Taylor Slough over the past week, with an average increase of 0.11 feet for the week. Changes ranged from approximately no change at P37 in the southern slough to +0.18 feet at Taylor Slough Bridge (TSB) in the northern slough (**Figure EV-7 and Figure EV-8**). Taylor Slough water levels are above the recent average (WY1993-2016) for this time of year by 2.5 inches compared to before the Florida Bay Initiative (starting in 2017), an increase of 1.1 inches relative to last week. Stages at Craighead Pond (CP) and TSB are below the estimated historical average by 0.81 and 1.06 feet, respectively.

Average salinity in Florida Bay was 38.5, a decrease of 1.8 from last week. Salinity changes ranged from −6.6 at Joe Bay (JB) in the eastern nearshore region to +1.2 at Buoy Key (BK) in the western region (**Figure EV-7**). Salinity is above the estimated historical average and above the WY2001-2016 Interquartile Range (IQR) 75th percentile

in all regions (**Figure EV-9**). Salinity in the eastern region is just below the hypersalinity threshold, while the central and western regions are above it. Bay-wide salinity remains above its recent average (WY1993-2016) for this time of year by 13.3, a decrease of 0.6 from last week.

Salinity at the Taylor River (TR) station in the mangrove zone (tracked for the Florida Bay MFL) was 16.3, a decrease of 5.3 from last week (**Figure EV-10**). The 365-day moving sum of flow from the five major creeks (McCormick Creek, Taylor River, Mud Creek, Trout Creek, West Highway Creek) was unable to be assessed due to missing data.

Average rainfall across Taylor Slough and Florida Bay was 1.32 inches for the week, based on the 18 gauges used for this report. Rainfall ranged from 0.00 inches at Duck Key (DK) in the eastern bay to 2.89 inches at Little Madeira Bay (LM) in the eastern nearshore region (**Figure EV-11**). Wind directions and speeds in Florida Bay ranged from 0.2 mph N on September 14th to 17.9 mph NE on September 16th (**Figure EV-11**).

The Taylor River, Mud Creek, and West Highway Creek flow stations are currently offline until further notice, so data from all five major creeks are unable to be assessed. Based on the available data from Trout and McCormick Creeks, average daily flow totaled 804 acre-feet, with net positive flows for the week. Total daily creek flow ranged from 282 acre-feet on September 14th to 1,427 acre-feet on September 17th (**Figure EV-12**). Average daily flow from Alligator Creek was 33 acre-feet, with net positive flows for the week (**Figure EV-12**).

Implications/considerations for water management

- Due to current low water conditions for this time of year that remain in the central Everglades, continued ascensions would help to protect the wetland ecology from damaging dry conditions during the wet season.
    - With continued drought conditions, conserving water within the WCAs, especially WCA-3A, will continue to be ecologically beneficial.
- A continued ascension but at a more moderate rate in the northern basins to reach peak wet season water depths would be ecologically beneficial as conditions move into the dry season.
- Freshwater input into Taylor Slough and the C-111 basin could help moderate salinities and support recovery of estuarine conditions in Florida Bay.
    - Hypersaline conditions in the north-central region of Florida Bay tied with elevated temperatures could lead to seagrass die-off conditions if freshwater input does not continue to increase.

- Conserving water in the WCAs while providing freshwater input to the sloughs of ENP will require careful consideration of a balance between the upstream and downstream ecological needs of the system. Individual regional recommendations can be found in **Table EV-2**.

Table EV-1. Previous week's rainfall and water depth changes in Everglades basins.

Everglades Region	Rainfall (Inches)	Stage Change (feet)
WCA-1	5.03	+0.66
WCA-2A	2.92	+0.56
WCA-2B	3.92	+0.52
WCA-3A	2.13	+0.17
WCA-3B	3.14	+0.23
ENP	2.27	+0.28

