



AGENDA MEMORANDUM

*Natural Resources
Department*

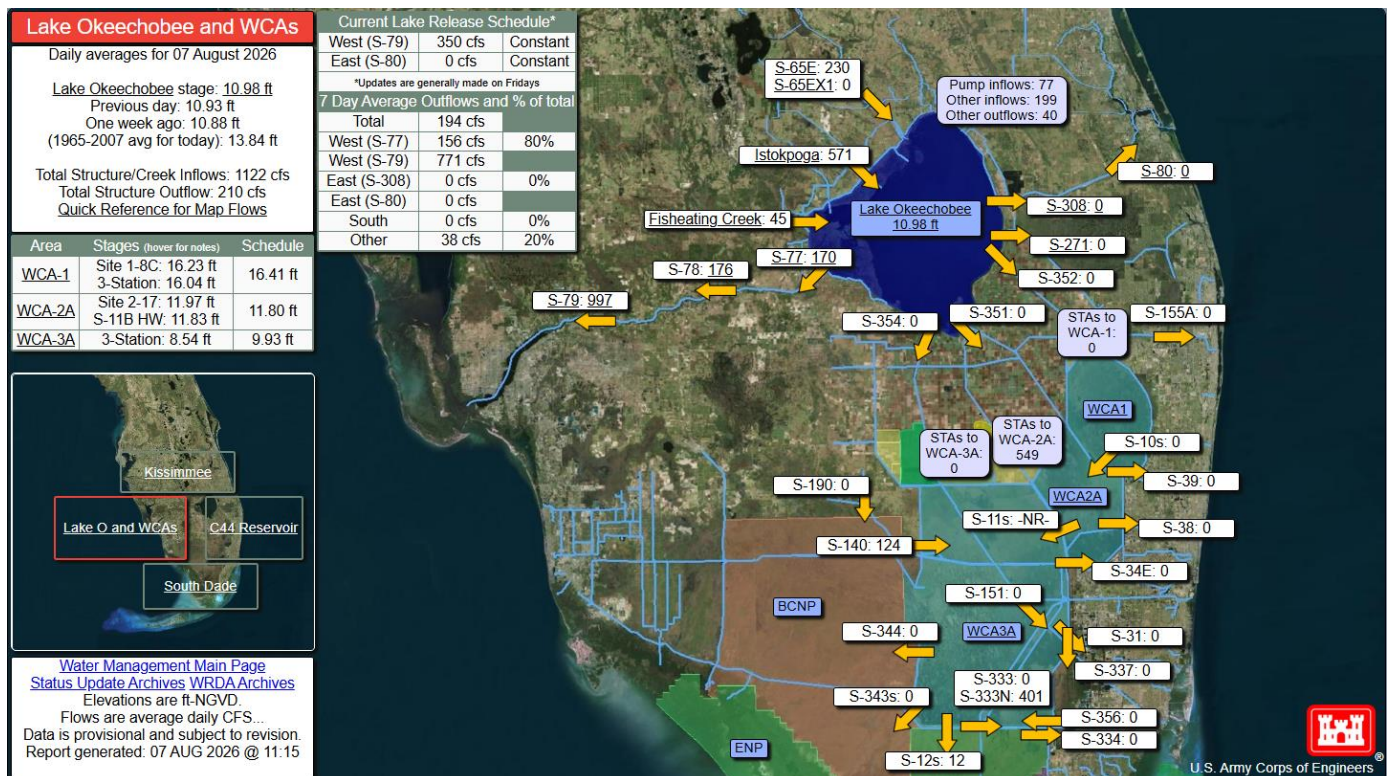
City Council Regular Meeting Date: August 18, 2026

To: City Council
From: Holly Milbrandt, Natural Resources Director
Date: August 7, 2026

