

Disclaimer: Information contained in the report addresses environmental conditions only and is not the official South Florida Water Management District operations recommendation or decision.

## **M E M O R A N D U M**

**TO:** John Mitnik, Assistant Executive Director, Executive Office Staff

**FROM:** SFWMD Staff Environmental Advisory Team

**DATE:** May 27, 2026

**SUBJECT:** Weekly Environmental Conditions for Systems Operations

### **Summary**

#### **Weather Conditions and Forecast**

Steering winds will veer south-southeasterly to southerly, shifting the primary afternoon rainfall maximum toward the SFWMD interior on Wednesday, with a preference for the western interior. While some rainfall could occur along and near the Southwest Coast, the more concentrated activity should migrate inland. In addition, deeper Gulf moisture is likely to begin spreading farther into the SFWMD supporting an increase in substantial rainfall coverage and total area-averaged rainfall. From Thursday into Friday, a strong northern jet stream disturbance is forecast to dig into the south-central Gulf of Mexico and northern Central America supporting substantial moisture transport from the western Caribbean, Yucatán Peninsula, and eastern Pacific into the SFWMD. This evolving pattern should support numerous showers and thunderstorms each afternoon, initially favoring the interior, then shifting toward the interior and eastern portions of the SFWMD on Friday and Saturday. A good to widespread rainfall coverage appears likely both days, along with an increasing potential for localized significant rainfall, and by Friday, a greater severe weather risk. Each afternoon from Saturday through Monday could feature numerous showers and thunderstorms, with activity tending to concentrate over the eastern half of the SFWMD. Forecast uncertainty increases late in the period. Although atmospheric conditions currently appear entirely unfavorable for tropical cyclone development, this feature could still enhance northward moisture transport into the eastern Gulf of Mexico and surrounding areas late in the weekend into early next week. Recent model guidance has shifted the axis of heaviest rainfall somewhat west of Florida. However, it remains possible that portions of the northern and western halves of the SFWMD could experience a more substantial increase in rainfall during this period as depicted in the Day-7 QPF. For the week ending next Tuesday morning, total area-averaged SFWMD rainfall is forecast to range from above to much above the long-term average. In addition, there remains a strong signal for continued above or much-above-average rainfall during the week-2 period. In fact, the more reliable guidance currently indicates that two-week total area-averaged rainfall could range from near the bi-weekly climatological average on the low end (3.4 inches) to as much as 6.3 inches on the high end.

## **Kissimmee**

In the week ending May 24, 2026, releases were made as needed from East Lake Toho and Lake Toho to continue snail kite nesting season stage recessions to reach low pool by June 1, 2026. Releases from Lakes Kissimmee-Cypress-Hatchineha followed the Headwaters Revitalization Schedule Increment 1 Temporary Deviation Discharge Plan. Weekly average discharge on May 24, 2026, was 380 cfs at S-65 and 320 cfs at S-65A. Mean weekly water depth on the Kissimmee River floodplain remained unchanged at 0.33 feet. The weekly average concentration of dissolved oxygen in the Kissimmee River decreased from 7.8 mg/L the previous week to 6.9 mg/L, which is above both the potentially lethal level of 1.0 mg/L and the stressful level of 2.0 mg/L for Florida bass and other species.

## **Lake Okeechobee**

Lake Okeechobee stage was 9.92 feet NAVD88 (11.23 ft NGVD29) on May 24, 2026, which was 0.15 feet lower than the previous week and 0.58 feet lower than a month ago. Average daily inflows (excluding rainfall) decreased slightly from 250 cfs the previous week to 210 cfs. Average daily outflows (excluding evapotranspiration) increased from 940 cfs the previous week to 1,920 cfs. The most recent non-obscured satellite image from May 25, 2026, NOAA's Harmful Algal Bloom Monitoring System suggests moderate to high cyanobacteria potential in Fisheating Bay and along much of the Indian Prairie shoreline.

## **Estuaries**

Total inflow to the St. Lucie Estuary averaged 140 cfs over the past week with no flow coming from Lake Okeechobee. Mean surface salinities increased at all sites in the estuary. Salinity in the middle estuary was in the optimal range (10–25) for adult eastern oysters.

Total inflow to the Caloosahatchee River Estuary averaged 464 cfs over the past week with 111 cfs coming from Lake Okeechobee. Over the past week, salinities slightly decreased at Cape Coral and increased at the remaining sites in the estuary. Salinities were in the optimal range (0–10) for tape grass in the upper estuary. Salinities were in the upper stressed range (>25) for adult eastern oysters at Cape Coral, Shell Point, and at Sanibel.

## **Stormwater Treatment Areas**

For the week ending Sunday, May 24, 2026, 600 ac-feet of Lake Okeechobee water was delivered to the FEBs/STAs. The total amount of Lake releases sent to the FEBs/STAs in WY2027 is approximately 5,500 ac-feet. The total amount of inflows to the STAs in WY2027 is approximately 19,000 ac-feet. Most online STA treatment cells are at or near target stage. STA-1E Central Flow-way is offline for post-construction activities. STA-1W Eastern Flow-way is offline for vegetation management activities. Operational restrictions are in effect in STA-1E Western Flow-way, STA-2 Flow-way 2 and 4, and STA-3/4 Eastern Flow-way for vegetation management activities. STA-1E Central Flow-way contains nests of Migratory Bird Treaty Act protected species. STA-1W Northern Flow-way, Eastern Flow-way, as well as Cells 6 and 7 contain nests of Migratory Bird Treaty Act protected species. STA-2 Flow-ways 1 and 4 contain nests of Migratory Bird Treaty Act protected

species. STA-5/6 Flow-way 3 contains nests of Migratory Bird Treaty Act protected species. This week, if LOSOM recommends Lake releases to the WCAs and conditions allow, releases will be sent to STA-2 and STA 3/4.

## **Everglades**

The Everglades Protection Area (EPA) received below average rainfall last week with most of it falling in WCA-3A, -3B, and Everglades National Park (ENP). Stage recessions remain elevated in central and southern WCA-3A. Recession rates in WCA-2A were elevated in the northern part of that basin. Overall, in the northern portion of the EPA (WCA-1/WCA-2A), water depths are near or above average relative to the past 20 years, while WCA-3A and WCA-3B continue to have below-average water depths, as they have for most of the dry season. Northern WCA-2A is drying down and is below average in the far north. These dry conditions have ecological consequences both system wide and within the central Everglades, including reducing already-limited prey populations, increasing the risk of damaging wildfires, enhanced peat oxidation, and potential ridge and slough degradation. Wildfire activity remains elevated within the central Everglades. Wading bird nesting is occurring only in WCAs 1 and -2A, with 2026 being the 5<sup>th</sup> year in a row of below average nesting and the lowest nesting effort in 30 years. Taylor Slough stages decreased last week but remain above the recent averages for this time of year. Average Florida Bay salinity decreased slightly last week and remains above its recent average. In the central region of the Bay conditions are approaching the hypersalinity threshold.

## Supporting Information

### Kissimmee Basin

#### *Upper Kissimmee*

On May 24, 2026, mean daily lake stages were 54.2 feet NAVD88 (0.1 feet below schedule) in East Lake Toho, 51.2 feet NAVD88 (0.1 feet below schedule) in Lake Toho, and 48.0 feet NAVD88 (2.4 feet below the Increment 1 Temporary Deviation schedule) in Lakes Kissimmee-Cypress-Hatchineha (KCH) (**Table KB-1, Figures KB-1-3**).

#### *Lower Kissimmee*

For the week ending May 24, 2026, mean weekly discharge was 380 cfs at S-65 and 320 cfs at S-65A. Mean weekly discharge from the Kissimmee River was 350 cfs at S-65D and 210 cfs at S-65E (**Table KB-2**). Mean weekly headwater stages were 45.2 feet NAVD88 at S-65A and 28.2 feet NAVD88 at S-65D. Mean weekly river channel stage was unchanged at 30.8 feet NAVD88 (**Figure KB-4**). Mean weekly water depth on the Kissimmee River floodplain remained unchanged at 0.33 feet (**Table KB-2, Figure KB-5**). The weekly average concentration of dissolved oxygen in the Kissimmee River decreased from 7.8 mg/L the previous week to 6.9 mg/L (**Table KB-2, Figure KB-6**).

#### **Water Management Recommendations**

Continue the stage recessions in East Lake Toho and Lake Toho to reach their low pools on June 1, 2026. In KCH, follow the Headwaters Revitalization Schedule (HRS) Increment 1 Temporary Deviation Discharge Plan for S-65/S-65A (**Figure KB-7**). With KCH stage in Zone B4, target flows of 300 cfs; if stage increases into Zone B3, target flows between 300 and 1,400 cfs at S-65A using the Increment 1 Interpolation Tool to determine discharge relative to stage in KCH. If stage declines into Zone B5, target flows of 150 cfs.

**Table KB-1.** Average discharge for the preceding seven days, Sunday's average daily stage and Sunday's average daily departure from Kissimmee Chain of Lakes (KCOL) flood regulation lines or temporary schedules. All data are provisional.

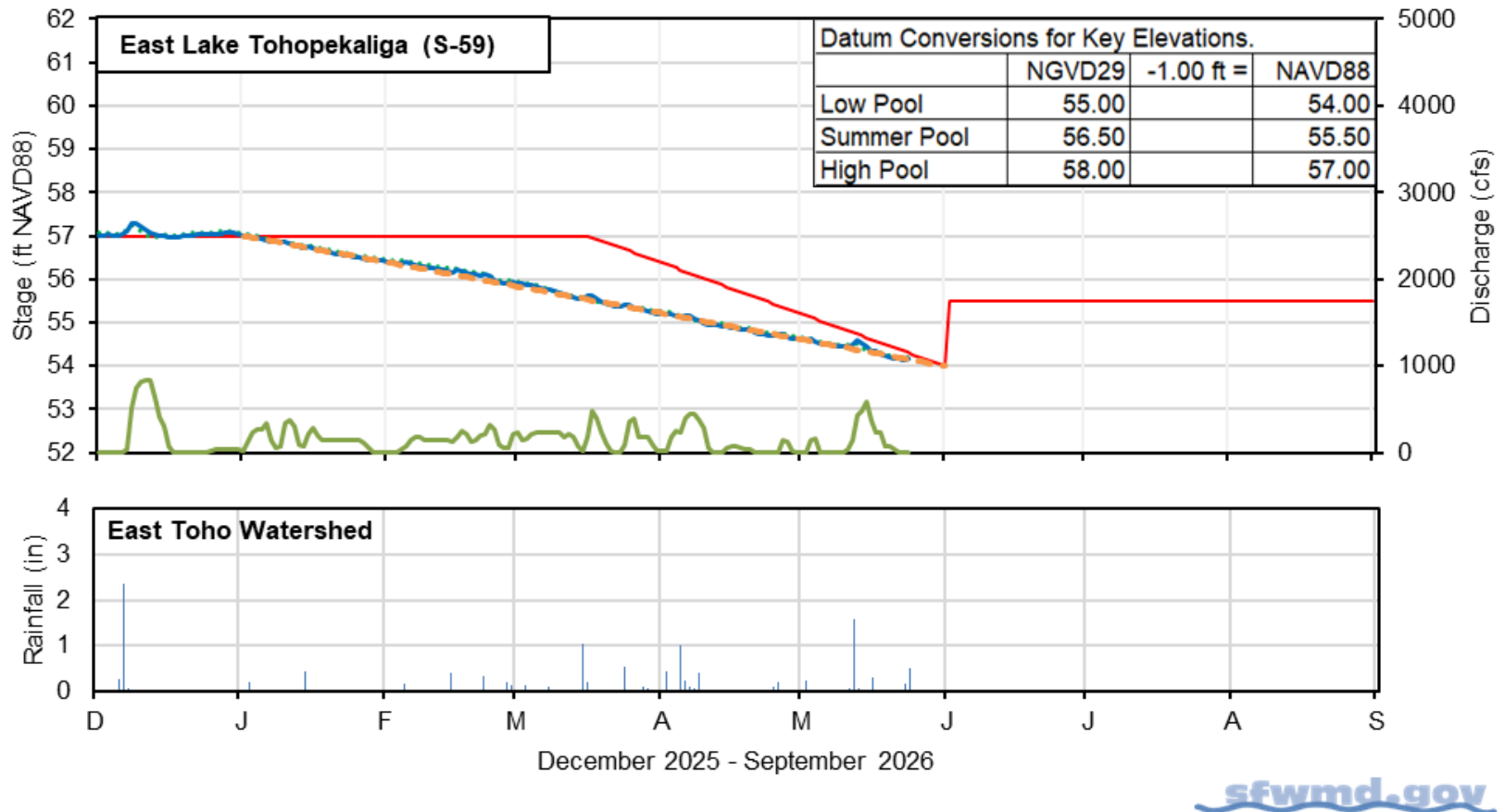
Water Body	Structure	Stage Monitoring Site	Weekly (7-Day) Average Discharge (cfs)	Sunday Lake Stage (feet NAVD88) <sup>a</sup>	Schedule Type <sup>b</sup>	Sunday Schedule Stage (feet NAVD88)	Sunday Departure from Regulation (feet)	
							5/24/26	5/17/26
Lakes Hart and Mary Jane	S-62	LKMJ	0	58.6	R	58.6	0.0	0.0
Lakes Myrtle, Preston and Joel	S-57	S-57	2	59.0	R	59.0	0.0	0.0
Alligator Chain	S-60	ALLI	19	61.2	R	61.1	0.1	0.0
Lake Gentry	S-63	LKGT	19	58.6	R	58.6	0.0	2.6
East Lake Toho	S-59	TOHOE	63	54.2	R	54.3	-0.1	-0.2
Lake Toho	S-61	TOHOW S-61	150	51.2	R	51.3	-0.1	-0.3
Lakes Kissimmee, Cypress and Hatchineha	S-65	KUB011 LKIS5B	370	48.0	T	50.4	-2.4	-2.3

a. Names of in-lake monitoring sites and structures used to determine lake stage. If more than one site is listed, an average is reported.

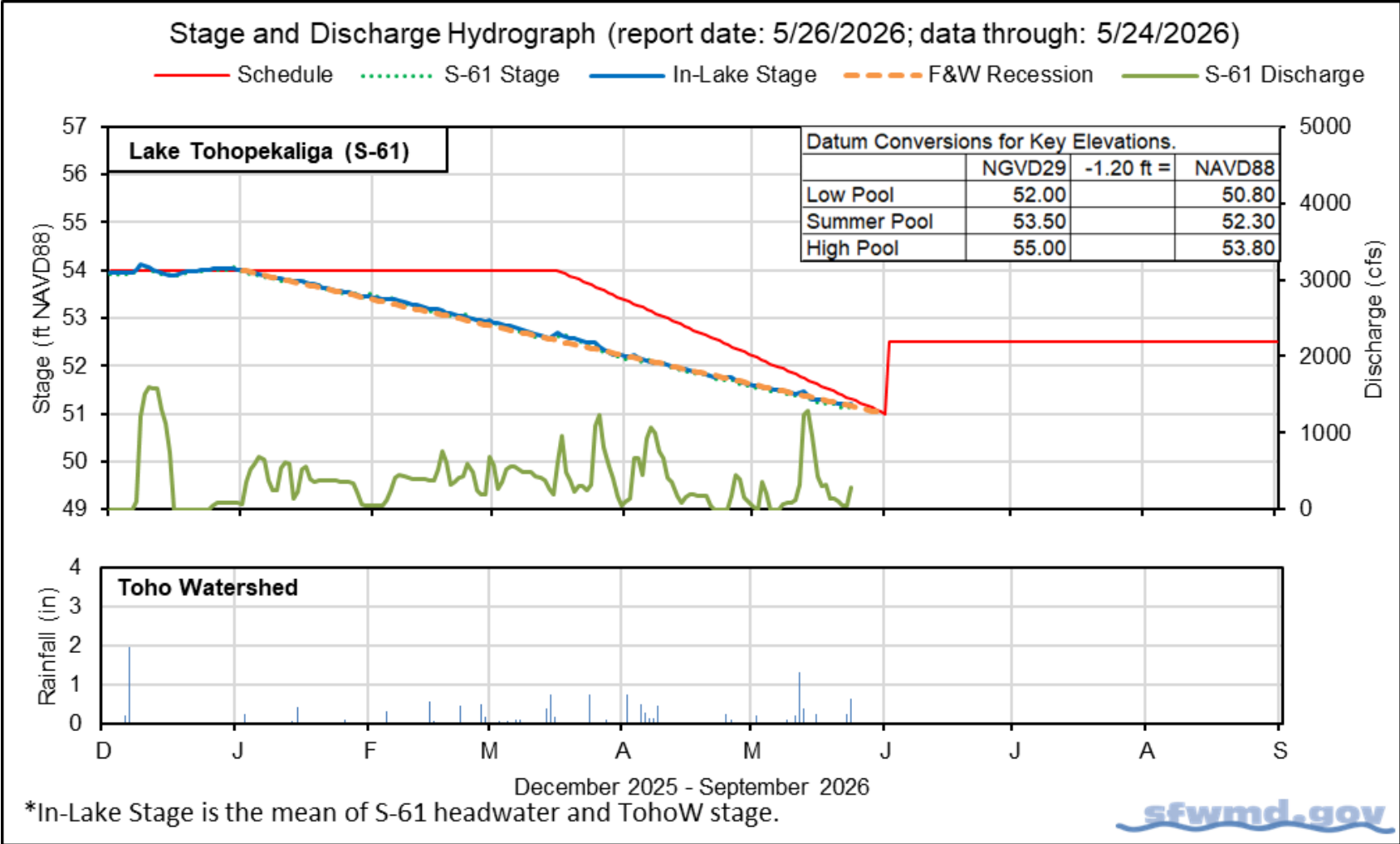
b. A: projected recession line; R: USACE regulation schedule; S: temporary recession target line; T: temporary schedule; NA: not applicable or not available.

Stage and Discharge Hydrograph (report date: 5/26/2026; data through: 5/24/2026)

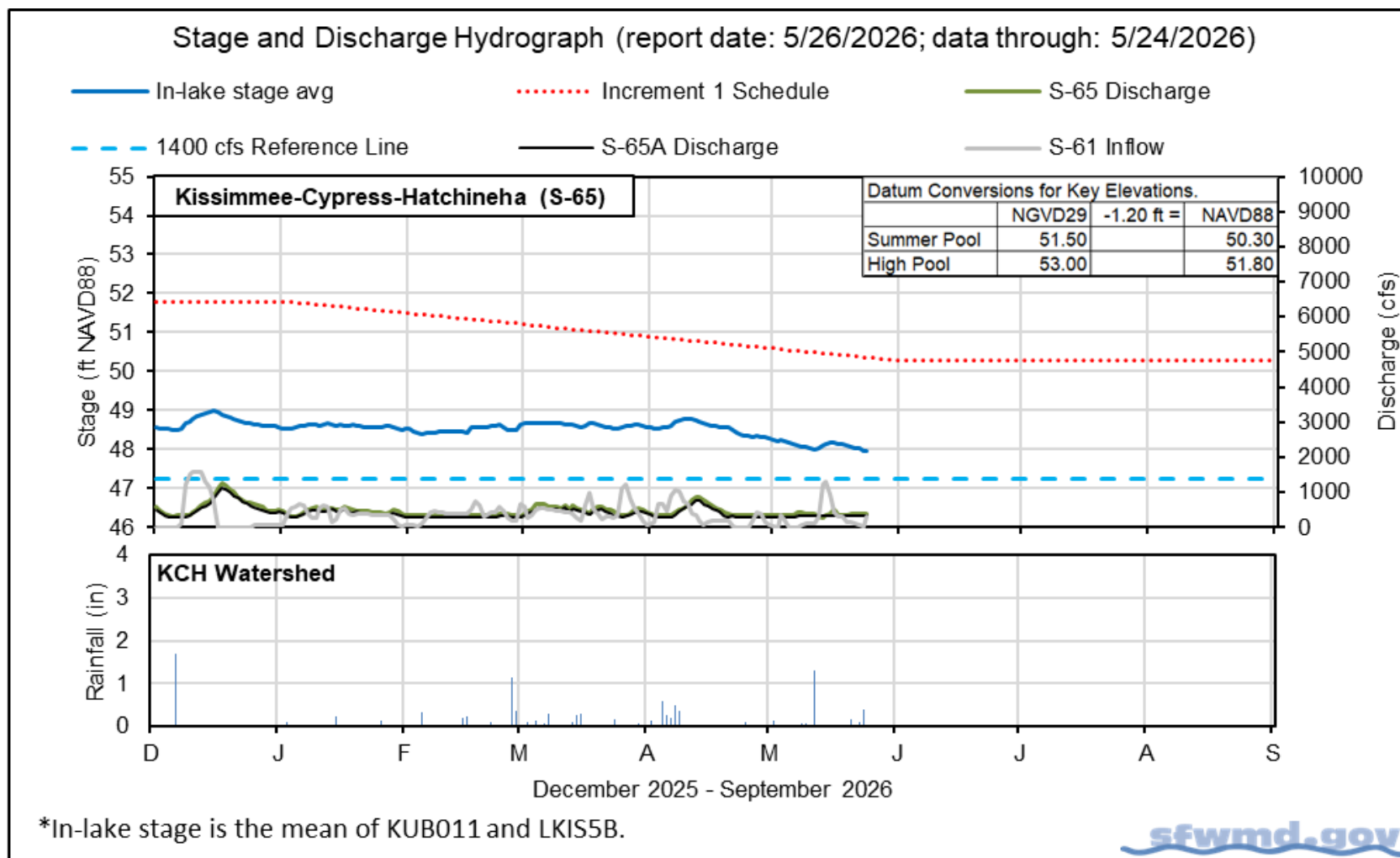
— Schedule    ..... S-59 Stage    — TohoE Stage    - - - F&W Recession    — S-59 Discharge



**Figure KB-1.** East Lake Toho regulation schedule, stage, discharge, and rainfall.



**Figure KB-2.** Lake Toho regulation schedule, stage, discharge, and rainfall.



**Figure KB-3.** Lakes Kissimmee, Cypress and Hatchineha regulation schedule, stage, discharge, and rainfall.

**Table KB-2.** One- and seven-day average discharge and stage at Lower Kissimmee basin structures, river channel dissolved oxygen concentrations and water depths in the Phase I area floodplain. All data are provisional.