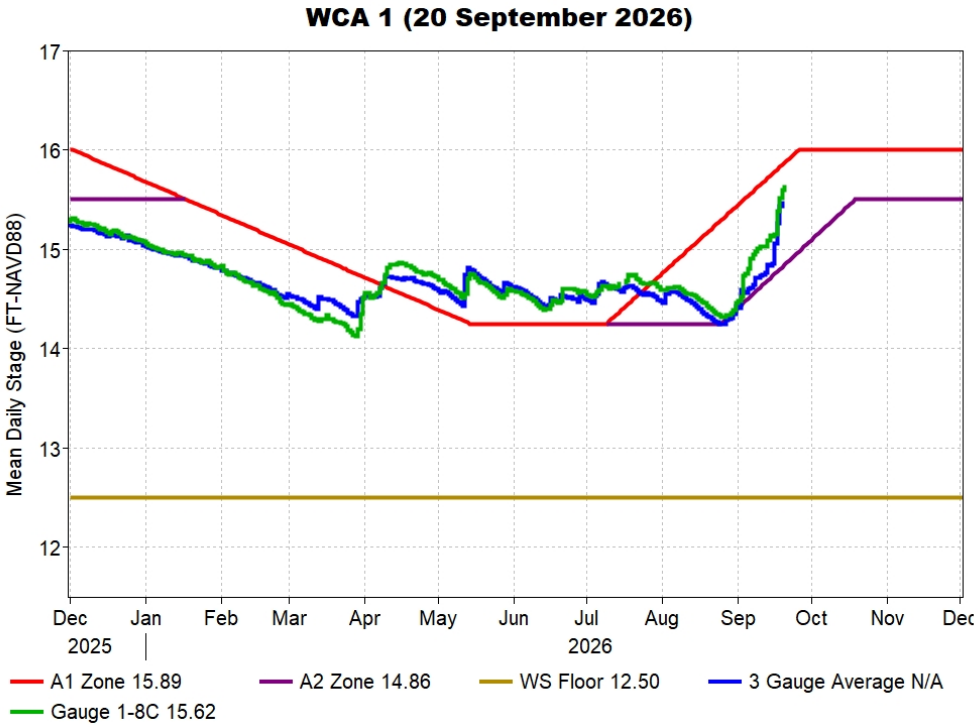

Figure EV-1. WCA-1 stage hydrographs and regulation schedule.

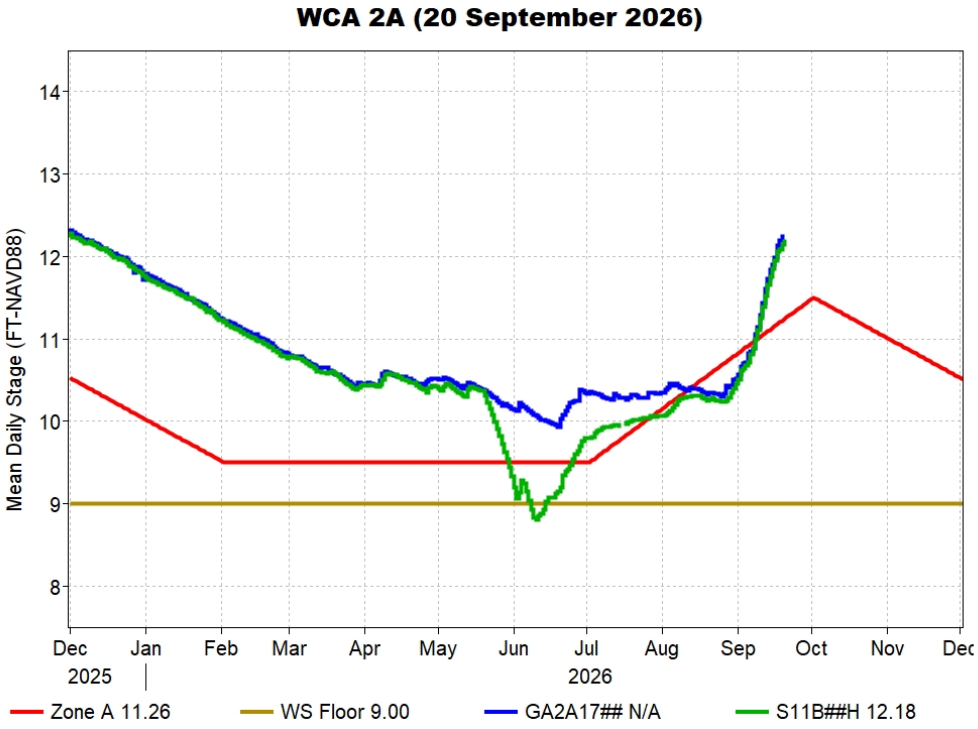

Figure EV-2. WCA-2A stage hydrographs and regulation schedule.