SUBJECT: Natural Resources Water Quality Updates

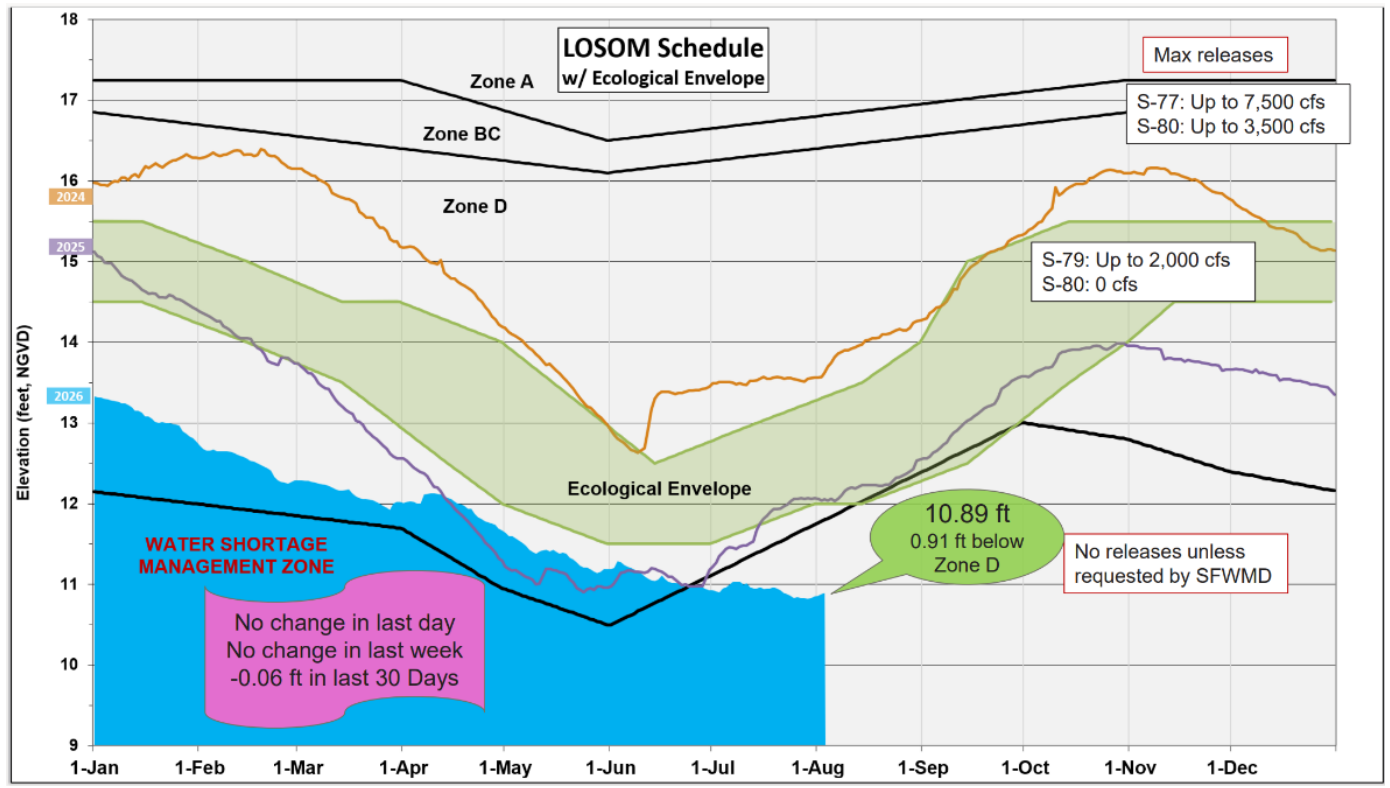
BACKGROUND:

CALOOSA HATCHEE RIVER & ESTUARY CONDITIONS REPORT



Click to view: [August 4, 2026 Caloosahatchee Conditions Report](#)

Below: Lake Okeechobee is currently below Zone D (LOSOM) and in the Water Shortage Management (WSMZ) zone. Under WSMZ, Lake Okeechobee operations are under the jurisdiction of the SFWMD and release guidance is for no releases to the Caloosahatchee. The 50th percentile indicates that the Lake could remain in the WSMZ thru November 2026, when a strong El Nino is expected to bring a wetter than normal dry season.



