

MEMORANDUM

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

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

DATE: March 2, 2017

SUBJECT: Operational Position Statement for February 28, 2017 to March 6, 2017

This Position Statement is for the one-week period from February 28, 2017 to March 6, 2017. On February 27, Lake Okeechobee stage was 13.46 feet NGVD, in the Base Flow Sub-band. During last week the lake stage decreased 0.05 feet.

District rainfall for February was below average. For next week, District rainfall is expected to be below average. District rainfall for the second week is also expected to be below average.

Precipitation Outlook: The most recent Climate Prediction Center (CPC) precipitation outlook indicates equal chances of below-normal, normal and above-normal rainfall for south Florida, for March 2017 and for the three-month windows March to May and April to June. The CPC precipitation outlook for the 2017 wet season is for equal chances of below-normal, normal and above-normal rainfall.

2008 LORS Release Guidance (Part C): With Lake Okeechobee stage within the Base Flow 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 20, 2017 to February 26, 2017, a total of 10,000 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: 200 acre-feet to STA-1E, 400 acre-feet to STA-1W, 700 ac-feet to STA-2 and 1,900 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 Base Flow Sub-band, 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 Base Flow 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.

The Adaptive Protocols recommend no releases to the Caloosahatchee Estuary based upon the 30-day moving average salinity forecast. However, in the Base Flow sub-band of LORS, the USACE can make releases of up to 450 cfs to the Caloosahatchee Estuary and 200 cfs to the St. Lucie Estuary. The District defers to the USACE regulation schedule authority at this time.

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, salinity conditions in the upper estuary are improving. However, Tape Grass in the upper estuary has likely suffered some mortality. Salinity conditions are good for adult oysters at the Cape Coral Bridge and Shellpoint, while in the fair range at the Sanibel Causeway.