



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: November 9, 2023

RE: Activity Agreements – Staff Report for October 2023

This memorandum serves as the Staff Report for October 2023 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)

Work is progressing on the two remaining projects funded by the California Department of Water Resources Proposition 1 Round 1 IRWM Implementation grant. The Orestimba Creek Recharge and Recovery Project is constructing approximately 60 acres of recharge ponds and associated infrastructure. The project is expected to add 15,000 acre-feet/year in water supply to the Westside San Joaquin IRWM Region. The project is sponsored by the Central California Irrigation District. The Broadview Aquifer Storage and Recovery Project sponsored by Westlands Water District will add approximately 1,200 acre-feet/year to the region's lower aquifer. The project is expected to improve groundwater management, drought resiliency, and data monitoring. Both projects are now scheduled for completion in 2024.

Staff continues to reach out to water agencies in the West Side San Joaquin IRWM Region for information on existing efforts to assist Disadvantaged Communities (DACs) in the region with drinking water concerns. It's part of a larger collaborative project with the non-profit Self-Help Enterprises to update water needs assessments for those communities. The information gathered from local water agencies will be used to inform and guide Self Help's work.

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).

2. Sustainable Groundwater Management Activity (SGMA) Activity Summary

General SGMA Activities

Progress continues on projects funded by the SGMA Round 1 Implementation Grant. All six Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) groups received funding for projects, efforts to fill data gaps, and public outreach about SGMA compliance activities. A total of \$7.6 million dollars was awarded to the Subbasin. More than \$4 million of that total will go to groundwater enhancement and water supply reliability projects.

Data collection and analysis is underway for the Delta-Mendota Subbasin's annual report of SGMA Implementation activities. The reports are required to be submitted to DWR, even for subbasins with groundwater sustainability plans (GSPs) deemed "inadequate" by DWR and now under the purview of the State Water Resources Control Board.

Coordinated Activities

Members of groundwater sustainability agencies (GSAs) are reviewing the first two chapters of a consolidated single GSP for the Delta-Mendota Subbasin. DWR ruled the Subbasin's previously submitted six GSPs as "inadequate" in March, triggering State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) oversight of the GSP amendment process. Coordination Committee members and technical consultants are meeting with SWRCB staff on a regular basis in an attempt to receive guidance on achieving approval for a revised single GSP.

Coordination Committee members are taking SWRCB Board members and staff on tours of the Subbasin to show them groundwater management activities, some of which pre-date SGMA legislation. The goal of the tours is to give both Board members and staff the opportunity to see the coordination, collaboration, and cooperation among the Subbasin's 23 GSAs. SWRCB members will determine whether the GSP revisions now underway are sufficient to address the deficiencies identified by DWR. The revisions address the three deficiencies identified by DWR, update the representative monitoring network, and use recent data to inform the Subbasin's water budget.

3. Drainage Activity Summary

Grassland Basin Drainage Management Steering Committee Activity Summary

The Grassland Bypass Channel gates were closed on March 24th, ending the discharge of storm-induced drainage from the Grassland Drainage Area. Remaining drainage flows have been managed internally by the San Joaquin River Improvement Project since that time. No significant storms are forecasted and it is not anticipated the gates will be opened again in the near future.

GBP Activities

- **General administration:** Review and approve consultant billing. Field review of drainage conditions and correspondence with SJRIP manager.
- **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 second meeting between Newman Land Co. (NLC) and CDFW was held on September 26 to discuss potential alternatives to the proposed project.

- Grassland Water District Monitoring Wells: A total of 10 observation wells are planned to be installed to monitor groundwater levels and quality within the San Joaquin River Improvement Project and in a portion of Grassland Water District to the north. All 10 observation wells have been installed, with the last well completed in June. The GBD are working on developing a monitoring plan to measure groundwater levels and quality.
- 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 is 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. Reporting forms were sent to farmer members in late 2022 for reporting 2022 nitrogen application.
- 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 but will take some time to complete. Other projects are in design phase.
- 13267 Order Report Part 2: The Authority received a 13267 Order from the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Board) in February 2020. This order required the Authority to submit two reports on water quality and fish tissue data, the first of which was submitted in July of 2021. The second and final report was submitted on October 31.

San Joaquin Valley Drainage Authority Activity Summary

- Participated in conference calls with the Regional Board to respond to their 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. Coalition staff submitted membership roll to the Regional Board on July 31, 2023. Sent out follow-up MPIR forms to growers for 2020 Nitrogen outliers and 2022 pyrethroid exceedances. Prep for upcoming pyrethroid Focused Outreach meeting for the Salt Slough watershed.
- Groundwater Protection Formula, Values and Targets: Coalitions have developed a methodology to establish nitrogen loading Values and Targets as required by the WDRs.

Approval of the targets was granted June 30,2023 with two conditions that must be met by April 2024 and July 2024 respectively. Conduct strategy meetings on methods to inform growers about the program and their needed cooperation to meet the watershed's targets.

- Management Practices Effectiveness Program: Attend conference call meetings of the MPEP group. Developing work schedules to implement nitrogen control measures for farmer member compliance. Work with other Coalitions to produce the required final report.
- Central Valley Groundwater Monitoring Collaborative: Attend conference call meetings to give direction to program. Work with other coalitions and staff to develop an updated groundwater monitoring CQAP.
- Management Zones: Work continued to develop plan for compliance within the Westside Coalition. Attend Valley Water Collaborative budget committee meetings to establish SJVDA FY25 Management Zone budget. Prepare the contracts and agreements that will be used going forward. Contact non-ag Permittees to inform them of the program. Attend Central Valley Salinity Coalition meetings to inform SJVDA 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). Consultants are compiling data in order to characterize current salinity conditions of both surface and groundwater across the Central Valley. 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. As of October 2023, grant funds billed is \$669,944 with \$185,056 remaining. The project has been extended to December of this year and the remaining funds will be used for the purchase of spare monitoring equipment.