U.S. ARMY

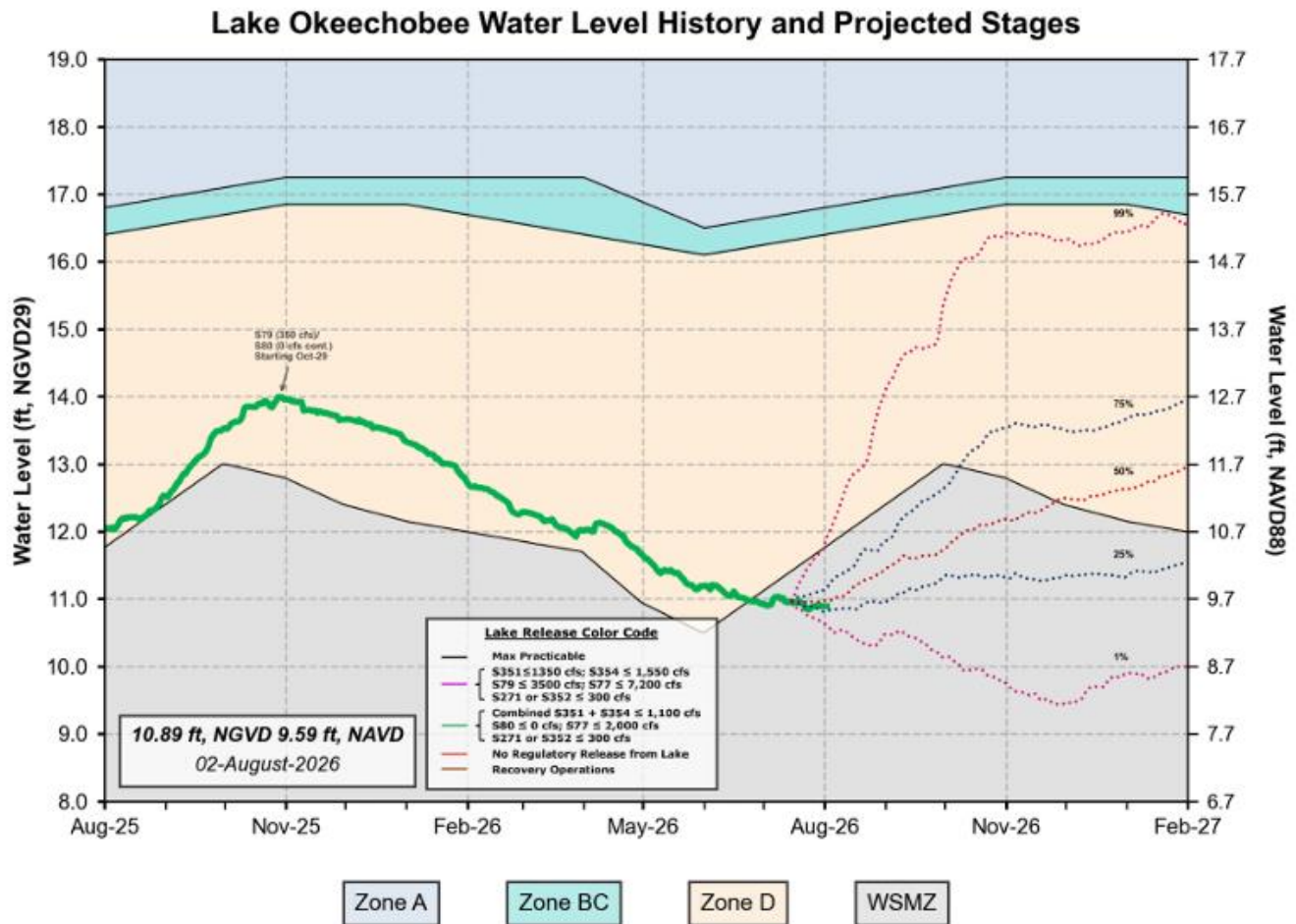
WATER SHORTAGE MANAGEMENT ZONE



- In this zone, no prescribed releases come from the lake. However, the SFWMD may make or request releases to allocate water supply within the basin from SFWMD- or USACE-operated structures, respectively.
- The operational intent of this zone is to manage the water available in the system as needed for water supply.
- The SFWMD manages water-shortage restrictions in the Lake Okeechobee Region in accordance with the Water Shortage Plan (Chapter 40E-21, Florida Administrative Code (F.A.C.) and the Regional Water Shortage Plans in Part III of Chapter 40E-22.)
 - Any potential water restrictions are carefully evaluated and announced by the SFWMD.
 - USACE carries out any water allocations requested by the SFWMD through any USACE operated structures such as S-77 and S-308
- C-43 and C-44 Canals may be operated outside their optimum levels in this zone.
- Navigation along the Okeechobee Waterway and through Route 1 and 2 within the lake is impacted with reduced depths and may be impacted by locking restrictions as requested by SFWMD

We are coordinating with SFWMD on guidance for lake releases.

Sanibel is and shall remain a barrier island sanctuary



CURRENT RAINFALL AND CLIMATE OUTLOOK

For Aug 2026 to date, rainfall within the SFWMD is above normal at 1.93" (125%); however, the SW Coast is below normal 1.65" (90%).

<https://www.sfwmd.gov/weather-radar/rainboard>

For the 2026 wet season to date (May 15, 2026-Aug 6, 2026), the SFWMD has received 16.70" of rain (84% of normal).

