M E M O R A N D U M

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DATE: November 5, 2015

SUBJECT: Operational Position Statement for November 3 to November 16, 2015

This Position Statement is for the two week period from November 3 through November 16, 2015. At the time of this recommendation, the Lake Okeechobee stage is in the lower third of the Low 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 October was below average (51%). Rainfall for the next two weeks is forecast to be below average.

2008 LORS Release Guidance (Part C): The Lake Okeechobee stage is currently within the Low 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 7-day period from October 26 to November 1, 2015, a total of 6,200 ac-ft were released from the lake south to the STAs, distributed as follows:

- STA-1E 500 ac-ft
- STA-1W no lake inflows
- STA2 5,100 ac-ft
- STA 3/4 100 ac-ft
- A-1 FEB 500 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, regulatory releases south will be reduced to provide the STAs a recovery period, to reduce phosphorus loading rates, and allow water levels to recede to target elevations. All these actions are in anticipation of El Niño wet conditions which could result in high dry season nutrient loadings for the STAs. Anticipated releases for the first week will be sent to STA-1E (up to 100 cfs mean daily) and to STA-2 (up to 150 cfs mean daily).

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-12 B through D structures are open to deliver the ERTP and SRS Rainfall Plan prescribed releases from WCA-3A to ENP. Increased releases into the 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 the lower third of the Low Sub-band. Part D of the 2008 LORS release guidance is "S-79 up to 3,000 cfs and S-80 up to 1,170 cfs". Consistent with the 2007 SEIS analysis of the selected plan and the 2008 Water Control Plan language on page 7-15, when lake stage is in the lower third of the Low Sub-band, releases should be limited to 2,000 cfs at S-79 and 730 cfs at S-80. For the first week the SFWMD recommendation to USACE is to follow the release guidance of 2008 LORS.

For the second week of the recommendation period, the Lake Okeechobee stage is expected to move into the Base Flow Sub-band, in which case the 2008 LORS release recommendation will be "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 at that point in time. 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.

On Friday October 30, 2015 (0700 hours) USACE started a 7-day pulse regulatory releases from Lake Okeechobee to the Caloosahatchee Estuary, averaging 800 cfs measured at S-79 and no regulatory release through S-80. This operation will end on Friday November 06, 2015 (0700 hours). Over the past week, flows at S-79 averaged approximately 850 cfs, with about 460 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, salinity at Sanibel remained in the upper fair range, and salinity at Cape Coral remained in the good range.

SFWMD lake scientists report that from an ecological point of view the current stage recession rate is within the preferred range. As far as possible, a steady decrease in stage not to exceed 0.5 feet per month will continue to benefit the lake.

Conditions in Florida Bay continue to be hypersaline with salinities 7 to 22 psu above average for this time of the year. The 30-day moving average salinity at the Taylor Slough (MFL sentinel) site decreased from 18.6 to 18.1 psu, well 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 exceptionally low freshwater inflows into the Bay. Additional rainfall amounts will increase fresh flows will help reduce salinities in Florida Bay.

Detailed reports are available at the SFWMD Operational Planning Portal.