MEMORANDUM

TO: Jason Engle, Chief, Engineering Division (USACE)

FROM: John Mitnik, Chief District Engineer (SFWMD)

DATE: March 26, 2026

SUBJECT: System Operational Position Statement March 24, 2026 to March 30, 2026

This Position Statement is to provide operational input for the one-week period from March 24, 2026 to March 30, 2026 based on system conditions and data observed during the previous Monday to Sunday 7-day period.

Current climate conditions: District March rainfall to date is slightly above normal (108% normal). The rainfall forecast (issued March 25) calls for above normal rainfall for the coming 7-day period and near to above normal for the following period.

Climate and weather forecasts: The most recent CPC precipitation outlook for Apr 2026 is increased chances (40-50%) of below normal rainfall for the Lake Okeechobee and north, and slightly increased chances (33-40%) of below normal for the respective remainder areas of the District. A transition from La Niña to ENSO-neutral is expected in the next month, with ENSO-neutral favored through May-July 2026 (55% chance). The 3-month window Apr 2026 – Jun 2026 indicates equal chances of below, normal and above normal rainfall (EC) for the Lake Okeechobee and south, and slightly increased chances (33-40%) of above Normal rainfall for the remainder of the District. The 3-month windows May 2026 – Jul 2026 shows slightly increased chances (33-40%) of above normal for the entire District. The 3-month window Jun 2026 – Aug 2026 shows equal chances of below, normal and above normal rainfall (EC) for the state of Florida. The 3-month windows from Jul 2026 – Sep 2026 to Aug 2026 – Oct 2026 indicate slightly increased chances (33-40%) of below normal for the Kissimmee River and north, and increased chances (40-50%) of below Normal rainfall for the remainder of the District. The transition into the 2026 – 2027 Dry Season goes through the 3-month window of Sep 2024 – Nov 2024 showing equal chances of below, normal and above normal (EC) for south Florida. The precipitation outlook for the 2026 - 2027 Dry Season indicates slightly increased chances (33-40%) to increased chances (40-50%) of above normal rainfall for south Florida.

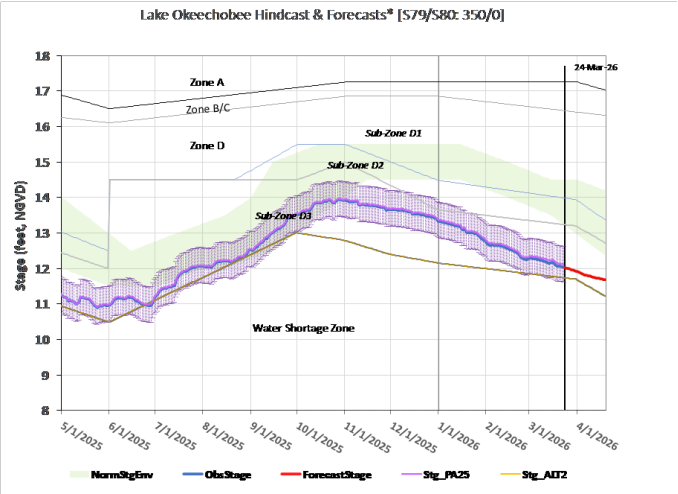
Hydrologic and tropical outlooks: Current climatological conditions are Normal. Current hydrological conditions are Dry. The lake stage is projected to remain in Zone D3 for the next 2 months.

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 Normal and at Moderate risk for water supply.