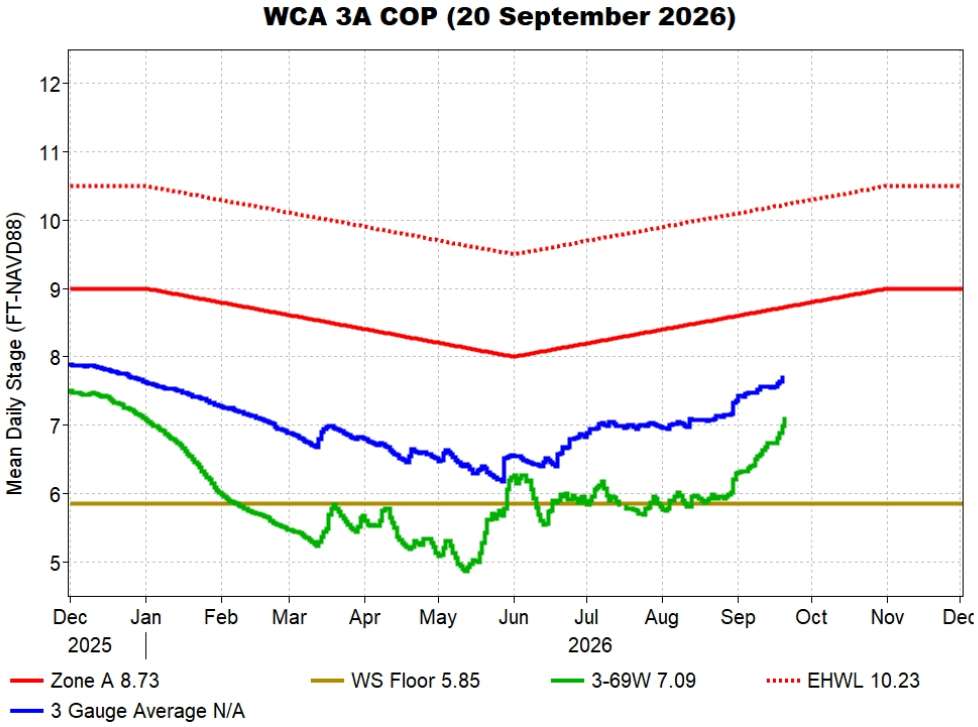

Figure EV-3. WCA-3A stage hydrographs (three-gauge average, 3-69W) and regulation schedule.

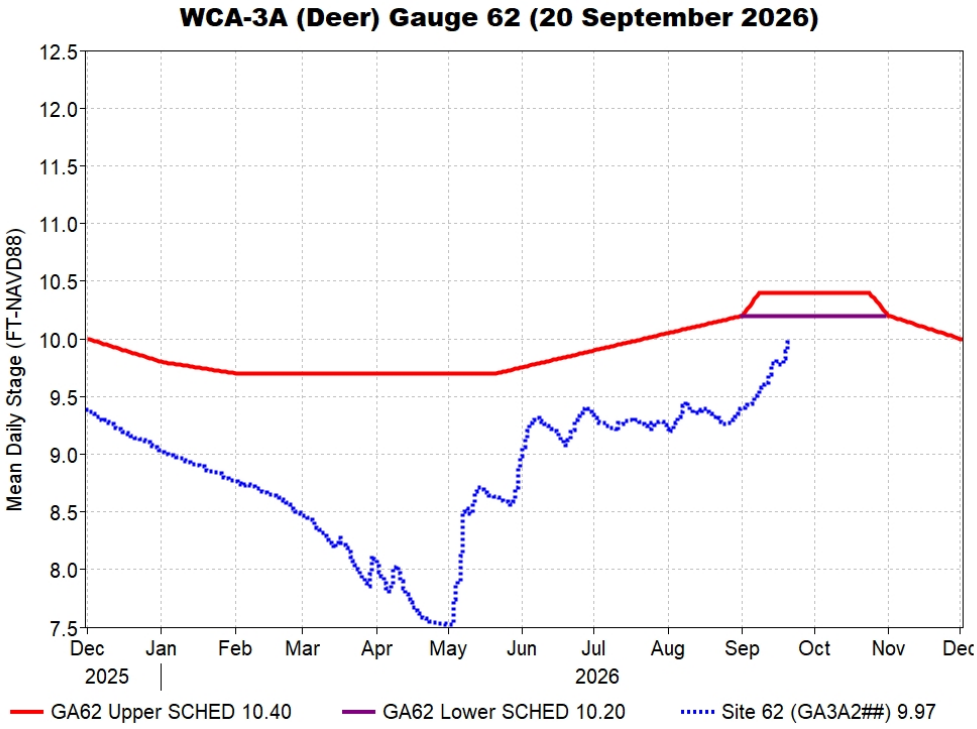

Figure EV-4. WCA-3A stage hydrograph (Deer gauge; Site 62) and regulation schedule.

