



**CHARLOTTE HARBOR NATIONAL ESTUARY PROGRAM**

1926 Victoria Avenue, Fort Myers, Florida 33901

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March 19, 2009

Colonel Paul Grosskruger  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Jacksonville District  
701 San Marco Boulevard  
Jacksonville, Florida 32207-8175  
Via email: [paul.l.grosskruger@saj02.usace.army.mil](mailto:paul.l.grosskruger@saj02.usace.army.mil)

Re: Freshwater Flow to the Caloosahatchee Estuary

Dear Col. Grosskruger:

The Charlotte Harbor National Estuary Program (CHNEP) is a partnership program and was established by an amendment to the Clean Water Act (Section 320) to identify, restore and protect estuaries along the coasts of the United States. In 1995, the estuarine system around Charlotte Harbor was recognized as an "estuary of national significance," creating the CHNEP. The program's *Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan* (CCMP) identifies the region's common priority environmental issues and actions needed to solve them.

We have recently learned that South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) Governing Board voted at its March 12, 2009 meeting to recommend ceasing the beneficial base flow discharges from Lake Okeechobee to the Caloosahatchee River and Estuary. **On March 16, 2009, the CHNEP Policy Committee (composed of local elected officials and top state and federal agency heads) voted to recommend that the Army Corps of Engineers continue beneficial flow discharges from Lake Okeechobee to the Caloosahatchee River and Estuary allowable under the Lake Okeechobee Regulation Schedule (LORS) adopted April 8, 2008.** Furthermore, beneficial flow discharges will provide needed capacity in Lake Okeechobee when the rainy season begins, reducing damaging excessive flows.

Further, we concur with the Lee County analysis as follows:

We are approaching the remainder of the dry season and elevations of 12.42' at this time of the year are not uncommon. For instance, this level is only 0.79' less than that of the simulated average for LORS 2008 (at 13.21'). There is a minimal probability (less than 10% chance) of approaching the point at which the Lake will be in Water Shortage Management by June 1<sup>st</sup> and if we were in the Water Shortage Management Band, the goal of operations would be to manage the Lake's water supply in accordance with SFWMD rules and guidance. See attached graphic "Lake Okeechobee Water Level History & Projection". Therefore, a move to discontinue the needed base flows to the Caloosahatchee is managing one portion of

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the Lake's project purposes in anticipation of the absolute worst case scenario. The more likely range of anticipated conditions places the Lake at an elevation of anywhere from 10.5-13.0' by June 1<sup>st</sup>, again within the range of making a base flow release to the Caloosahatchee.

If the CHNEP can be of further assistance, or if you have any questions regarding the above request, please contact me at the CHNEP office a (239) 338-2556 x 235 or via e-mail at [lbeever@swfrpc.org](mailto:lbeever@swfrpc.org).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lisa B. Beever". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Lisa B. Beever, PhD, AICP  
Director

cc: Eric Buermann, Chair, via [ebuermann@sfwmd.gov](mailto:ebuermann@sfwmd.gov)

### Lake Okeechobee Water Level History & Projection

