

**Update on the Army Corps of Engineers  
Lake Okeechobee Systems Operating Manual (LOSOM)  
- A Stakeholder's Perspective -**

In April 2019, Lt. Colonel Jennifer Reynolds, Deputy Commander, South Florida with the Army Corps of Engineers updated the Council on the issues related to water, water management, and Lake Okeechobee including the review and update of the Lake Okeechobee Regulation Schedule. Scheduled to be completed in 2020 to coincide with the completion of the Herbert Hoover Dike rehabilitation in 2022, the goals of this project is the development of an optimized lake schedule that will reduce releases in the Northern Estuaries and increase the number of times Caloosahatchee minimum flows and levels are met; improve the ecology of Lake Okeechobee; increase water supply for the environment and existing legal users; and ensure that dam safety requirements are met.

Since the Lt. Colonel's presentation, the Project Delivery Team Member meetings have begun. Ms. Phillips and Mr. MacVicar will update the Council on the status of the Lake Okeechobee System Operation Manual (LOSOM), a component of the Central & Southern Florida (C&SF) System Operation Plan process and provide stakeholder perspectives.

**Guests Speakers**

**Luna Phillips, Shareholder, Gunster**



**Luna Phillips** is a Florida Bar board certified Gunster shareholder who practices in the area of environmental, administrative and governmental law. She leads the firm's Environmental practice. Prior to joining the firm, Luna was a senior attorney for the South Florida Water Management District and the Florida Department of Environmental Protection.

Luna practices exclusively in the area of water and natural resources law before state and federal agencies. Her practice includes assisting large scale developers, agricultural entities, public and private companies, as well as individuals in a wide range of water related issues. Her experience ranges from water quality regulations such as TMDLs, to environmental resource permitting, to water use permitting, to sovereign state land and listed species approvals. In addition, Luna actively works on Everglades related restoration issues in south Florida involving complex restoration agreements with governmental entities and water quality and supply regulations.

## Thomas K. MacVicar, P.E., President, MacVicar Consulting



**Thomas K. MacVicar, P.E.** is an expert in the history, design and operation of the Water Management District in South Florida. He has been directly involved in the most significant Water Management Issues in south Florida for the last 40 years, including the changes to water management affecting Everglades National Park, Florida Bay and South Miami-Dade County, the Everglades Water Quality Consent Decree in Federal Court, the Everglades Forever Act by the Florida Legislature and the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan by the U.S. Congress. He spent 16 years on the staff of the South Florida Water Management District and for the last 25 years has been a private consultant primarily

serving clients in agriculture, mining, and land management.

### **Additional Links:**

ACOE LOSOM Information Webpage: <https://www.saj.usace.army.mil/LOSOM/>

ACOE LOSOM Fact Sheet:

<https://usace.contentdm.oclc.org/utis/getfile/collection/p16021coll11/id/3966>

LOSOM Project Delivery Team Meeting – Aug 20, 2019:

<https://usace.contentdm.oclc.org/utis/getfile/collection/p16021coll11/id/4052>



JUNE 2019

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) is re-evaluating Lake Okeechobee operations to coincide with the completion of Herbert Hoover Dike (HHD) rehabilitation in 2022. This study will re-examine the opportunities to balance the project purposes for flood control, water supply, navigation, recreation, and preservation of fish and wildlife resources. The result will be the Lake Okeechobee System Operating Manual (LOSOM). The LOSOM study will also consider the future Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP) infrastructure that will provide additional flexibility for lake operation.

### PROJECT AUTHORITY

Section 1106 of the 2018 Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) directs, “The Secretary shall expedite completion of the Lake Okeechobee regulation schedule to coincide with completion of the Herbert Hoover Dike project, and may include all relevant aspects of the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan described in section 601 of the Water Resources Development Act of 2000 (114 Stat. 2680).”

### STUDY SCOPE

The result of the LOSOM effort will be a new system operating manual (SOM) for Lake Okeechobee and the accompanying National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) documentation. Incremental regulation schedules will be developed to account for future infrastructure construction. Each increment will have NEPA documentation to allow for implementation when the infrastructure is available.

