



**US Army Corps
of Engineers**
Jacksonville District

News Release

Release No. 0549
For Release: July 13, 2005
P.O. Box 4970 Jacksonville, FL 32232-0019

Nanciann Regalado, Corporate Communications
Phone: 904-232-2236
FAX: 904-232-2237

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Corps, SFWMD Increase Releases from Lake Okeechobee

JACKSONVILLE, FLA. - Water managers for the Army Corps of Engineers and the South Florida Water Management District will increase water releases from Lake Okeechobee starting Thursday at 7 a.m. as a preemptive measure to slow the rate of rise of Lake Okeechobee.

The current Lake elevation is 16.57 feet-NGVD and in Zone C of the WSE (Water Supply and Environmental) regulation schedule. The current elevation is only 0.12 feet from Zone B. A week ago the level was 16.29 feet NGVD. The current rate of rise has already been reduced to 0.03 feet/day.

This preemptive measure of increasing releases is to reverse the rate of rise of Lake Okeechobee due to the current lake elevation being unusually high for this time of year. The releases will be transitioned back to WSE regulation schedule releases when the lake recedes to 16.25 feet NGVD and will maintain a downward trend. These increased releases have been approved by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineer's South Atlantic Division.

The expected discharge from the St. Lucie Lock and Dam (S-80) on the St. Lucie Canal will be less than a maximum of 8,500 and at Moore Haven Lock and Dam (S-77) on the Caloosahatchee River less than a maximum of 9,300 cubic

feet per second. The St. Lucie Canal has historically had a higher discharge capacity due to design than the Caloosahatchee River and at the current unusual condition, it is necessary to utilize this capacity.

Even though releases are being increased above those made this past week, the public will not be impacted nor experience additional high water levels as a result of this action. The spillway operators monitor and adjust the discharges depending on local runoff, downstream conditions and changes in the tidal cycle.

Inflow to the Lake remains high from the Kissimmee, Istokpoga and Fisheating Creek Basins.

The Herbert Hoover Dike, a 140-mile long flood control embankment, surrounds the Lake. The Corps' South Florida Operations Office regularly maintains and inspects the dike as part of our normal monitoring plan. The frequency of inspections has increased as a result of the lake water level rise, although no problems have been found. Data collected during these inspections are evaluated against past performance of the dike and provide information for preventative actions.

Water level data for Lake Okeechobee and the Central and Southern Florida Project can be found on the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Jacksonville District, Water Management and Meteorology Section Homepage at <http://www.saj.usace.army.mil/h2o/>.