

MEMORANDUM

TO: Jason Engle, Chief, Engineering Division (USACE)
FROM: John Mitnik, Chief District Engineer (SFWMD)
DATE: August 20, 2026
SUBJECT: System Operational Position Statement August 18, 2026 to August 24, 2026

This Position Statement is to provide operational input for the one-week period from August 18, 2026 to August 24, 2026 based on system conditions and data observed during the previous Monday to Sunday 7-day period.

Current climate conditions: District August rainfall was below normal (77% normal). The rainfall forecast (issued August 19) calls for below normal rainfall for the coming 7-day period and near to below normal for the following period.

Climate and weather forecasts: The most recent CPC precipitation outlook for Aug 2026 is equal chances of below, normal and above normal rainfall (EC) for the entire District. El Niño conditions are present and will strengthen through the end of the year. The 3-month windows of Sep 2026 – Nov 2026 predicts equal chances of below, normal and above normal rainfall (EC) for the entire District. The transition into the 2026 – 2027 Dry Season goes through the 3-month window Oct 2026 – Dec 2026 shows increased chances (40-50%) of above normal for south Florida. The 3-month windows from Nov 2026 – Jan 2027 to Feb 2027 – Apr 2027 show outlooks for substantial increased chances (50-60%) of above normal rainfall for the Kissimmee River and north, and increased chances (40-50%) of above normal for the respective remainder areas of the District. The transition into the 2027 wet season shows slightly increased chances (33-40%) to increased chances (40-50%) of above normal rainfall for the state of Florida.

Hydrologic and tropical outlooks: Current climatological conditions are Normal. Current hydrological conditions are Normal. The lake stage is in the Water Shortage Management Zone (WSMZ) and is projected to stay within the WSMZ for next two months.

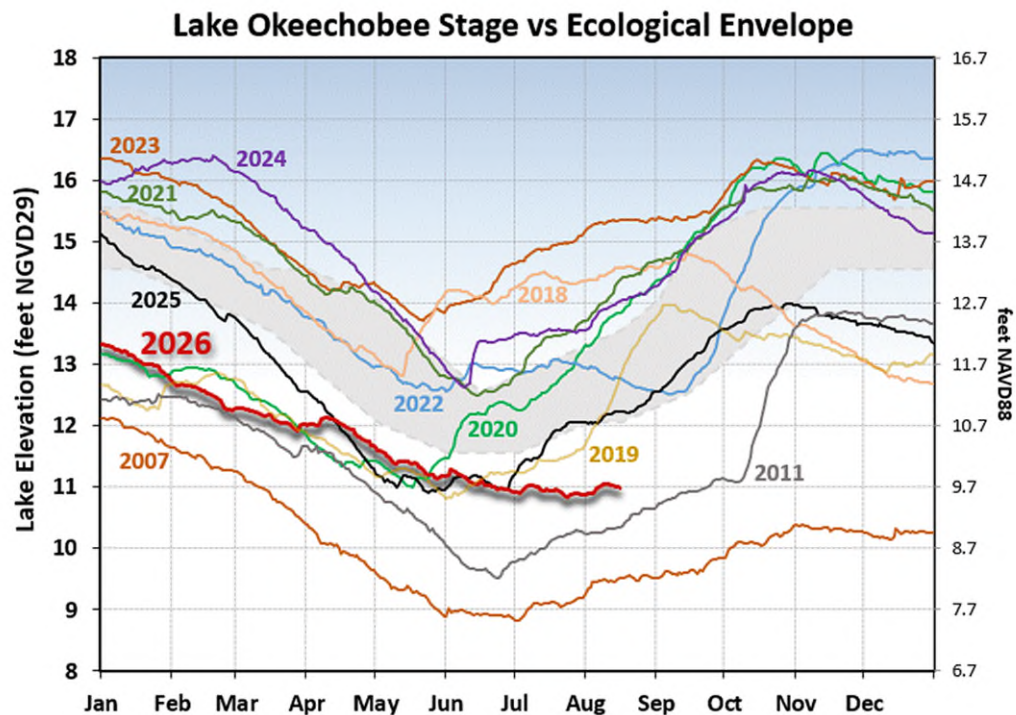
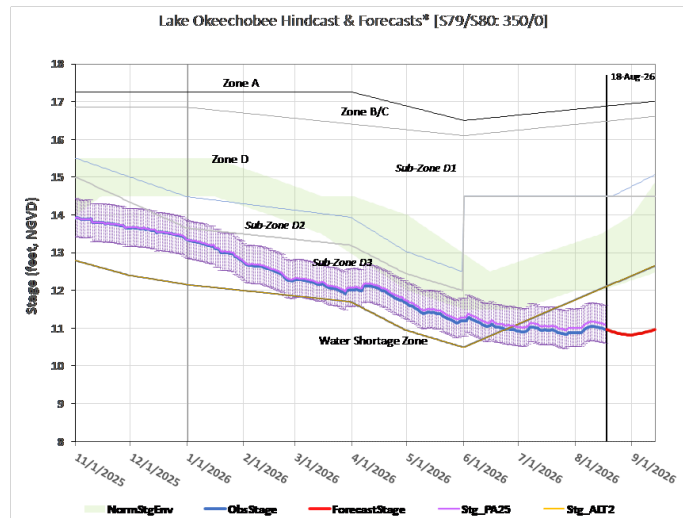
Water-supply conditions: The Lake Okeechobee seasonal net inflow outlook is Normal and at Low risk for water supply. The multi-seasonal net inflow outlook is Wet and at Low risk for water supply.

