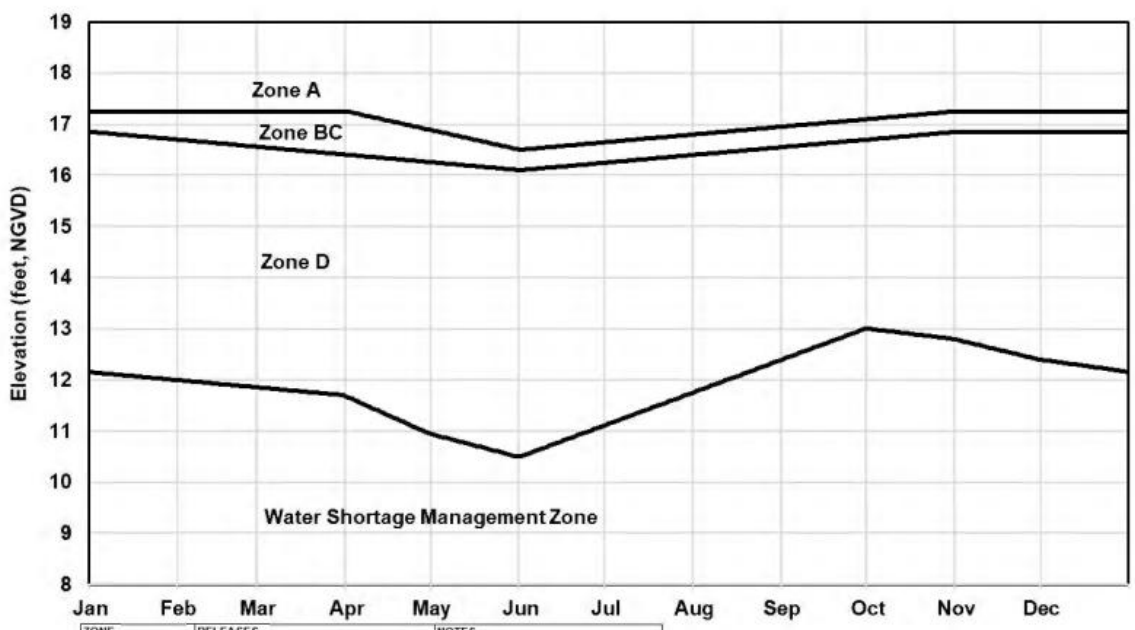
LOSOM Technical Summary October 19, 2026

This technical summary provides insight into the application of the Lake Okeechobee Systems Operation Manual (LOSOM). LOSOM, which went into effect with Record of Decision on August 12, 2024, provides operational guidelines that establishes Lake Okeechobee's operational strategy for flood risk management, water supply, fish and wildlife enhancement, navigation, and recreation. LOSOM has four zones (three relevant to regulatory release guidance), unlike the previous operations schedule Lake Okeechobee Regulation Schedule (LORS08) which had seven sub-bands (five relevant to regulatory release guidance). As described by the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), LOSOM operational decision making has shifted to an approach that benefits the system by allowing regulatory releases south in all operational zones, while eliminating regulatory releases to the east in zones below Zone B/C.

Below is the Lake Okeechobee Regulation Schedule for LOSOM. Related documentation can be found on the USACE Jacksonville District's Environmental planning website. (https://www.saj.usace.army.mil/About/Divisions-Offices/Planning/Environmental-Branch/Environmental-Documents/)



ZONE	RELEASES	NOTES
Zone A	Maximum capacity	Canals 43 and 44 may be maintained above their optimum water elevations (Table 7-3)
Zone BC	Up to 1,350 cfs at S-351 Up to 1,550 cfs at S-354 Up to 7,200 cfs at S-77 Up to 3,500 cfs at S-80 Up to 300 cfs at S-271 or S-352	Canals 43 and 44 should be maintained within their optimum water elevations (Table 7-3)
Zone D	Up to 1,100 cfs at S-351 and S-354 combined Up to 2,000 cfs at S-79 Up to 300 cfs at S-271 or S-352	Canals 43 and 44 should be maintained 7-3) except when Lake Okeechobee is lower than the optimal, then maintain canal with the lake.
Water Shortage Management Zone	Water supply releases as needed	Canals 43 and 44 may be maintained below their optimum water elevations (Table 7-3)

CENTRAL AND SOUTHERN FLORIDA PROJECT

2024 LAKE OKEECHOBEE
REGULATION SCHEDULE
Lake Okeechobee System Operating Manual (LOSOM)

DATED: 2024
DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY, JACKSONVILLE DISTRICT
CORPS OF ENGINEERS, JACKSONVILLE, FLORIDA