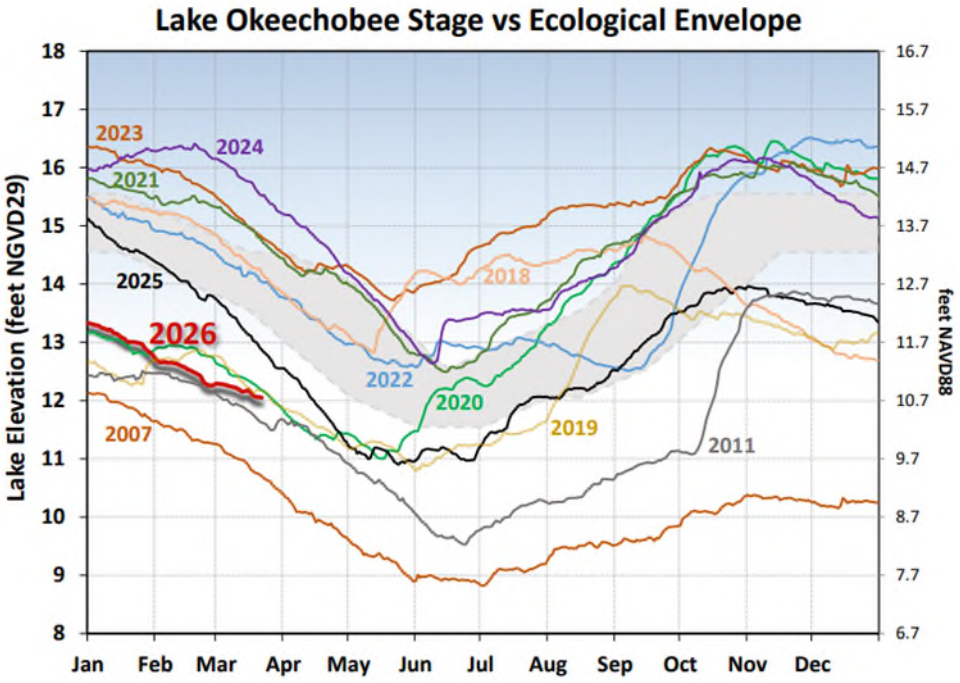
Estuary conditions: For the past 7-day periods, March 16 to March 22, 2026, total inflow to the Caloosahatchee River Estuary averaged approximately 550 cfs with about 200 cfs coming from Lake Okeechobee through S-77. Salinities in the upper estuary were within the optimal range (0-10) for tape grass at S-79 and Val I-75, and in damaging range (>15) at Ft. Myers. 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 150 cfs with no flow coming from Lake Okeechobee, C-44 Basin, C-23 Basin, and C-24 Basin, about 50 cfs coming from the Ten Mile Creek Basin, and about 100 cfs coming from Tidal Basin. The average salinity in the middle estuary was within the upper stressed range (>25) for adult eastern oysters.

Lake Okeechobee stage and ecological conditions:

Forecast Modeling Based on PA25 Simulation



On March 22 the daily average Lake Okeechobee stage was 10.74 feet NAVD88 (12.05 feet NGVD29), which placed it within the lower portion of Zone D (Zone D3 of the PA25 simulation) of the Lake Okeechobee System Operating Manual (LOSOM). Lake stage decreased by 0.05 feet over the preceding 7-day period. A transition from La Niña to ENSO-neutral is expected in April. 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 ensure S-79 flows remain above a targeted steady release of 350 cfs; flow targets for the St. Lucie Estuary and Lake Worth Lagoon should remain at 0 cfs consistent with Normal Operations within Zone D. 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.



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

Navigation and recreation conditions: Boaters navigating to and from Lake Okeechobee should be advised that if current dry conditions persist and the levels of Lake Okeechobee continue to recede. Once the water level in Lake Okeechobee drops below 12 feet NGVD or 10.70 feet NAVD, S-135/G-36/S-127/S-131 Boat Locks will be completely closed to navigation. The S-193 Boat Lock will remain open only on Saturdays and Sundays. 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 March 20, 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 March 22, 2026, NOAA's Harmful Algal Bloom Monitoring System suggests moderate cyanobacteria activity in Fisheating Bay and along much of the western and northwestern shorelines.

