



MEMORANDUM

TO: SLDMWA Board of Directors, Alternates

FROM: John Brodie, Water Resources Programs Manager
Chris Linneman, Regional Drainage Coordinator
Orvil McKinnis, Westside Watershed Coalition Coordinator

DATE: May 16, 2024

RE: Activity Agreements – Staff Report for April, 2024

This memorandum serves as the Staff Report for April 2024 regarding specified¹ Water Authority activities not separately addressed on the Board meeting agenda.

1. Integrated Regional Water Management (IRWM) Activity Summary

General Westside-San Joaquin Integrated Regional Water Management Plan (IRWMP)

Only two projects remain to be completed for the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) Proposition 1 Round 1 IRWM Implementation Grant for the Westside San Joaquin IRWM Region. Both the Broadview Aquifer Storage and Recovery Project sponsored by Westlands Water District and Orestimba Creek Recharge and Recovery Project sponsored by the Central California Irrigation District have expended all grant funds. However, some construction activity remains for both projects before DWR will consider the projects “complete.”

Staff continues its work with Self Help Enterprises (SHE) to update Community Water Needs Assessments for disadvantaged communities (DACs) in the Westside San Joaquin IRWM Region. The updated assessments will be used to identify and prioritize the most critical drinking water needs for DACs in the region, especially during drought years. SHE has been documenting past efforts to assist DACs by AA members and cataloguing emerging projects.

2. Sustainable Groundwater Management Activity (SGMA) Activity Summary

General SGMA Activities

Several draft sections of revised and combined single Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) for the Delta-Mendota Subbasin have been posted to the Subbasin’s SGMA website (www.deltamendota.org) for public review and comment. Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSAs) agreed to post these sections early to give the public more time to review and comment

¹ For the sake of completeness, this includes those Activity Agreements that have been approved by the Board of Directors, but not yet signed by all interested members and/or participants (i.e., the Los Vaqueros Expansion Project Activity Agreement, the Exchange Contractors 2019-2023 Transfer Program Activity Agreement, and the Westside-San Joaquin Integrated Regional Water Management Activity Agreement).

on sections that build the foundation for the single GSP. The goal is to have the full draft document available for public review and comment in June. A webinar explaining SGMA, the public comment process, and how to submit comments was held May 10. It was recorded and the recording is available via link on the website.

May is the beginning of another SGMA monitoring regimen. GSAs this month begin to monitor for water quality constituents of concern. They have until the end of August to complete water quality sampling.

Coordinated Activities

Staff presented at the second Water Leadership Institute session held in April, giving the cohort a broad overview of SGMA legislation and compliance activities in the Subbasin. Staff is also scheduled to present at the third session this month. The fourth and final day will include graduation in June.

A full draft of a single GSP for the Subbasin is on schedule for public release for comments by June. Based on comments, the draft will be revised and is expected to be adopted by the Coordination Committee in July. The single GSP is being developed in response to the “inadequate” determination DWR gave to the amended original six plans submitted by the Subbasin last summer. By statute, the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) will decide whether the new single GSP addresses the deficiencies or can place the subbasin on probation for up to one year to continue to address those deficiencies. GSA representatives are seeking to avoid probation by submitting a revised GSP with enough time for staff to review prior to a possible probationary hearing during the first quarter of 2025.

GSA and Coordination Committee representatives have been successful in bringing members of the Board to the Subbasin for a first-hand look at projects and management actions being implemented as part of SGMA. SWRCB Chair Joaquin Esquivel toured Subbasin areas including the City of Patterson, Del Puerto Water District, Patterson Irrigation District, and West Stanislaus Irrigation District on April 23, 2024.

3. Drainage Activity Summary

Grassland Basin Drainage Management Steering Committee Activity Summary

The Grassland Bypass Channel gates were opened on January 3 as a result of storm events and remained open through February 28, when they were closed. Selenium water quality levels exceeded the water quality objective in Mud Slough from February 20 to March 2. Regional Water Quality Control Board staff is aware of the exceedances as well as activities to prevent future exceedances.

