



MEMORANDUM

TO: SLDMWA Board of Directors, Alternates

FROM: John Brodie, Water Resource Programs Manager
Joe McGahan, Regional Drainage/Westside Watershed Coalition Coordinator

DATE: December 9, 2021

RE: Activity Agreements – Staff Report for November 2021

This memorandum serves as the Staff Report for November 2021 regarding specified¹ Water Authority activities not separately addressed on the Board meeting agenda.

1. Integrated Regional Water Management (IRWM) Activity Summary

San Joaquin River Funding Area (SJRFA)

An amended Special Project Agreement (SPA) and corresponding Task Order (TO) for administration of the Proposition 1 Round 1 IRWM Implementation grant were executed for both the SJRFA and Tulare-Kern Funding Area (TKFA) projects in the Westside-San Joaquin (WSJ) IRWM Region. The amendments were needed to cover the costs of un-scoped activities requested by SPA participants, plus the unanticipated completion this fiscal year for one project. Administered through SLDMWA, the grant includes funding for four projects within the SJRFA and one project within the TKFA.

Tulare-Kern Funding Area (TKFA)

The City of Huron Groundwater Supply Well and Recharge Project, supported by funding through the Proposition 1 Round 1 IRWM Implementation grant, will be completed before the end of this fiscal year. The supply well will reduce the need for Huron, a designated disadvantaged community (DAC), to purchase water. It will help meet more than 50% of the community's drinking water demands.

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

The WSJ IRWM Region's Technical Advisory Committee is ranking projects for inclusion in the Proposition 1 Round 2 IRWM Grant Funding. DWR anticipates a March 2022 deadline for submission of applications. A full IRWM Activity Agreement member meeting will be held later this month to review and approve the TAC rankings and discuss upcoming IRWM activities.

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).

Staff has begun work on an annual report for the WSJ IRWM Region. The report will highlight activities during the 2021 water year.

2. Sustainable Groundwater Management Activity (SGMA) Activity Summary

Northern and Central Delta-Mendota Regions

The Northern and Central Management Committees held their regular joint meeting in mid-November. The Committees are in the process of prioritizing activities and projects for an anticipated \$7.6 million of SGMA Round 1 Implementation funding targeted for critically overdrafted subbasins, including the Delta-Mendota Subbasin.

The Central Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA) met in mid-November to adopt a Conflict of Interest code.

General SGMA Activities

The Subbasin's GSP Group representatives are considering projects and activities to submit for the upcoming SGMA Round 1 Implementation funding opportunity. The funds are from SB 170 and will be administered by DWR. Allowable grant funded activities include projects and preparing responses to DWR comments on the Subbasin's GSPs. DWR has tentatively said it will release comments on all critically overdrafted subbasins by mid-December, and anticipates a January 31, 2022 deadline for applications for the SGMA Round 1 Implementation funding. The Subbasin will submit a single application for this opportunity.

The Subbasin received approval for an extension of Facilitation Support Services (FSS) through DWR for Interbasin Coordination with the Chowchilla, Madera, and Merced subbasins. Once completed, the latest amendment will extend the agreement to June 30, 2022. As new GSPs are submitted, the potential exists for Interbasin Coordination with other neighboring subbasins including Tracy, Turlock, and East Stanislaus.

Work is in the final stages for the Subbasin's Proposition 68 Sustainable Groundwater Management (SGM) grant. Both a well census and inventory project and a Subbasin-wide subsidence characterization and project feasibility study will be completed by the end of the fiscal year. The consultant conducting the Delta-Mendota Subbasin Subsidence Characterization and Project Feasibility Study will hold the second of a possible three presentations to a special Technical Working Group meeting in January. Committee members provided input on determinations from the preliminary data analysis.

The Coordination Committee has scheduled a half-day workshop on January 6, 2022 to discuss pending items including comments from DWR on the Subbasin's GSPs. DWR has said it plans to release initial assessments of all critically overdrafted subbasins by mid-December. These assessments will allow subbasins to work with DWR prior to administrative determinations that will be issued January 31, 2022 and trigger a six-month response deadline from any GSPs deemed "inadequate."

All GSAs and member agencies are working with staff to upload Fall water level monitoring results to DWR's SGMA Portal before the January 1, 2022 deadline. Staff is also working with GSAs to

complete volumetric reporting information as part of the Subbasin's Annual Report information. The SGMA Annual Report is due April 1, 2022.

Staff participated in virtual conferences and webinars including: California-European Union-Australia workshop on SGMA Implementation; the IRWM Summit on Climate Science and Resilience; the Department of Conservation's Land Repurposing Program overview; and, the fourth in a series of Webinars by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers on Social Justice in Flood Risk Management.

3. Drainage Activity Summary

Grassland Basin Drainage Management Steering Committee Activity Summary

Mud Slough Restoration Project: The project is to restore Mud Slough (north) flows to the Newman Lake north of Highway 140 and to remove structures within the state's China Island Refuge. The CEQA Initial Study was circulated for public comment on June, 30, 2021 and comments were due on July 30, 2021. Comments were received from the State Water Resources Control Board Division of Water Rights, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife and a group of 18 parties comprised of the Planning and Conservation League and others. Consultants have reviewed the comments. The Grassland Basin Drainers Steering Committee reviewed the comments and responses on November 19, 2021 and, recommended adoption of the Final Mitigated Negative Declaration and Project Approval by the Authority at the December 9, 2021 meeting.

Threat to Fish Report: The GBD were required to submit a report on July 31, 2021 under Section 13267 of the California Water Code that would include all data available on fish tissue sampling since the beginning of the Grassland Bypass Project since 1996. Comments were received by the Regional Board and responses are being prepared.

Other ongoing activities: Continue to review GBD invoices, prepare annual monitoring reports, support for ongoing litigation and data management and management of the Third Party Group for the Grassland Drainage Area Coalition to implement the Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program. Work includes participation in activities for groundwater protection values. Additionally, the program updated the Regional Board on the status of the GBP at the December 9, 2021 Board workshop and is working with the subcommittee overseeing expenditure of the supplemental mitigation fund.

San Joaquin Valley Drainage Authority Activity Summary

Continue management of the Westside San Joaquin River Watershed Coalition to comply with the Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program. Follow up calls and emails were answered to assist farmers in completing their paperwork requirements. Manage field monitoring program and provide update of the management plan to the Regional Board. Review invoices from consultants and prepare letters to admin staff. Continue to update membership database. Organize and make presentation to outreach meetings for surface and groundwater management plan. Assist grower members in completing the required reporting forms and self-certification requirements. Enter farmer evaluation and nitrogen summary reports into coalition database.

Memo to SLDMWA Board of Directors

December 9, 2021

Page 4 of 4

Participate in group conference calls regarding surface and groundwater management plans, groundwater protection formulas and the CVSalts prioritization and optimization studies. Participate in Central Valley Groundwater Monitoring Collaborative conference calls. Participate in Regional Board quarterly conference calls.

Begin planning for development of Management Zone implementation. Manage ongoing monitoring. Revise the QAPP for the monitoring program.

Management continued for the Prop 84 Real Time Management Program Grant for compliance with the San Joaquin River Salt and Boron TMDL. Follow up and direct field work in northerly stations. Organize and lead September SJVDA Board meeting.