

## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Lauren Borocharner, Chief, Engineering Division (USACE)  
**FROM:** John Mitnik, Chief District Engineer (SFWMD)  
Akin Owosina, Chief, Hydrology & Hydraulics Bureau (SFWMD)  
**DATE:** July 29, 2021  
**SUBJECT:** Operational Position Statement for July 27, 2021 to August 2, 2021

This Position Statement is to provide operational recommendations for the one-week period from July 27, 2021 to August 2, 2021 based on system conditions and data observed during the previous Monday to Sunday 7-day period. On July 26, Lake Okeechobee stage was 13.53 feet NGVD, which places it within the Low Sub-band of the 2008 Lake Okeechobee Regulation Schedule (LORS). Lake stage increased by 0.06 feet during the preceding 7 days.

July to date District rainfall is above normal (113% of normal). Rainfall forecast (issued July 20) predicts near to above average rainfall for the coming 7-day period and near average for the second 7-day period.

Precipitation Outlook: The most recent CPC precipitation outlooks for August 2021 and for the 3-month windows of Aug-Oct to Oct-Dec are for equal chances of above-normal, normal, and below-normal rainfall. The 3-month windows of Nov 2021-Jan 2022 to Feb 2022-Apr 2022 indicate increased chances of below-normal rainfall. The outlooks for the 3-month windows transitioning into the 2022 wet season are for slightly increased chances of above-normal rainfall.

2008 LORS Release Guidance (Part C): With Lake Okeechobee stage within the Low Sub-band, the Tributary Hydrologic Conditions in the Wet category and the Multi-seasonal Lake Okeechobee Net Inflow Outlook in the Wet category, Part C of the 2008 LORS suggests “Up to Maximum Practicable to the WCAs if desirable or with minimum Everglades impacts; otherwise no releases to WCAs.”

Over the 7-day period from July 19, 2021 to July 25, 2021, STA-2 received 500 ac-ft of Lake Okeechobee regulatory releases. An additional 900 ac-ft from Lake Okeechobee was used to bring STA-1W cells stages to target depths. No Lake regulatory releases reached the Lake Worth Lagoon through the C-51 canal. Stage in WCA-1 is below regulation schedule in Zone A2, stage in WCA-2A is above schedule, and WCA-3A stage is below schedule (Zone B). For the coming operational period, the USACE is requesting maximum practical regulatory releases be sent south from Lake Okeechobee towards the WCAs.

2008 LORS Release Guidance (Part D): With Lake Okeechobee stage in the Low Sub-band, the Tributary Hydrologic Conditions in the Wet category and the Multi-seasonal Lake Okeechobee Net Inflow Outlook in the Wet category Part D of the 2008 LORS suggests “S-79 up to 3,000 cfs and S-80 up to 1,170 cfs”.

For the 7-day period July 19, 2021 to July 25, 2021, total discharge to the St. Lucie Estuary was near 900 cfs with no flows coming from Lake Okeechobee. The 7-day average salinity at the US1 Bridge is in the good range for adult oysters. Total inflow to the Caloosahatchee Estuary averaged approximately 3,550 cfs over the past week with less than 50 cfs coming from Lake Okeechobee. Salinity conditions are in the good range for Tape Grass at Val I-75 and at Ft. Myers. Salinity conditions for adult eastern oysters are in the good range at Shell Point and Sanibel, and in the fair range at Cape Coral.

The District will continue to work with the USACE to manage Lake Okeechobee levels in an effort to curtail harmful discharges over this year. Generally speaking, the District and Corps should strive to move as much water out of the lake without harming natural resources and other critical resources. At this time, this involves releases that maintain appropriate salinity in the estuaries and ensuring the Stormwater Treatment Areas don't sustain long term damage from extended high-volume flows. Current District operational objectives are to continue to move water south from Lake Okeechobee for delivery to the Everglades where opportunities exist.

The District recommends USACE continue lake discharges to the Caloosahatchee Estuary in a pulse release fashion, measured at S-79, at a non-damaging level of 2,000 cfs (7-day average), while continuing to monitor estuary conditions and make any adjustments as necessary. This decision should be reassessed as needed based on lake and estuarine conditions. The USACE typically implements the releases to the estuaries over a 7-day period starting on Saturday and ending on Friday.