M E M O R A N D U M

TO: Jeff Kivett, Director, Operations, Engineering & Construction Division
Terrie Bates, Director, Water Resources Division

FROM: Akin Owosina, Chief, Hydraulics & Hydrology Bureau
John Mitnik, Chief, Engineering & Construction Bureau
Susan Gray, Chief, Applied Science Bureau
Dean Powell, Chief, Water Supply Bureau

DATE: November 19, 2015

SUBJECT: Operational Position Statement for November 17 to November 30, 2015

This Position Statement is for the two week period from November 17 through November 30, 2015. At the time of this recommendation, the Lake Okeechobee stage is in the Base Flow Sub-band.

Consistent with forecast for strong El Niño conditions, the most recent Climate Prediction Center (CPC) outlook for Central and South Florida indicates an increased likelihood of above-normal rainfall (37%) for the month of November 2015 and increased chances of above normal rainfall (65%) for the three-month window November 2015 to January 2016. The CPC rainfall outlook for the remainder of the 2015-2016 dry season is for a substantial increase in the likelihood (up to 75%) for above-normal precipitation. However, SFWMD rainfall for the month of November up to date is below average. Rainfall for the next two weeks is forecast to be above average for the first week and below average for the second week.

2008 LORS Release Guidance (Part C): The Lake Okeechobee stage is currently within the Base Flow Sub-band and Part C of the 2008 LORS release guidance recommends "Up to Maximum Practicable to the WCAs if desirable or with minimum Everglades Impacts".

Over the 14-day period from November 2 to November 15, 2015, a total of 13,200 ac-ft were released from the lake south to the STAs, distributed as follows:

STA-1E	1,600 ac-ft	STA 3/4	2,900 ac-ft
STA-1W	1,600 ac-ft	A-1 FEB	1,100 ac-ft
STA2	6,000 ac-ft		

No releases were made from the lake to tide via C-10A, L-8 and C-51.

Consistent with the LORS release guidance, the USACE is requesting the SFWMD to continue Lake Okeechobee regulatory releases to the WCAs. For the next two weeks, limited lake releases south will be implemented in response to specific STA needs (such as stage management, vegetation management, etc.) to allow water levels to recede to target elevations.

District Everglades scientists have indicated that additional releases south would be beneficial or have minimal impact to the WCAs. WCA-2A is currently discharging around 200 cfs to WCA-3A. S-333 and the S-12s structures are open to deliver the ERTP and SRS Rainfall Plan prescribed releases from WCA-3A to ENP. Increased releases into north WCA-3A and ENP are being recommended by District Everglades scientists. The G-3273 constraint relaxation and S-356 field test (Increment 1) continues. South Miami-Dade agricultural drawdown for the C-102 and C-103 canals is progressing normally.

2008 LORS Release Guidance (Part D): The Lake Okeechobee stage is currently within Base Flow Sub-band. Part D of the 2008 LORS release guidance is "S-79 up to 450 cfs and S-80 up to 200 cfs". The SFWMD recommendation to USACE is to follow the Lake Okeechobee Adaptive Protocols (AP) release guidance which calls for no lake releases at S-77 because the Caloosahatchee Estuary will not "need" freshwater per the salinity criterion. Specifically, the 30-day average salinity is expected not to raise above the 5 practical salinity units (psu) at the Val-I75 site within the next two weeks.

For the second week of the recommendation period, the Lake Okeechobee stage is expected to remain in the Base Flow Sub-band and therefore the LORS 2008 recommendation will be for Base Flow releases. The likelihood of salinity criterion being exceeded by the beginning of next week is very low. In that case, the SFWMD recommendation to USACE will be again to follow the Lake Okeechobee Adaptive Protocols (AP) release guidance which calls for no lake releases at S-77 because the Caloosahatchee Estuary will not "need" freshwater per the salinity criterion.

On each Friday, November 6 and Friday November 13, 2015 (0700 hours), USACE started 7-day pulse regulatory releases from Lake Okeechobee to the Caloosahatchee Estuary, averaging 650 cfs measured at S-79 and no regulatory release through S-80. The second cycle of this operation will end on Friday November 20, 2015 (0700 hours). Over the past week, flows at S-79 averaged approximately 760 cfs, with about 400 cfs directly from the lake through S-77. There were no flows through S-80. In the St. Lucie Estuary, salinity remained in the good range for adult oysters. In the Caloosahatchee Estuary, salinity continued to be in the good range for adult oysters at Shell Point and Cape Coral and in the upper fair range at Sanibel.

SFWMD lake scientists report that from an ecological point of view the current stage recession rate is outside the preferred range for this time of the year and a slower recession would be more beneficial to the lake.

Conditions in Florida Bay continue to be hypersaline; salinities are 7 to 16 psu above average for this time of the year. The 30-day moving average salinity at the Taylor Slough (MFL sentinel) site has decreased to 6.9 psu, still above the 1 psu MFL average for this time of year. High salinities are a result of below average wet season rainfall for the Everglades and the southern portion of the District, high evaporation, and low freshwater inflows into the Bay (currently 45% of their annual average). Large increases in rainfall and inflow are required to approach seasonally normal conditions in the ENP and Florida Bay.

Detailed reports are available at the SFWMD Operational Planning Portal.