Metric	Location	Sunday Daily Average	Weekly Average for Previous Seven Day Periods			
		5/24/26	5/24/26	5/17/26	5/10/26	5/3/26
Discharge	S-65	380	380	370	390	360
Discharge	S-65A <sup>a</sup>	320	320	320	310	300
Headwater Stage (feet NAVD88)	S-65A	45.3	45.2	45.3	45.2	45.2
Discharge	S-65D <sup>b</sup>	360	350	350	330	320
Headwater Stage (feet NAVD88)	S-65D <sup>c</sup>	24.5	28.2	28.3	28.2	28.2
Discharge (cfs)	S-65E <sup>d</sup>	180	210	240	250	230
Discharge (cfs)	S-67	0	0	0	0	0
Dissolved Oxygen (mg/L) <sup>e</sup>	Phase I, II/III river channel	6.4	6.9	7.8	8.4	8.0
River channel mean stage (feet NAVD88) <sup>f</sup>	Phase I river channel	30.8	30.8	30.8	30.7	30.7
Mean depth (feet) <sup>g</sup>	Phase I & II/III floodplain	0.33	0.33	0.33	0.33	0.33

a. Combined discharge from main and auxiliary structures.

b. Combined discharge from S-65D, S-65DX1, and S-65DX2.

c. Average stage from S-65D and S-65DX1.

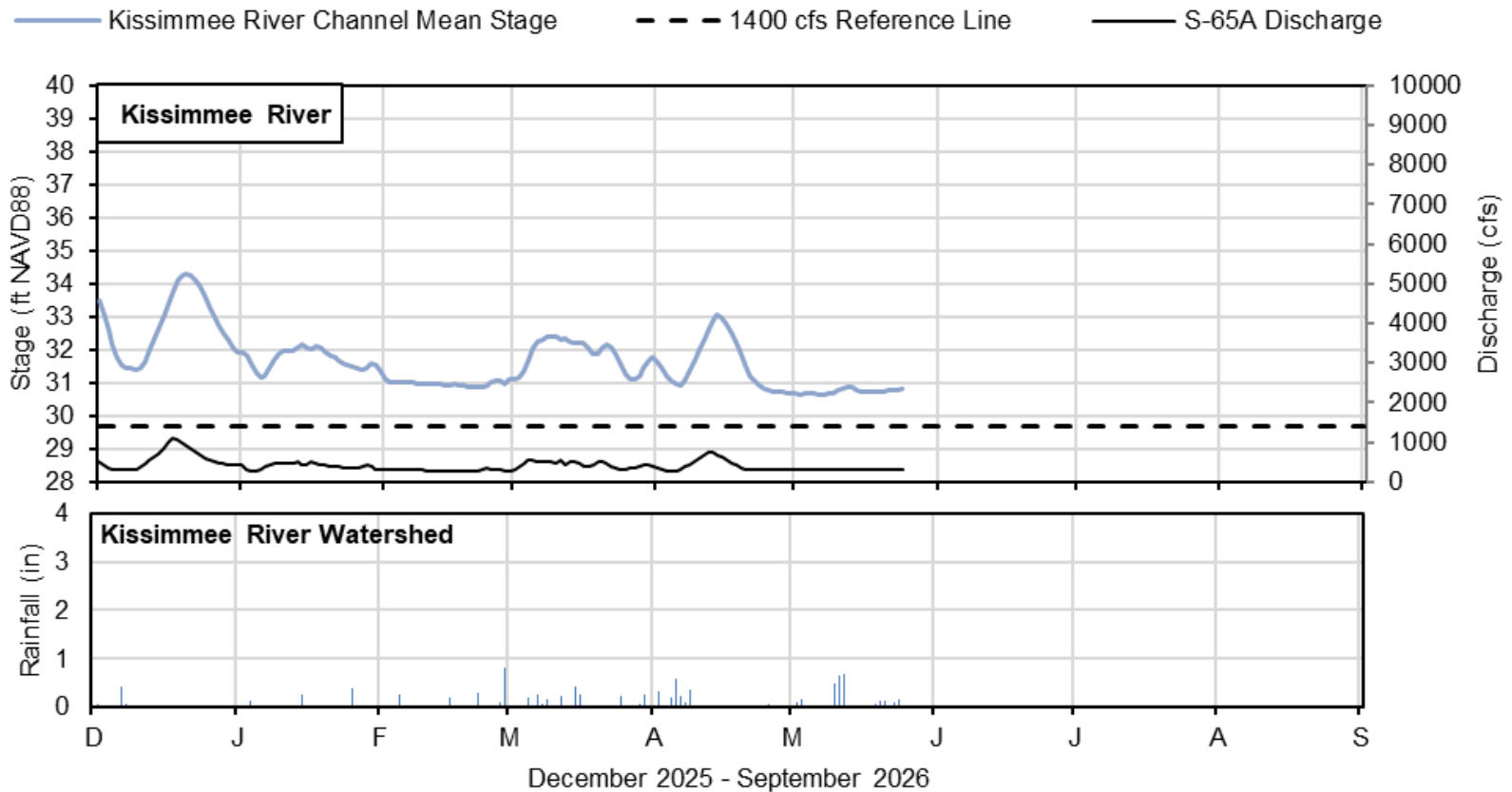
d. Combined discharge from S-65E and S-65EX1.

e. Dissolved oxygen is the average of values from sondes KRBN, PC62, PC33, PD62R, and PD42R.

f. Mean of five river channel stations (PC62, KRDR02, KRBN, PC33, PC11) in the Phase I area.

g. One-day spatial average obtained from the South Florida Water Depth Assessment Tool (SFWDAT).

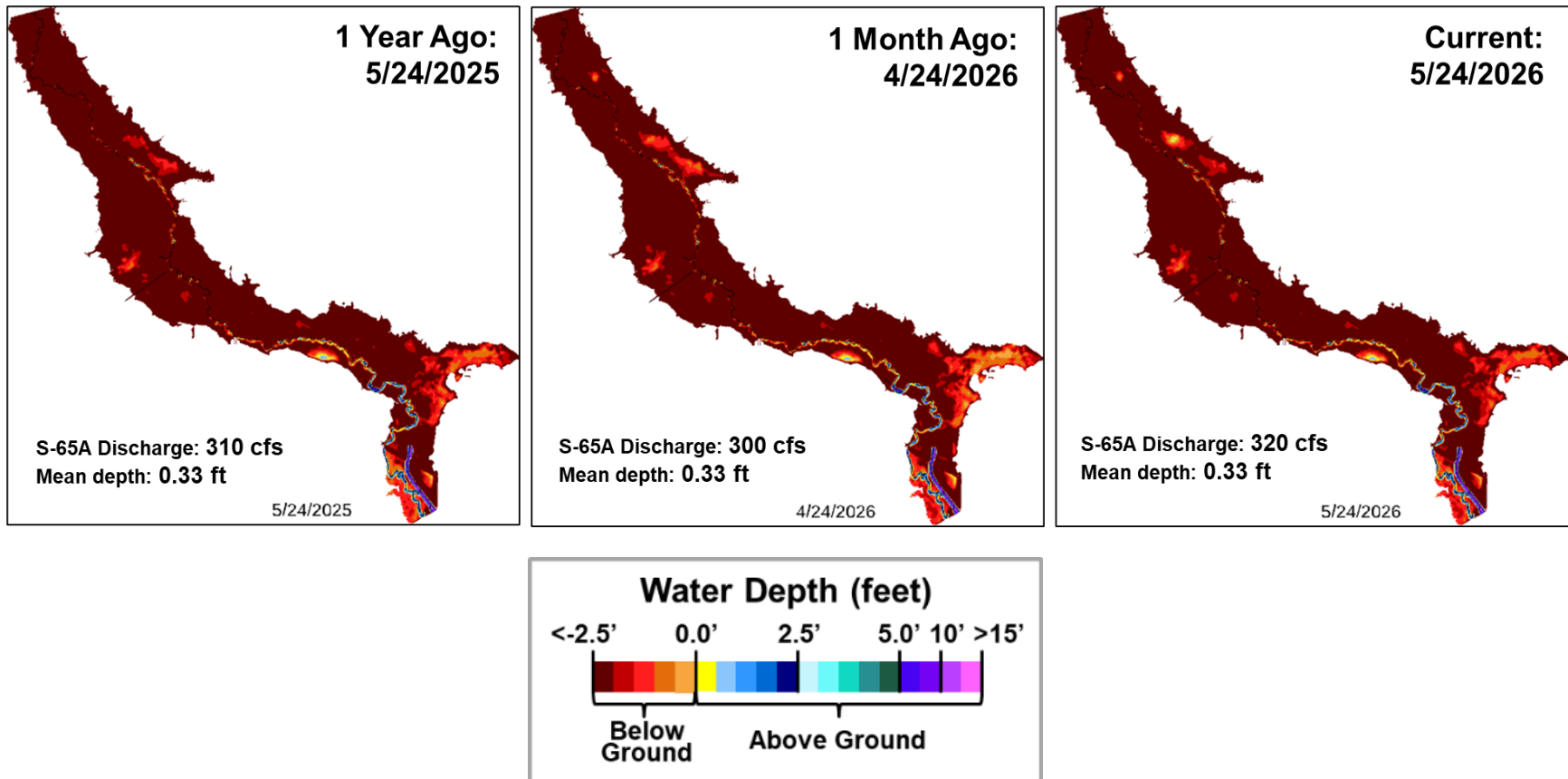
### Stage and Discharge Hydrograph (report date: 5/26/2026; data through: 5/24/2026)



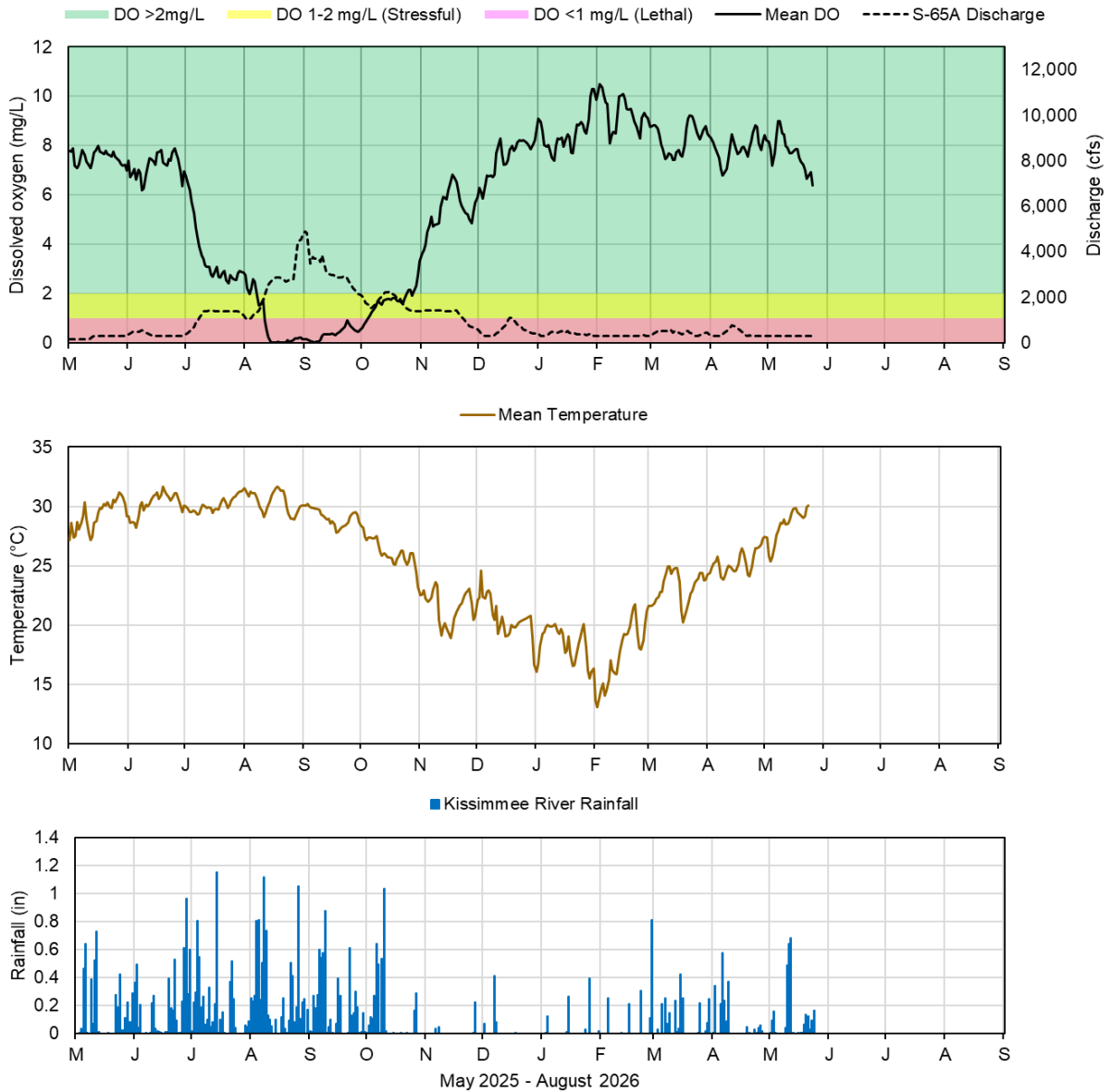
\*River Channel Stage is the average for PC62, KRDR02, KRBN, PC33, and PC11.



**Figure KB-4.** Kissimmee River stage, discharge, and rainfall.



**Figure KB-5.** Phase I-II-III area Kissimmee River floodplain water depths (from left to right) one year ago, one month ago, and current.



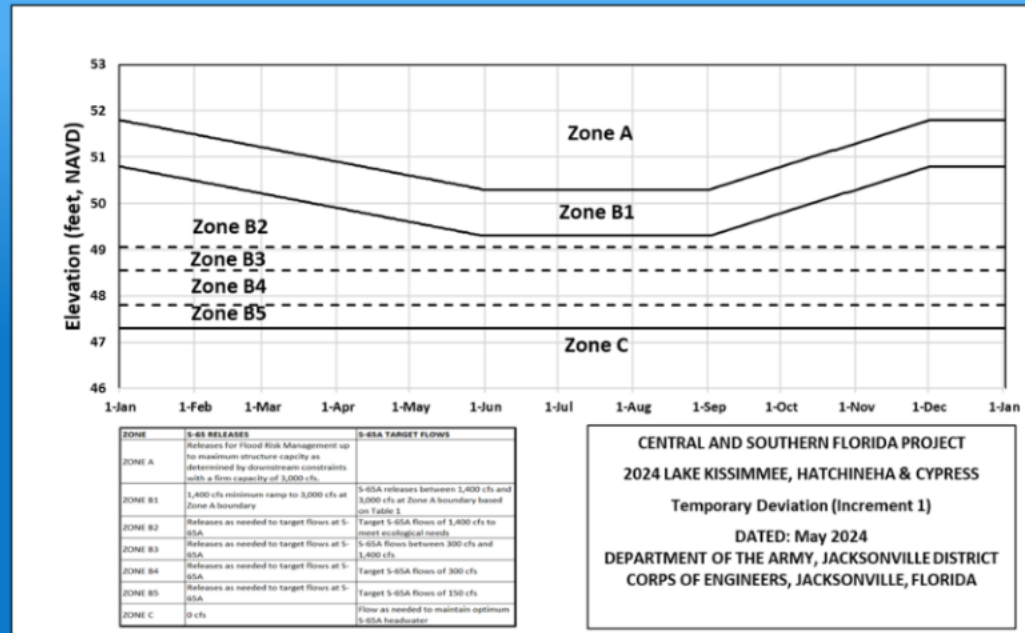
Report Date: 5/26/2026; data are through: 5/24/2026



**Figure KB-6.** Kissimmee River channel mean daily dissolved oxygen concentration (mg/L), S-65A discharge (cfs), temperature (°C) and rainfall (inches). Dissolved oxygen (DO) and temperature are mean daily values averaged for PC62, KRDR02, KRBN, PC33, PC11, PD62R, and PD42R with an average of five stations reporting this week. Rainfall values are daily totals for Kissimmee River (Pool BCD) AHED watershed.

# HRS Increment 1 Temporary Deviation Discharge Plan for S-65/S-65A

Discharge Guidance for Increment 1 Temporary Deviation Discharge Plan		
ZONE	S-65 RELEASES	S-65A TARGET FLOWS
ZONE A	Releases for Flood Risk Management up to maximum structure capacity as determined by downstream constraints with a firm capacity of 3,000 cfs.	
ZONE B1	1,400 cfs minimum ramp to 3,000 cfs at Zone A boundary	S-65A releases between 1,400 cfs and 3,000 cfs at Zone A boundary based on Table 1
ZONE B2	Releases as needed to target flows at S-65A	Target S-65A flows of 1,400 cfs to meet ecological needs
ZONE B3	Releases as needed to target flows at S-65A	S-65A flows between 300 cfs and 1,400 cfs
ZONE B4	Releases as needed to target flows at S-65A	Target S-65A flows of 300 cfs
ZONE B5	Releases as needed to target flows at S-65A	Target S-65A flows of 150 cfs
ZONE C	0 cfs	Flow as needed to maintain optimum S-65A headwater



**Table KB-3. Maximum Rate of Change Limits for S-65A**

MAXIMUM Release Rate of Change Limits for S-65A. In general recommended rates of change will be slower than shown in this table.

Q (cfs)	Maximum rate of INCREASE (cfs/day)	Maximum rate of DECREASE (cfs/day)
0-300	50	-50
301-650	75	-75
651-1400	150	-150
1401-3000	300	-600
>3000	1000	-2000

**Other Considerations**

- When possible, limit lake ascension rate in the Jun 1 - Aug 15 window to 0.25 ft per 7 days in Lakes Kissimmee, Cypress, Hatchineha (S-65), East Toho (S-59) and Toho (S-61).
- If outlook is for extreme dry conditions meet with KB staff to discuss modifications to this plan.

**Figure KB-7.** Headwaters Revitalization Schedule (HRS) Increment 1 Temporary Deviation Discharge Plan for S-65/S-65A.

## Lake Okeechobee

Lake Okeechobee stage was 9.92 feet NAVD88 (11.23 ft NGVD29) on May 24, 2026, which was 0.15 feet lower than the previous week and 0.58 feet lower than a month ago (**Figure LO-1**). Lake stage is in Zone D of the regulation schedule, is 0.63 feet above the water shortage management band (**Figure LO-2**), and is 0.40 feet below the ecological envelope (**Figure LO-3**). According to NEXRAD, 0.73 inches (approximately 27,300 acre-feet) of rain fell directly over the lake during the previous week, and 1.49 inches (approximately 43,000 acre-feet) were lost to evapotranspiration.

Average daily inflows (excluding rainfall) decreased slightly from 250 cfs the previous week to 210 cfs. The only notable inflow came from the Kissimmee River (210 cfs via S-65E(X1)). Average daily outflows (excluding evapotranspiration) increased from 940 cfs the previous week to 1,920 cfs. The largest release was to the south through the S-351 structure (840 cfs). **Figures LO-4 and LO-5** show the combined average daily inflows and outflows for the lake over the past eight weeks, and the average inflows and outflows last week, respectively.

In the most recent non-obscured satellite image from May 25, 2026, NOAA's Harmful Algal Bloom Monitoring System suggests moderate to high cyanobacteria potential in Fisheating Bay and along much of the Indian Prairie shoreline (**Figure LO-6**).

Note: All data presented in this report are provisional and are subject to change.

