

## MEMORANDUM

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

**FROM:** John Mitnik, Director, Operations, Engineering & Construction Division (SFWMD)  
Akin Owosina, Chief, Hydraulics & Hydrology Bureau (SFWMD)

**DATE:** March 31, 2016

**SUBJECT:** Operational Position Statement for March 29, 2016 to April 4, 2016

This Position Statement is for the one-week period from March 29, 2016 to April 4, 2016. On March 28 the Lake Okeechobee stage was 15.07 feet, NGVD, in the Low Sub-band of the 2008 LORS. During last week the Lake stage experienced a decrease of 0.18 feet.

District-average rainfall for the month of March has been low so far (60% of Average). Rainfall for the upcoming week (likely Tuesday through Saturday) is forecast to be above average, and below average for the following week.

Precipitation Outlook: Consistent with the forecast El Niño conditions, the most recent Climate Prediction Center (CPC) outlook for Central and South Florida indicates equal chances of above, below and normal rainfall for the month of April 2016, and increased chances of above-normal rainfall (45%) for the three-month window April to June 2016. The CPC rainfall outlooks into the 2016 wet season are for equal chances of above, below and normal rainfall. The long-range CPC outlook for the 2016-17 dry season is for increased chances of below-normal rainfall.

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. Otherwise no releases to the WCAs”

Over the 7-day period from March 21, 2016 to March 27, 2016, releases from Lake Okeechobee to the STAs were as follows: 1,500 ac-feet to STA-1E and 700 to STA-2. No releases from the Lake south to STA 3/4 were made. Releases from the Lake into the A-1 FEB were about 4,700 ac-ft. Releases from the Lake to tide via C-10A, L-8 and C-51 were approximately 700 ac-ft.

USACE has requested the District to implement Lake regulatory releases into WCA-1, in such a way that inflows and outflows are balanced and the current stage recession continues. The District will continue to implement releases from the lake to the A-1 FEB, and from the A-1 FEB to STA-2. Flows entering WCA-2A will be balanced with outflows to tide. These two operations will be contingent on the amount of rain the District could receive towards the end of this week.

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 recommends following the 2008 LORS.

In the St. Lucie Estuary, salinity during the past week remained in the fair range but was trending downward. In the Caloosahatchee Estuary, salinities at Sanibel and Shell Point remained in the good range for adult oysters. Salinity at Cape Coral remained in the poor range.

Projection for Next Week: It is expected that for the first week of April 2016, the multi-seasonal Lake Net Inflow Outlook will generate a switch in the multi-seasonal classification from Wet to Normal. LORS would then suggest reduced releases, and the SFWMD’s Lake Okeechobee Adaptive Protocols would be considered for the SFWMD’s recommendation per SFWMD Governing Board direction. Because salinity conditions in the Caloosahatchee Estuary are fresh the Adaptive Protocol guidance may suggest reduced releases at S-77.