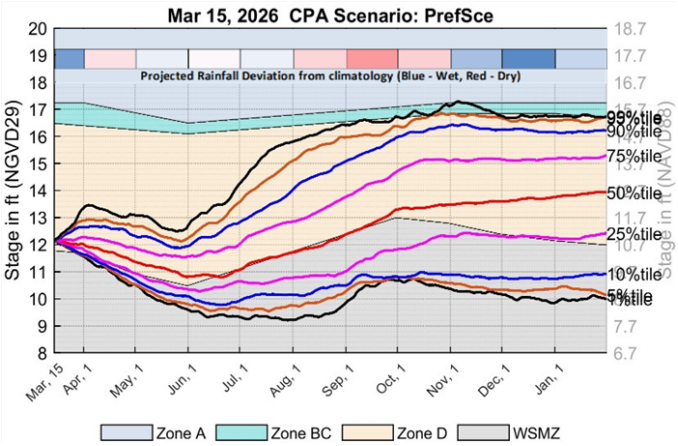
STA conditions: In STA-1E, Central Flow-way is offline for construction activities. An operational restriction is in place in the Western Flow-way for post-construction vegetation grow-in. Online treatment cells are slightly above target stage. In STA-1W, Eastern Flow-way is offline for vegetation management activities. Most treatment cells are slightly above 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/year. In STA-2, operational restrictions are in place in Flow-ways 2, 3, and 4 for vegetation management activities. Treatment cells are at or slightly above target stage. The 365-day PLRs for all Flow-ways are below 1.0 $g/m^2/yr$. 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 slightly above 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 $g/m^2/yr$. 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 March 22 the daily average stage in WCA-1 was at 14.25 feet NAVD88 (15.85 feet NGVD29), in Zone B and 0.43 feet below regulation schedule. The daily average stage in WCA-2A was at 10.51 feet NAVD88 (12.10 feet NGVD29), in Zone A and 1.05 feet above regulation schedule. The daily average stage in WCA-3A was at 6.91 feet NAVD88 (8.43 feet NGVD29), in Zone B and 1.54 feet below regulation schedule. Over the 7-day period, March 15, 2026 to March 22, 2026, no regulatory releases were sent from Lake Okeechobee south to the STAs. No Lake regulatory releases reached the Lake Worth Lagoon through the C-51 canal during this period.

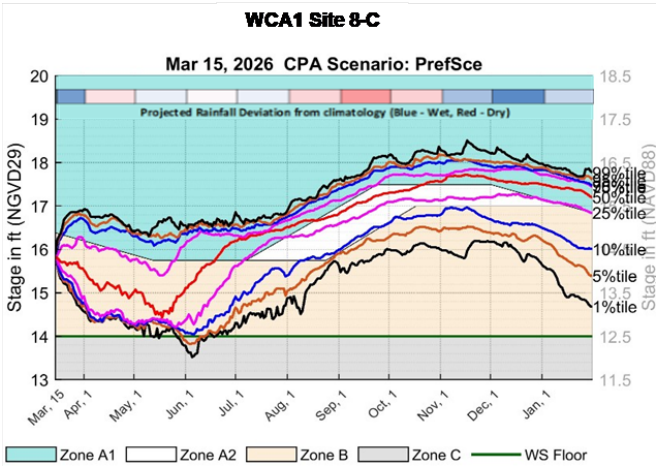
ENP conditions: Releases from WCA-3A to the ENP continue through the S-12C, S-12D, and S333 structures. Hydrologic connectivity within the major sloughs of ENP has increased with more connections to the coast through Taylor Slough and Shark River Slough. The SFWDAT model illustrates slightly lower water depths compared to a month ago with below ground conditions remaining in the northern portion of WCA-1 and WCA-2A. The southern half of WCA-2A remains deep for this time of year but is decreasing. Depths are lower than a month ago in WCA-3A and WCA-3B. Depths remain very low for this time of year in WCA-3A with potential impacts to system-wide ecology. Stages increased in Taylor Slough over the past week and are now above the recent average. Salinity decreased on average in Florida Bay compared to last week and is above the estimated historical average (circa 1900) and at the WY2001-2016 Interquartile Range (IQR) 75^{th} percentile in all three regions. The Tamiami Trail Flow Formula (TTFF) recommends 174 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.