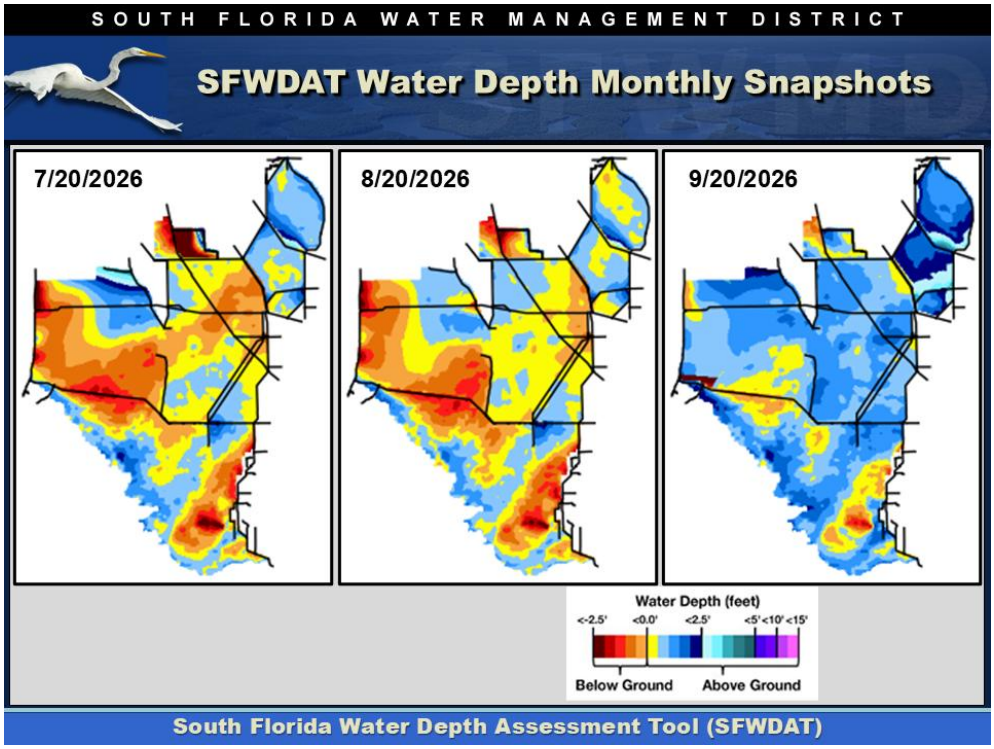

Figure EV-5. Everglades water depths from two months ago (left), one month ago (center) and present (right), based on SFWDAT.

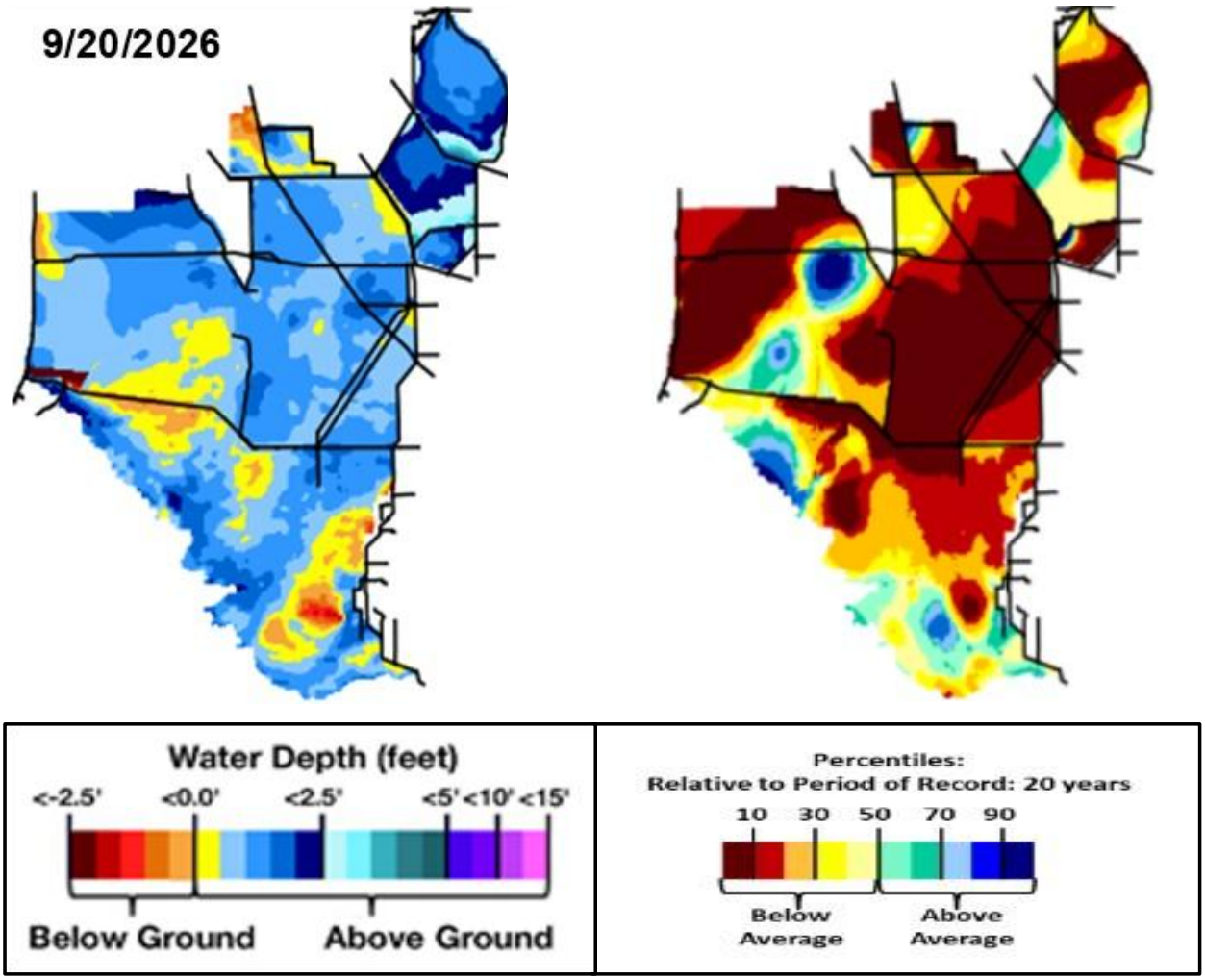

Figure EV-6. Present water depths (September 20, 2026) compared to the day of year relative to average (percentile) over the previous 20 years. Yellow star indicates an error in the model.