1 Month Ago:  
04/24/2026

Current:  
05/24/2026

10.50 ft  
NAVD88

9.92 ft  
NAVD88

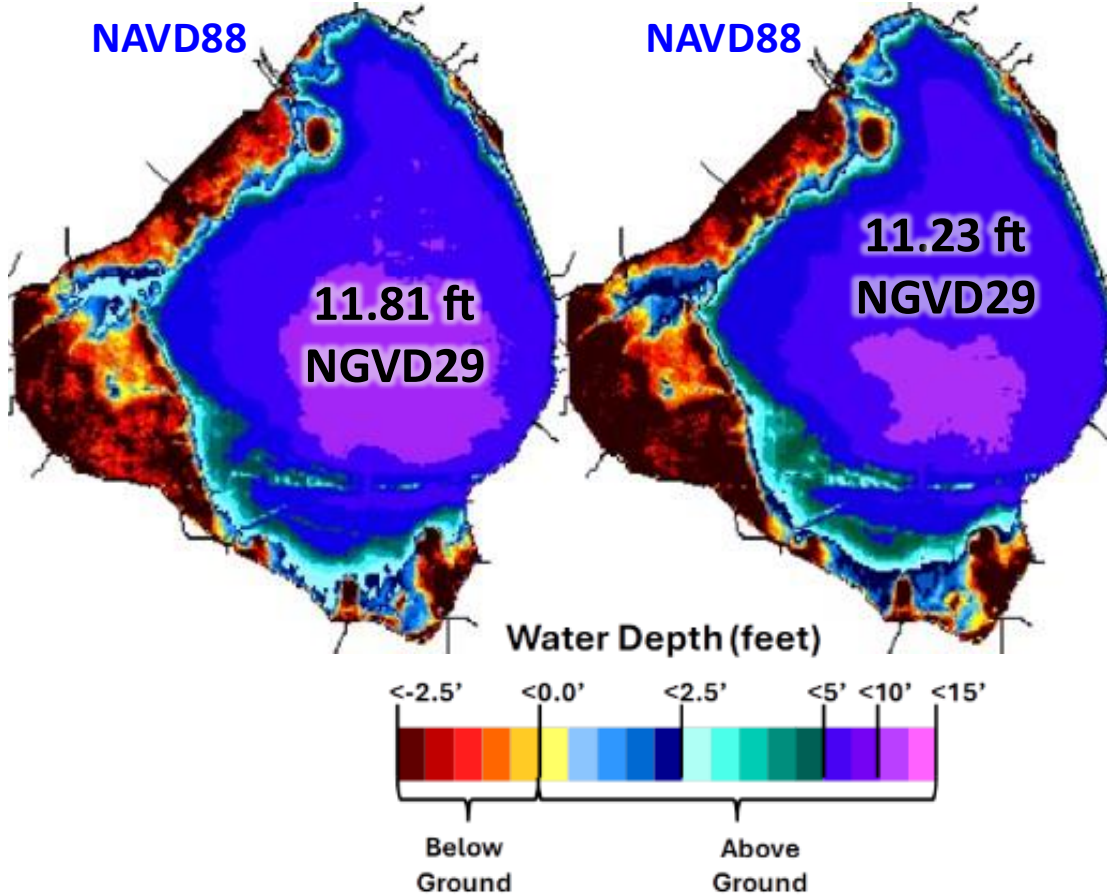
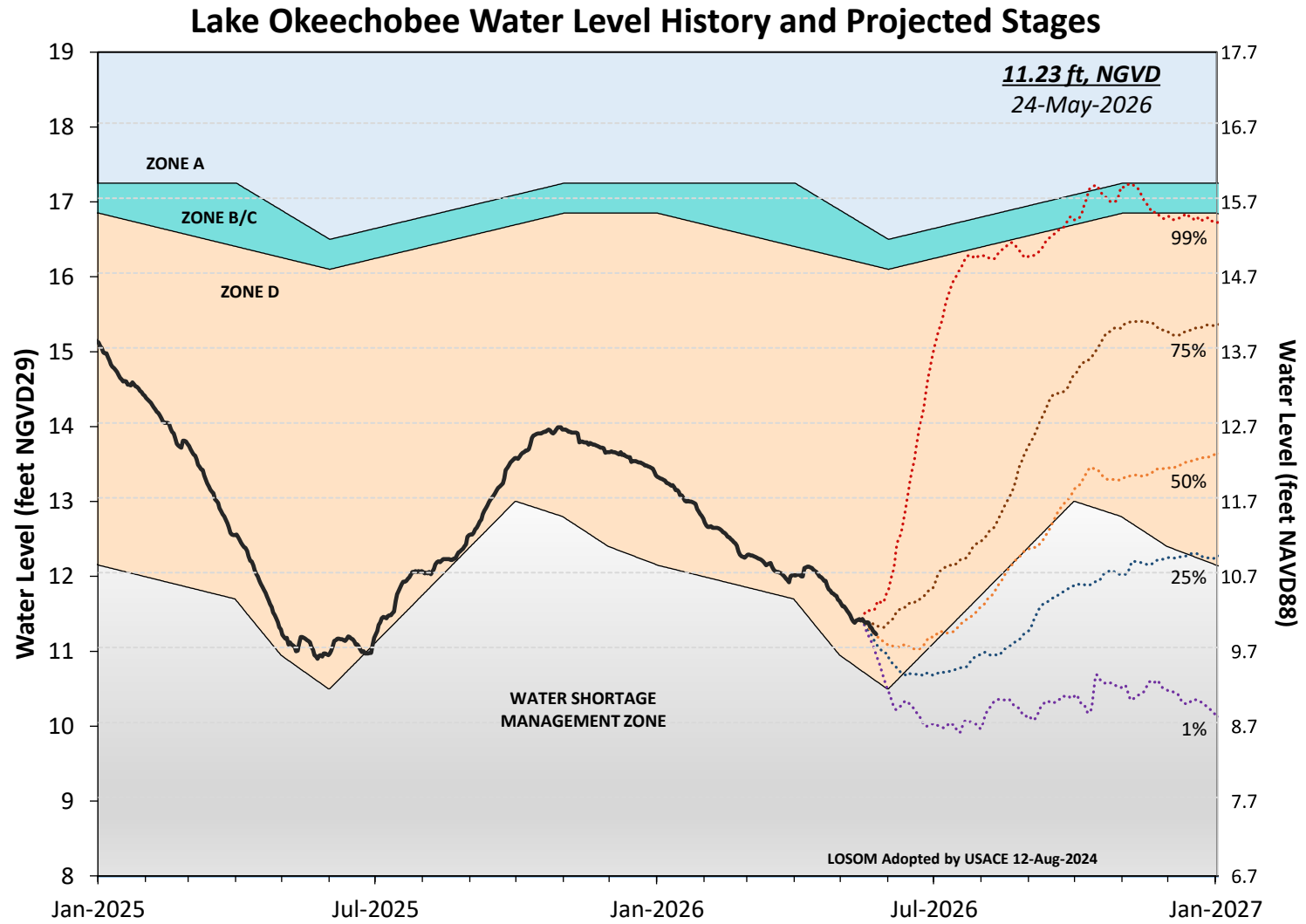
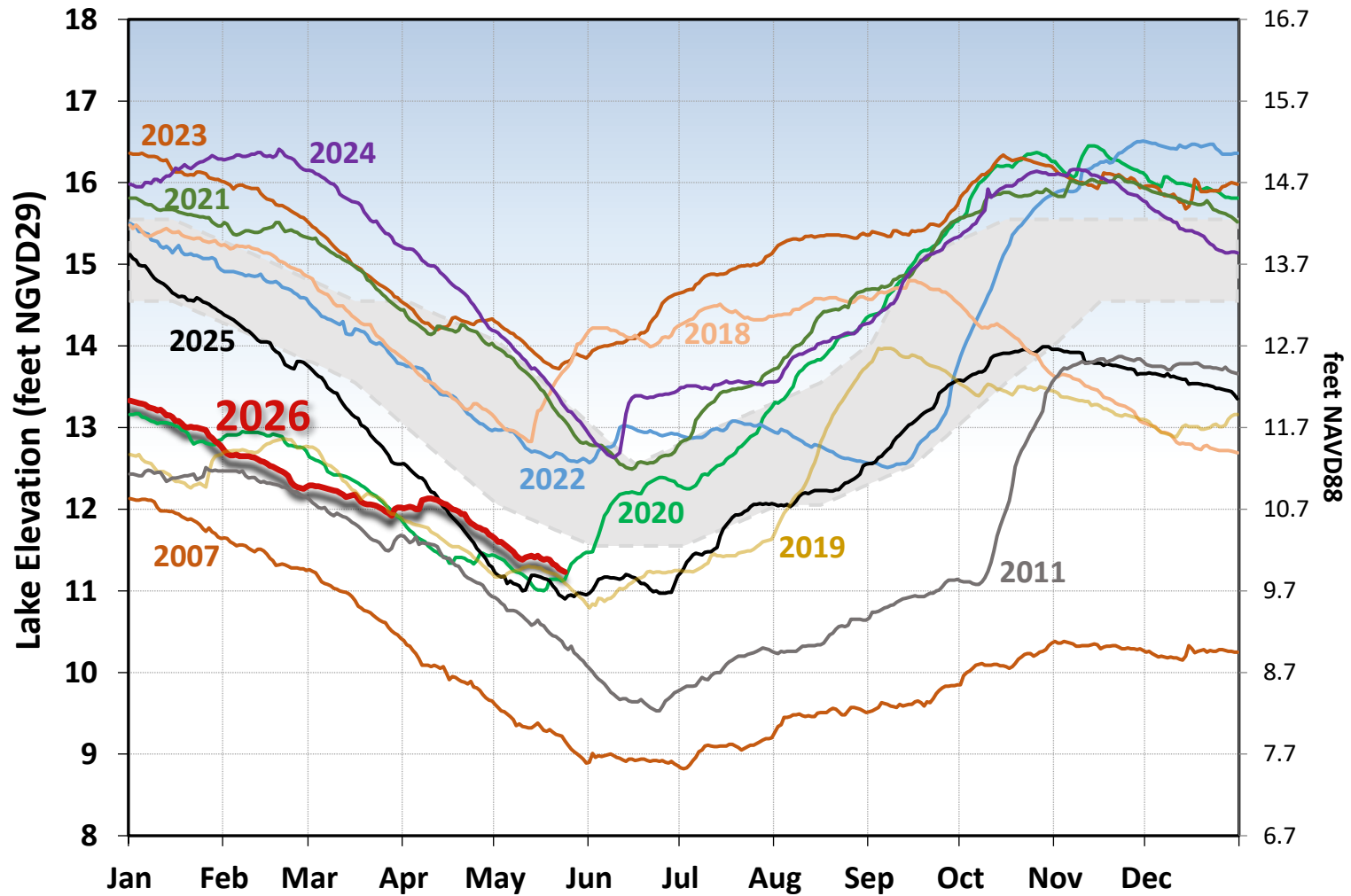


Figure LO-1. Lake Okeechobee water depth estimates based on South Florida Water Depth Assessment Tool (SFWDAT).

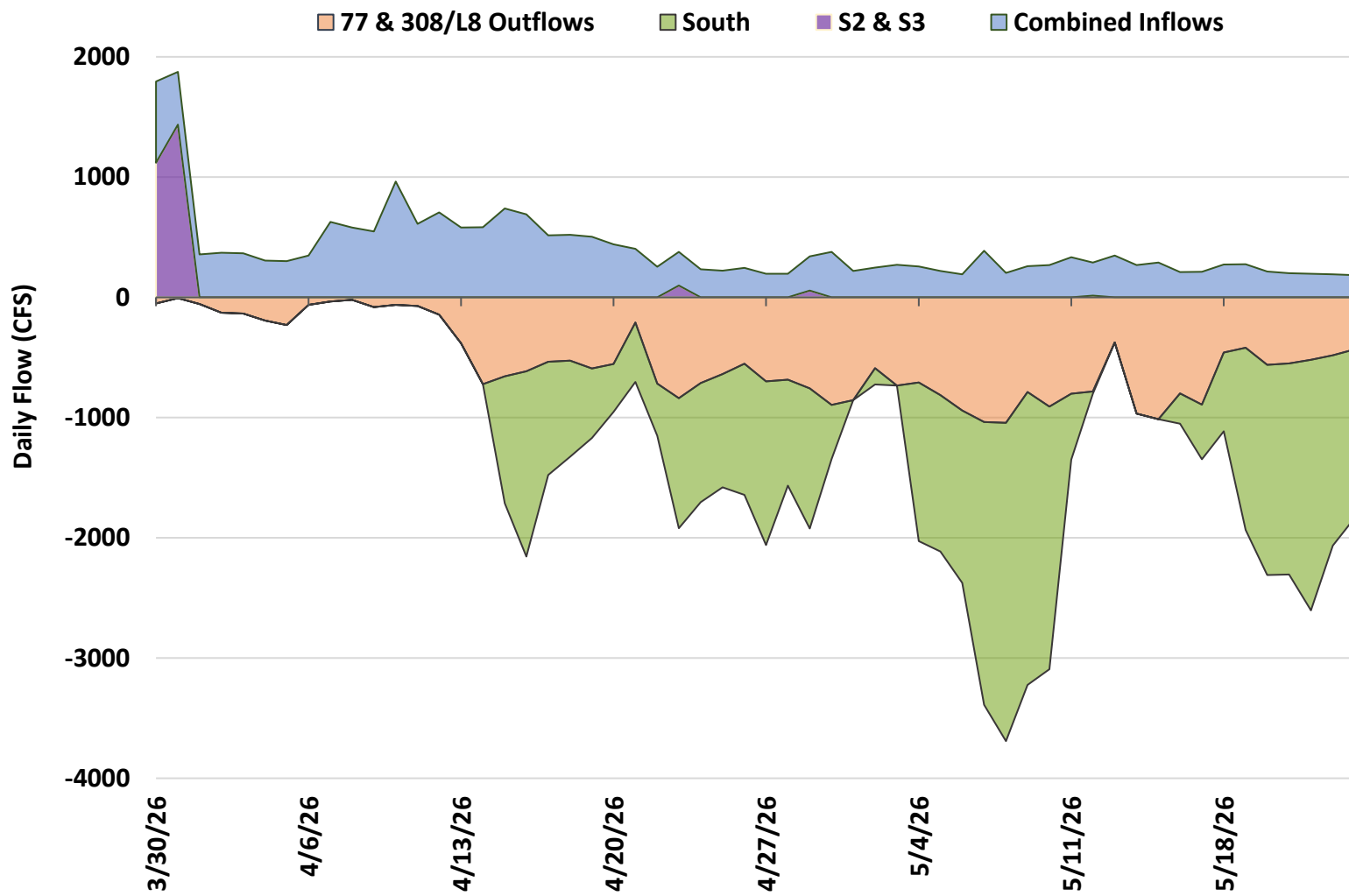


**Figure LO-2.** Recent Lake Okeechobee stages with projected stages based on a conditional position analysis.  
 Note: stages are in NGVD29, approximate NAVD88 values are shown for reference.

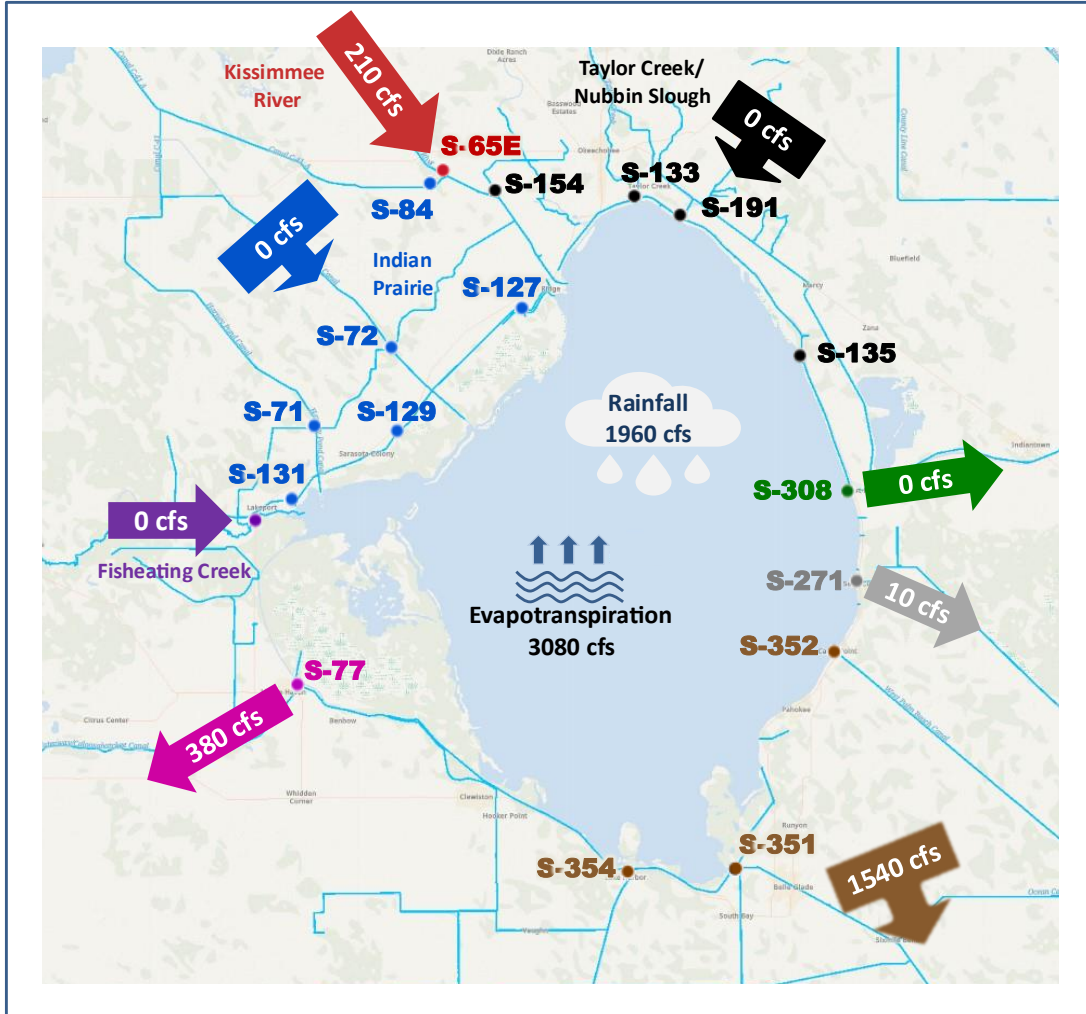
# Lake Okeechobee Stage vs Ecological Envelope



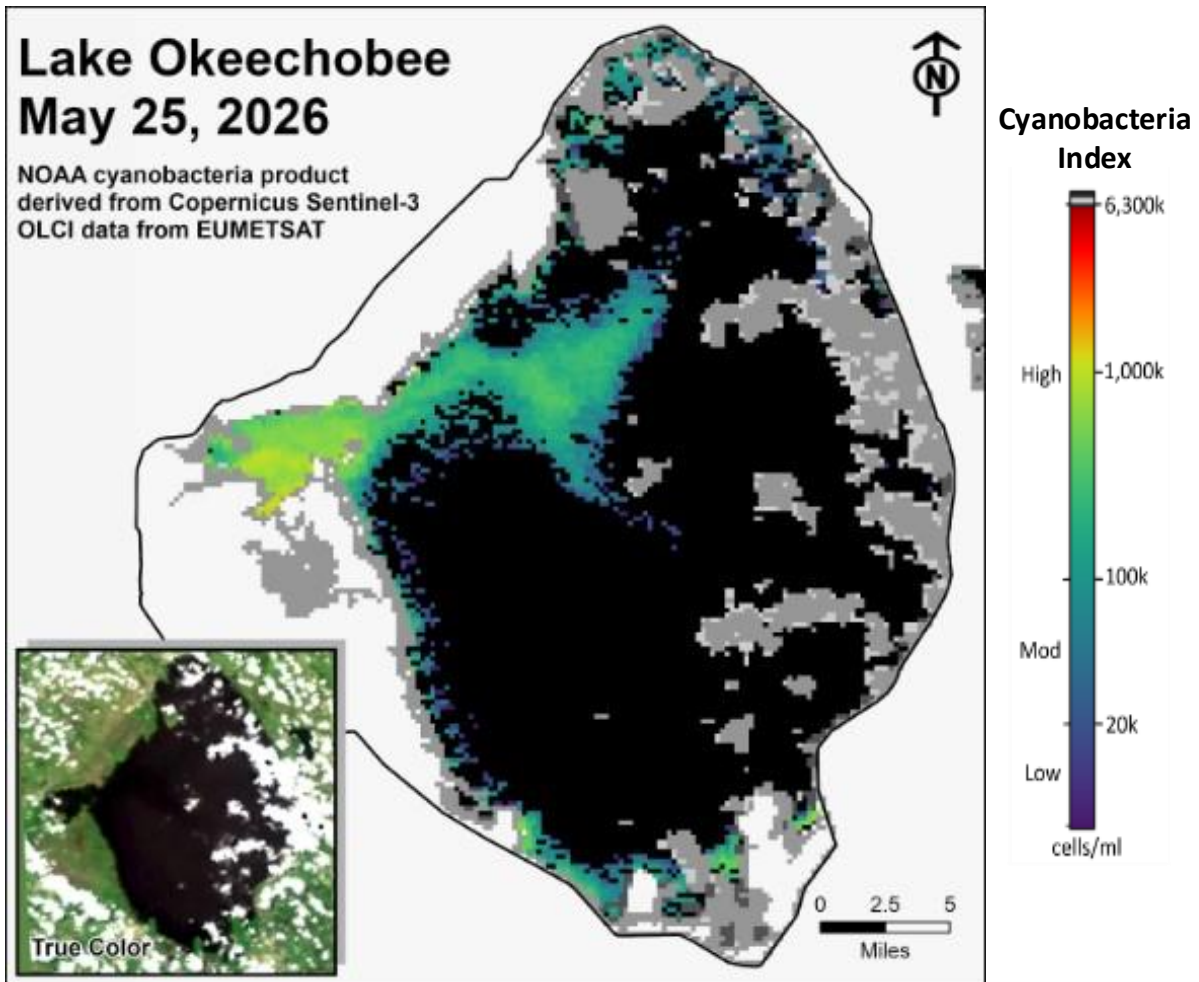
**Figure LO-3.** The current and select prior year's annual lake stage hydrographs in comparison to the Lake Okeechobee ecological envelope (light grey).



**Figure LO-4.** Major inflows (orange) to and outflows east and west (blue) from Lake Okeechobee. Outflows south are shown in green. Flows into Lake Okeechobee from the L-8 canal through S-271 (formerly Culvert 10A) or from the C-44 canal through the S-308 are included as inflows. Conversely, flows from Lake Okeechobee into the L-8 or C-44 canals are included with outflows. Inflows are shown as positive values; outflows are negative. Outflows through the S-77 (Caloosahatchee) and S-308 (C-44 Canal) structures are based on downstream gauges to include flows to lock openings for navigation.



**Figure LO-5.** Inflows into Lake Okeechobee from Indian Prairie basins, Taylor Creek/Nubbin Slough, Kissimmee River and Fisheating Creek (currently no flow data available for FECR), and outflows to the west via S-77, to the east via S-308, to the south via S-351, S-352, S-354, and to southeast via S-271 (formerly Culvert 10A) for the week of May 18 - 24, 2026.



**Figure LO-6.** Cyanobacteria bloom index level on Lake Okeechobee, based on NOAA’s harmful algal bloom monitoring system. Gray color indicates cloud cover. \*Provisional NOAA image, subject to change\*.

## Estuaries

### *St. Lucie Estuary*

Over the past week, mean total inflow to the St. Lucie Estuary was 140 cfs (**Figures ES-1 and ES-2**), and the previous 30-day mean inflow was 265 cfs. For comparison, the historical provisional mean inflows from contributing areas are shown in **Figure ES-2**.

Over the past week, surface salinities increased at all sites in the estuary (**Table ES-1 and Figure ES-3**). The seven-day moving average of the surface and bottom salinities at the US1 Bridge was 20.4. Salinity conditions in the middle estuary were estimated to be within the optimal range for adult eastern oysters (**Figure ES-4**). The mean larval oyster recruitment rate reported by the Fish and Wildlife Research Institute (FWRI) for April was 1.2 spat/shell at Rio, which is an increase from the previous month (**Figure ES-5**).

### *Caloosahatchee River Estuary*

Over the past week, mean total inflow to the Caloosahatchee River Estuary was 464 cfs (**Figures ES-6 and ES-7**), and the previous 30-day mean inflow was 320 cfs. For comparison, the historical provisional mean inflows from the contributing areas are shown in **Figure ES-7**.