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

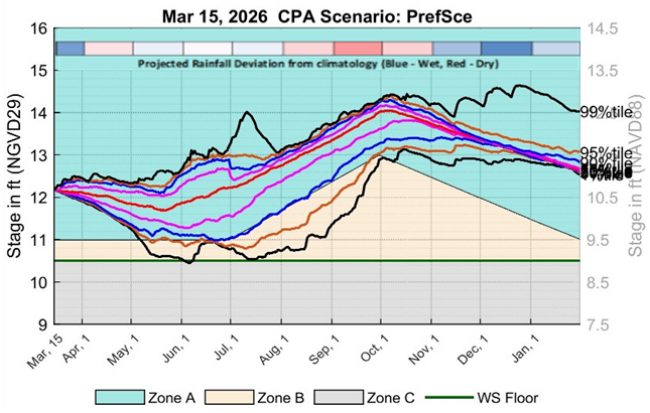
LOK



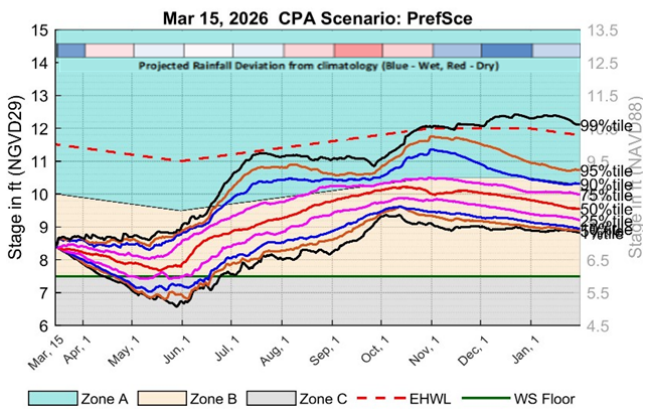
WCA1 Site 8-C

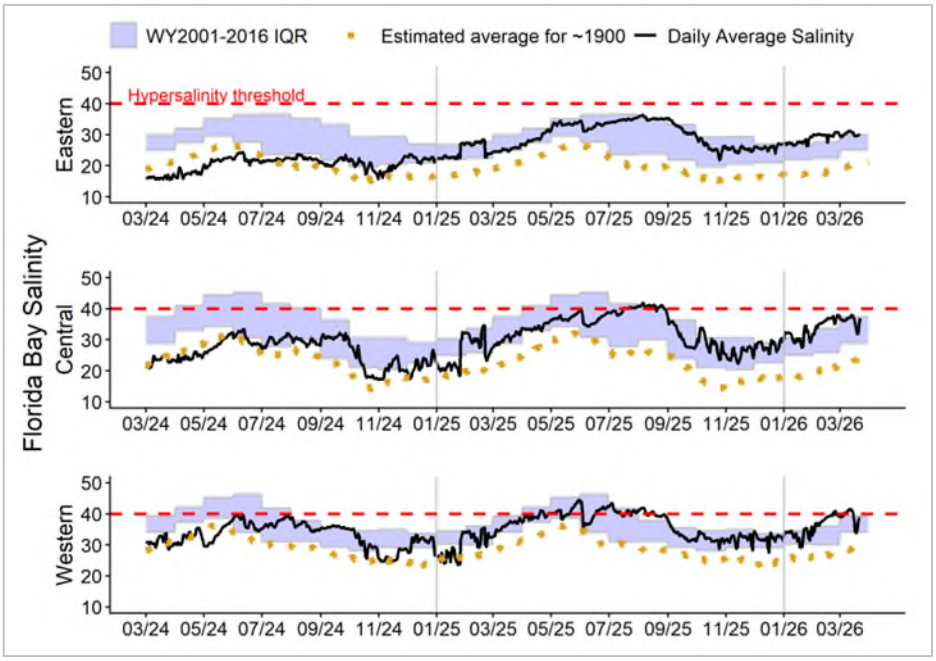


S11B_H



WCA3AAvg





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 hyper salinity threshold indicates the level at which salinities start to become harmful to seagrass.