Estuary conditions: For the past 7-day periods, August 10 to August 16, 2026, total inflow to the Caloosahatchee River Estuary averaged approximately 3,450 cfs with a little or no flow from Lake Okeechobee through S-77. Salinities were in the optimal range (0-10) for tape grass in the upper estuary. Salinities were in the optimal range (10-25) for adult eastern oysters at Cape Coral, and in the upper stressed range (>25) at Shell Point and Sanibel. Total inflow to the St. Lucie Estuary was about 550 cfs with no flow coming from Lake Okeechobee, C-23 Basin, and C-44 Basin, about 50 cfs coming from C-24 Basin, about 50 cfs coming from the Ten Mile Creek Basin, and about 450 cfs coming from Tidal Basin. The average salinity in the middle estuary was within the optimal range (10-25) for adult eastern oysters.

Lake Okeechobee stage and ecological conditions:

On August 16, the daily average Lake Okeechobee stage was 9.67 feet NAVD88 (11.04 feet NGVD29), which placed it within the Water Shortage Management Zone (WSMZ) of the Lake Okeechobee System Operating Manual (LOSOM). Lake stage decreased by 0.07 feet over the preceding 7-day period. El Niño conditions are present, and will strengthen through the end of the year. The District will continue to monitor conditions in the estuaries, as well as the systemwide conditions. Normal Lake Operations continue pursuant to the considerations in LOSOM as informed by PA25. It is recommended that flow targets for the Caloosahatchee Estuary should rely on basin flows to ensure the delivery of the Minimum Flow and Level, but use Lake Okeechobee flows from S-77 to attain a targeted steady release of 350 cfs at S-79; flow targets for the St. Lucie Estuary and Lake Worth Lagoon should remain at 0 cfs. The District will continue to monitor salinity conditions in the estuaries and water supply conditions within the Lake Okeechobee Service Area. The USACE typically implements the releases to the estuaries over a 7-day period starting on Saturday and ending on Friday.

Forecast Modeling Based on PA25 Simulation



The current and seven prior years' annual stage hydrographs for Lake Okeechobee in comparison to the ecological envelope (light grey).

Navigation and recreation conditions: There are five navigational boat locks (S-135/G-36/S-127/S-131/S-193) that are closed. Boaters are encouraged to exercise caution on the Kissimmee River (C-38 Canal). Public access along the L-29, L-67A and L-67C Canals near Tamiami Trail in Miami-Dade County is closed for maintenance activities.

STOF water supply conditions: Current Lake Okeechobee stage is sufficiently high that water supply deliveries to the Seminole Tribe of Florida (STOF) Brighton Reservation, if needed, will not be impacted. When Lake Okeechobee stage recedes below 8.75 feet NAVD88 (10 feet NGVD29) and 6.75 feet NAVD88 (8 feet NGVD29), water supply delivery is not achievable via Pump Station G-207 on the Harney Pond Canal and Pump Station G-208 on the Indian Prairie Canal, respectively, as the respective canals become disconnected from Lake Okeechobee.