1. Lake Okeechobee Stage Classification:

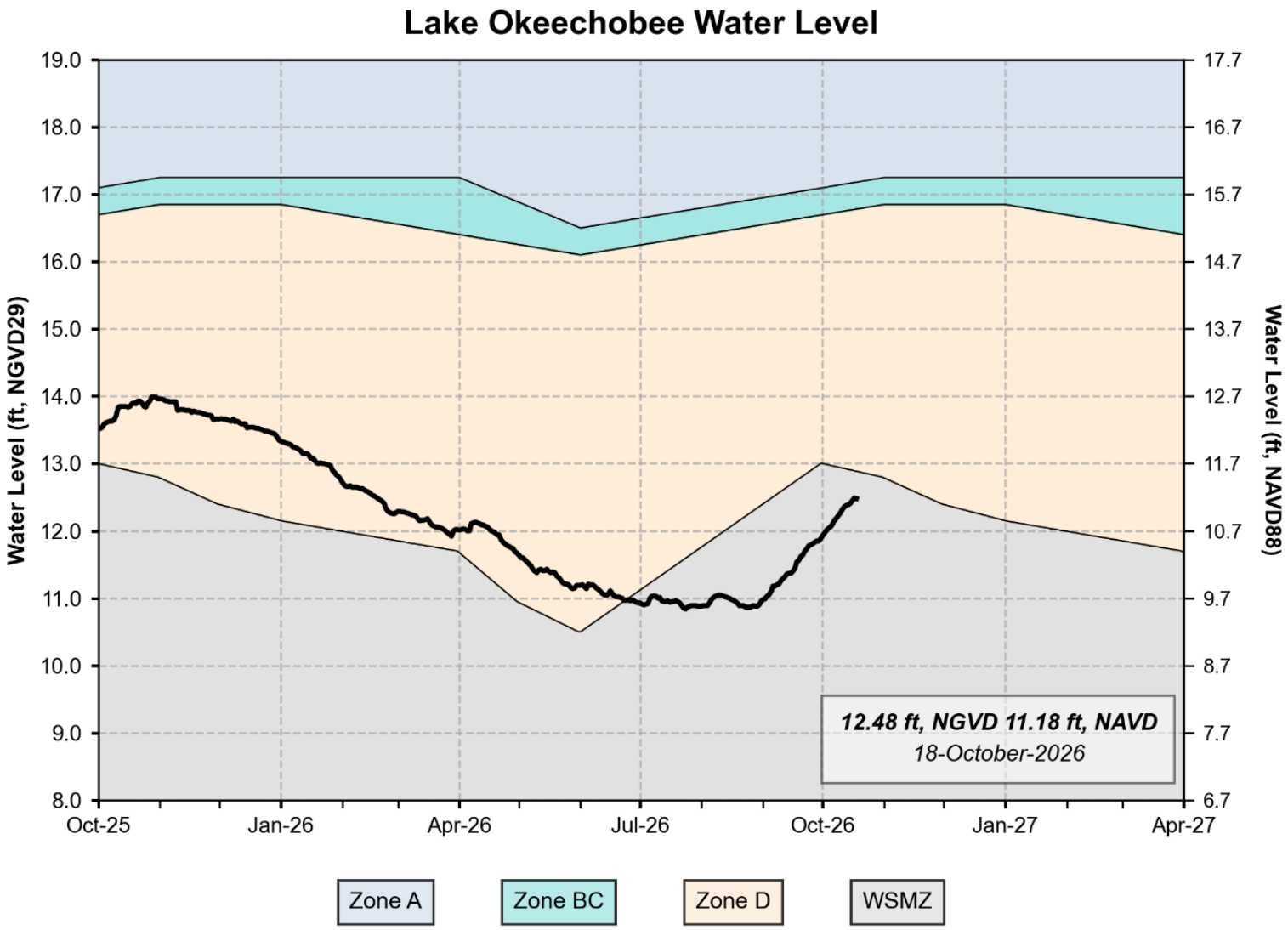
Lake Okeechobee Stage on 10/18/2026:

Lake Okeechobee Stage: **12.48 feet (NGVD29), 11.18 feet (NAVD88)***

Lake Okeechobee Management Zone	Bottom Elevation feet, NGVD (feet NAVD)	Current Lake Stage feet, NGVD (feet NAVD)
Zone A	17.18 (15.88)	
Zone B/C	16.78 (15.48)	
Zone D	12.89 (11.59)	
Water Shortage Management Zone		12.48 (11.18)

* Lake Okeechobee Stage NAVD88 offset of -1.30 is based on the revised Datum Conversion Agreement for C&SF Regulation Schedules – MFR #2 (12/12/2025). Anything below Zone D is in the Water Shortage Management Band.

USACE Jacksonville District maintains Central and South Florida system-wide database which is updated daily (https://w3.saj.usace.army.mil/h2o/reports.htm). These 'Daily Operational Reports' contain information related to Lake Okeechobee regulation schedule, recent stage, and relevant structure flows history. This is the primary source of information used in above table.