<https://www.sfwmd.gov/weather-radar/rainboard>

The NOAA Climate Prediction Center one-month Probability Outlook for August 2026 indicates equal chances of above normal, normal, and below normal rainfall for Florida.

https://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/products/predictions/long_range/lead14/

The three-month outlook for Aug-Sept-Oct 2026 indicates equal chances of above normal, normal, and below normal rainfall for Florida.

https://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/products/predictions/long_range/lead01/off01_prpc.gif

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NOAA ENSO Report (updated on 8/3/2026):

- El Niño is present.
- Equatorial sea surface temperatures (SSTs) are above average across the central and eastern Pacific Ocean.
- El Niño will strengthen through the end of the year, with a 97% chance it will persist through early spring 2027.
- https://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/products/analysis_monitoring/lanina/enso_evolution-status-fcsts-web.pdf

ALGAE BLOOMS

Red Tide: FWC Update for August 7, 2026

<https://myfwc.com/research/redtide/statewide/>

The red tide organism, *Karenia brevis*, was observed at background to low concentrations in 13 samples from Florida's East Coast, and background concentrations in seven samples along Florida's Gulf Coast, offshore of Hillsborough County, and in Manatee, Charlotte and Collier counties.

Fish kills & respiratory irritation suspected of being related to red tide were not reported.

Blue-Green Algae:

