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Jacksonville District

News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

U.S ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS MAKES RELEASES FROM LAKE OKEECHOBEE

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. – The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers will begin a 10-day Level 1 pulse release from Lake Okeechobee to the Caloosahatchee River and the St. Lucie Canal at 7 a.m. Sunday, Jan. 1, 2006. These releases are part of a transition approach to maintaining a downward trend in the lake's water level.

Pulse releases are designed to mimic nature and provide discharges from the lake to the estuaries via the St. Lucie Canal to the east and the Caloosahatchee River to the west. The goal is to strike a balance between the health of the lake's littoral zone and the health of the estuaries.

In 10 days, a Level 1 pulse release to the Caloosahatchee River can lower the lake 0.07 ft. (average of 1,600 cfs/day); a Level 2 release can lower it by 0.10 ft. (average of 2,300 cfs/day); and a Level 3 by 0.13 ft. (average of 3,000 cfs/day).

In 10 days, a Level 1 pulse release to the St. Lucie Canal can lower the lake 0.03 ft. (average of 730 cfs/day); a Level 2 can lower it by 0.04 ft. (average of 950 cfs/day); and a Level 3 by 0.05 ft. (average of 1,170 cfs/day).

In the future, the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP), will provide storage for much of this water and minimize the need for these types of releases.

Today's lake level is 15.73 feet, which is 0.16 feet higher than the average for this time of the year based on the years from 1992 through 2000. The level is now in Zone D of the WSE (Water Supply/Environment) regulation schedule, the set of federal guidelines used to manage the lake. When in Zone D, water managers generally proceed with releases to maintain decreasing lake levels.

Water level data for Lake Okeechobee and the Central and Southern Florida Project can be found on the water management page on U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Jacksonville District web site at <http://www.saj.usace.army.mil/h2o/>.

For further information, please call the Jacksonville District Corporate Communications Office at 904-232-2236 or (cell) 904-614-4976.

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