Lake Okeechobee Water Level
Water Level (ft, NGVD29)
Water Level (ft, NAVD88)
19.0
18.0
17.0
16.0
15.0
14.0
13.0
12.0
11.0
10.0
9.0
8.0
17.7
16.7
15.7
14.7
13.7
12.7
11.7
10.7
9.7
8.7
7.7
6.7
Oct-25
Jan-26
Apr-26
Jul-26
Oct-26
Jan-27
Apr-27
12.48 ft, NGVD 11.18 ft, NAVD
18-October-2026
Zone A
Zone BC
Zone D
WSMZ

2. Release Guidance:

Regulatory Releases*		
East	**West**	**South**
S-80 (SLE): No releases S-271 or S-352 (LWL): No releases	S-79: No releases	S-351 and S-354 combined: No releases

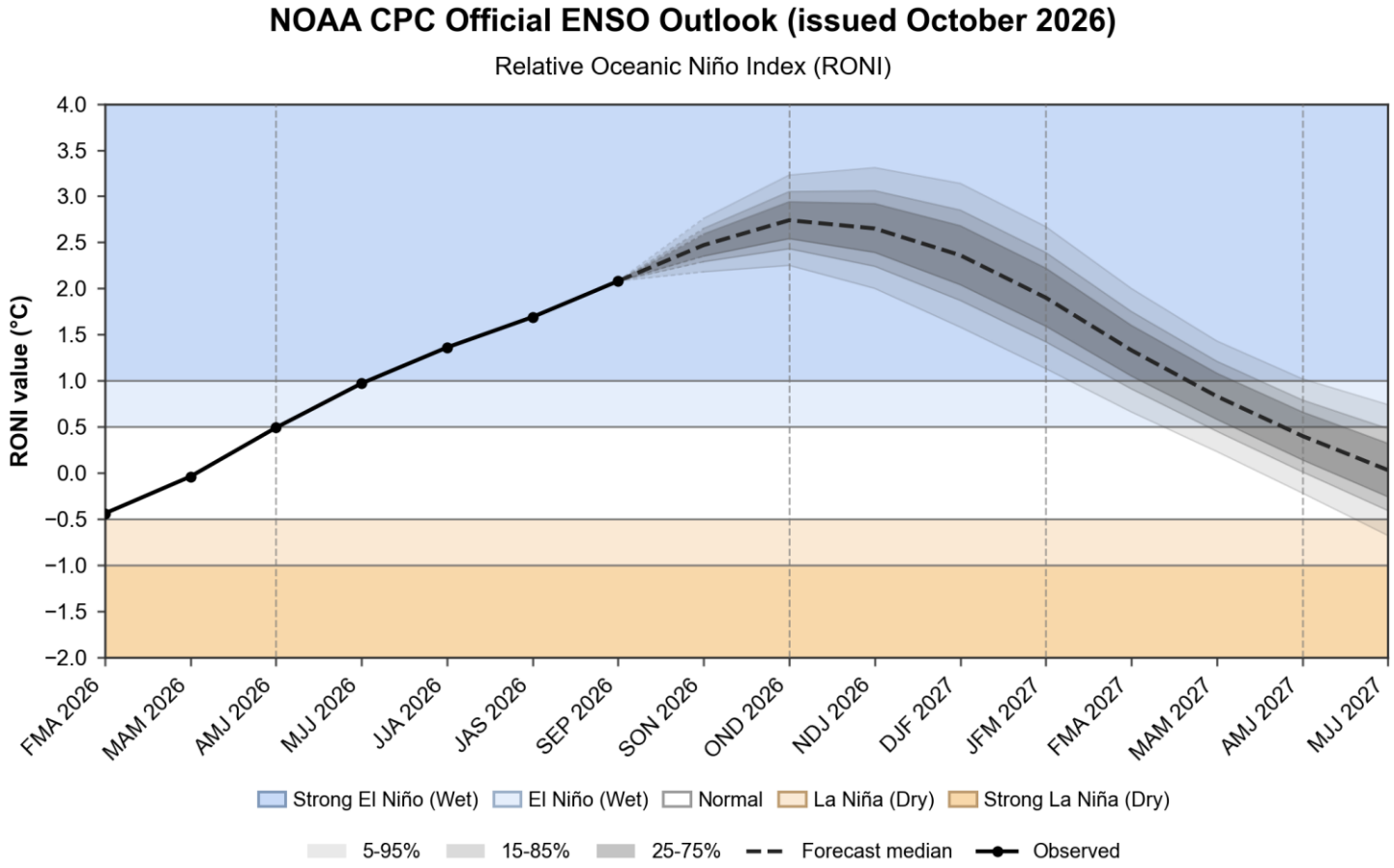
*Release guidance values are based on up to values stated in the Regulation Schedule figure (page 1 of this document) in the LOSOM Water Control Plan (https://usace.contentdm.oclc.org/utils/getfile/collection/p16021coll7/id/25888).