GBP Activities

- General administration: Review and approve consultant billing. Field review of drainage conditions and correspondence with SJRIP manager. The 2023 Annual Monitoring Report was submitted this month in accordance with the 2019 Order. This report covers the monitoring data for the 2023 calendar year.

- Mud Slough Restoration Project: The intent of this project is to restore Mud Slough in accordance with the 2010 MOU between the Authority and California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW). The Water Authority adopted the CEQA for the project in December 2021, which was not challenged. GBP management staff had a meeting with CDFW on August 15th during which CDFW committed to providing a revised MOU that would outline the specific tasks required to complete restoration of Mud Slough. A letter from CDFW regarding the MOU status was received the last week of January and we have requested a follow up meeting with CDFW to discuss alternatives.
- Compliance Monitoring: Monitoring in compliance with the 2019 revised WDRs and 2019 Use Agreement is a continuous and daily effort. Regular flow, water quality and toxicity monitoring are required at eight locations at a frequency that varies from monthly to daily. Special monitoring for fish and invertebrate selenium levels has occurred annually, along with efforts to collect particulate samples for selenium analysis.
- Grassland Drainage Area Coalition: Work continues to provide coverage for farmers within the Grassland Drainage Area for the Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program. Farm evaluation surveys will be sent out to farmers in 2024.
- Proposition 84 Grant: Work is ongoing to support the Prop 84 Grant administered by Panoche Drainage District for improvements to the San Joaquin River Improvement Project. The Short-Term Storage Basins construction is in progress and should be completed within the next 4 months. Other projects are in design phase.

San Joaquin Valley Drainage Authority Activity Summary

- Participated in conference calls with the Regional Board to respond to questions on surface water quality management plans and required follow up. Working with the Regional Board to formulate a more efficient focused outreach program to address sediment and surface water quality impacts to receiving waters.
- Westside San Joaquin River Watershed Coalition: Work continues to provide coverage under the Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program for farmers within the Westside San Joaquin River Watershed Coalition. The work includes managing the monitoring program, assisting farmers with the necessary reporting to comply with the program and preparing reports for the Regional Board. Analyze pyrethroid Focused Outreach data for follow up MPIRs. Respond to Regional Board's comments of annual monitoring report.
- Groundwater Protection Formula, Values and Targets: Coalitions have developed a methodology to establish nitrogen loading Values and Targets as required by the WDRs. Values and Targets have been submitted to the Regional Board and collaborating with the other Coalitions for responses to comments from the Regional Board.
- Management Practices Effectiveness Program: Attend conference call meetings of the MPEP group. Developing work schedules to implement nitrogen control measures for farmer member compliance. Working with other Coalitions to finalize Acceptable Ranges 6-Year report to be presented to Regional Board for public comments on May 1, 2024.
- Central Valley Groundwater Monitoring Collaborative: Attend conference call meetings to give direction to program. Work with other coalitions and staff to coordinate and collaborate with SGMA efforts regarding groundwater quality monitoring and reporting.

- Management Zones: Work continued to develop plan for compliance within the Westside Coalition. Attend meetings with other Management Zone dischargers to begin formation of official Management Zone. Continue to negotiate with Dairy group to determine percentage of cost share. Attend Central Valley Salinity Coalition meetings to inform SJVDA regarding Management Zone formation.
- Salt Control Program: Phase I of the Salt Control Program involves the development of a Prioritization and Optimization Study (P&O Study). Collaborate with Consultants who are looking to establish the Delta Mendota subwatershed as an Archetype to develop salt targets for the other areas of the P&O Study. This work is being supported through the SJVDA budget.
- Prop 84 Real Time Program Grant: Work continues on maintaining the stations, gathering monitoring data, and computer modeling to determine and manage salt discharges to the San Joaquin River. The project has been extended to December of 2024 and the remaining funds will be used for the purchase of spare monitoring equipment.