Over the past week, surface salinities slightly decreased at Cape Coral and increased at the remaining sites in the estuary (**Table ES-2 and Figures ES-8 and ES-9**). The seven-day mean surface salinities (**Table ES-2**) were in the optimal range (0-10) for tape grass in the upper estuary at S-79 and Val I-75 and in the damaging range (>15) at Ft. Myers. The seven-day mean salinity values were within the upper stressed range for adult eastern oysters at Cape Coral, Shell Point, and Sanibel (**Figure ES-10**). The mean larval oyster recruitment rates reported by the FWRI in April were 1.5 spat/shell at Iona Cove and 11.3 spat/shell at Bird Island, which is an increase from the previous month (**Figures ES-11 and ES-12**).

Surface salinity at Val I-75 was forecast for the next week using an autoregression model (Qiu and Wan, 2013<sup>1</sup>) coupled with a linear reservoir model for the tidal basin. Model scenarios included pulse releases at S-79 ranging from 450 to 2,000 cfs, with estimated tidal basin inflows of 50 cfs. Model results from all scenarios predict daily salinity to be 9.6 or lower and the 30-day moving average surface salinity to be 8.5 or lower at Val I-75 at the end of the two-week period (**Table ES-3 and Figure ES-13**). This keeps predicted salinities in the upper estuary within the optimal salinity range (0-10) for tape grass.

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<sup>1</sup> Qiu, C., and Y. Wan. 2013. Time series modeling and prediction of salinity in the Caloosahatchee River Estuary. *Water Resources Research* 49:5804-5816.

### **Red Tide**

The FWRI reported on May 22, 2026, that *Karenia brevis*, the Florida red tide dinoflagellate, was not observed at bloom concentrations within the District region.

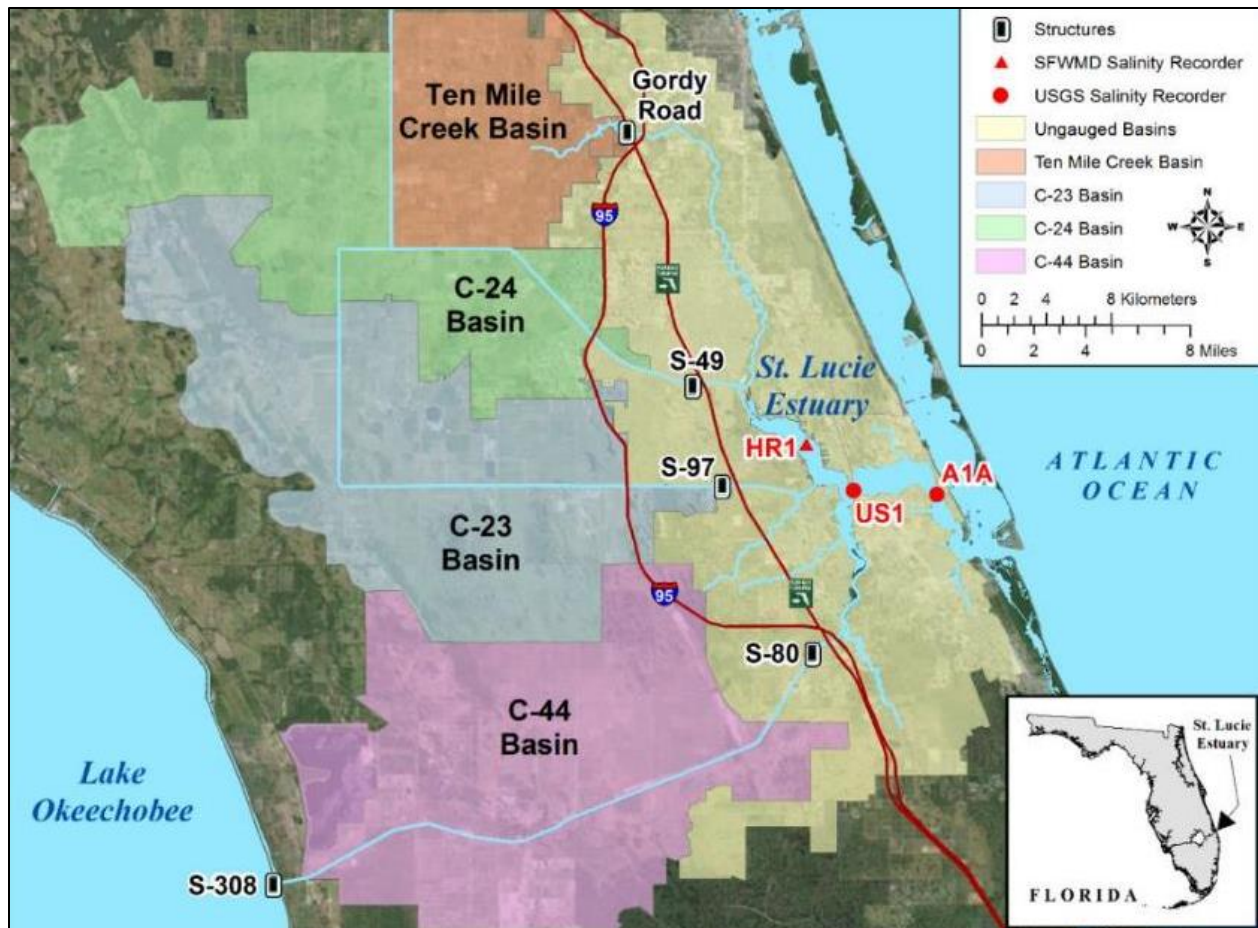
### **Water Management Recommendations**

Lake stage is in Zone D. Current hydrological conditions are dry and climatological conditions are normal. The LOSOM release guidance suggests up to 2,000 cfs release at S-79 to the Caloosahatchee River Estuary and no releases at S-80 to the St. Lucie Estuary.

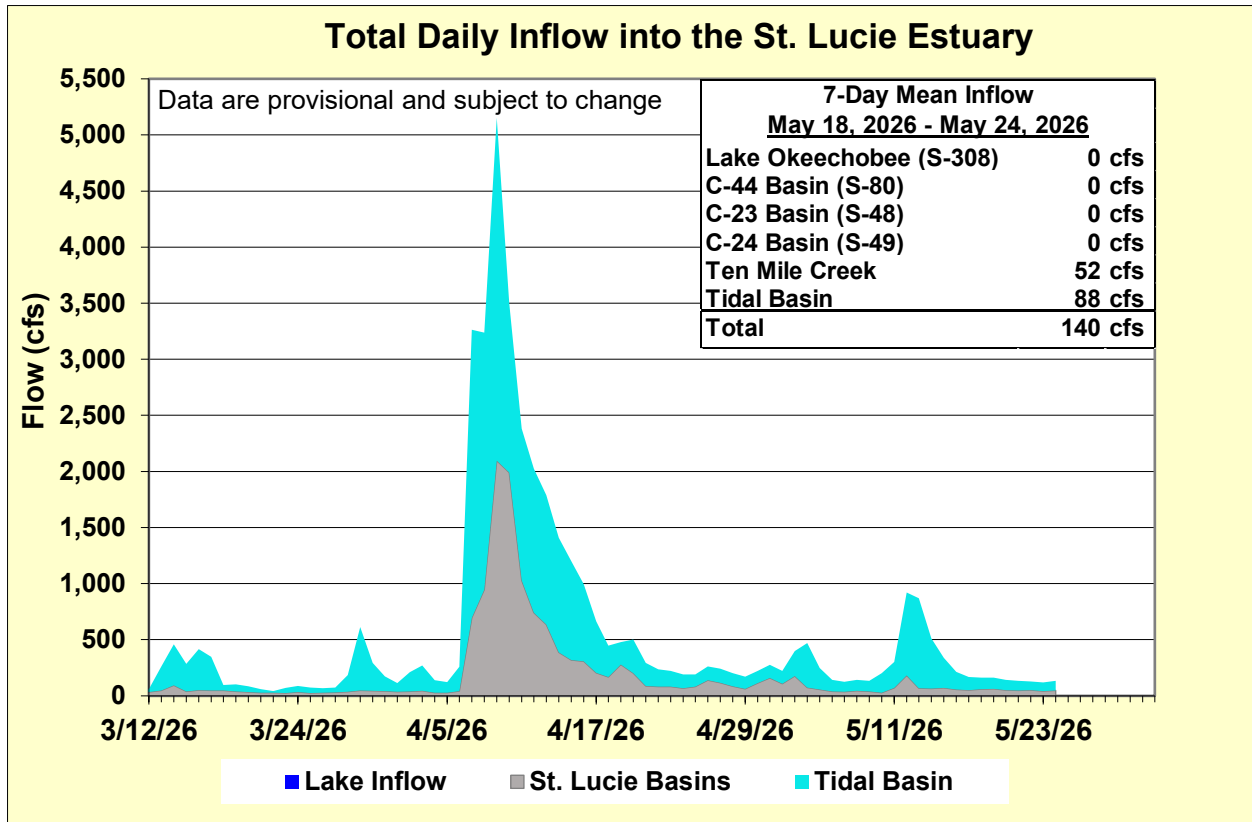
### **Minimum Flows and Minimum Levels**

The minimum flows and levels (MFL) for the Caloosahatchee River Estuary is a 30-day moving average flow of 457 cfs or greater at S-79. The current 30-day average flow at S-79 is 320 cfs (**Figure ES-14**) which is an exceedance.

The MFL for the Northwest Fork of the Loxahatchee River is a) flows at Lainhart Dam maintained at 35 cfs or greater and b) the 20-day moving average salinity of 2 or less at River Mile (RM) 9.2. An exceedance occurs when flows decline below 35 cfs for more than 20 consecutive days or when the 20-day moving average salinity at River Mile 9.2 exceeds 2. The current daily average flow at Lainhart Dam is 34 cfs for 1 consecutive day (**Figure ES-15**) and the 20-day average salinity at RM 9.2 is 0.9 (**Figure ES-16**).



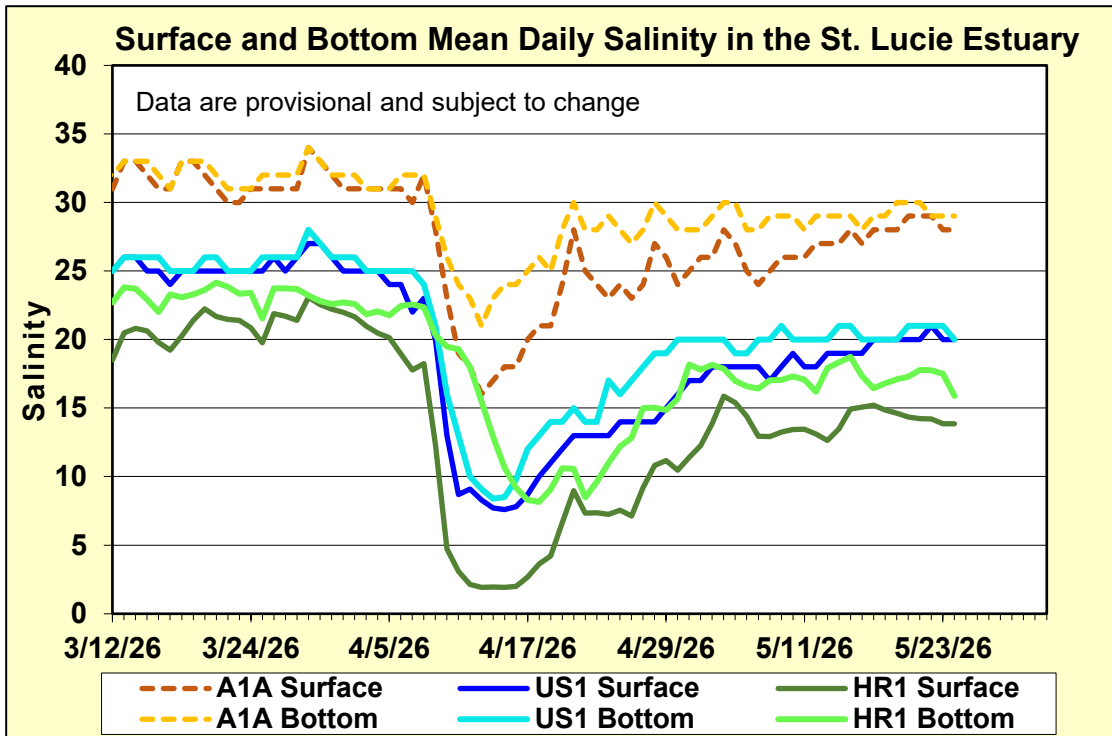
**Figure ES-1.** Basins, water control structures and salinity monitoring sites in the St. Lucie Estuary.



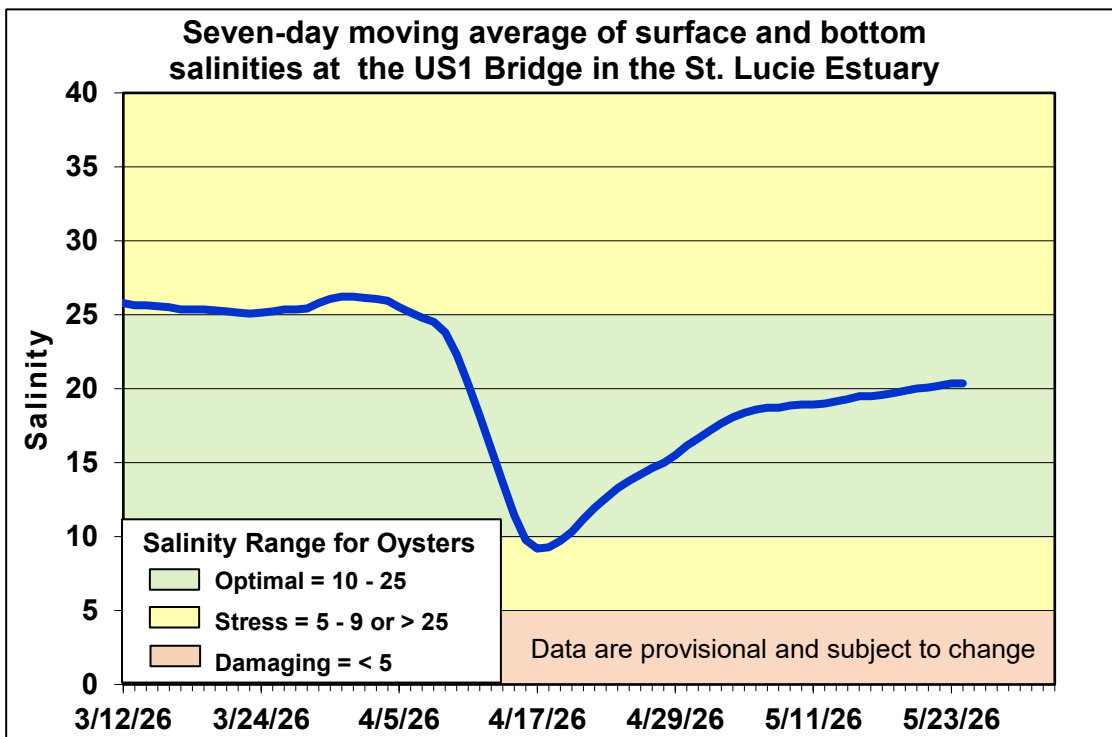
**Figure ES-2.** Total daily inflows from Lake Okeechobee and runoff from the C-44, C-23, C-24, Ten Mile Creek, and Tidal Basins into the St. Lucie Estuary.

**Table ES-1.** Seven-day mean salinity at oyster monitoring sites in the St. Lucie Estuary. Current means are in bold font; previous week's means are in parentheses. The envelope reflects the optimum salinity range for adult eastern oysters (*Crassostrea virginica*) in the estuary. Data are provisional.

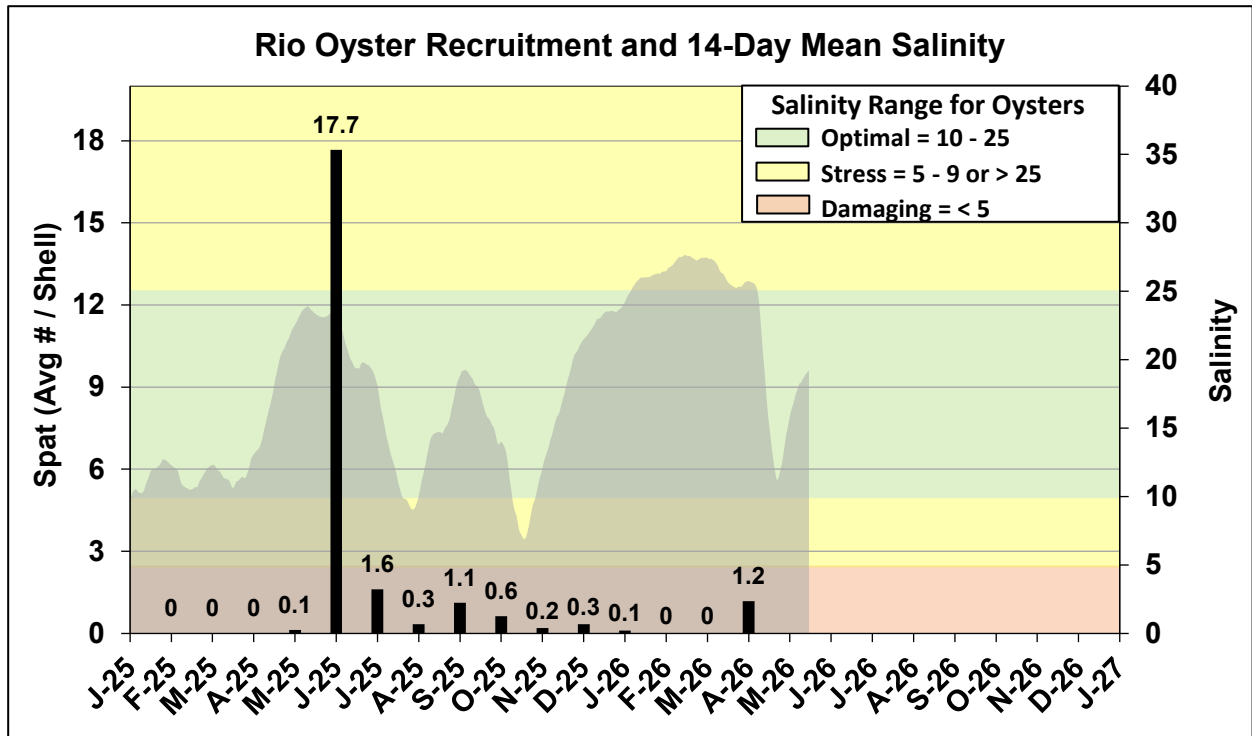
Sampling Site	Surface	Bottom	Optimum Envelope
HR1 (North Fork)	<b>14.3</b> (14.0)	<b>17.2</b> (17.4)	10.0 – 25.0
US1 Bridge	<b>20.1</b> (18.9)	<b>20.6</b> (20.3)	10.0 – 25.0
A1A Bridge	<b>28.4</b> (27.1)	<b>29.4</b> (28.7)	10.0 – 25.0



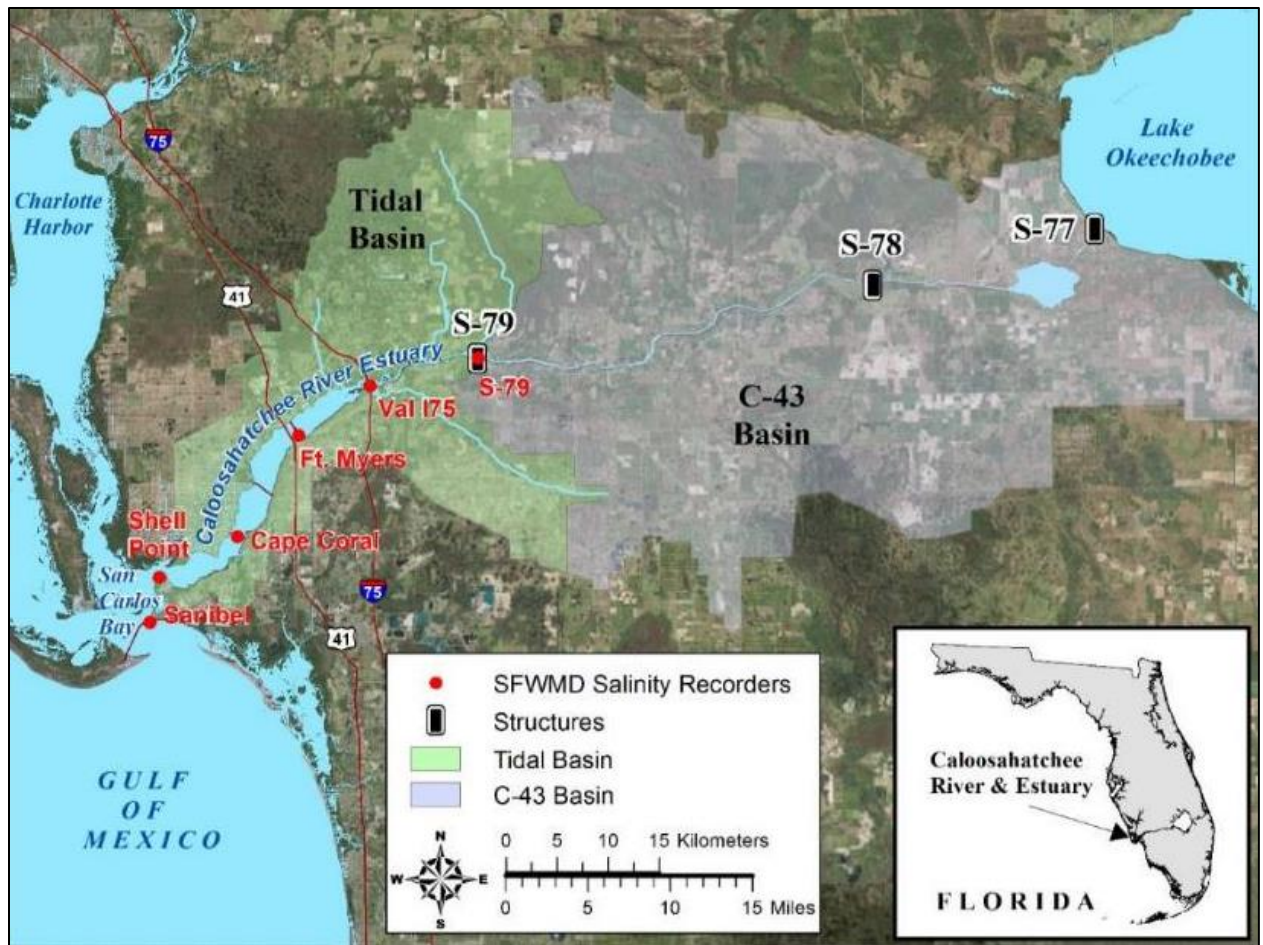
**Figure ES-3.** Mean daily salinity at the A1A, US1, and HR1 sites in the St. Lucie Estuary.