3. Water Management Considerations:

LOSOM decision-making on quantity, timing, and duration of releases from Lake Okeechobee should consider recent, current, and forecasted system conditions. While the list of factors that should be considered is elaborate, this report focuses on current climate, weather forecasts (together termed as climatological conditions), and hydrologic conditions.

3.1 Current Climate and Forecast:

El Niño Southern Oscillation (ENSO) observations and forecasts are used to develop seasonal strategies for Lake Okeechobee operations. The LOSOM water control plan considers 'moderate-to-strong' temperature anomalies to be more than 1 °C in the Niño 3.4 Index Region. The Climate Projection Center (CPC) defines warm and cold periods when the Relative Oceanic Niño Index (3-month running mean of Sea Surface Temperature [SST] anomalies) pass the thresholds of +/- 0.5 °C. Water managers should consider ENSO forecasts at three key seasonal assessment points (AMJ, OND, and JFM) for release guidance.

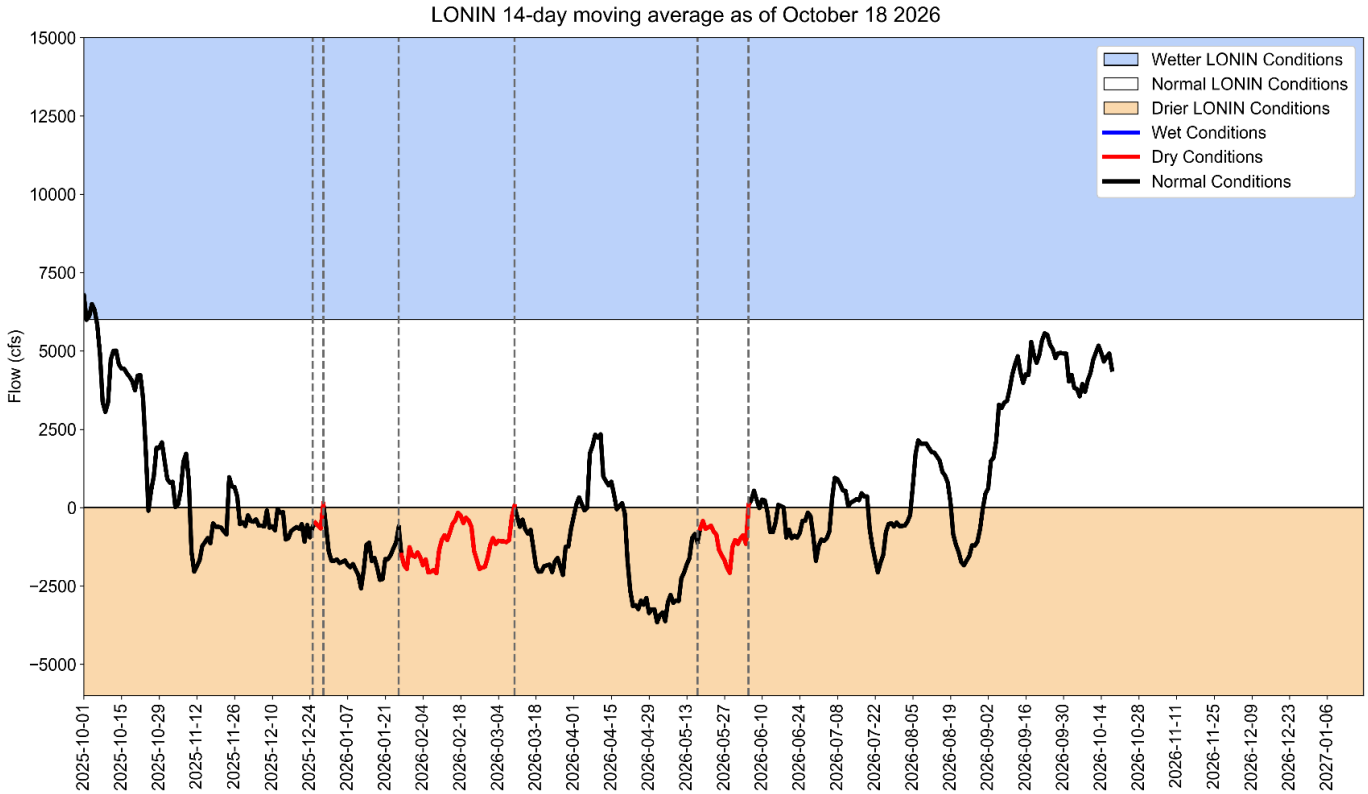


Forecast shading spans NOAA CPC RONI percentiles for nine upcoming 3-month seasons (issued 2026-10-08). (https://cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/products/analysis_monitoring/enso/roni/outlook/)
Observed line shows seasonal RONI values from NOAA CPC. (https://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/data/indices/RONI.ascii.txt)

