

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 23, 2017

SUBJECT: Operational Position Statement for March 21, 2017 to March 27, 2017

This Position Statement is for the one-week period from March 21, 2017 to March 27, 2017. On March 20, Lake Okeechobee stage was 12.82 feet NGVD, receding within the Base Flow Sub-band, and 0.22 feet above the Beneficial Use Sub-band. During last week the lake stage decreased 0.24 feet.

District rainfall for March up to date is well below average (~66%). For next week, District rainfall is expected to be below average. District rainfall for the second week is expected to be also 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 March 13, 2017 to March 19, 2017, a total of 25,000 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: no inflows to STA-1E and STA-1W, 3,400 acre-feet to STA-2 and 3,000 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 100 to 200 cfs.

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 (AP) recommend no releases through S-77 to supplement flows entering the Caloosahatchee Estuary at S-79, based upon the 30-day moving average salinity forecast. When the Lake stage recedes into the Beneficial Use Sub-band the AP guidance will suggest no more than 300 cfs at S-79. The District recommends that the USACE implement operations that will transition from current flow targets down to 450 cfs at S-79 this week.

Salinity at the US 1 Bridge location in the St. Lucie Estuary increased slightly and remains within the fair range for adult oysters. In the Caloosahatchee Estuary, salinity conditions between Val-I75 and Ft. Myers are improving, but when salinity is in excess of 10 psu there may be impacts to tape grass. Salinity conditions are in the good range for adult oysters at the Cape Coral Bridge and Shellpoint, while in the fair range at the Sanibel Causeway.