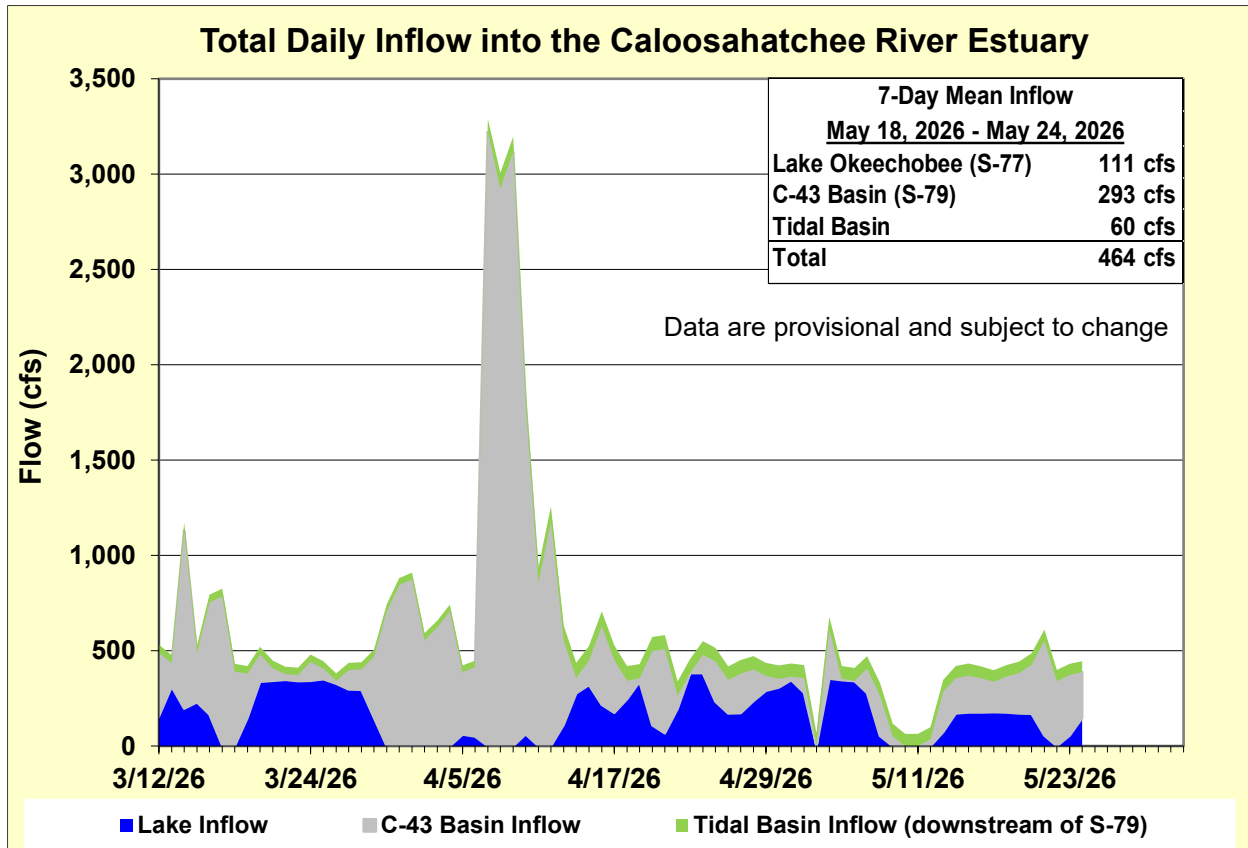
**Figure ES-4.** Seven-day moving average of the surface and bottom salinities at the US1 Bridge in the St. Lucie Estuary.



**Figure ES-5.** Mean oyster recruitment at the Rio oyster monitoring station and 14-day mean salinity at US1 Bridge.



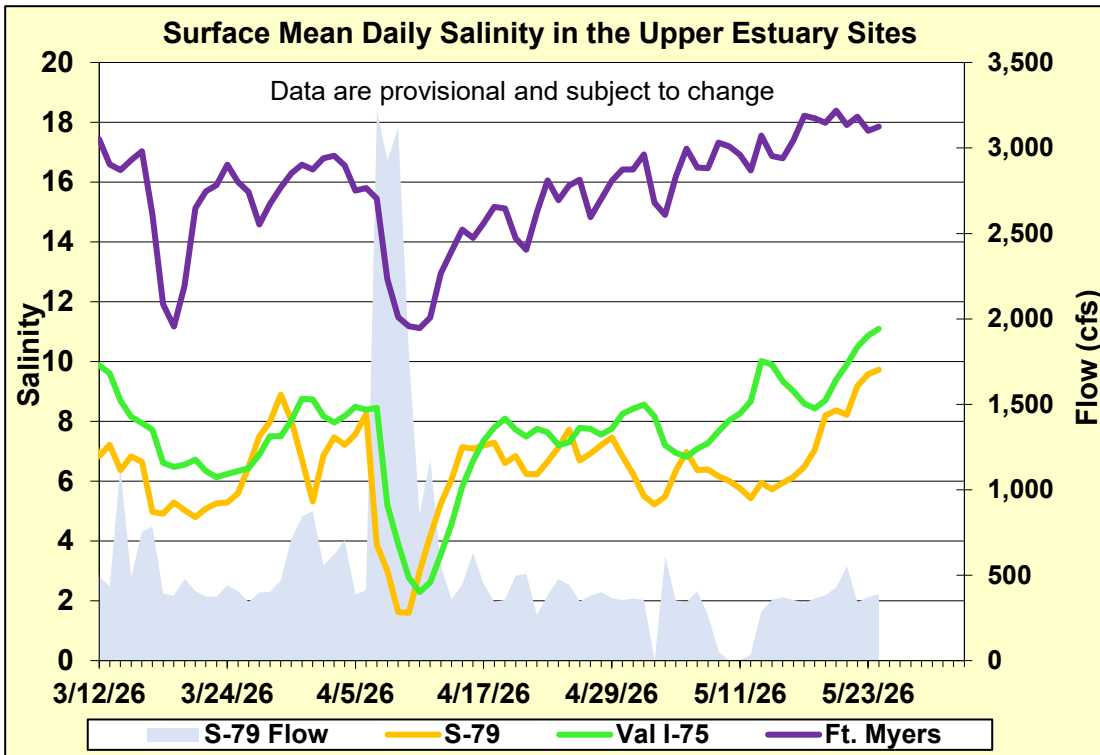
**Figure ES-6.** Basins, water control structures, and salinity monitoring sites in the Caloosahatchee River Estuary.



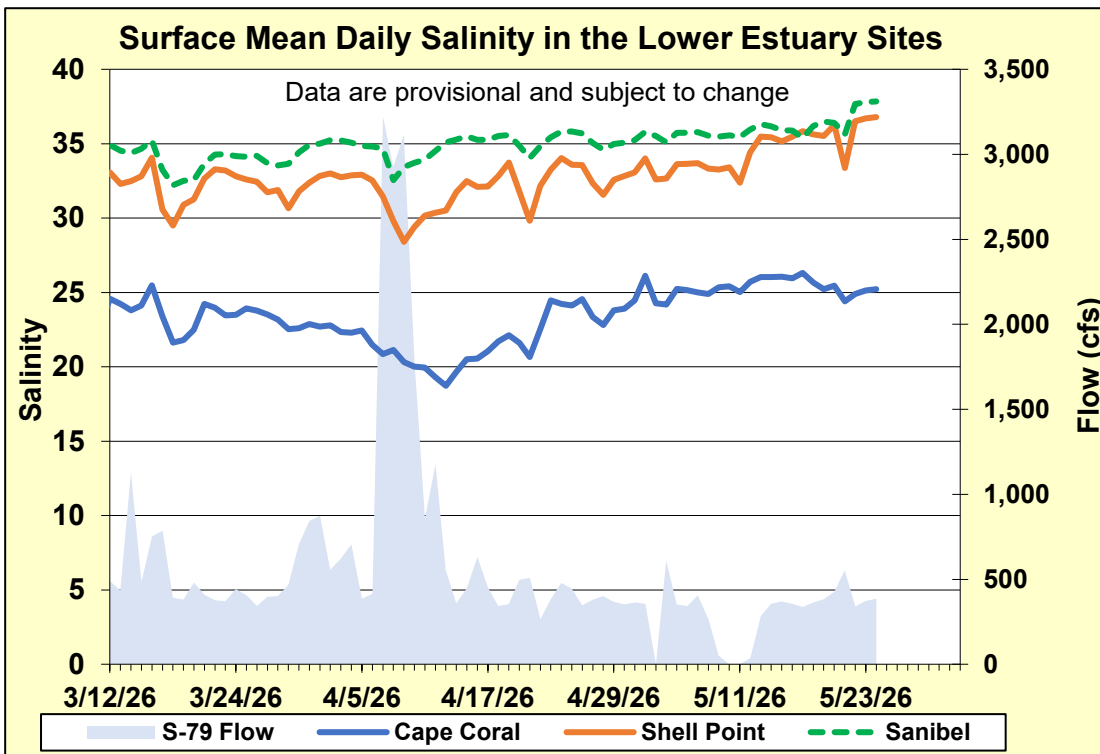
**Figure ES-7.** Total daily inflows from Lake Okeechobee, and runoff from the C-43 and Tidal basins into the Caloosahatchee River Estuary.

**Table ES-2.** Seven-day mean salinity at six monitoring sites in the Caloosahatchee River Estuary. Current means are in bold font; previous week's means are in parentheses. The envelope in the upper estuary sites is for the protection of tape grass and the envelope in the lower estuary is the optimum salinity range for adult eastern oysters (*Crassostrea virginica*). Data are provisional.

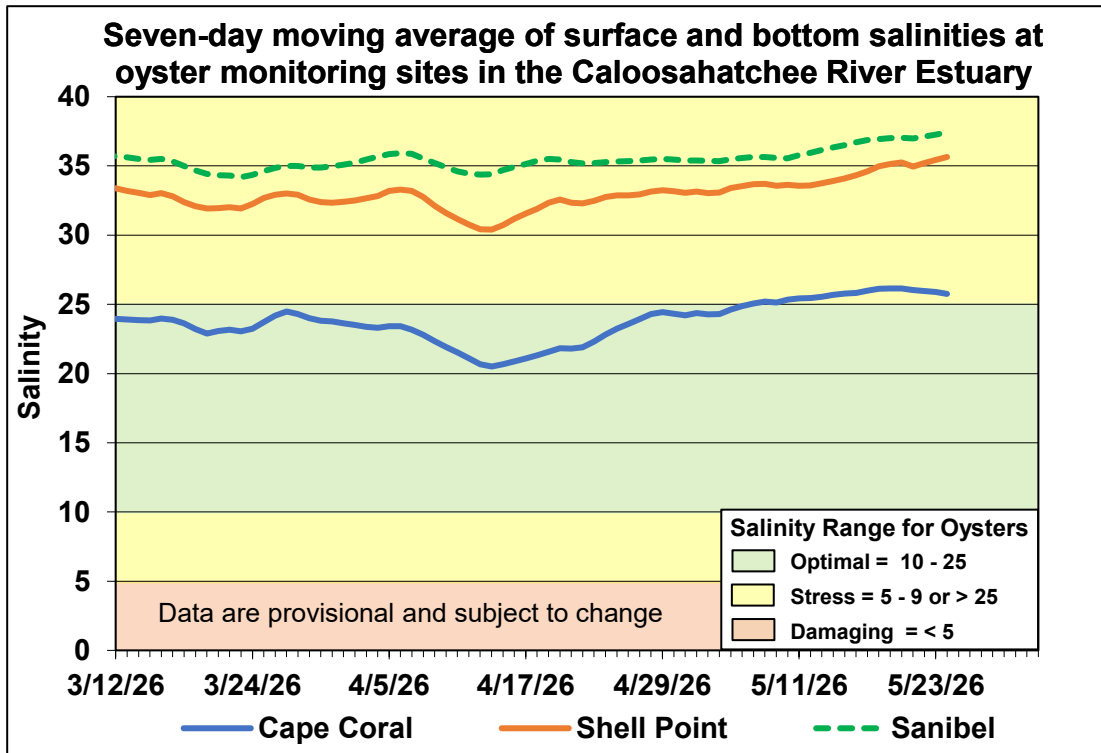
Sampling Site	Surface	Bottom	Optimum Envelope
S-79 (Franklin Lock)	<b>8.6</b> (5.9)	<b>9.6</b> (6.4)	0.0 – 10.0
Val I-75	<b>9.8</b> (9.1)	<b>12.5</b> (10.4)	0.0 – 10.0
Fort Myers Yacht Basin	<b>18.0</b> (17.2)	<b>20.3</b> (18.1)	0.0 – 10.0
Cape Coral	<b>25.1</b> (25.9)	<b>26.3</b> (26.1)	10.0 – 25.0
Shell Point	<b>35.8</b> (34.9)	<b>35.4</b> (34.3)	10.0 – 25.0
Sanibel	<b>36.9</b> (35.9)	<b>38.0</b> (37.9)	10.0 – 25.0



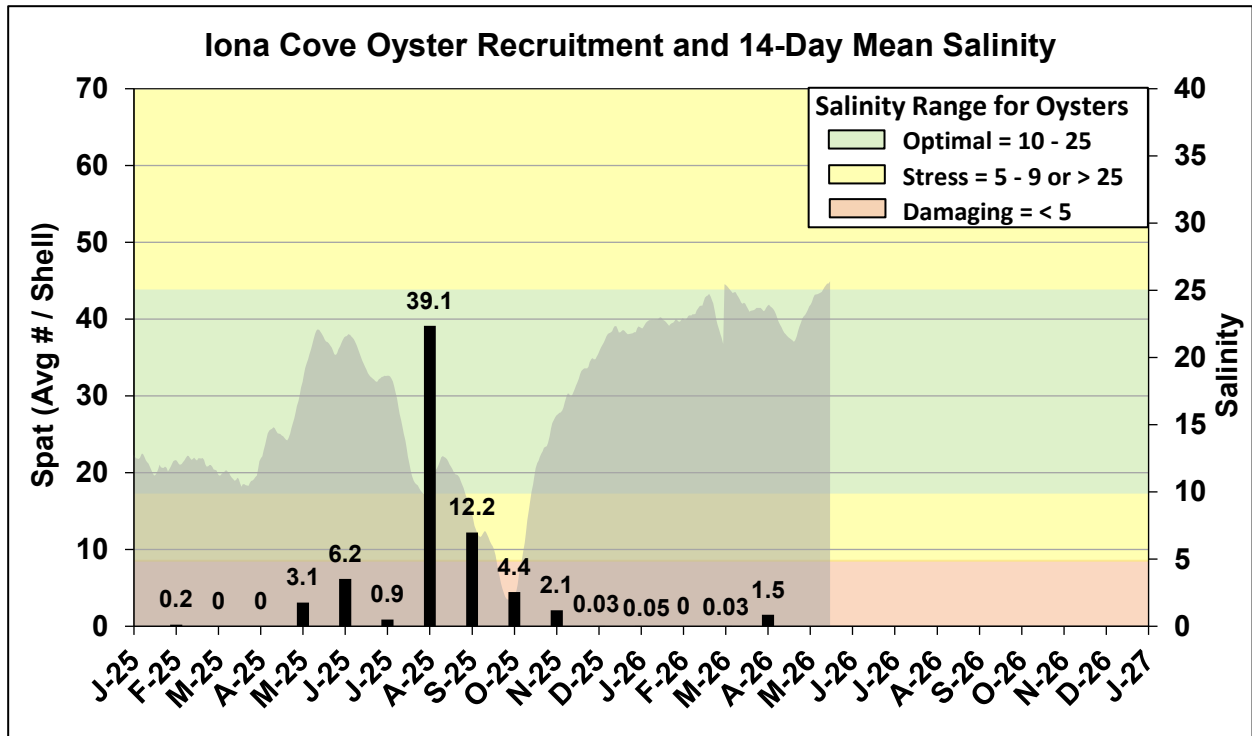
**Figure ES-8.** Mean daily salinity at upper Caloosahatchee River Estuary monitoring sites and mean daily flow at S-79.



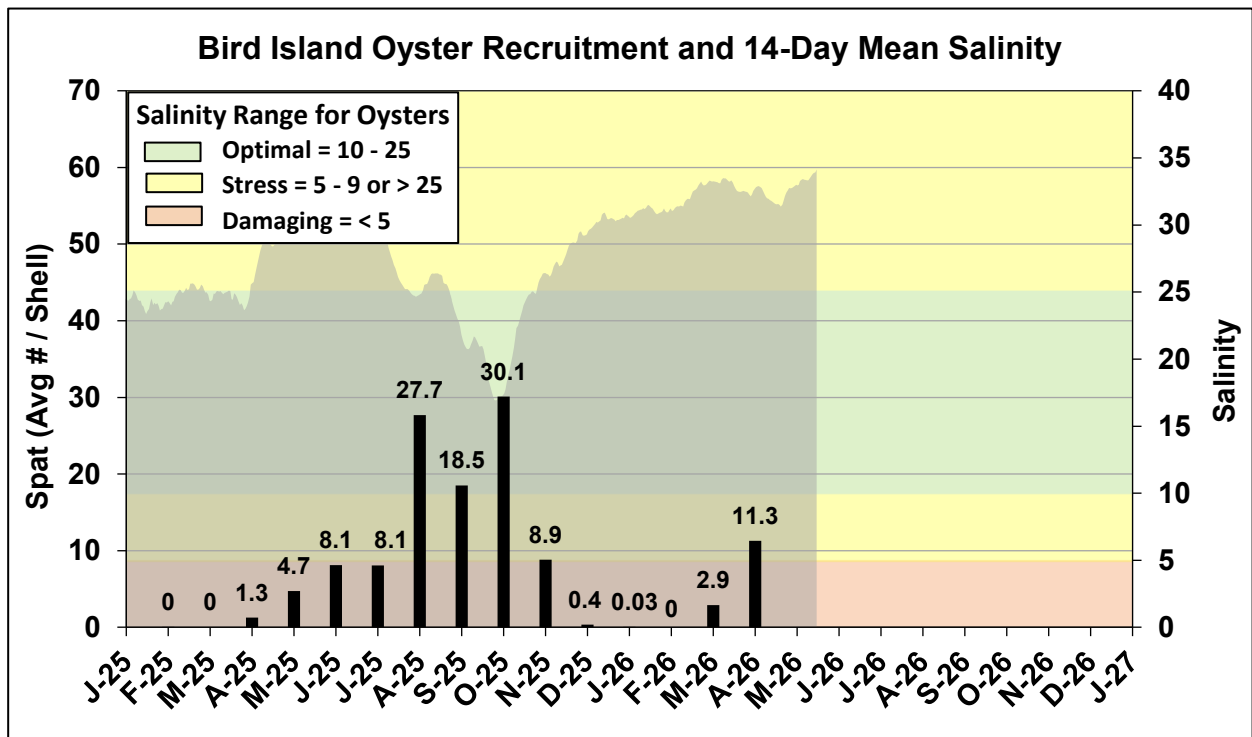
**Figure ES-9.** Mean daily surface salinity at lower Caloosahatchee River Estuary monitoring sites and mean daily flow at S-79.



**Figure ES-10.** Seven-day moving average of surface and bottom salinities at Cape Coral, Shell Point, and Sanibel monitoring sites in the Caloosahatchee River Estuary.



**Figure ES-11.** Mean oyster recruitment at the Iona Cove oyster monitoring station and 14-day mean salinity at Cape Coral.

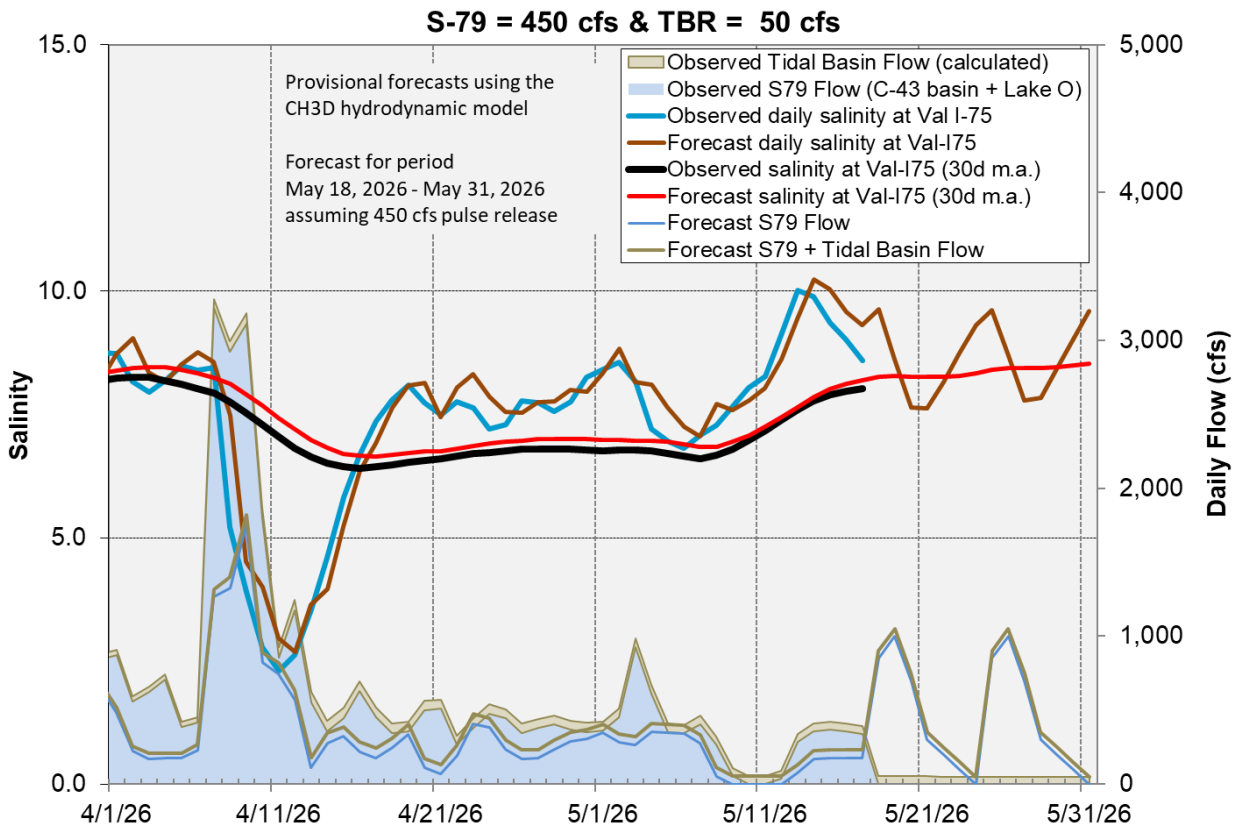


**Figure ES-12.** Mean oyster recruitment at the Bird Island oyster monitoring station and 14-day mean salinity at Shell Point.

