

higher damaging discharges. Under the CLA action, there would be slightly less damaging discharges greater than 3,000 cfs (4 less than the base, or no action alternative). The simulation results do not indicate any adverse impact to oysters for the St. Lucie Estuary.

Caloosahatchee River Estuary

The Caloosahatchee Estuary performance was evaluated by counting the number of times during the 36-year (432 months) simulation that the average monthly flows to the estuary exceeded specific flow limits.

Table 4. Caloosahatchee Estuary Mean Monthly Flow Envelope Summary

Inflows to CE at S-79 (C43 basin runoff plus LOK releases) (mean monthly cfs)	BASE (months)	CLA (months)	CLA-BASE (months)
< 300 cfs (less is better)	156	149	-7 (better)
300-2800 cfs (more is better)	207	207	0
2800-4500 cfs (less is better)	37	42	+5 (worse)
> 4500 cfs (less is better)	32	34	+2 (worse)

Source: SFWMD Technical Report (Appendix B)

The results of the CLA simulation for the Caloosahatchee are difficult to evaluate. The modeled differences are small. As compared to the base case, the CLA simulation shifts 7 months from the low flow category to the moderate and high flow categories. This represents a change of 1.6% (7 of 432 months). The additional seven months of discharge (> 2800 cfs) would have adverse effects on seagrasses in the lower more marine end of the estuary. On the other hand, the seven fewer months of flows below 300 cfs would benefit tape grass beds, *Vallisneria americana*, in the upper brackish region of the estuary. These beds are sensitive to high salinity events caused by intrusion of ocean water. These intrusions occur when flows fall below 300 cfs at the Franklin Lock and Dam. The decrease in low flows (<300 cfs) versus the increase in moderate to high flows (> 2800 cfs) could potentially offset each other. Since the modeled differences are small and potentially offsetting, neither benefits or adverse impacts could be determined.

4.2.2 NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE (STATUS QUO)

Tables 3 and 4 compare the mean monthly flows with the no action alternative (base) and with the CLA alternative. A key feature of the WSE schedule is the lower operational zone, labeled Zone D (*reference Figure 7*). This zone allows the operational flexibility to release water to the Everglades Water Conservation Areas (WCAs) and estuaries, to lower lake water levels, which minimizes adverse impacts