

Dear Editor:

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers began releasing water from Lake Okeechobee to both coastal estuaries on March 27<sup>th</sup>. Their purpose is for concerns about the health of the Lake. The Lake missed a natural recession but now it would be too difficult to get the Lake low enough even with releases. The total volume released over the 13-day schedule to both estuaries will be 81,120 acre-feet which is equivalent to 0.17 feet off of the Lake. They want to do 3 of these in a row (39 days) for a 0.5 feet drop in Lake level. This will not lower the Lake enough and will kill the adult oysters, larvae oysters and many of the 300 aquatic species on these oyster reefs together with the spring spawn of many fish species in the estuary, including threatened and endangered species.

Our voice should be loud and clear, we don't want any discharges, stop them NOW. Each 13-day pulse release will be dumping billions of gallons of fresh water (7.9 billion out the St. Lucie and 18.4 billion out the Caloosahatchee- that's a full 20-day water supply for the 7.5 million people here in south Florida ! ) while destroying these valuable coastal estuaries. It will not prevent a major discharge in the future either. If we get a tropical storm like Fay in 2008 and the Lake goes up 4 feet, all gates will open in this emergency no matter how long before they were making small pulse releases. Stop the releases NOW. E-mail Colonel Alfred A. Pantano, Jr., District Commander U.S. Army Corps of Engineers at [Alfred.A.Pantano@usace.army.mil](mailto:Alfred.A.Pantano@usace.army.mil) and tell him to stop the releases. Copy the Senators and Congressmen; Bill Nelson, George LeMieux, Tom Rooney and Alcee Hastings because the Corps will listen when they call.

Sincerely,

Mark D. Perry  
Executive Director  
Florida Oceanographic Society  
4-6-10