3.2 Hydrological Conditions:

Lake Okeechobee Net Inflow (LONIN) is a surrogate of Lake Okeechobee basin hydrologic condition. This along with climatologic conditions are considered while adopting weekly release strategies. The graphic below provides a historical view of wetness in upstream lake watershed represented by LONIN's 14-day moving average. Based on modeling assumptions for Zone D operations used in LOSOM planning, ENSO-based "wet" or "dry" conditions would be overridden by hydrologic conditions under specific situations. If 14-day moving average LONIN is greater than 6000 cfs for 14 consecutive days would trigger "wet" condition operations until this criterion is no longer satisfied. Similarly, "dry" condition operations would be triggered when 14-day moving average LONIN remains negative for 28 consecutive days. For more detailed information on LOSOM modeling interested readers can refer to https://usace.contentdm.oclc.org/utils/getfile/collection/p16021coll7/id/25896.

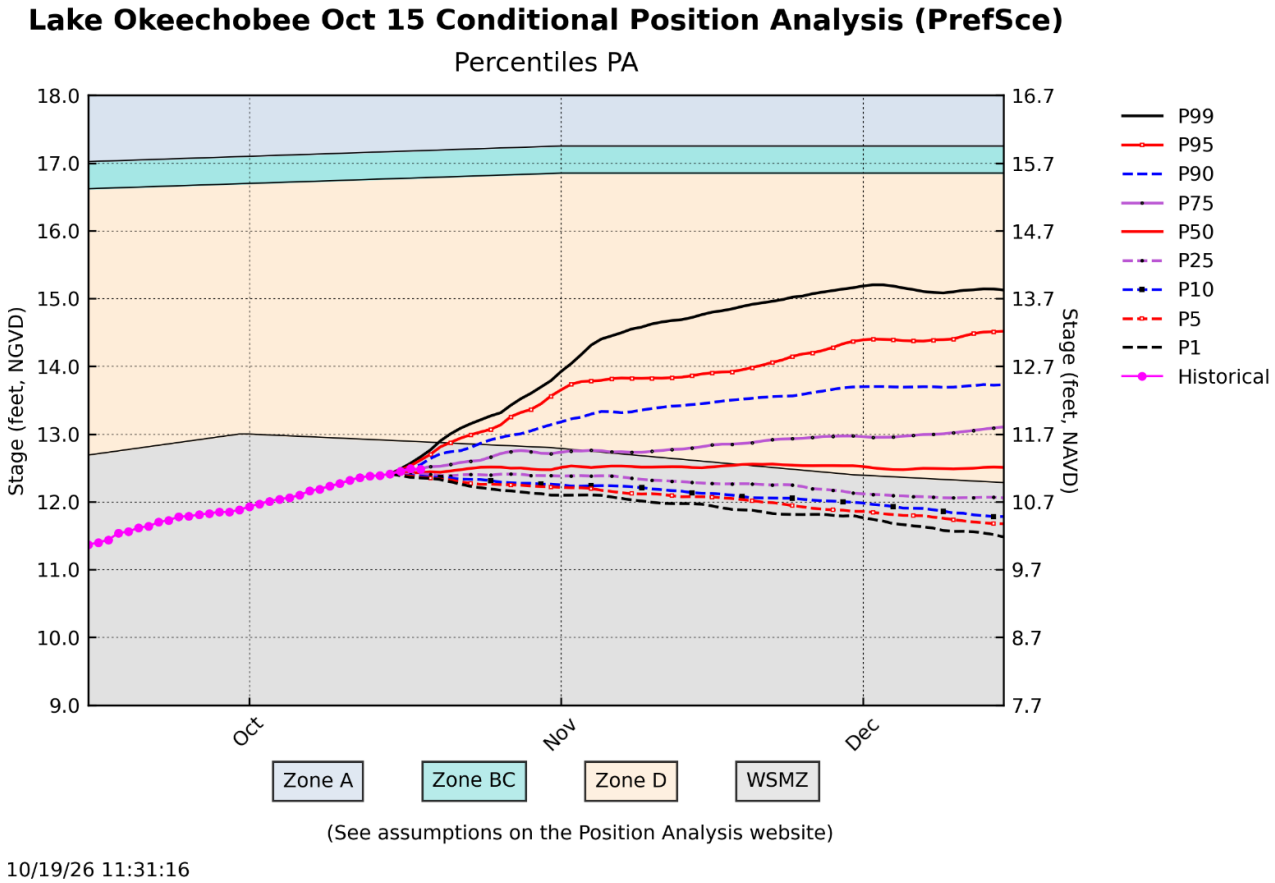
Real-time Lake Okeechobee operations under LOSOM could consider additional metrics beyond ENSO and hydrologic conditions to trigger "wet" or "dry" operations. Meteorological forecasts, tropical activity, recent Lake ascension/recession rates are examples of such metrics. The scope of this report is limited to tracking "wet" and "dry" conditions based on ENSO and LONIN.



