

MEMORANDUM

TO: Jeff Kivett, Director, Operations, Engineering & Construction Division
Terrie Bates, Director, Water Resources Division

FROM: Akin Owosina, Chief, Hydraulics & Hydrology Bureau
John Mitnik, Chief, Engineering & Construction Bureau
Susan Gray, Chief, Applied Science Bureau
Dean Powell, Chief, Water Supply Bureau

DATE: December 17, 2015

SUBJECT: Operational Position Statement for December 15 to December 21, 2015

This Position Statement is for the period from December 15 through December 21, 2015. The Lake Okeechobee stage is rising slowly within the Low Sub-band of the 2008 LORS.

Consistent with the forecast for strong El Niño conditions, the most recent Climate Prediction Center (CPC) outlook for Central and South Florida indicates an increased likelihood of above-normal rainfall (53%) for the month of December 2015 and increased chances of above normal rainfall (75%) for the three-month window December 2015 to February 2016. The CPC rainfall outlook for the remainder of the 2015-2016 dry season is for a substantial increase in the likelihood (up to 75%) for above-normal precipitation. SFWMD rainfall for the month of December up to date is substantially above average. Rainfall for the next two weeks is forecast to be average.

2008 LORS Release Guidance (Part C): With the Lake Okeechobee stage within the Low Sub-band, Part C of the 2008 LORS release guidance recommends “Up to Maximum Practicable to the WCAs if desirable or with minimum Everglades Impacts”.

Over the 7-day period from December 7 to December 13, 2015, a total of 1,500 ac-ft were released from the lake south to the STAs, distributed as follows:

STA-1 E	1,500 ac-ft	STA 3/4	0 ac-ft
STA- 1W	0 ac-ft	A-1 FEB	0 ac-ft
STA2	0 ac-ft		

Releases from the lake to tide via C-10A, L-8 and C-51 were in the amount of 1,000 ac-ft.

The LORS release guidance is for “Up to Maximum Practicable to the WCAs if Desirable or with minimum Everglades impacts.” The USACE recognized the limited capability to release south due to high water levels in the WCAs, releases from the A1 FEB, and currently high stages in the STAs (above target stages). For the upcoming week no Lake Okeechobee releases to the WCAs will be implemented.

District Everglades scientists also indicated that Lake Okeechobee releases to the WCAs would not be beneficial this week. All WCA water levels are at or above their respective regulation schedules. S-333 and all the S-12 structures, except S-12A, are open to deliver SRS Rainfall Plan prescribed releases from WCA-3A to ENP (S-333 releases are small at this time). The G-3273 constraint relaxation and S-356 field test (Increment 1) continues, and S-356 is pumping two units again. Operational settings for the South Miami-Dade agricultural drawdown for the C102 and C-103 canals continue to be in place after the rainfall event of December 4 to 6, 2015.

2008 LORS Release Guidance (Part D): With the Lake Okeechobee stage in the Low Sub-band, Part D of the 2008 LORS release guidance recommends “S-79 up to 3,000 cfs and S-80 up to 1,170 cfs”. The SFWMD recommendation to USACE is to follow the 2008 LORS.

On Friday December 11 (0700 hours) the USACE started 7-day pulse regulatory releases from Lake Okeechobee to the Caloosahatchee Estuary, averaging 1,500 cfs measured at S-79; and no regulatory release through S-80. This 7-day release period will end on Friday December 18, 2015 (0700 hours).

Over the past week, flows at S-79 averaged approximately 1,560 cfs, with about 620 cfs from the lake through S-77. Flows through S-80 averaged 400 cfs with none coming from Lake Okeechobee. In the St. Lucie Estuary, salinity declined for the last four weeks and moved into the fair range for adult oysters. In the Caloosahatchee Estuary, salinity continued to be in the good range for adult oysters at Shell Point (estimated), Cape Coral, and Sanibel.

The Lake Okeechobee stage rose 0.06 feet during the past week. Stage recessions are ecologically desirable during this time of year. When recessions resume they should not exceed 0.4 feet/month to be beneficial to the lake.

December rainfall on the greater Everglades and Florida Bay during the past week has improved freshwater inflows and salinity conditions in Florida Bay.

Detailed reports are available at the [SFWMD Operational Planning Portal](#).