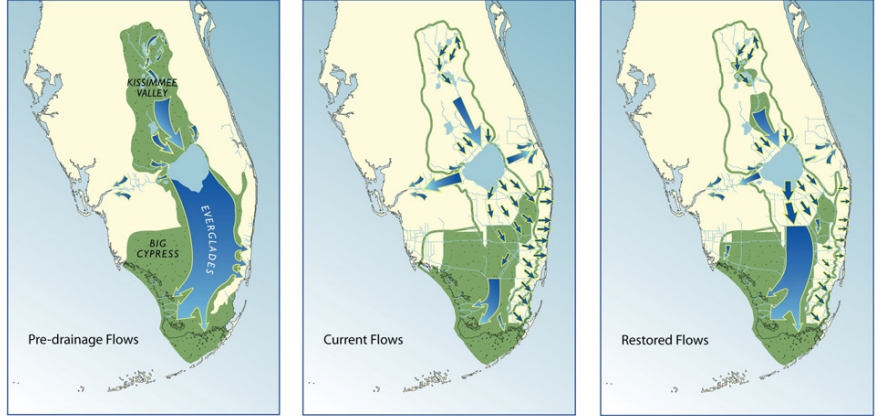
The study will not propose water quality improvement features, nor propose new infrastructure beyond evaluation of already authorized projects.

### STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

The LOSOM stakeholder engagement began with the NEPA scoping meetings that were conducted throughout February 2019. Around Lake Okeechobee and on both coasts, meetings were scheduled in communities influenced by lake operations. Stakeholder feedback will inform priorities and scope of the new operational plan. Beginning in May 2019, planned workshops will allow specific stakeholder input during the alternative development and evaluation process.

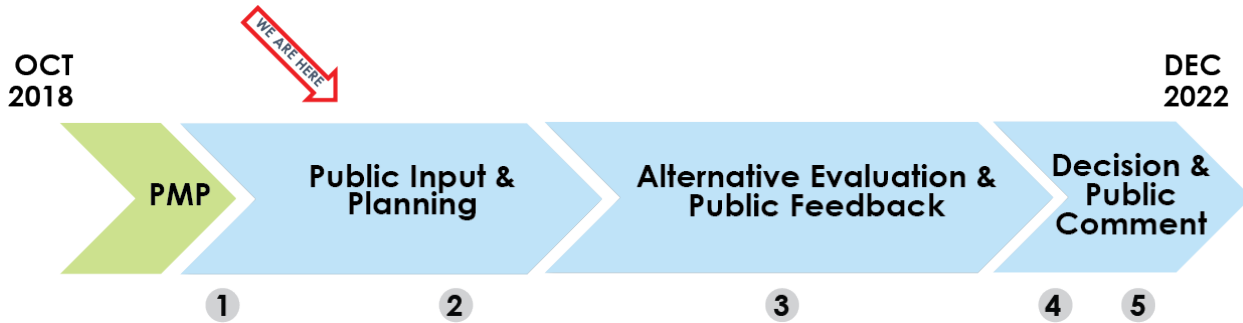


Lake Okeechobee is the heart of the Everglades, supplying the natural system with water that is the life blood for the River of Grass. With the construction of the vast water management system throughout central and south Florida, Lake Okeechobee is also the keystone in the flood protection and water supply system. Regulation of Lake Okeechobee is an integral part of the restoration effort on-going in central and south Florida, working with the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan to better manage the hydrology of the regional system and meet the many-faceted needs of the urban and natural environments.



## KEY MILESTONES

Approved PMP and Review Plan.....	January 2019
Public Scoping/Plan Formulation.....	February – September 2019
Public Workshops/Alternative Evaluation.....	October 2019 – September 2021
Prepare Draft LOSOM/NEPA document .....	October 2021 – January 2022
Public Comment/Draft LOSOM/NEPA document.....	February – March 2022
Prepare Final LOSOM/NEPA document.....	April – May 2022
Final LOSOM NEPA document .....	September 2022
Signed Record of Decision (ROD).....	December 2022



## PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

- |                                     |                       |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Scoping Meetings                 | February 2019         |
| 2. Planning Workshops               | May & August 2019     |
| 3. Alternative Evaluation Workshops | Multiple in 2019–2022 |
| 4. Draft Report — Public Comment    | April–May 2022        |
| 5. Final Report — Public Comment    | September 2022        |

## FOR MORE INFORMATION



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Project website:  
[www.saj.usace.army.mil/LOSOM](http://www.saj.usace.army.mil/LOSOM)