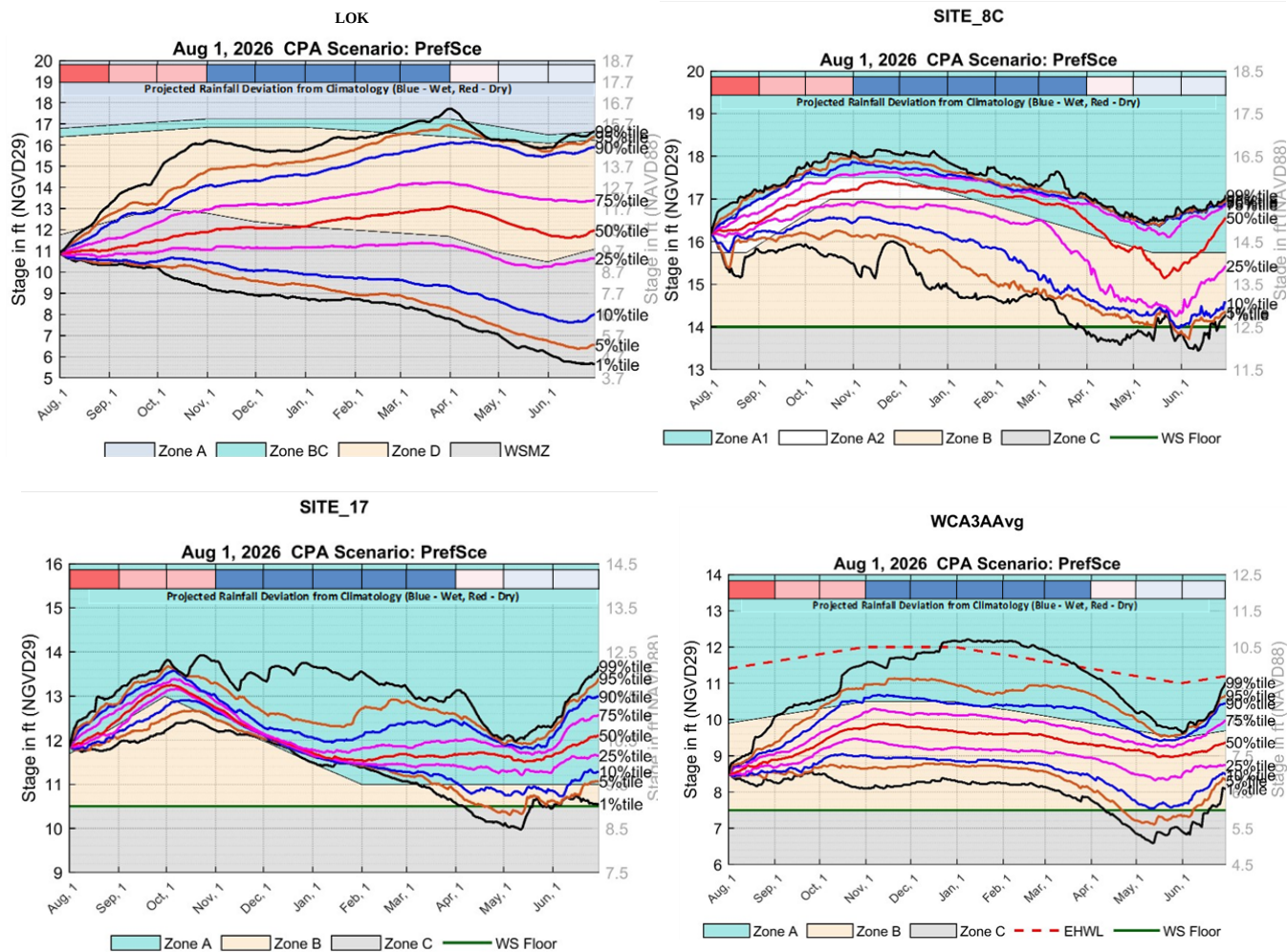
Algal Bloom conditions: The Fish and Wildlife Research Institute reported on August 14, 2026, that *Karenia brevis*, the Florida red tide dinoflagellate, was not observed at bloom concentrations in any samples collected within the District region. In the most recent non-obscured satellite image from August 15, 2026, NOAA's Harmful Algal Bloom Monitoring System suggests moderate to high cyanobacteria potential across most of Lake Okeechobee's shallow nearshore regions.

