

Lake Okeechobee Restoration Initiative, Inc. [LORI ] objective is to change the Lake Okeechobee's management paradigm by adding lake water quality as an equal second endeavor to current agencies activities of water movement, storage and releases. Both are essential.

The major impediment to sending more Lake Okeechobee south into the Everglades is its excessive and increasing total phosphorus [TP] concentration of 160 ppb. Federal criteria for lake's entry into the Everglades National Park [ENP] is 10 ppb TP annual geometric mean. That 16 fold reduction will not be accomplished to full ENP water volume inflow by full buildout of the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan. This plan will increase that flow to ENP to less than natural restoration levels because effective pollution reduction mechanisms are lacking. Also, the plan will reduce but not eliminate lake discharges to the St. Lucie River.

LORI's work efforts are two: public awareness for this essential paradigm shift and its developing scientific/ engineering concepts of mud stabilization and/or removal in the lake and St. Lucie River. LORI will test options for dredge spoil removal that do not simply move spoils' TP from lake to land within the basin. LORI's work will test alternative repurposes for dredge spoil such as non-soluble formulations.

Less mud in Lake Okeechobee and St. Lucie River means a lower TP and suspended mud pollutant levels so that more water will flow south into the Everglades, cleaner critical delivery volumes to the Caloosahatchee River, possible elimination of lake releases to the St. Lucie River except ICW boat traffic and opportunity for submergent aquatic plants to repopulate these currently mud impacted habitats.