

MEMORANDUM

TO: Luis Alejandro, Chief, Water Management Section (USACE)

FROM: John Mitnik, Chief District Engineer (SFWMD)
Akin Owosina, Chief, Hydrology & Hydraulics Bureau (SFWMD)

DATE: February 16, 2017

SUBJECT: Operational Position Statement for February 14, 2017 to February 20, 2017

This Position Statement is for the one-week period from February 14, 2017 to February 20, 2017. On February 13, Lake Okeechobee stage was 13.71 feet NGVD, in the lower third of the Low Sub-band. During last week the lake stage decreased 0.09 feet.

District rainfall for February up to date is well below average (13%) low. For next week, District rainfall is expected to be average. District rainfall for the second week is also expected to be average.

Precipitation Outlook: The most recent Climate Prediction Center (CPC) precipitation outlook for February 2017 indicates equal chances of below-normal, normal and above-normal rainfall for south Florida. For the three-month windows February to April and March to May, there is a slight increase in the likelihood (~38%) of below-normal rainfall. The CPC precipitation outlook for the remainder of the 2017 calendar year is for equal chances of below-normal, normal and above-normal rainfall.

2008 LORS Release Guidance (Part C): With Lake Okeechobee stage within the Low Sub-band and the tributary hydrologic conditions falling into the Dry classification, Part C of the 2008 LORS release guidance recommends "No Releases to the WCAs".

Over the 7-day period from February 6, 2017 to February 12, 2017, a total of 20,700 acre-feet were released south from Lake Okeechobee through EAA canals and the L-8 canal. Of this volume, inflows into STAs were as follows: no inflows to STA-1E and STA-1W, 1,600 ac-feet to STA-2 and 2,900 acre-feet to STA-3/4. No releases were made from the lake to tide via C-10A, L-8 and C-51.

At this time, the USACE is not requesting the SFWMD to implement lake regulatory releases to WCA-1, WCA-2A or WCA-3A. There will be no releases from the lake into the A-1 FEB for this operational period. Small outflows from A-1 FEB to lower stages for construction purposes are being directed to STA 3/4. STA-2 releases into north WCA-2A will occur in the range of 200-250 cfs. STA 3/4 releases into north WCA-3A will continue in the range of 250 to 300 cfs on average.

2008 LORS Release Guidance (Part D): With Lake Okeechobee stage in the Low Sub-band and the tributary hydrologic conditions within the Dry classification, Part D of the 2008 LORS release guidance suggests Base Flow releases: "S-79 Up to 450 and S-80 Up to 200 cfs". Consistent with previous Governing Board direction, District staff evaluated SFWMD's Lake Okeechobee Adaptive Protocols (AP) this week since the lake stage is in the Low Sub-band and the LORS release guidance is recommending Base Flow releases. The 30-day moving average salinity at I-75 bridge is projected to be below 5 p.s.u. over the next two weeks. Therefore, AP recommendation this week is for no S-77 release to the Caloosahatchee Estuary.

The District recognizes the USACE desire to manage the lake stage by making Base Flow releases per the LORS release guidance, as well as the beneficial impact that releases will have on estuarine salinity. The District recommends continuation of releases per Part D of the 2008 LORS release guidance.

Salinity at the US 1 Bridge location in the St. Lucie Estuary remains in the upper fair range for adult oysters. In the Caloosahatchee Estuary, Tape Grass in the upper estuary are likely deteriorating due to salinity conditions. Salinity conditions are good for adult oysters at the Cape Coral Bridge and Shellpoint, while in the fair range at the Sanibel Causeway.