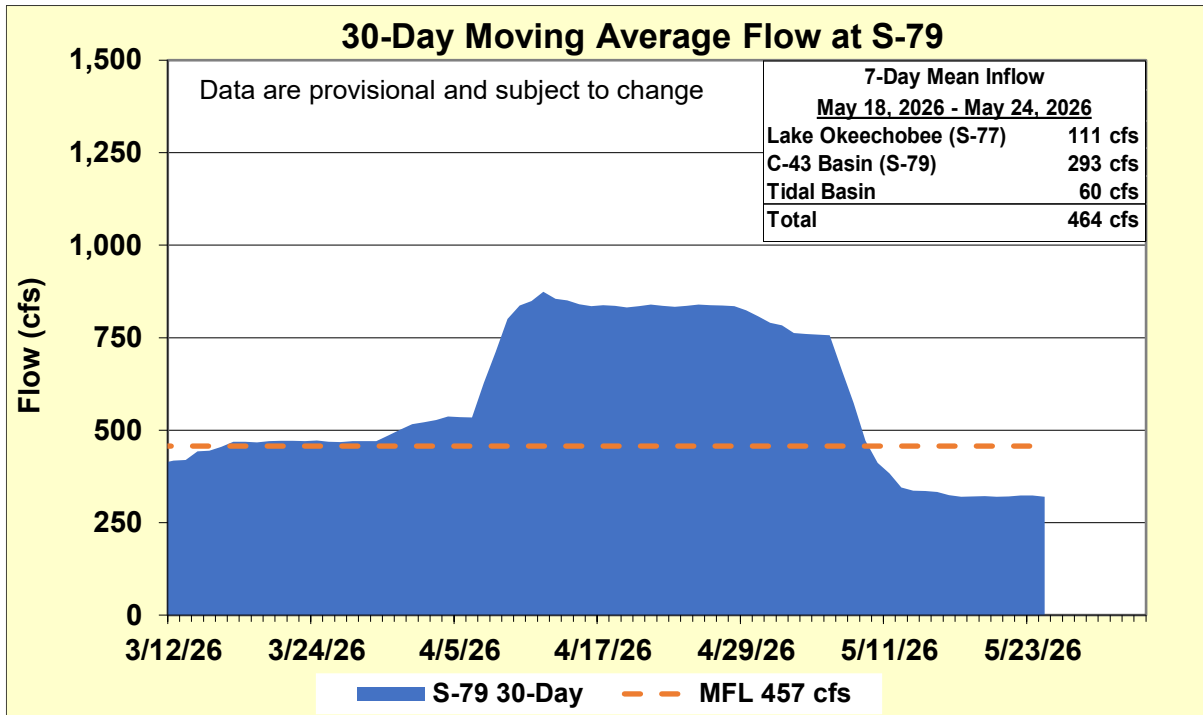
**Table ES-3.** Predicted salinity at Val I-75 in the Caloosahatchee River Estuary at the end of the forecast period for various S-79 flow release scenarios.

Scenario	Simulated S-79 Flow (cfs)	Tidal Basin Runoff (cfs)	Daily Salinity	30-Day Mean Salinity
A	450	50	9.6	8.5
B	750	50	6.4	7.6
C	1,000	50	5.2	7.1
D	1,500	50	3.0	6.2
E	2,000	50	1.5	5.7

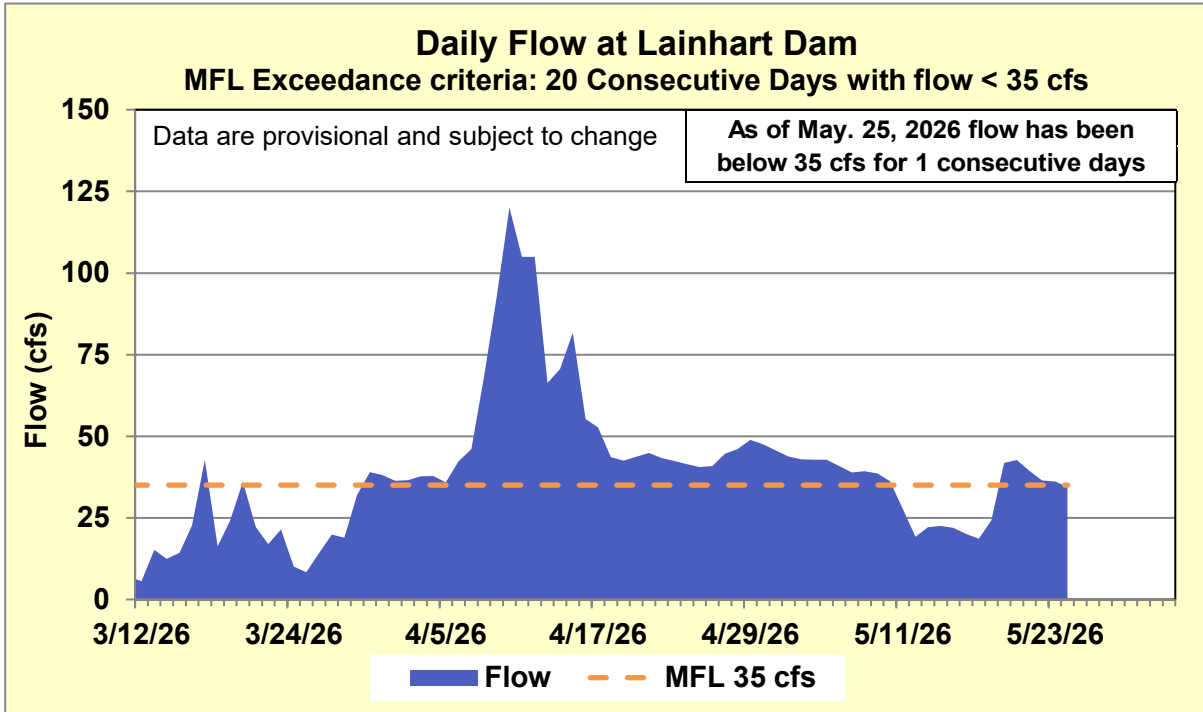
Observed and Forecasted Flow at S-79 and Salinity at Val I-75



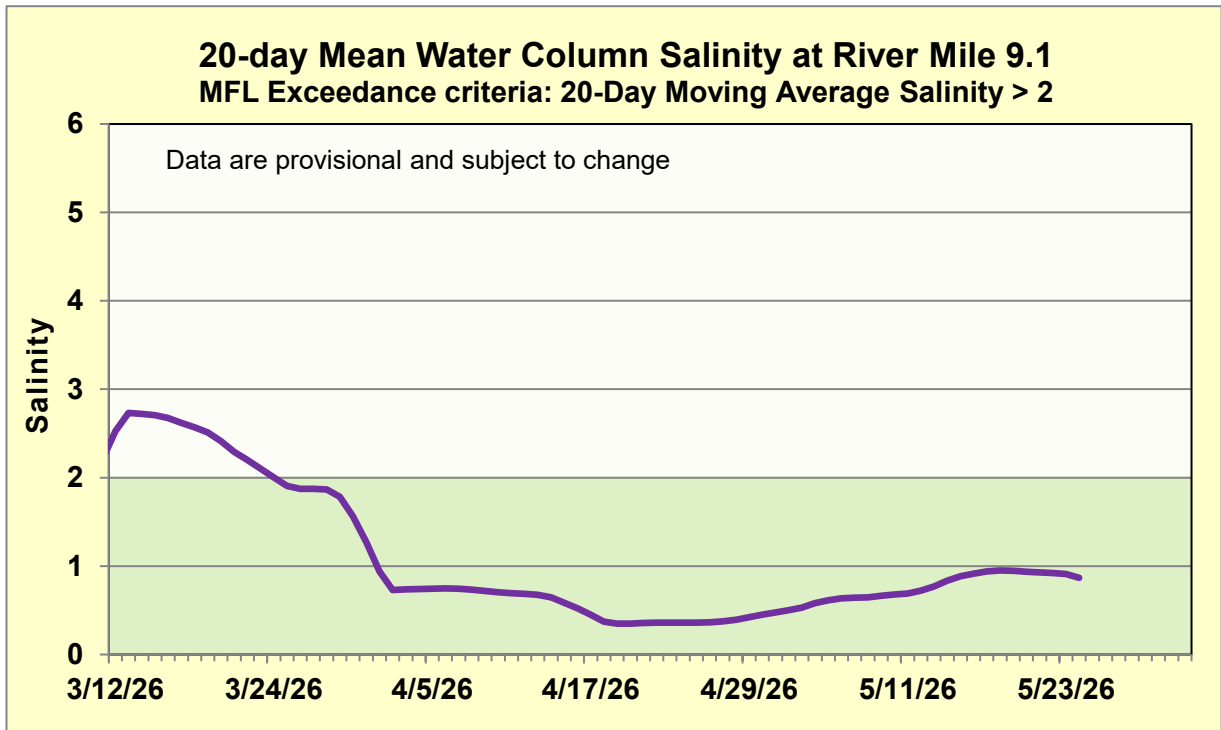
**Figure ES-13.** Surface salinity forecast at the Val I-75 site assuming a 450 cfs pulse release at S-79.



**Figure ES-14.** 30-day moving average flow at S-79 for the Caloosahatchee River Estuary Minimum Flows and Minimum Levels (MFL).



**Figure ES-15.** Average daily flow (cfs) at Lainhart Dam for the Loxahatchee River Estuary Minimum Flows and Minimum Levels (MFL).



**Figure ES-16.** 20-day moving average salinity at Lainhart Dam for the Loxahatchee River Estuary Minimum Flows and Minimum Levels (MFL).

## Stormwater Treatment Areas

**STA-1E:** 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. STA-1E Central Flow-way contains nests of Migratory Bird Treaty Act protected species. Online treatment cells are at or near target stage. The 365-day PLR for the Western and Eastern Flow-way is below 1.0 g/m<sup>2</sup>/year (**Figure S-2**).

**STA-1W:** STA-1W Eastern Flow-way is offline for vegetation management activities. Treatment cells are at or near target stage. The Northern Flow-way, Eastern Flow-way and Cells 6 and 7 contain nests of Migratory Bird Treaty Act protected species. 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/m<sup>2</sup>/year (**Figure S-2**).

**STA-2:** Treatment cells are at target stage. An operational restriction is in place in Flow-way 2 and Flow-way 4 for vegetation management activities. Flow-ways 1 and 4 contain nests of Migratory Bird Treaty Act protected species. The 365-day PLRs for all Flow-ways are below 1.0 g/m<sup>2</sup>/year (**Figure S-3**).

**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<sup>2</sup>/year (**Figure S-3**).

**STA-5/6:** Treatment cells are at or below target stage. All treatment cells have highly stressed vegetation conditions. Flow-way 3 contains nests of Migratory Bird Treaty Act protected species. The 365-day PLRs for all Flow-ways are below 1.0 g/m<sup>2</sup>/year. (**Figure S-4**).

For definitions on STA operational language see glossary following figures

# Everglades Stormwater Treatment Areas - STAs

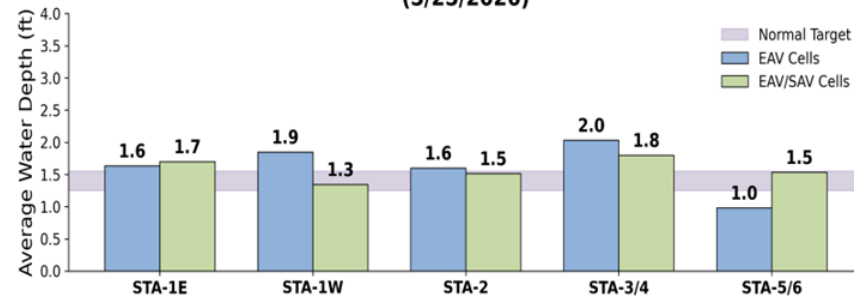
Estimated Inflow and Outflow Volumes

May. 18<sup>th</sup>, 2026 - May. 24<sup>th</sup>, 2026 *Includes preliminary data*

	Total Inflow (acre-feet)	Total Outflow (acre-feet)
STA-1E	550	250
STA-1W	1,900	450
STA-2	0	1,100
STA-3/4	500	3,500
STA-5/6	0	50

- Total WY2027 inflows to STAs (5/1/2026 to 5/24/2026): ~19,000 ac-ft
- Lake Okeechobee releases to FEBs/STAs
  - 5/18/2026 to 5/24/2026: 600 ac-ft
  - WY 2027: ~ 5,500 ac-ft
- Extensive vegetation management activities underway to address stressed and highly stressed vegetation in EAV cells
- MBTA protected species nesting in:
  - STA-1E: Cells 4N & 4S
  - STA-1W: Cells 1A, 1B, 3, 5B, 6 & 7
  - STA-2: Cells 1, 5 & 6
  - STA-5/6: Cell 5-3B
- All treatment cells are at or near target water depth

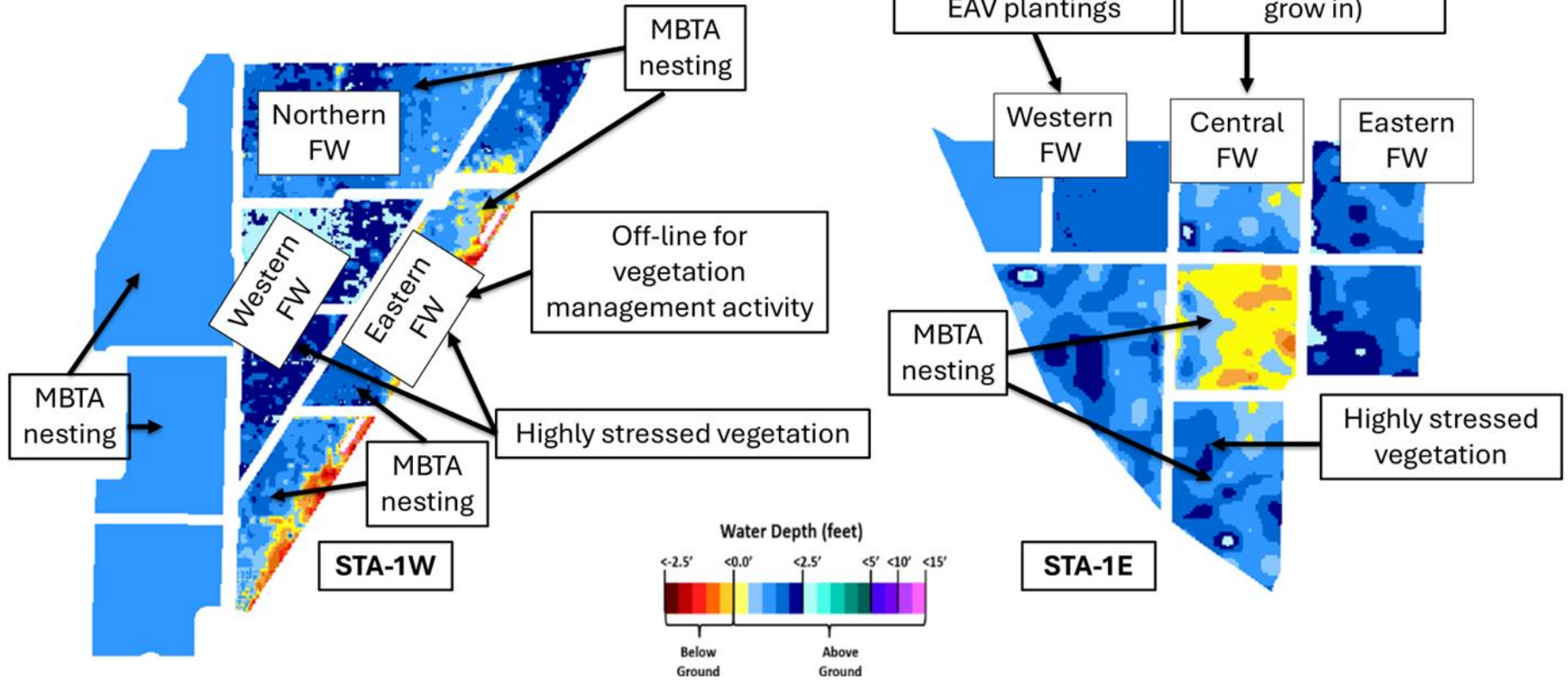
Water Depths  
(5/25/2026)



*Includes preliminary data; Emergent Aquatic Vegetation (EAV); Submerged Aquatic Vegetation (SAV)*

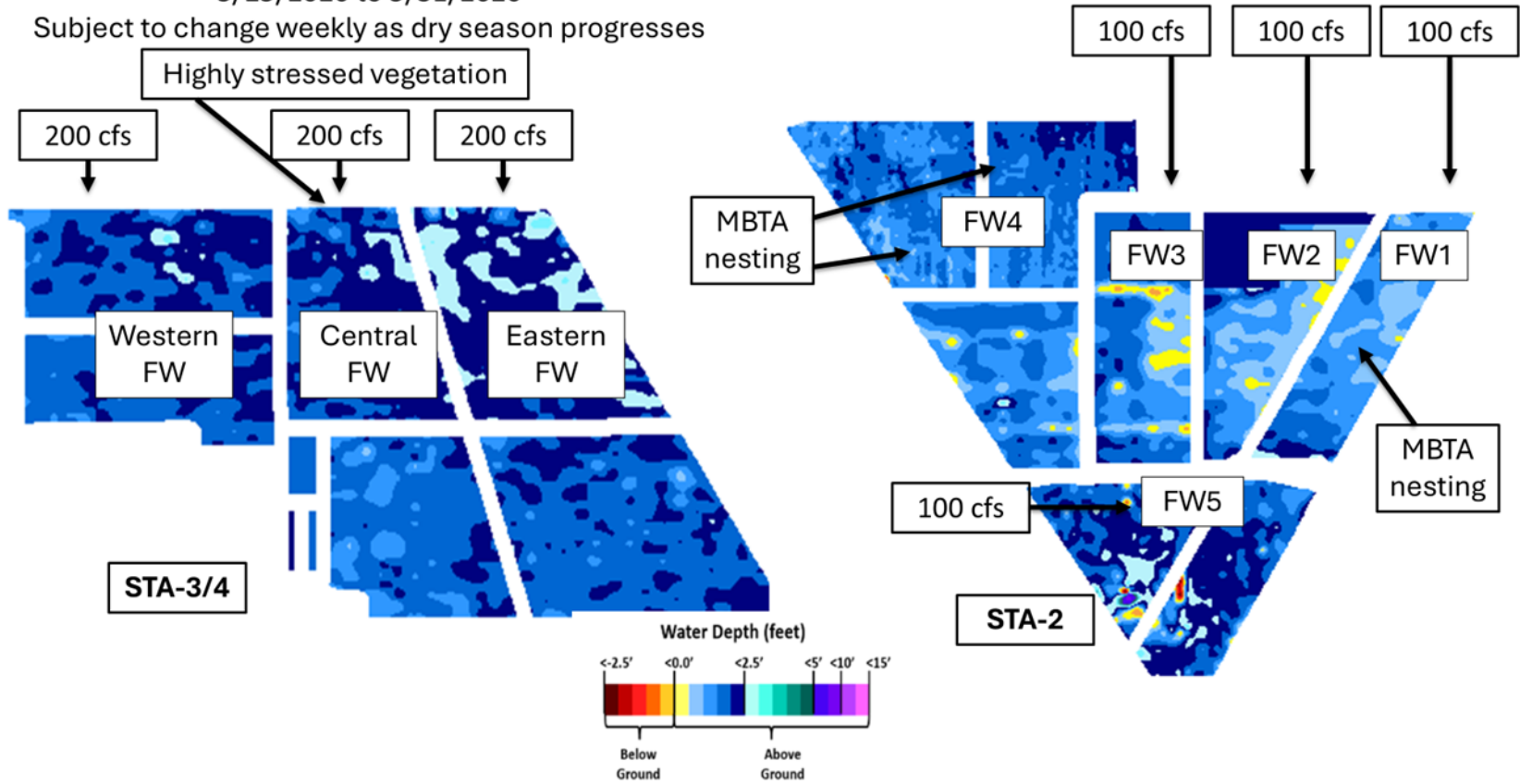
**Figure S-1.** STA depths and flow volumes

0 CFS Lake release capacity in Eastern Flow Path:  
 5/25/2026 to 5/31/2026  
 Subject to change weekly as dry season progresses



**Figure S-2.** Eastern Flow Path Weekly Status Report

1,000 CFS Lake release capacity in Central Flow Path:  
5/25/2026 to 5/31/2026  
Subject to change weekly as dry season progresses