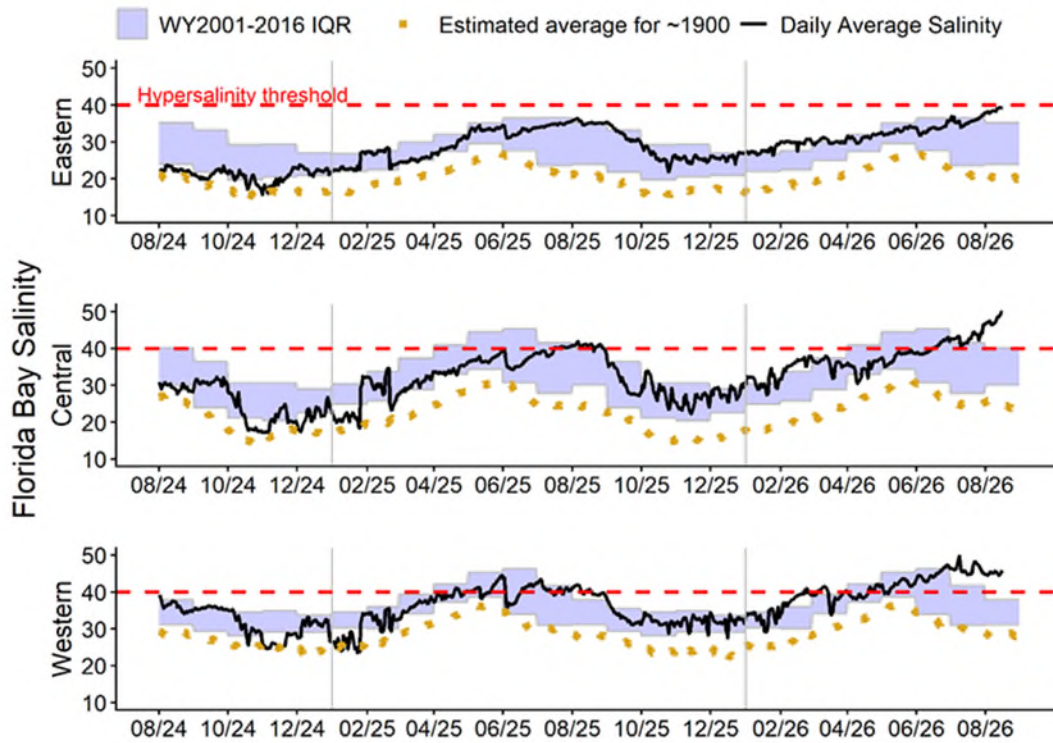
STA conditions: In STA-1E, Central Flow-way is offline for construction activities. An operational restriction is in place in the Western Flow-way for post-construction vegetation grow-in. Online treatment cells are at or near target stage. In STA-1W, Eastern Flow-way is offline for vegetation management activities. Treatment cells are at target stage. Vegetation in the Western and Eastern Flow-ways is highly stressed. The 365-day PLRs for the Northern and Western Flow-ways are below 1.0 g/m²/yr. In STA-2, treatment cells are at or near target stage. An operational restriction is in place in Flow way 2 for vegetation management activities. The 365-day PLRs for all Flow-ways are below 1.0 g/m²/yr. In STA-3/4, an operational restriction is in place in the Eastern Flow-way for vegetation management activities. Most treatment cells are at or near target stage. Vegetation in the Central Flow-way is highly stressed. The 365-day PLR for the Eastern, Central, and Western Flow-ways are below 1.0 g/m²/yr. For the current operational period, USACE is not requesting flows south from Lake Okeechobee towards the WCAs. The District will continue to work with the USACE to manage Lake Okeechobee levels in an effort to curtail harmful discharges over this year. To help with this objective the District will move as much water south through the Stormwater Treatment Areas as possible under the current permits as regional conditions allow.

WCA conditions: On August 16, the daily average stage in WCA-1 was at 14.48 feet NAVD88 (16.08 feet NGVD29), in Zone A2 and 0.57 feet below regulation schedule. The daily average stage in WCA-2A was at 10.38 feet NAVD88 (11.89 feet NGVD29), in Zone B and 0.13 feet below regulation schedule. The daily average stage in WCA-3A was at 7.08 feet NAVD88 (8.60 feet NGVD29), in Zone B and 1.40 feet below regulation schedule. Over the 7-day periods, August 10, 2026 to August 16, 2026, no regulatory releases were sent from Lake Okeechobee south to the STAs. No Lake regulatory releases reached Lake Worth Lagoon through the C-51 canal during this period.

ENP conditions: Releases from WCA-3A to the ENP continue through the S12D and the S333N structures. In Everglades National Park, both Taylor Slough and Shark River Slough had stable water depths from north to south compared to a month ago. WCA-1 and WCA-2 are exhibiting a stable to drying trend over the last month. Water levels are increasing across southern WCA-3A, stable in the central region, but remain below the soil surface in the northeast. The Big Cypress basin is also showing a stable to drying trend although there are issues with the WDAT output in the northeast of this region. Stages have increased in Taylor Slough over the past week and remain below the recent average. Salinity increased on average in Florida Bay compared to last week and remains above the estimated historical average and above the WY2001-2016 Interquartile Range (IQR) 75th percentile in all regions. The Tamiami Trail Flow Formula (TTFF) recommends 324 cfs of daily target releases from WCA-3A to ENP. The District recommends continuing with the current operations for the releases from WCA-3A in accordance with the Combined Operating Plan.

August 1, 2026 Conditional Position Analysis (CPA) results for Lake Okeechobee, WCA-1, WCA-2A and WCA-3A under LOSOM Operations.





Eastern (top panel), Central (middle panel) and Western (bottom panel) Florida Bay daily average salinities with WY2001-2016 interquartile (25-75 percentile) ranges (IQR) and estimated historical daily average salinities. The hypersalinity threshold indicates the level at which salinities start to become harmful to seagrass.