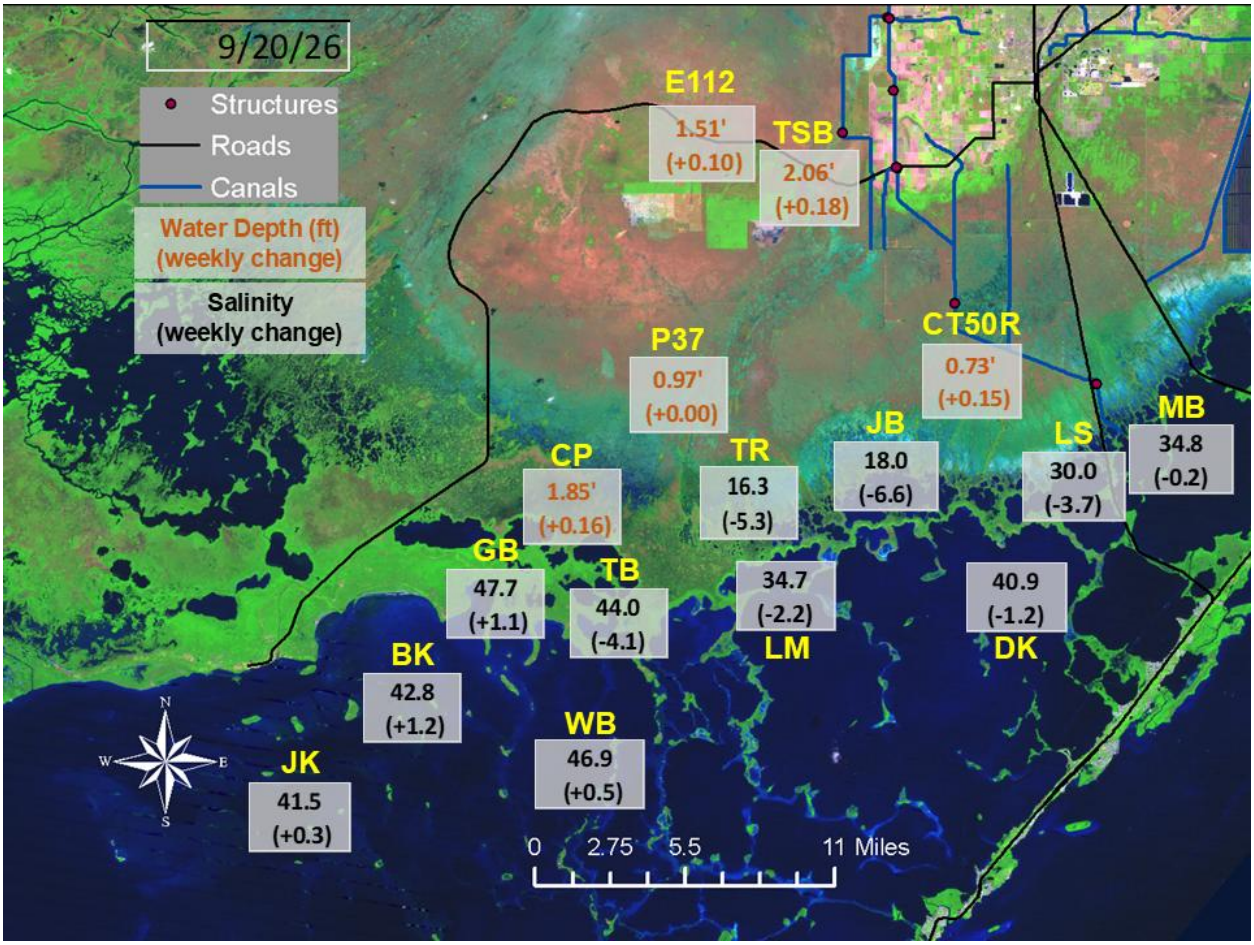

Figure EV-7. Taylor Slough water depths and Florida Bay salinities with changes since a week ago.

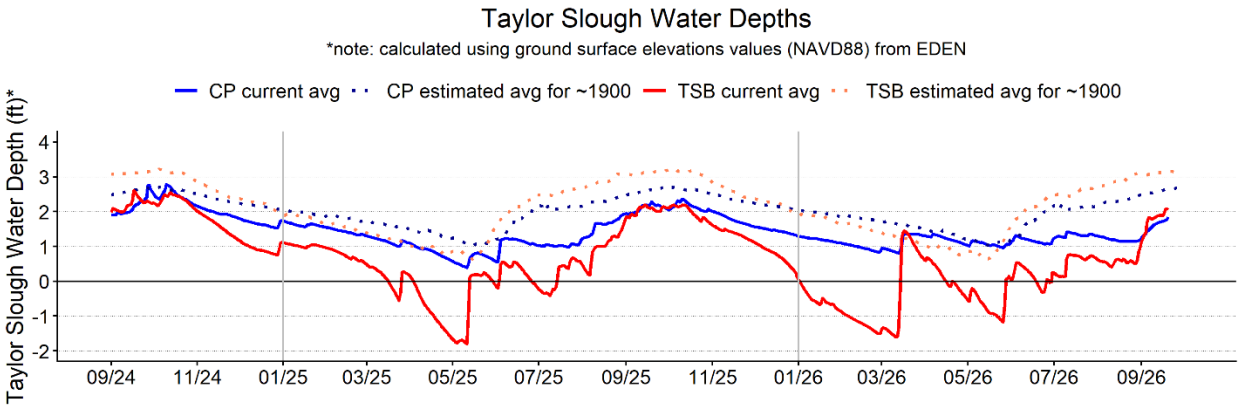

Figure EV-8. Taylor Slough water depth time series for Taylor Slough Bridge (TSB; northern slough) and Craighead Pond (CP; southern slough).

