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Lisa Aley  
Special Projects Section  
USACE Jacksonville District  
Mobile 904-401-0342  
[Lisa.E.Aley@usace.army.mil](mailto:Lisa.E.Aley@usace.army.mil)  
(Submitted via email)

RE: LOSOM- Plan Formulation and Evaluation

Dear Ms. Aley,

The Rivers Coalition is comprised of 105 organizational members representing over 300,000 people in the community. Our Mission is to stop discharges into the St. Lucie River Estuary from Lake Okeechobee and to fight for a safe, healthy and ecologically balanced St. Lucie River Estuary and Indian River Lagoon, and the natural resources that are vital to the economy and quality of life of Martin County and the Treasure Coast. With this mission in mind, we are making the following comments regarding the 2020 Lake Okeechobee System Operating Manual (LOSOM).

Releases from Lake Okeechobee to the St. Lucie Estuary bring large volumes of freshwater causing an imbalance in the estuarine ecology resulting in destruction of critical habitat including oyster reefs, listed seagrasses and nearshore coral reefs. Lake releases to the Estuary also bring massive amounts of pollution including nitrogen, phosphorus and tons of silt and sediment also destructive to the estuary. Lake releases also brings major toxic algae blooms which impact public health and safety for thousands of residents and animals in the community.

We want the USACE to accept the Alternative presented at the LOSOM PDT Meeting of January 25, 2021 known as the **Representative Plan for Sub-Objective 4C-St. Lucie Ecology Plan 4C-1 3307 (22448)** showing the “Part D: Established Allowable Lake Okeechobee Releases to Tide (Estuaries)” as “St. Lucie releases are switched off except for Zone A” and all others are “S80 Up to 0 cfs”. This is the ONLY alternative that is right for the St. Lucie River Estuary which never received releases from Lake Okeechobee prior to the damming of the Lake and the engineering, construction and operation of the S-308, the C-44 Canal and the St. Lucie Lock and Dam (S-80). No releases from the Lake to the St. Lucie Estuary is the only Alternative that should be considered in LOSOM as a Part D for allowable Lake releases to Tide (Estuaries). We ask LOSOM to include Objective 4C-St. Lucie Ecology Plan 4C-1 3307 (22448) for no Lake releases to the St. Lucie Estuary. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Mark Perry, Chair  
Rivers Coalition Board of Directors