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DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES

THE CAPITOL

TALLAHASSEE, FLORIDA

July 14, 1959

Handwritten initials: JWM

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Memorandum to: The State Board of Conservation

From: John W. Warefield

We have recently completed a tour of inspection of waterways throughout central Florida, and have found that due to excessive rainfall during April, May, and June, the water levels in all of the lakes and waterways in the central peninsula are at previous heights. Rainfall during the first six months of this year exceeded the average for this period of the year by about 15 inches at most stations. In most cases, this has not been the result of extremely heavy downpours, but of numerous and extensive showers. The result of the excessive rainfall is that all lakes and streams in central Florida are at or near a state of flood. So far, damage has been restricted to waterfront properties in most areas, although several blocks of houses in Tampa and a few isolated homes near Brooksville have been flooded in recent weeks.

It is significant that we are now approaching what is normally the wettest part of the year and the period in which tropical disturbances are sure likely to occur. Any tropical disturbance resulting in heavy rainfall over a wide area will almost surely produce a disastrous flood under the condition existing at the present time. We recommend that disaster relief agencies be alerted and that precautionary measures be taken to safeguard life and property in low-lying areas. It would be advisable to shift stock and other easily moved property from areas subject to flooding to higher ground until dry weather permits the removal of surplus water. Low lying agricultural lands on which the winter crops have been removed might well be purposely flooded to prevent breaching of protective dikes. Weather reports of major tropical disturbances usually give ample warning for the evacuation of danger areas, but persons with homes in low areas should be alert to the possibility of flooding from less intense disturbances which may cause heavy rainfall in limited areas.

Long range weather forecasts for the month of July indicate continued heavy rainfall during the month and there is every indication that the present high water conditions will continue at least until early fall.

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