**Figure S-3.** Central Flow Path Weekly Status Report

0 CFS Lake release capacity in Western Flow Path:  
5/25/2026 to 5/31/2026

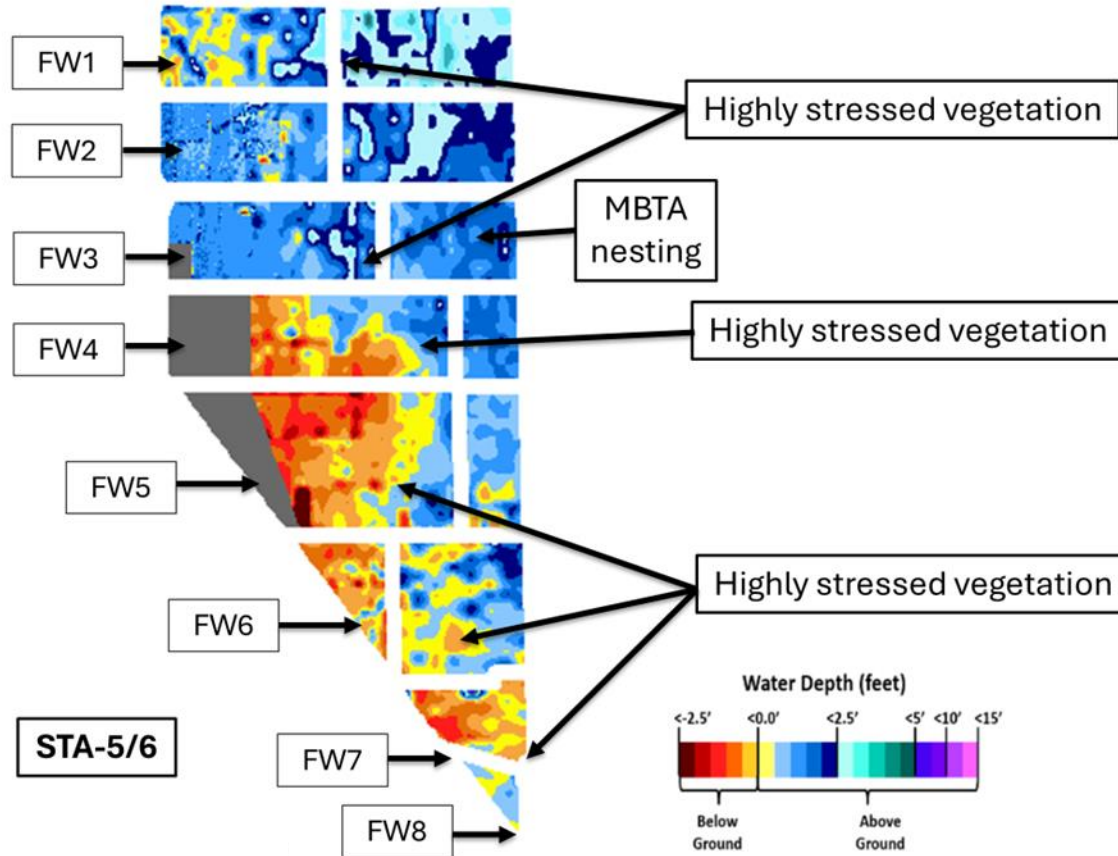


Figure S-4. Western Flow Path Weekly Status Report

## Basic Concepts and Definitions for STA Weekly Status Report

- **Inflow:** Sum of flow volume at all inflow structures to an STA.
- **Lake Inflow:** Portion of the STA total inflow volume that originates from Lake Okeechobee.
- **Outflow:** Sum of flow volume at outflow structures from an STA.
- **Total Phosphorus (TP):** Total mass of phosphorus in all its forms; including particulate, dissolved, etc.
- **Inflow Concentration:** TP concentration is the mass of TP in micrograms per liter of water,  $\mu\text{g/L}$  or ppb. Inflow concentration refers to the flow-weighted mean TP from all inflow structures over a period of time.
- **Outflow Concentration:** The flow-weighted mean TP from all outflow structures over a period of time. The outflow concentration represents the reduction of inflow TP achieved by STA treatment of the inflow water.
- **WQBEL:** The STA outflow concentration that is required upon completion of the Restoration Strategies projects by December 2025. The outflow concentration shall not exceed 13 ppb as an annual flow weighted mean in more than 3 out of 5 water years on a rolling basis and shall not exceed 19 ppb as an annual flow weighted in any water year.
- **Flow-Way (FW):** One or more treatment cells connected in series. Cells typically have emergent aquatic vegetation (EAV) in the front portion of the flow-way followed by a mix of EAV and submerged aquatic vegetation (SAV)
- **Vegetation Status:** Healthy means the vegetation condition is good and will allow the STA to perform as designed. Stressed means the vegetation is showing signs of poor health, such as browning or areas of vegetation die-off, or the cell contains undesirable vegetation such as floating exotic vegetation requiring treatment. The TP reduction capability of the STA is affected when the vegetation condition is poor.
- **Phosphorus Loading Rate (PLR):** Mass of inflow TP in grams, divided by total treatment area of STA in square meters, per year. In general, a 365-day value of less than 1.0 is needed for an STA to perform optimally. A PLR of 2.0 is considered very high and a PLR of 3.0 is considered extremely high. The TP reduction capability of the STA is affected when the PLR is high, very high and extremely high.
- **Online:** Online status means the FW can receive and treat inflow.
- **Online with Restriction:** The FW can receive and treat inflow, but the amount of flow or water level may be limited temporarily. For example, a vegetation rehabilitation effort may require reduced flows through an area while the new plants are establishing, or nesting by protected species may require a certain water level not to be exceeded.
- **Offline:** The FW is unable to receive and treat inflow due to repairs, construction, or other prohibitive reasons.
- **Depth:** Difference between the average surface water level in a cell and the average ground elevation in that cell. Target depths, or depths between flow events, are between 1.25 ft to 1.5 ft. As depth approaches or drops below zero, an increasing percentage of the cell is considered dry and STA conditions deteriorate. An increase in depth above target depth is expected with increasing flow. However, as depth increases much above the target depth and is sustained over a period of time, it can be detrimental to vegetation health and overall STA treatment performance.
- **Note:** The data provided in this summary report were developed using a combination of provisional and quality-assured flow and water quality data. In some cases, best professional judgment was used to estimate missing data and revise questionable data. Values provided are not considered final but are appropriate for use in STA operational decision-making.

## **Everglades**

### ***Water Conservation Area***

#### ***Regulation Schedules***

WCA-1: Over the past week, stage fell at the 1-8C gauge but remained above the A1 Zone regulation line. As of Sunday May 24, 2026, stage was 0.32 feet above the line (**Figure EV-1**).

WCA-2A: Water depth at the 2-17 gauge receded more quickly than in recent weeks. Stages were 0.71 feet above the regulation line on Sunday (**Figure EV-2**).

WCA-3A: The 3-gauge average remains well within Zone B. Average stage change over the week was moderate but uncertain as gauge 3-63 is not reading correctly. On Sunday, stages were 1.73 feet below the Zone A regulation line. Stage at Gauge 62 (NW corner) fell over the week and remains below the Upper Schedule line by 1.13 feet on Sunday (**Figures EV-3 and EV-4**).

#### ***Water Depths***

The SFWDAT model output for May 24, 2026, illustrates that both northern WCA-1 and northern WCA-2A are drier in the north compared to one month ago. Significantly below ground conditions continue to expand across WCA-3A. Water depths remain low across Big Cypress National Preserve (BCNP), WCA-3A, and -3B with impacts on soil, flora and fauna. WCA-3A and -3B remain very dry, having received the least amount of rainfall in the system over the dry season, severely limiting wading bird nesting across the system. Over the weekend there was a small wildfire currently being reported as contained in northern WCA-3A South. In Everglades National Park (ENP) there is very little hydrologic connectivity from north to south, however downstream Taylor Slough (TS) shows more connection to the coast. Comparing current conditions to water depths over the last 20 years, WCA-1 water depths are now mostly above average with some ponding beginning in the north and south. WCA 2A water depths are below average in the far north, above in the southeast of that basin. Most of BCNP water depths are below the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile; for this time of year within that basin, this means depths significantly below ground to the south and west. Within WCA-3A and -3B, water depths remain low and below the 10<sup>th</sup> percentile. Inflows to the northwest are keeping a portion of northern WCA-3A above average. Recurring below average water depths in the central Everglades are illustrating the system-level importance of maintaining water in the sloughs and low-water refugia in the central region. Conditions in most of ENP are below average (far below in the northwest) and falling quickly, while southeastern ENP remains just above average. See **Figures EV-5 and EV-6**.

#### ***Taylor Slough and Florida Bay***

Most stages decreased across Taylor Slough since May 17<sup>th</sup>, with an average decrease of 0.02 feet for the week. Changes ranged from -0.05 feet at Taylor Slough Bridge (TSB) in the northern slough to +0.02 feet at Craighead Pond (CP) in the southern slough (**Figure EV-7 and Figure EV-8**). The stage at TSB remains negative, indicating a lack of water at the head of the slough. Taylor Slough water levels remain just above the recent

average (WY1993-2016) for this time of year by 0.4 inches compared to before the Florida Bay Initiative (starting in 2017), a decrease of 1.2 inches relative to last week. The stage at TSB is below the estimated historical average by 1.82 feet, while CP stage is approximately equal to this metric.

Average salinity in Florida Bay was 36.8, a decrease of 0.1 from May 17<sup>th</sup>. Salinity changes ranged from -3.1 at Joe Bay (JB) in the eastern nearshore region to +1.0 at Buoy Key (BK) in the western nearshore region (**Figure EV-7**). Salinity remains above the estimated historical average and within the WY2001-2016 Interquartile Range (IQR) for all three regions (**Figure EV-9**). Salinities in the central and western regions are near and above the hypersalinity threshold, respectively. Bay-wide salinity remains just above its recent average (WY1993-2016) for this time of year by 0.8, an increase of 0.2 from last week.

Salinity at the Taylor River (TR) station in the mangrove zone (tracked for the Florida Bay MFL) was 24.2, a decrease of 4.6 from last week (**Figure EV-10**). The 365-day moving sum of flow from the five major creeks (McCormick Creek, Taylor River, Mud Creek, Trout Creek, West Highway Creek) was unable to be assessed due to missing data.

Average rainfall across Taylor Slough and Florida Bay was 0.09 inches since May 17<sup>th</sup>, based on the 18 gauges used for this report. Rainfall ranged from 0.00 inches at four stations to 0.54 inches at CP (**Figure EV-11**). Wind directions and speeds in Florida Bay ranged from 11.1 mph SE on May 20<sup>th</sup> to 21.4 mph NE on May 18<sup>th</sup> (**Figure EV-11**).

The Taylor River, Mud Creek, and West Highway Creek flow stations are currently offline until further notice, so data from all five major creeks are unable to be assessed. Based on the available data from Trout and McCormick Creeks, average daily flow totaled 850 ac-feet, with net positive flows since May 17<sup>th</sup>. Total daily creek flow ranged from 356 ac-feet on May 21<sup>st</sup> to 1,422 ac-feet on May 18<sup>th</sup> (**Figure EV-12**). Average daily flow from Alligator Creek was -38 ac-feet, with net negative flows since May 17<sup>th</sup> (**Figure EV-12**).

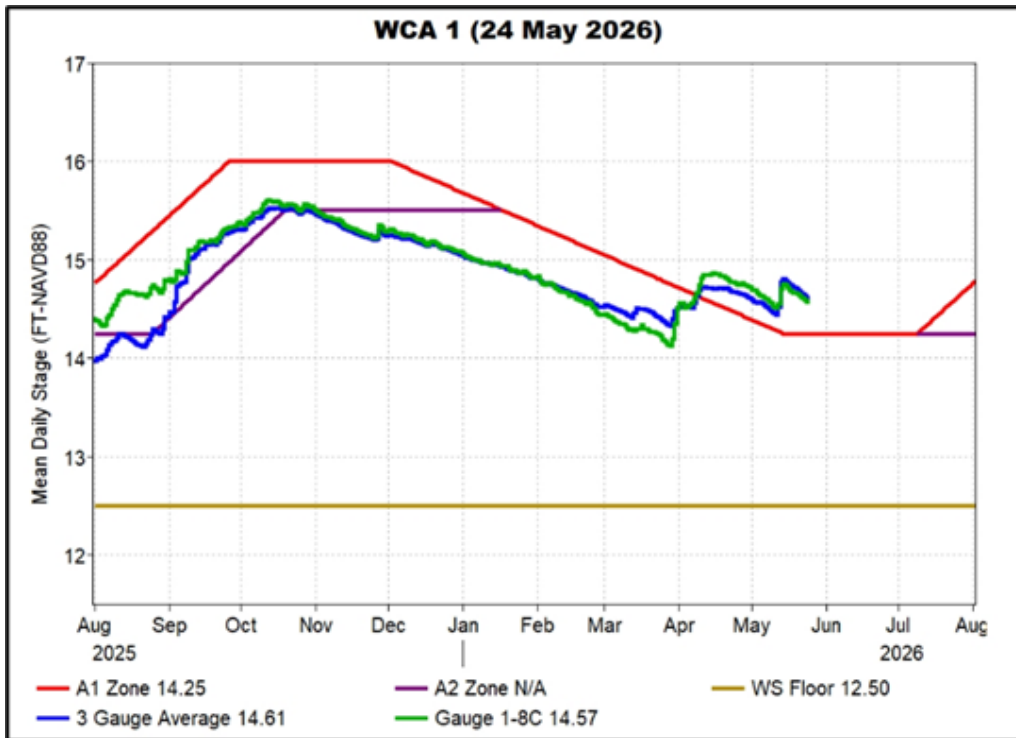
***Implications/considerations for water management.***

- Due to current drought conditions in WCA-3, slower recessions in that WCA would help to protect the wetland ecology from damaging dry downs.
- Dry conditions did further extend the recent run of 4 consecutive poor wading bird nesting years into the 2026 nesting season.
- In southern WCA-2A, shallower conditions on average are needed to recover ridge and slough habitat. Moderate recessions within this basin have ecological benefit as conditions move into the wet season.
- There is currently a high fire risk within the central Everglades, wildfires during these dry conditions can be very damaging.

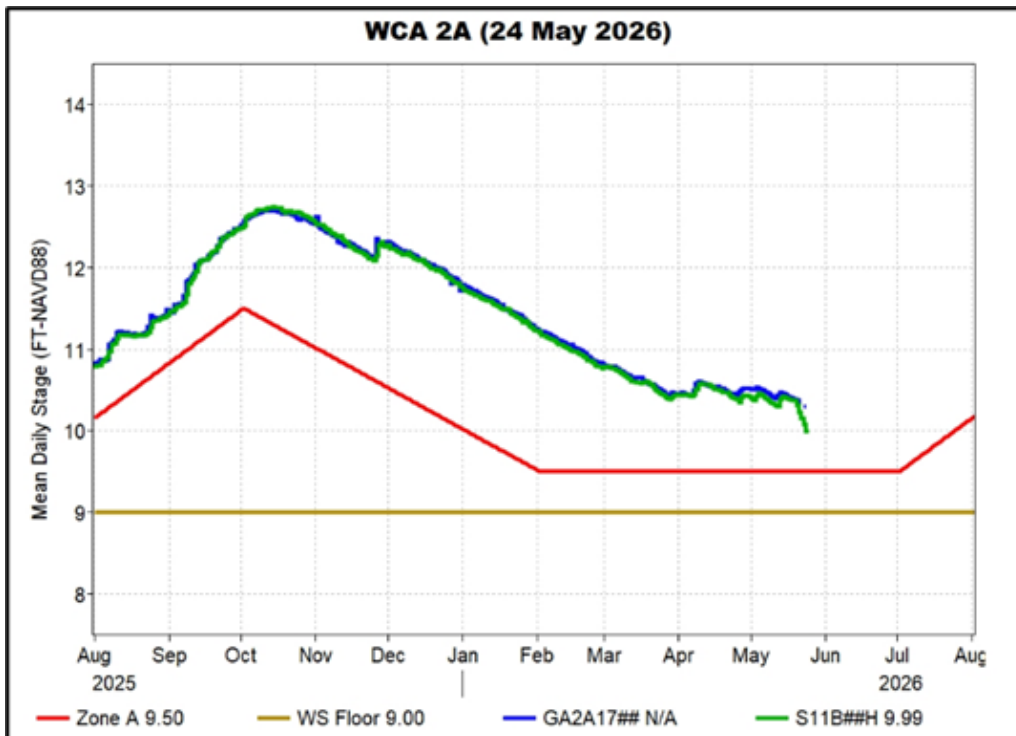
- Freshwater input into Taylor Slough and the C-111 basin could help moderate salinities and support recovery of estuarine conditions in Florida Bay.
- Conserving water in the WCAs while providing freshwater input to the sloughs of ENP will require careful consideration of a balance between the upstream and downstream ecological needs of the system. Individual regional recommendations can be found in **Table EV-2**.

**Table EV-1.** Previous week’s rainfall and water depth changes in Everglades basins.

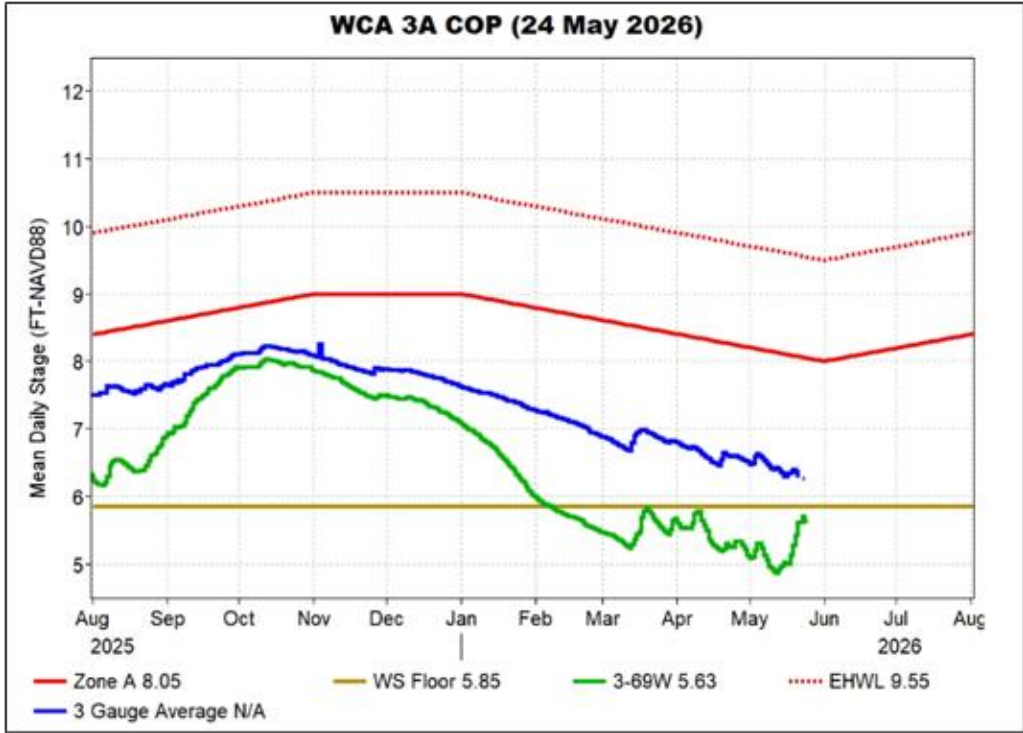
Everglades Region	Rainfall (inches)	Stage change (feet)
WCA-1	0.27	-0.13
WCA-2A	0.11	-0.13
WCA-2B	0.07	-0.20
WCA-3A	0.85	-0.09
WCA-3B	0.91	+0.17
ENP	0.97	+0.20



**Figure EV-1.** WCA-1 stage hydrographs and regulation schedule.



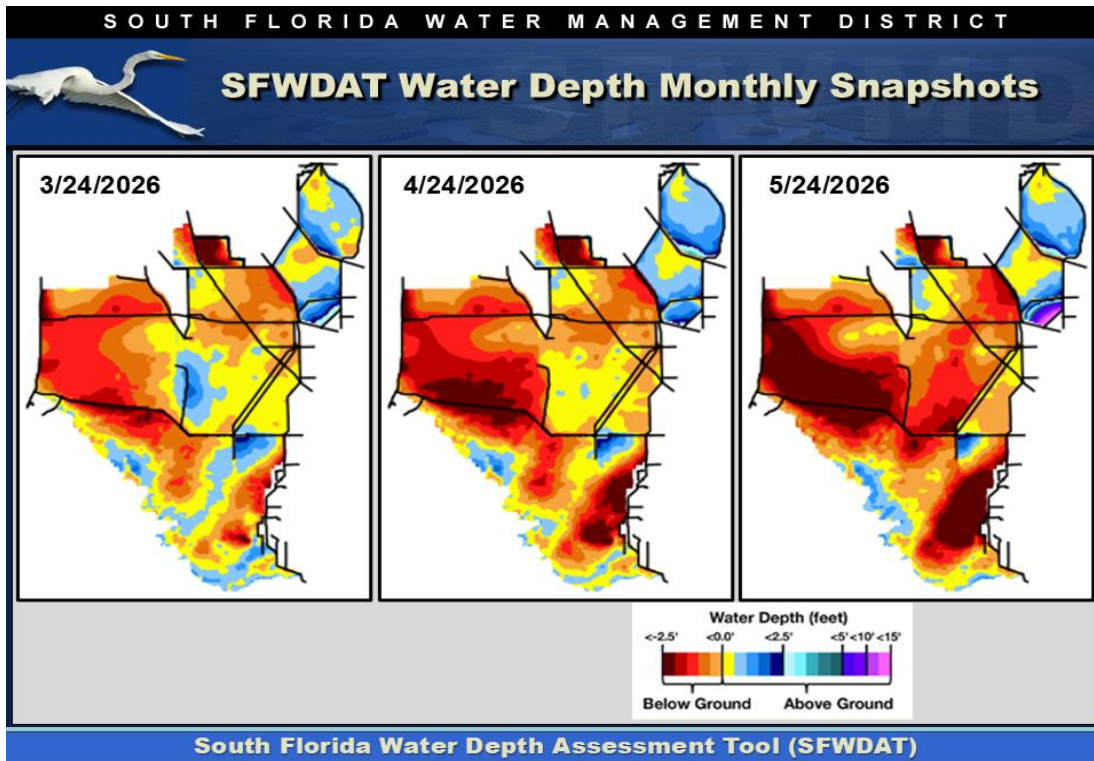
**Figure EV-2.** WCA-2A stage hydrographs and regulation schedule.