Count of the last 14 days of the 14-day running average LONIN that have values > 6000 cfs: 0
Count of the last 28 days of the 14-day running average LONIN that have values < 0 cfs: 0

3.3 Lake Okeechobee Stage Projection with Conditional Position Analysis:

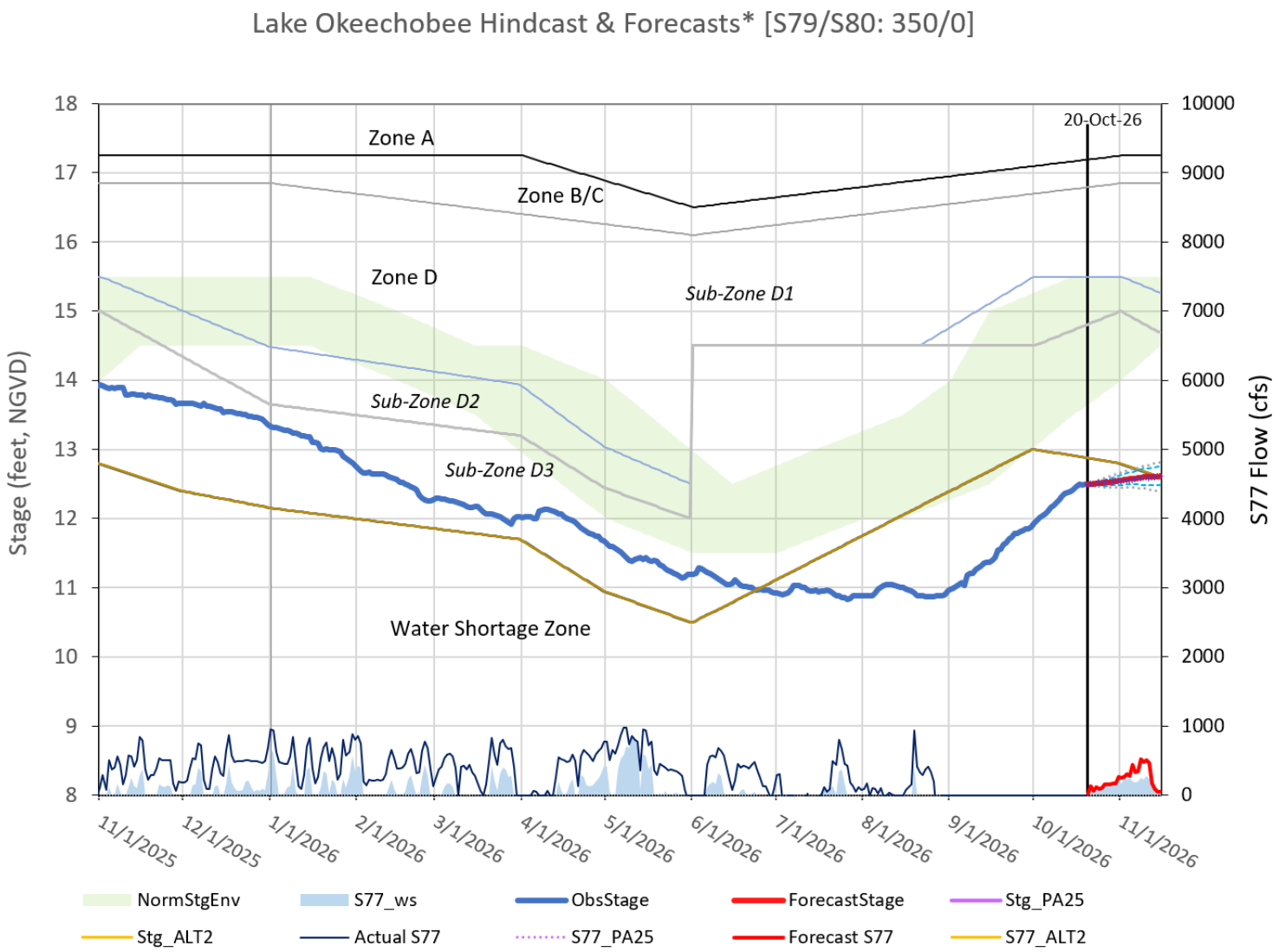
The Position Analysis graphic below shows stage percentile lines for the next two months along with historical stages. For more information about the Dynamic Position Analysis (DPA) or the Conditional Position Analysis (CPA), please visit the SFWMD operational planning webpage https://www.sfwmd.gov/science-data/operational-planning. CPA stochastically transforms stages obtained from the Dynamic Position Analysis (DPA) considering projected rainfall tercile probabilities over the next twelve 3-monthly seasons. For the Preferred Rainfall Scenario (PrefSce), seasonal rainfall probabilities are calculated based on historical data and projected Relative Oceanic Niño Index (RONI) values published by CPC. Seasonal rainfall tercile probabilities of the first season are estimated from the official rainfall forecasts published by CPC. Seasonal rainfall tercile probabilities of the remaining seasons are calculated based on historical data and projected Relative Oceanic Nino-3.4 Index (RONI) published by the CPC and adjusted for the seasonal weights of the ENSO signal to the historical rainfall. The monthly probability of the current month is derived from the QPF estimates generated from WMD, WPC, ECMWF, HRES, and 100 ECMWF ensembles, in combination with recently observed rainfall (NEXRAD) and historical rainfall data during 1991–2020.



