

MEMORANDUM

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

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

DATE: March 30, 2017

SUBJECT: Operational Position Statement for March 28, 2017 to April 3, 2017

This Position Statement is for the one-week period from March 28, 2017 to April 3, 2017. On March 27, Lake Okeechobee stage was 12.68 feet NGVD, receding within the Base Flow Sub-band, and 0.08 feet above the Beneficial Use Sub-band. During last week the lake stage decreased 0.14 feet. At the current rate of recession, lake stage will be in the Beneficial Use Sub-band by Friday March 31, 2017.

District rainfall for March up to date is well below average (~40%). For next week, District rainfall is expected to be below average. District rainfall for the second week is expected to be near 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 April 2017 and for the three-month windows April to June and May to July. 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 20, 2017 to March 26, 2017, a total of 34,600 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, 1,000 acre-feet to STA-1W, 2,500 acre-feet to STA-2 and 2,300 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 SFWMMD 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 have been terminated. STA-3/4 releases into north WCA-2A via S-7 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 SFWMMD'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 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. It is likely that the salinity in the 30-day moving average is being meaningfully lowered by the current Lake Okeechobee releases and a rapid reduction in flow will result in more impacts than a gradual reduction. With the lake stage receding into the Beneficial Use Sub-band before Friday the AP guidance will suggest no more than 300 cfs at S-79. The District recommends that the USACE implement operations that will reduce the current S-79 flow targets down to 450 cfs as an initial step toward the likely reduction down to 300 cfs if dry conditions persist.

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 remain in the tolerable range for 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.