



MEMORANDUM

TO: SLDMWA Board of Directors, Alternates

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

DATE: October 5, 2023

RE: Activity Agreements – Staff Report for September, 2023

This memorandum serves as the Staff Report for September 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)

Staff is working with water agencies in the West Side San Joaquin IRWM Region to get a better understanding of existing efforts to assist Disadvantaged Communities (DACs) in the region with drinking water concerns. It's part of a larger project that will be a collaboration with the non-profit Self Help Enterprises to update water needs assessments for those communities. A volunteer project steering committee has been formed and will meet with staff from the Authority and Self-Help Enterprises to guide the work.

The California Department of Water Resources granted an extension request for the Proposition 1, Round 1 IRWM Implementation grant. The Orestimba Creek Recharge and Recovery project, sponsored by the Central California Irrigation District, and the Broadview Aquifer Recharge and Recovery Project, sponsored by Westlands Water District, each experienced delays in getting to final construction activities. The agreement end date was extended to December 31, 2024.

2. Sustainable Groundwater Management Activity (SGMA) Activity Summary

General SGMA Activities

Fall groundwater level monitoring is underway. GSAs have until the end of October to collect groundwater level data. Water quality data collected this summer has been submitted to DWR as required by the regulation.

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).

Work continues throughout the Subbasin on various projects funded by the SGMA Round 1 Implementation Grant. All six Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) groups received funding for a variety of groundwater enhancement projects, efforts to fill data gaps, and public outreach about SGMA compliance activities. The Subbasin received a total of \$7.6 million dollars, more than half of that total is earmarked for groundwater enhancement projects.

Coordinated Activities

GSA's continue efforts to consolidate the GSPs into one as the Subbasin's strategy to achieve "approved" status under SGMA. 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. SWRCB staff had a favorable reaction to the Subbasin's intention to develop a single GSP. Coordination Committee members and technical consultants are meeting with SWRCB staff on a regular basis in an attempt to receive guidance on a proposed document.

GSPs for six of the critically over-drafted Subbasins in the San Joaquin Valley must be amended to SWRCB standards. The Delta-Mendota Subbasin faces a potential September 2024 probationary hearing before the SWRCB, according to a draft schedule released in June. Based on the draft schedule, Delta-Mendota would be the fifth subbasin to face a possible probationary hearing. GSA's intend to submit the single GSP to the SWRCB in July 2024 to possibly avoid the scheduled probationary hearing.

Under the process as outlined at a June SWRCB meeting, if a basin is placed on probation, all well owners must register wells with the state and report extractions based on meters that will be required. Extractions must be reported annually, and well owners (excepting *de minimus* domestic wells) will pay fees to the SWRCB based on extractions. Subbasins will have one year from being placed on probation to correct GSPs, at which time the SWRCB may impose its own management actions.

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.

- 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, is in progress and will be submitted this fall.

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 March 2023, grant funds billed is \$595,942 with \$259,058 remaining. The project has been extended to December of this year.