* Lake Okeechobee Stage NAVD88 offset of -1.30 is based on the revised Datum Conversion Agreement for C&SF Regulation Schedules – MFR #2 (12/12/2025). Anything below Zone D is in the Water Shortage Management Band.

3.4 Lake Okeechobee Stage Hindcast with Lane Assist Tool:

The Interagency Modeling Center (IMC) developed a tool called Lane Assist Tool (LAT) for Lake Okeechobee Water Managers. It provides perspective on hindcast simulated stages compared to actual stages and potential future stages on 4-week horizon. Simulations are based on the modeling assumptions used in LOSOM planning process and help to provide context on how stage observation is influenced by real-time operational flexibility relates to planning assumptions and performance. The combination of rainfall forecasts from SFWMD meteorologist and European Center for Medium-Range Weather Forecasts (ECMWF) are used to drive component models. Insights provided by LAT are valuable for situational awareness and potentially exercising real-time operational flexibility and should not be used to audit water management decisions which consider several factors not included in the planning modeling. The following graphic shows Lake Okeechobee stage and S-77 flows forecasted assuming target flow rates of 350 cfs at S-79 and 0 cfs at S-80.



LAT-forecasted Lake Okeechobee stage and S-77 flows with 350 cfs target at S-79 and 0 cfs at S-80.

3.5 LOSOM Definition of “Wet” or “Dry” Conditions:

In LOSOM, “Wet” or “Dry” Conditions are determined by a combination of the ENSO 3.4 SST anomaly and the 14-day running average for LONIN. These considerations can be used to help with release decisions in the bounds of the WCP.

October 2025 ENSO 3.4 SST anomaly was **-0.7°C.**

Assuming observed ONI on AMJ 2026 represents the ENSO value at the latest evaluation point for climatological conditions classifying them as **Normal**.

Last change in hydrologic conditions occurred on June 5 (**Dry to Normal**).

Test for “Wet” hydrologic conditions:
Did each of the past 14 consecutive days of Lake Okeechobee Net Inflow (LONIN) have values **>6000 cfs, NO.**

Test for “Dry” hydrologic conditions:
Did each of the past 28 consecutive days of Lake Okeechobee Net Inflow have values **< 0 cfs, NO.**

The considerations above indicate the conditions are **Normal.**

3 Planning Modeling Considerations:

The LOSOM Water Control Plan makes several provisions for lower releases (compared to the "up-to" release rate). This section helps to provide context on what was assumed in the planning modeling that supported the LOSOM Environmental Impact Statement. While this information is not intended to be prescriptive release guidance and many other factors should be considered in release decisions, this information is helpful to give an additional piece of context that relates back to the modeled performance on the LOSOM plan.

LOSOM modeling documentation can be used for providing modified release guidance under these lower Lake conditions (LOSOM EIS Appendix G, USACE 2024).

Current Lake Okeechobee Stage is in the Water Shortage Management Zone.

