



To COTI Members and Friends,

As a result of the heavy rains in May and the failure to reduce the level of Lake Okeechobee to a minimum during the preceding months, our local estuaries are in danger. The Army Corps of Engineers is now releasing water from Lake Okeechobee at a rate of 4,000 cubic feet per second. And when the additional flows from the Caloosahatchee watershed are included, the flows into the river measured at the Franklin Lock have exceeded 8,000 cfs. Flows of nutrient-laden water of this magnitude risk great harm to the estuaries; the situation is critical.

The City of Sanibel has prepared a "Call to Action" excerpted below. Our community leaders are asking citizens to contact officials of the Corps, the South Florida Water Management District and the Florida Department of Environmental Protection to ask for various actions that could help alleviate the problem.

Please consider sending some emails to help. The proposed messages, for each governmental organization, along with the names and email addresses of the recommended contacts, are shown below.

We need your help. Thanks.

Mike Miller
COTI President

**We Need Your Help
to Address Water Problems
CALL TO ACTION**

Army Corps of Engineers:

Contact(s):

Colonel Jason Kirk, District Commander and District Engineer

Email: Jason.a.kirk@usace.army.mil

Lieutenant Colonel Jennifer Reynolds, Deputy District Commander

Email: Jennifer.A.Reynolds@usace.army.mil

Key Message 1: *Immediately stop all regulatory releases from Lake Okeechobee (S-77) to the Caloosahatchee until flows at the Franklin Lock (S-79) drop below 3,000 cfs.*

Key Message 2: *Immediately send water south. Where is the shared adversity?*

- The west coast stakeholders and the Lake scientists have been requesting higher releases from the Lake to benefit the ecology of the Lake and the Caloosahatchee since January. Water was kept in the lake to assure water supply. Now, the estuaries are penalized by having to take all of the water that was reserved when it is no longer needed.
- The dark-colored freshwater plume extends out into the Gulf of Mexico and along Sanibel's beaches. This is already impacting tourism, the quality of life for our residents, and the local economy.

Key Message 3: *Immediately implement solutions to address inherent INEQUITY of the Adaptive Protocols for Lake Okeechobee and LORS 2008.*

- Directly contributed to the MFL violation in the Caloosahatchee that occurred for 89 days and retained excess water in the Lake.
- Under LORS, in the upper bands of the schedule or when hydrologic conditions are "very wet" flows are measurements at S-77 (at the Lake) and do not take into account watershed runoff versus on the east coast where they are measured at S-80 (the estuary).

South Florida Water Management District:

Contact(s):

Ernie Marks, Executive Director

Email: emarks@sfwmd.gov

Federico Fernandez, Governing Board Chair

Email: fefernan@sfwmd.gov

Jaime Weisinger, Local Governing Board Rep.

Email: jweisinger@sfwmd.gov

Rick Barber, Local Governing Board Rep.

Email: rbarber@sfwmd.gov

Key Message 1: *Immediately send water south. Where is the shared adversity?*

- The west coast stakeholders and the Lake scientists have been requesting higher releases to get water out of the Lake to benefit the ecology of the Lake and the Caloosahatchee since January. Water was

kept in the lake for assurance of water supply. Now, the estuaries are penalized by having to take all of the water that was reserved when it is no longer needed.

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Key Message 2: *Between May 23rd and June 5th the L-8 canal back-flowed 30,007 acre-feet (ac-ft) of water into Lake Okeechobee and the S-310 (near Clewiston) back-flowed 4,239 ac-ft.*

- Why is the L-8 Flow Equalization Basin (FEB) not providing the necessary relief to eliminate the need for back-flowing from the L-8?
- What is the future strategy for reducing or eliminating back-flowing from the S-310?
- How did the A-1 FEB perform during this event? Is it providing additional capacity for moving Lake O water south or is it primarily taking stormwater runoff from the EAA?

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Key Message 4: *Immediately deploy flow monitoring stations within the Caloosahatchee watershed tributaries between the Franklin Lock (S-79) and the Moore Haven Lock (S-77).*

- We need to better understand where the flows within the watershed are coming from. Currently, approximately 50% of the flow that we are receiving at S-79 is coming from the Caloosahatchee watershed. Flow monitoring stations deployed within the Caloosahatchee watershed tributaries will allow us to determine where the water is coming from and what projects are needed to curtail it.

Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP)

Contact:

Drew Bartlett, Deputy Secretary Ecosystems Restoration

Email: drew.bartlett@dep.state.fl.us

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Governor Rick Scott

Contact: rick.scott@eog.myflorida.com

Feb. 2016 dark water plume in San Carlos Bay
Courtesy Captains for Clean Water



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