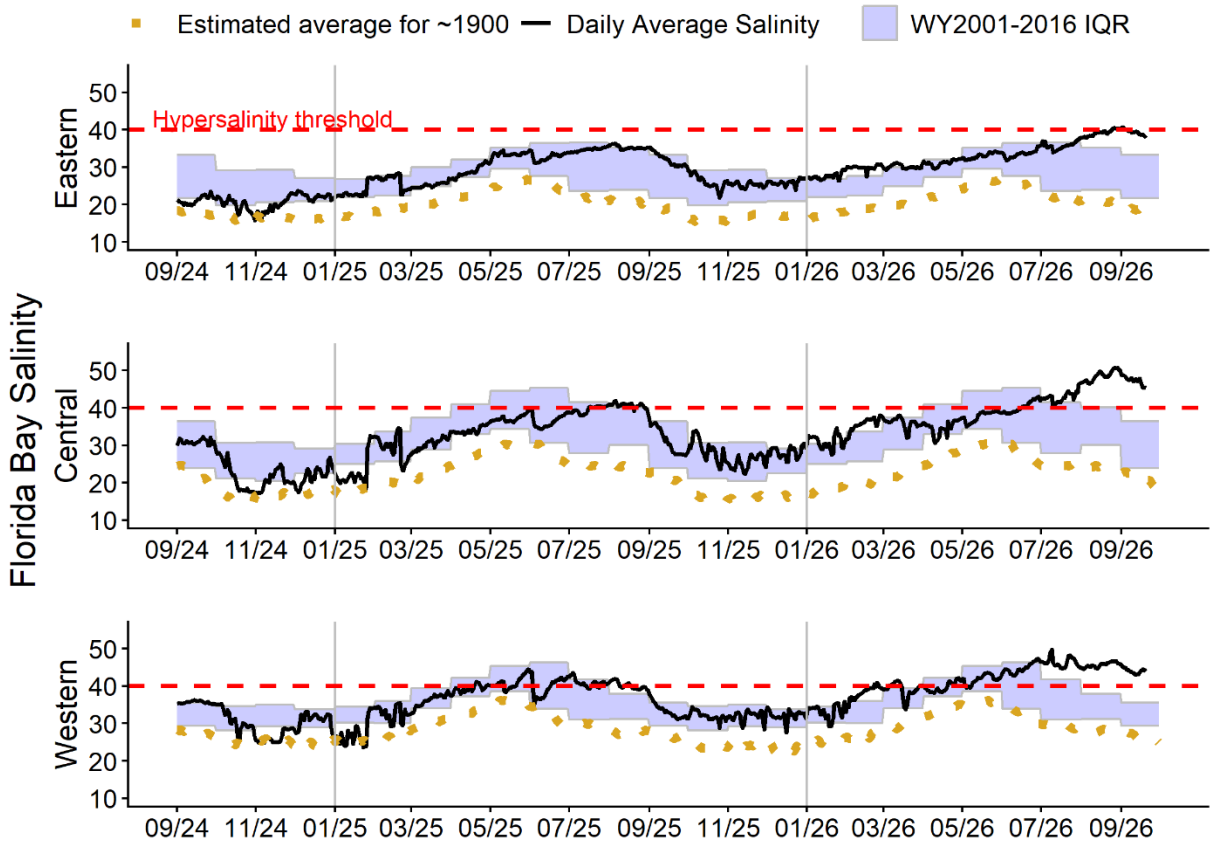

Figure EV-9. Eastern (top panel), Central (middle panel) and Western (bottom panel) Florida Bay daily average salinities with WY2001-2016 interquartile (25-75 percentile) ranges (IQR) and estimated historical daily average salinities. The hypersalinity threshold indicates the level at which salinities start to become harmful to seagrass.