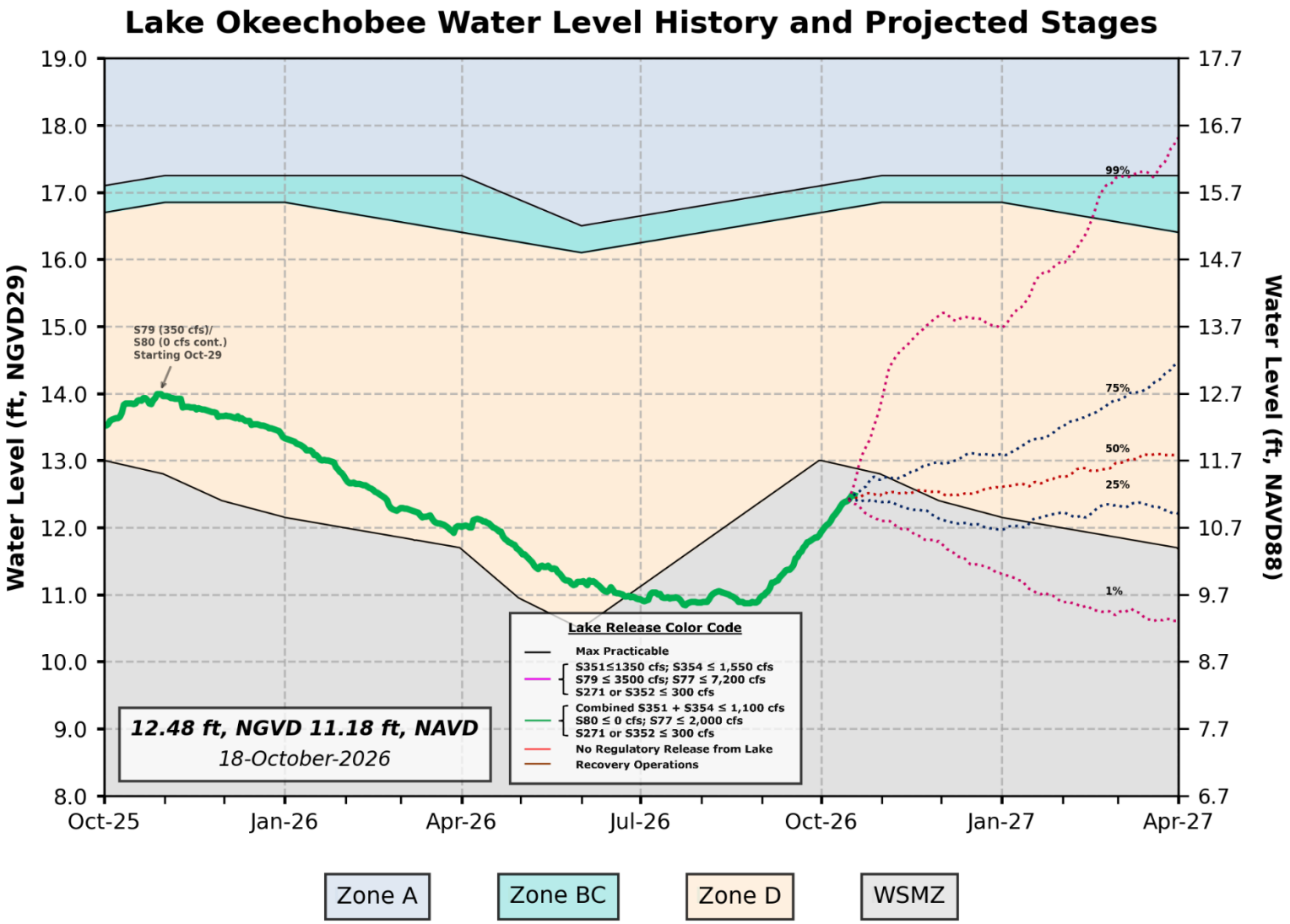
Current climatological conditions are Normal.

Current hydrological conditions are Normal.

Based on modeling performed during LOSOM planning, the following regulatory releases values were modeled:

- No releases at S80
- No releases at S271
- No releases at S79
- No releases at S-354
- No releases at S-351

4 Lake Okeechobee Hydrographs:



5 Water Supply Risk Evaluation:

Area	Subzone Indicator[1]	Value	Color Coded Scoring Scheme
LOK	Projected LOK Stage for the next two months	Zone D3	M
	Palmer Drought Index for LOK Tributary Conditions	-3.93	H
	CPC Precipitation Outlook	1 month: Above Normal	L
		3 months: Above Normal	L
	LOK Seasonal Net Inflow Outlook (Oct-Mar)	2.19 ft	L
	ENSO Forecast	Normal to Extremely Wet	
	LOK Multi-Seasonal Net Inflow Outlook (Oct-Apr)	2.29 ft	M
	ENSO Forecast	Normal	
WCAs[2]	WCA 1: Site 1-8C	Above Line 1 (17.62 ft) (16.12 ft NAVD88)	L
	WCA 2A: Site S11B-HW	Above Line 1 (13.73 ft) (12.23 ft NAVD88)	L
	WCA-3A: Site 3-69W[3]	Above Line 1 (9.91 ft) (8.26 ft NAVD88)	L

10/19/2026

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[1] All water supply risk metrics, except for 'Projected LOK Stage for the next two months', originated from Adaptive Protocols developed under LORS2008.

[2] WCA1 and WCA2A NAVD88 offset of -1.5 and 3-69W offset of -1.65 is based on the revised Datum Conversion Agreement for C&SF Regulation Schedules – MFR #2 (12/12/2025).

[3] The stage data for station 3-69W was retrieved from DBHydro using DBKey: OU839