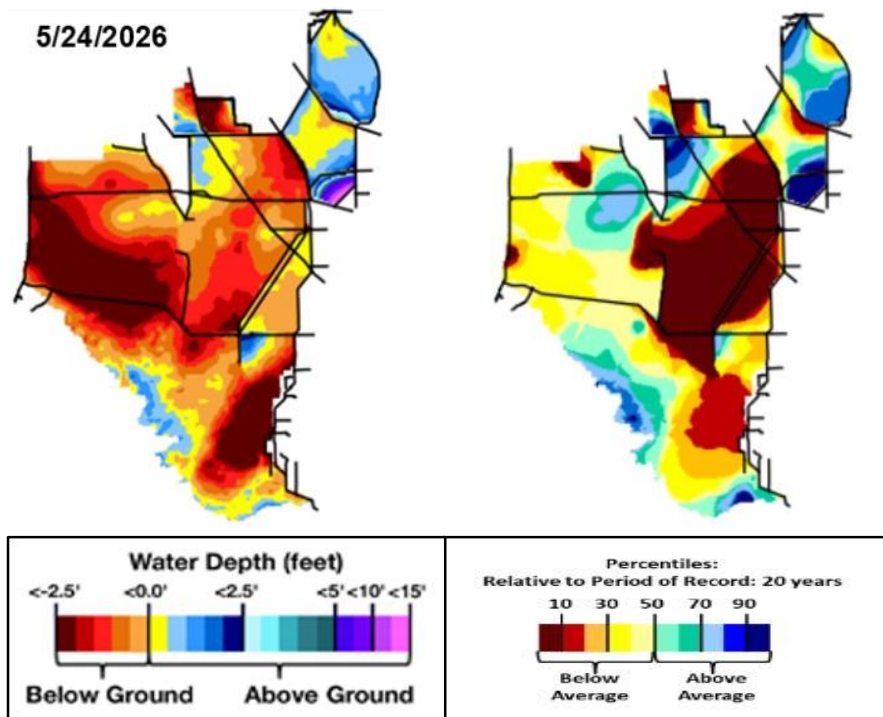
**Figure EV-3.** WCA-3A stage hydrographs (three-gauge average, 3-69W) and regulation schedule.



**Figure EV-4.** WCA-3A stage hydrograph (Deer gauge; Site 62) and regulation schedule.



**Figure EV-5.** Everglades water depths from two months ago (left), one month ago (center) and present (right), based on SFWDAT.



**Figure EV-6.** Present water depths (May 24, 2026) compared to the day of year relative to average (percentile) over the previous 20 years.

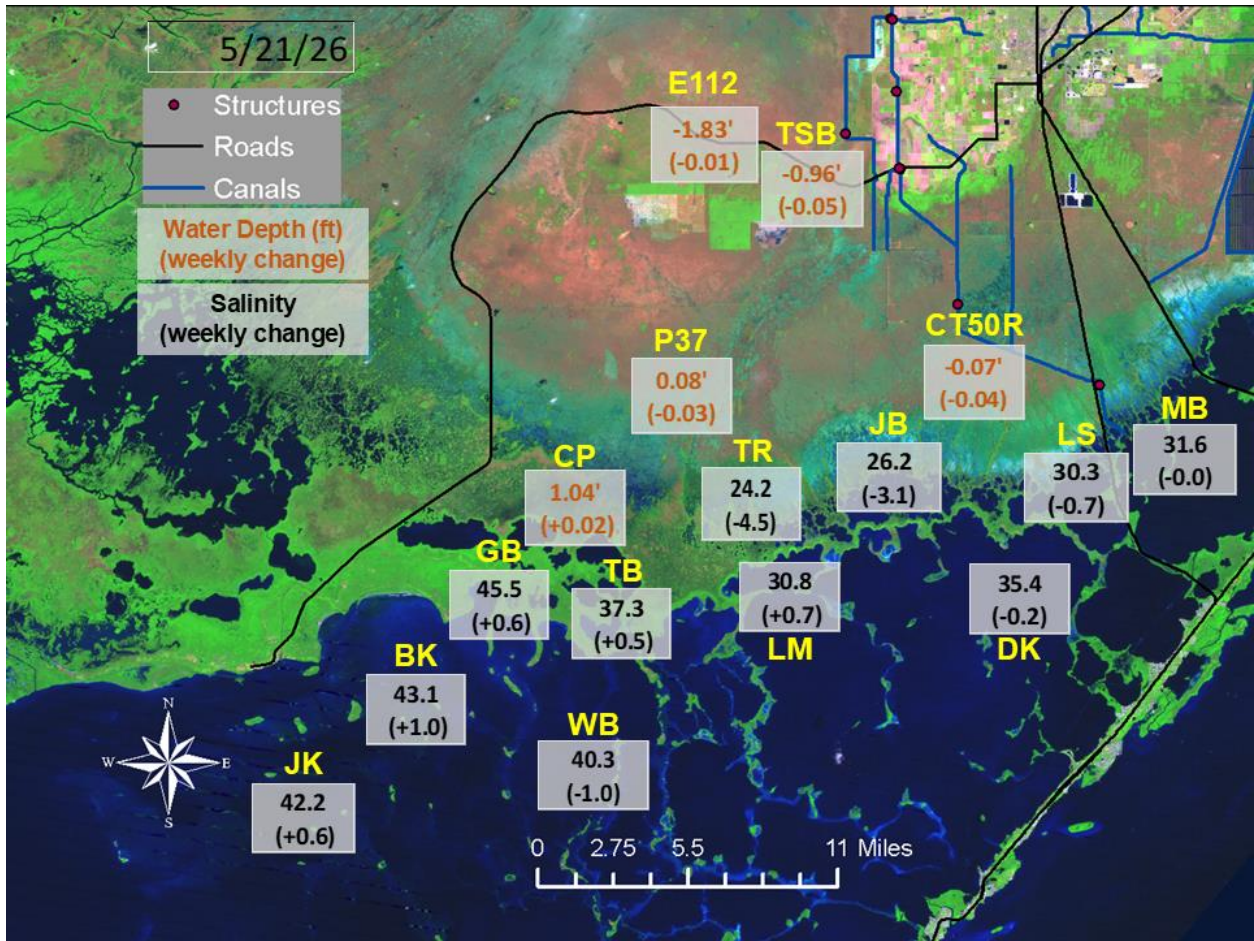


Figure EV-7. Taylor Slough water depths and Florida Bay salinities with changes since a week ago.

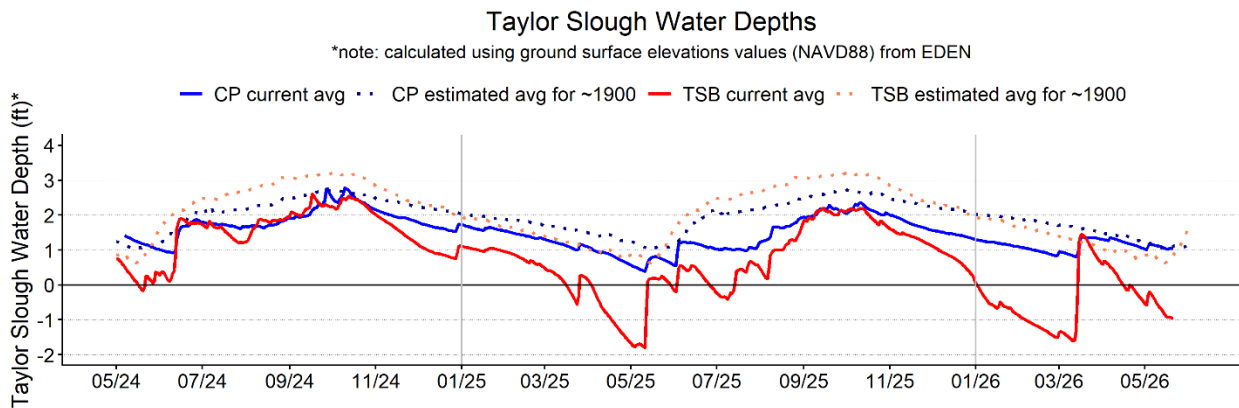
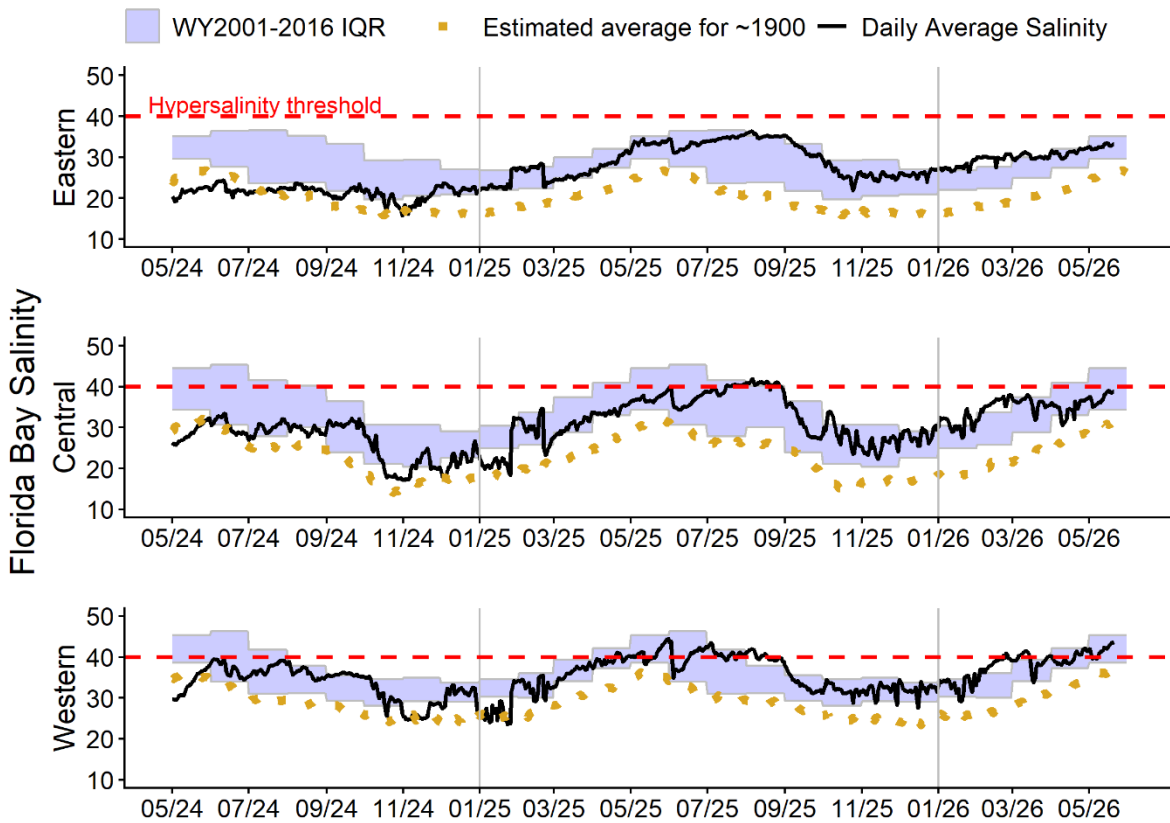
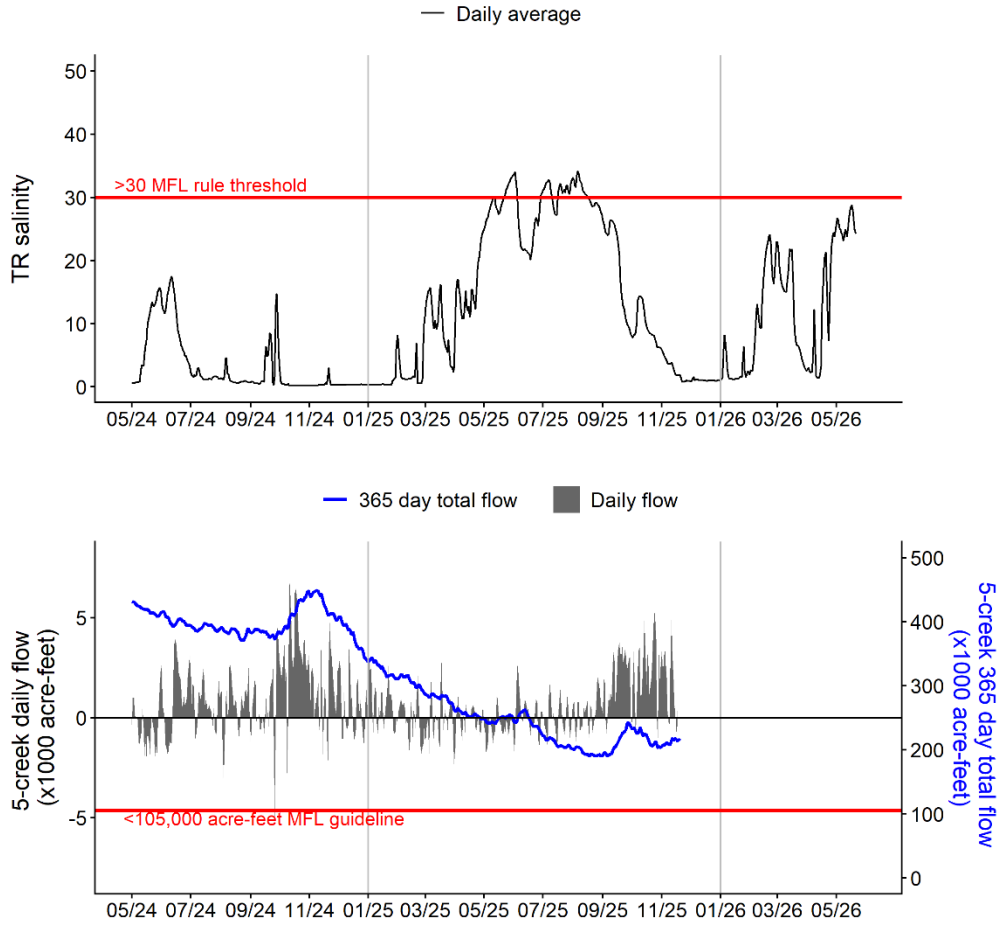


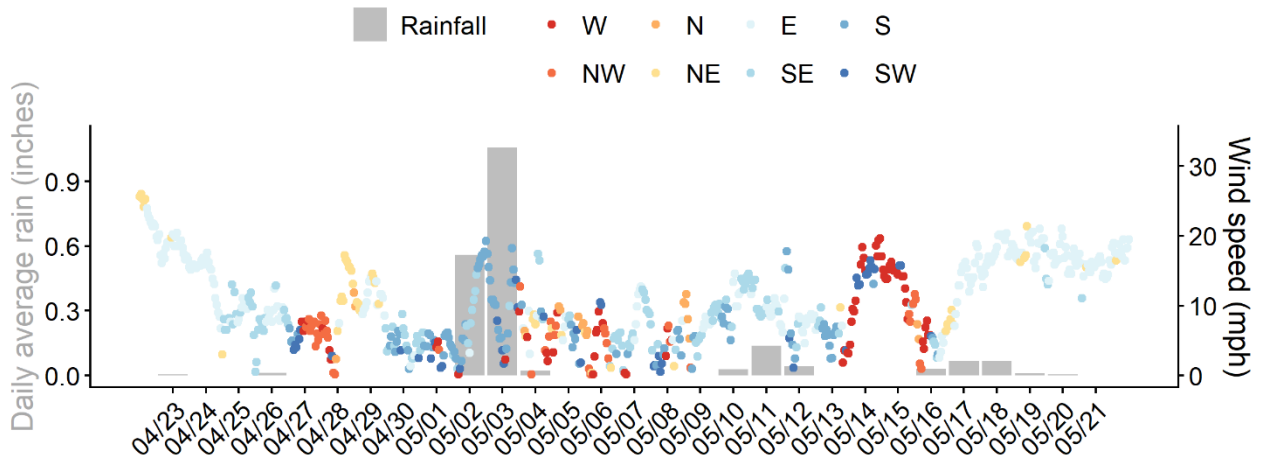
Figure EV-8. Taylor Slough water depth time series for Taylor Slough Bridge (TSB; northern slough) and Craighead Pond (CP; southern slough).



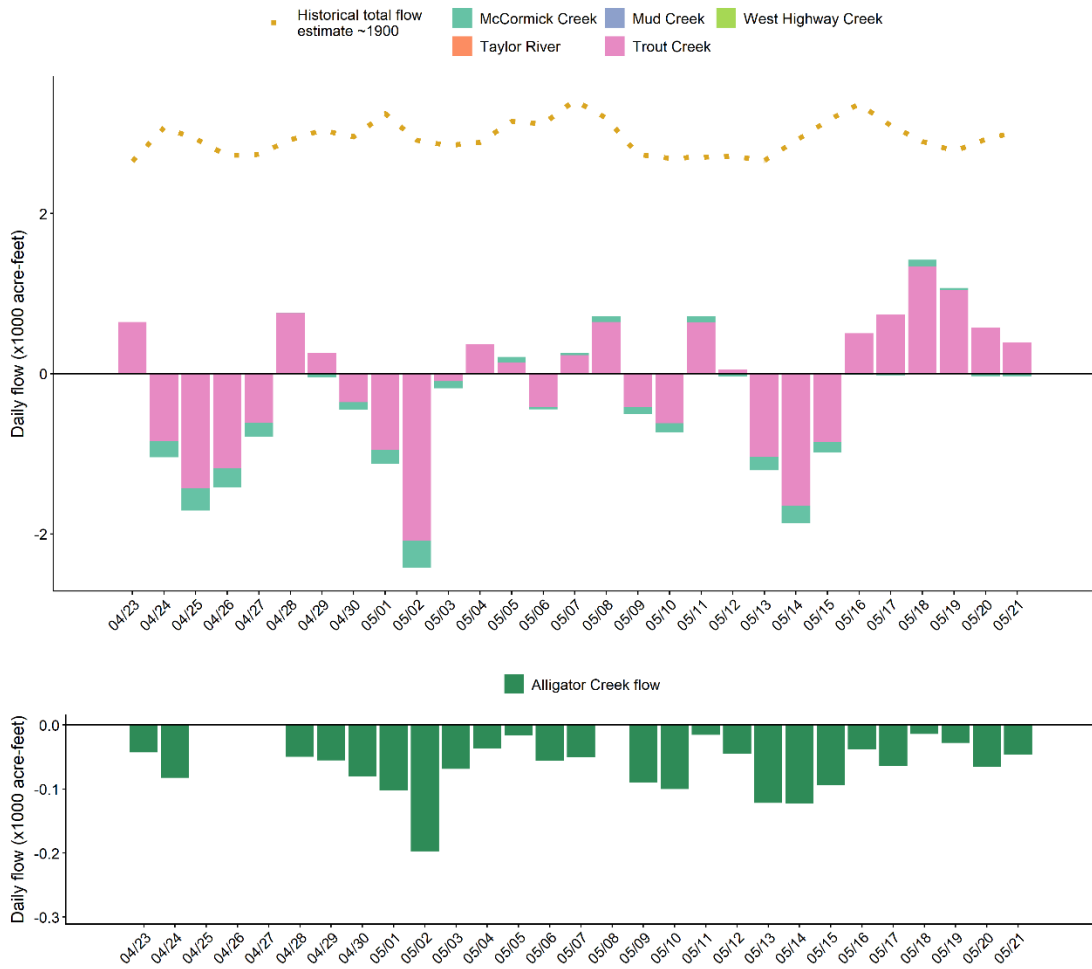
**Figure EV-9.** Eastern (top panel), Central (middle panel) and Western (bottom panel) Florida Bay daily average salinities with WY2001-2016 interquartile (25-75 percentile) ranges (IQR) and estimated historical daily average salinities. The hypersalinity threshold indicates the level at which salinities start to become harmful to seagrass.



**Figure EV-10.** Daily average salinity at Taylor River (TR) tracked for the Florida Bay MFL criteria. The 365-day total creek flow MFL metric is not currently available due to missing creek flow data.



**Figure EV-11.** Daily average rain across Taylor Slough and Florida Bay, along with hourly average wind speed and direction (measured at Long Key) in Florida Bay over the past four weeks.



**Figure EV-12.** Top: daily average creek flow summed between the five major creeks with estimated historical daily flow over the past four weeks (**note:** data from Taylor River, Mud Creek and West Highway Creek are currently unavailable since November 21<sup>st</sup>, 2025). Bottom: Daily average Alligator Creek flow data. N/A indicates missing data.

**Table EV-2.** Weekly water depth changes and water management recommendations

<b>SFWMD Everglades Ecological Recommendations, May 26<sup>th</sup>, 2026 (red is new)</b>			
	Weekly change	Recommendation	Reasons
<b>WCA-1</b>	Stage decreased by 0.13 feet.	A recession of no faster than 0.05 feet per week.	Conserve water, maintain within basin and downstream habitat and wildlife. Maintain maintenance access for vegetation management.
<b>WCA-2A</b>	Stage decreased by 0.13 feet.	A recession of no faster than 0.12 feet per week.	Maintain within basin (north versus south) and downstream habitat and wildlife.
<b>WCA-2B</b>	Stage decreased by 0.20 feet	A recession of no faster than 0.12 feet per week.	Protect within basin and downstream habitat and wildlife.
<b>WCA-3A NE</b>	Stage showed no change	A recession of no faster than 0.05 feet per week.	Conserve water, maintain within basin and downstream habitat and wildlife. Provide suitable depths for aquatic prey and protect against peat soil loss during the dry season.
<b>WCA-3A NW</b>	Stage decreased by 0.06 feet	A recession of no faster than 0.05 feet per week.	
<b>Central WCA-3A S</b>	Stage decreased by 0.10 feet	A recession of no faster than 0.05 feet per week.	Conserve water, maintain within basin and downstream habitat and wildlife. Provide suitable depths for aquatic prey and protect against peat soil loss during the dry season.
<b>Southern WCA-3A S</b>	Stage decreased by 0.19 feet		
<b>WCA-3B</b>	Stage increased by 0.17 feet	A recession of no faster than 0.12 feet per week.	Protect within basin and downstream habitat and wildlife.
<b>ENP-SRS</b>	Stage increased by 0.20 feet.	Make discharges to ENP according to COP protocol, considering up/down stream ecological conditions.	Protect within basin and upstream habitat and wildlife. Buffer downstream salinity conditions.
<b>Taylor Slough</b>	Stage changes ranged from -0.05 feet to +0.02 feet	Move water southward as possible.	When available, provide freshwater to promote water movement and buffer salinity conditions.
<b>FB- Salinity</b>	Salinity changes ranged from -3.1 to +1.0	Move water southward as possible.	When available, provide freshwater to promote water movement and buffer salinity conditions.