



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: December 7, 2023

RE: Activity Agreements – Staff Report for November 2023

This memorandum serves as the Staff Report for November 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)

A volunteer subcommittee of IRWM Activity Agreement members is guiding work on a project to update water needs assessments for disadvantaged communities (DACs) in the Westside San Joaquin IRWM Region. Self Help Enterprises is updating previously completed assessments with the goal of creating a Community Engagement Plan. The first step in the process is a summary and analysis of current efforts by members to assist DACs in their areas. The ultimate goal is to solve drink water needs for DACs in the Region, especially in times of drought.

Work continues on two 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. It is sponsored by Central California Irrigation District. The Broadview Aquifer Storage and Recovery Project sponsored by Westlands Water District is targeted to benefit the region's lower aquifer by improving groundwater management, drought resiliency, and data monitoring.

2. Sustainable Groundwater Management Activity (SGMA) Activity Summary

General SGMA Activities

Data compilation and analysis continues for the Delta-Mendota Subbasin's Water Year 2023 Annual Report. The annual reports are required under the Sustainable Groundwater

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).

Management Act (SGMA). Fall groundwater level monitoring data must be submitted by December 31, 2023.

The SGMA Round 1 Implementation Grant is helping the Subbasin meet SGMA requirements by filling data gaps. One data gap faced by GSPs throughout the San Joaquin Valley is Interconnected Surface Water (ISW). Design of an ISW monitoring network for the Subbasin is complete. Requests for proposals for construction management and installation of the monitoring network will be released in early 2024.

Coordinated Activities

The D-M Subbasin Coordination Committee members conducted a second tour of the Subbasin for State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) members and staff. The tour for board members Maguire and Morgan and two staff members focused on the central area of the Subbasin and showcased groundwater recharge, environmental habitat, disadvantaged community drinking water, and subsidence mitigation projects. Board Member D'Adamo toured parts of the Subbasin in October. 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 will determine whether a single GSP for the Subbasin, now under development, will be approved or if the area will be placed on probation and subject to SWRCB oversight. Coordination Committee members, staff, and technical consultants are meeting regularly, including meetings with SWRCB staff, to address deficiencies identified by DWR when it deemed the six Subbasin GSPs "inadequate." At its November meeting, the Coordination Committee approved a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) which will serve as a framework for the D-M Subbasin's 23 GSAs to cooperate on implementing the single GSP to achieve groundwater sustainability in the Subbasin. The Committee also approved a Special Projects Agreement including a cost share split for consolidation of the six GSPs into a single plan for the Subbasin.

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. A minor storm impacted the region in mid-November but did not cause a discharge. 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. Approximately ¾" of precipitation occurred on November 18th. This was not enough to cause discharge.
- 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 2024 and the remaining funds will be used for the purchase of spare monitoring equipment.