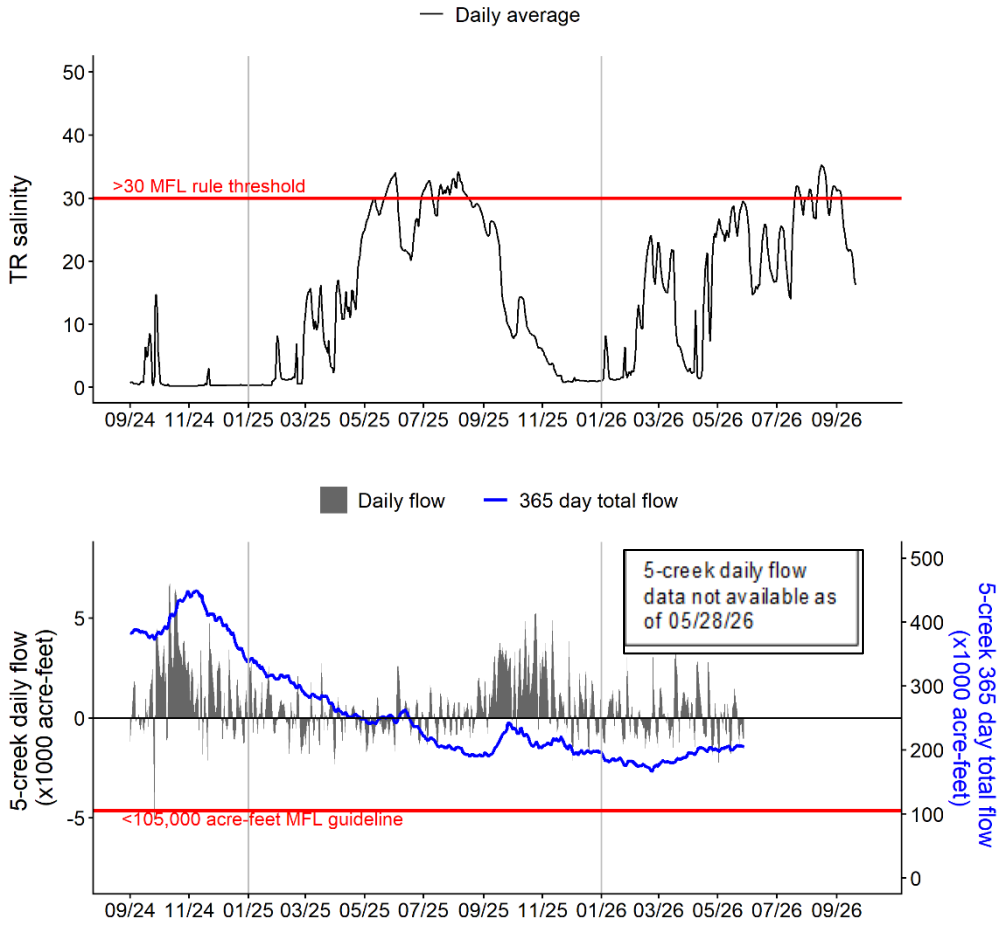

Figure EV-10. Daily average salinity at Taylor River (TR) tracked for the Florida Bay MFL criteria. The 365-day total creek flow MFL metric is not currently available due to missing creek flow data.

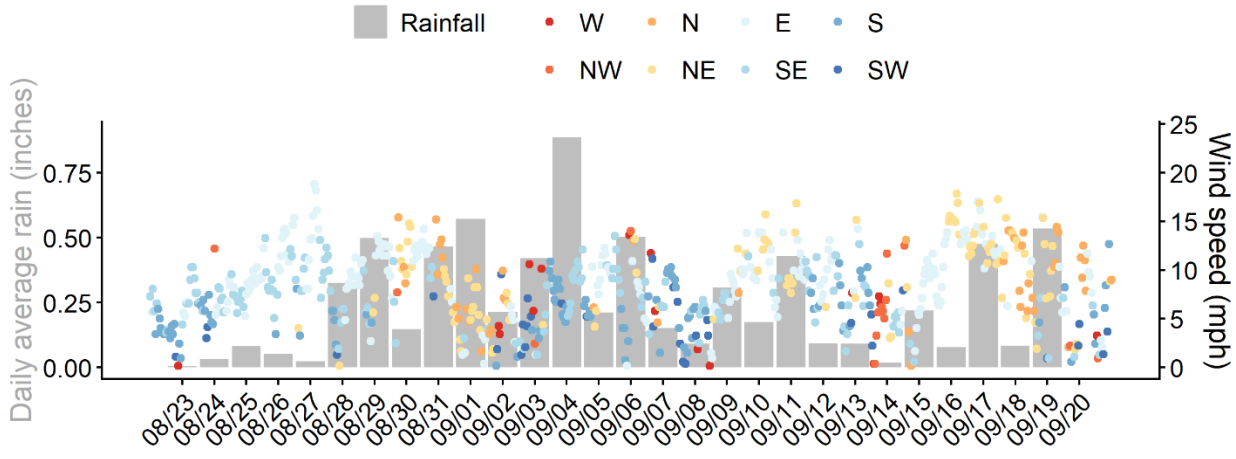

Figure EV-11. Daily average rain across Taylor Slough and Florida Bay, along with hourly average wind speed and direction (measured at Long Key) in Florida Bay over the past four weeks.