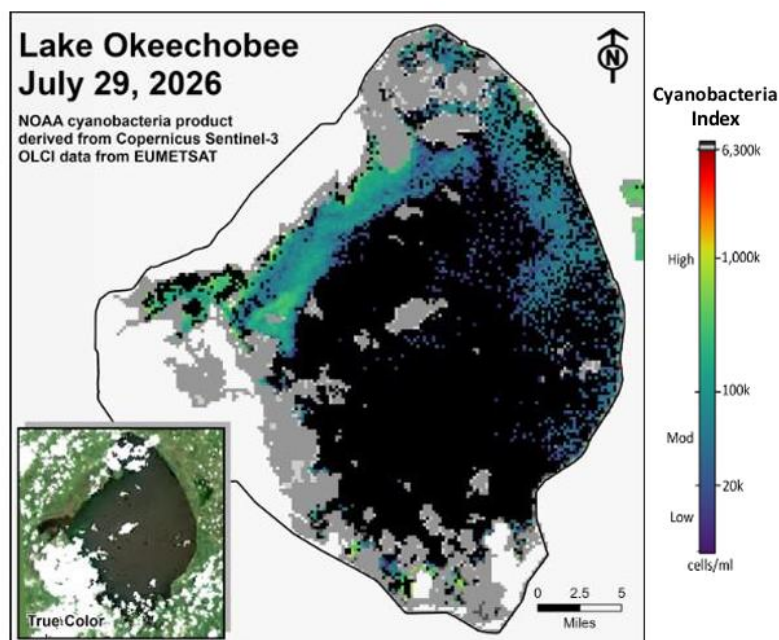
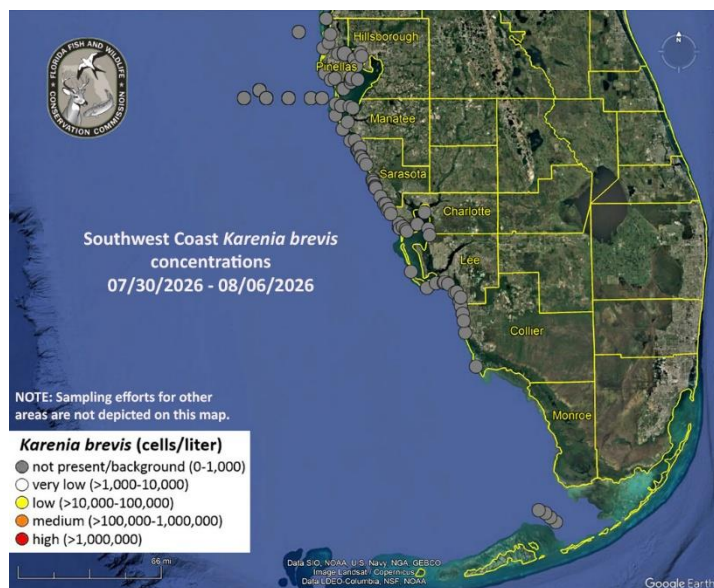
ProtectingFloridaTogether.gov

Blue green algae alerts and cautions are in effect for various locations in Lake Okeechobee.

Red Drift Algae: Locally heavy red drift algae deposits continue to occasionally appear on Sanibel beaches.

Trichodesmium: No reports

Sargassum: No reports



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PAST MEETING HIGHLIGHTS & UPDATES

Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission Meeting

August 5-6, 2026

Panama City Beach, FL

<https://myfwc.com/about/commission/commission-meetings/august-2026/>

CHNEP Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)

August 6, 2026

Port Charlotte, FL

<https://www.chnep.org/technical-advisory-committee>

UPCOMING MEETINGS & EVENTS

SFWMD Governing Board Meeting

August 13, 2026

9:00 AM

West Palm Beach, FL

<https://www.sfwmd.gov/news-events/meetings>

South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Task Force Working Group & Science Coordination Group Meeting

August 25, 2026

9:00 AM – 3:30 PM

West Palm Beach, FL (SFWMD)

<https://www.evergladesrestoration.gov/working-group/aug252026>

- Lake Okeechobee System Operating Manual (LOSOM) Recovery Mode After Action Report (AAR)

CHNEP Management Committee

September 4, 2026

9:00 AM – 1:00 PM

Port Charlotte, FL

<https://www.chnep.org/management-committee>

SFWMD Governing Board Meeting

September 10, 2026

9:00 AM

West Palm Beach, FL

<https://www.sfwmd.gov/news-events/meetings>

FUNDING SOURCE: N/A

RECOMMENDED ACTION: N/A

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