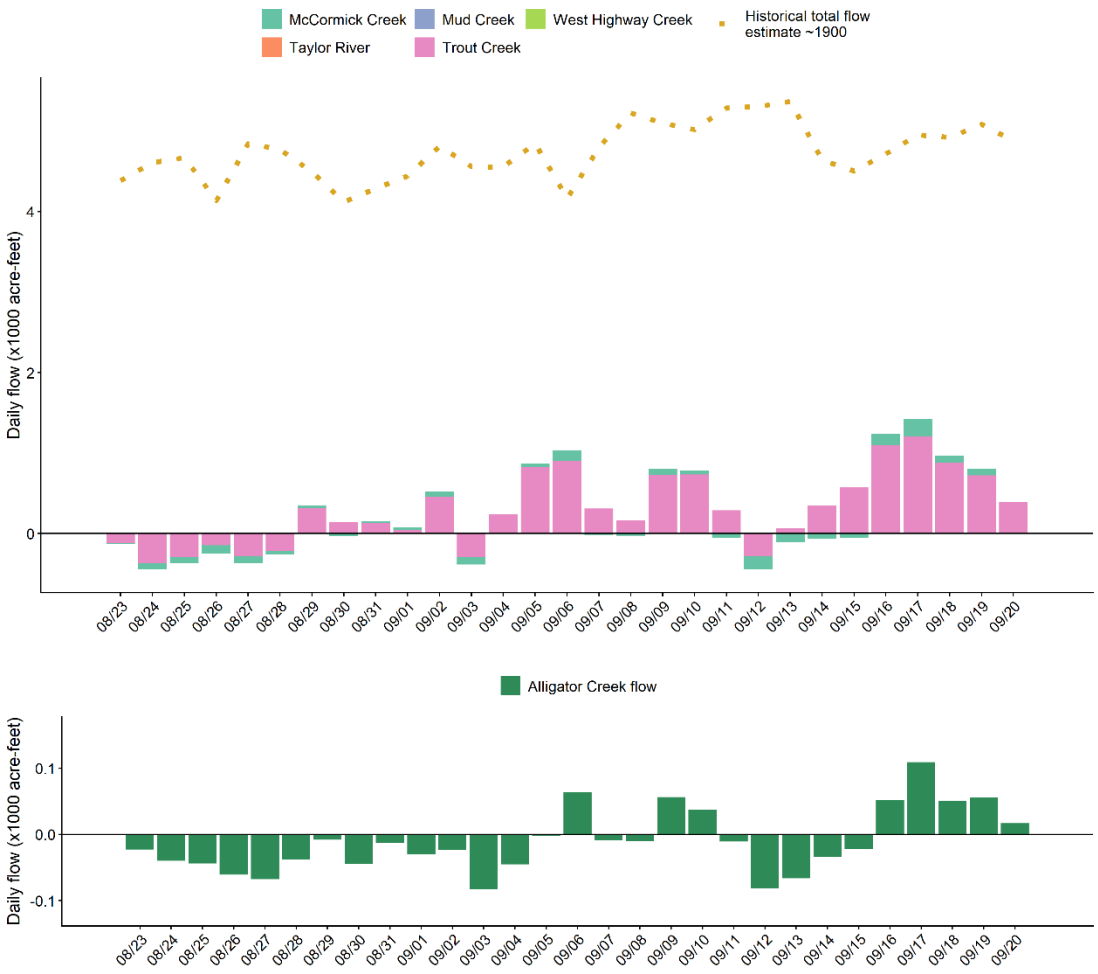

Figure EV-12. Top: daily average creek flow summed between the five major creeks with estimated historical daily flow over the past four weeks (**note**: data from Taylor River, Mud Creek and West Highway Creek are currently unavailable since May 28th, 2026). Bottom: Daily average Alligator Creek flow data.

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

SFWMD Everglades Ecological Recommendations, September 22nd, 2026 (red is new)			
	Weekly change	Recommendation	Reasons
WCA-1	Stage increased by 0.66 feet	An ascension of no faster than 0.25 feet per week	Conserve water, maintain within basin and downstream habitat and wildlife. Maintain maintenance access for vegetation management.
WCA-2A	Stage increased by 0.56 feet	An ascension of no faster than 0.25 feet per week	Conserve water, maintain within basin (north versus south) and downstream habitat and wildlife.
WCA-2B	Stage increased by 0.52 feet	An ascension of no faster than 0.25 feet per week	Protect within basin and downstream habitat and wildlife.
WCA-3A NE	Stage increased by 0.16 feet	An ascension of no faster than 0.25 feet per week	Conserve water, maintain within basin and downstream habitat and wildlife. Provide suitable depths for aquatic prey and protect against peat soil loss during the dry season.
WCA-3A NW	Stage increased by 0.20 feet	An ascension of no faster than 0.25 feet per week	
Central WCA-3A S	Stage increased by 0.12 feet	An ascension of no faster than 0.25 feet per week	Conserve water, maintain within basin and downstream habitat and wildlife. Provide suitable depths for aquatic prey and protect against peat soil loss during the dry season.
Southern WCA-3A S	Stage increased by 0.18 feet		
WCA-3B	Stage decreased by 0.23 feet	An ascension of no faster than 0.25 feet per week	Protect within basin and downstream habitat and wildlife.
ENP-SRS	Stage increased by 0.28 feet	Make discharges to ENP according to COP protocol, considering up/down stream ecological conditions	Protect within basin and upstream habitat and wildlife.
Taylor Slough	Stage changes ranged from ±0.00 feet to +0.18 feet	Move water southward as possible	When available, provide freshwater to promote water movement.
FB- Salinity	Salinity changes ranged from —6.6 to +1.2	Move water southward as possible	When available, provide freshwater to promote water movement.