



MEMORANDUM

TO: SLDMWA Board of Directors, Alternates

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

DATE: December 8, 2022

RE: Activity Agreements – Staff Report for November, 2022

This memorandum serves as the Staff Report for November 2022 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)

DWR approved an amendment to the Proposition 1 Round 1 IRWM Grant administered through SLDMWA. In addition to granting a six-month work extension to July 31, 2024, the amendment reduces the number of wells required for the Broadview Aquifer Storage and Recovery Project. Since the estimate to complete the project was made in the fall of 2019 when the grant application was submitted, actual construction costs have increased more than 600%.

DWR announced its funding recommendations for the Proposition 1 Round 2 IRWM Grant Program. In the Westside San Joaquin Region, Del Puerto Water District (DPWD) will receive \$955,000 to fund development of a Decision Support Tool that will be used to site dams for flood control and water storage projects. The DPWD project was funded for the San Joaquin River Funding Area, one of two funding areas in the Westside San Joaquin (WSJ) IRWM Region. In the Tulare-Kern Funding Area, the Subsidence Prevention and Drought Resiliency Storage Project submitted by Westlands Water District was not selected for funding in DWR's draft recommendations.

2. Sustainable Groundwater Management Activity (SGMA) Activity Summary

Coordinated Activities

Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSAs) have agreed at the Coordinated level to increase the meeting frequency in anticipation of the required 2025 Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) Updates. The Updates must be finalized in less than two years so they can be adopted by all 23

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).

GSAs in the Subbasin, including local governments, prior to submitting in January 2025. Detailed work on the Updates must wait until DWR issues the final determinations on the Subbasin's six GSPs. DWR ruled them incomplete in January 2022, and amended Plans were resubmitted by the GSP groups in July. The final determinations aren't expected until the late in the first quarter of 2023. While waiting for DWR's decision, GSP groups will review the Coordination Agreement and may recommend changes to that document.

Data compilation is underway for the Water Year 2022 Annual Report. The report must be submitted to DWR by April 1, 2023.

General SGMA Activities

The Subbasin's GSP groups are finalizing a grant application for SGMA Implementation Round 2 grant funding. A total of \$20 million is being requested. Proposed activities include construction of groundwater recharge projects, canal lining projects, a water use efficiency and reclamation project, filling data gaps, and enhancing the Subbasin's monitoring capabilities including an expansion of an Interconnected Surface Water Monitoring Network that is being established with previously awarded SGMA Implementation Round 1 funds. The Round 2 application is due in mid-December. San Joaquin River Exchange Contractors Water Authority will serve as the lead applicant.

Work is underway for projects funded by the \$7.6-million-dollar SGMA Implementation grant awarded to the Subbasin. Grant-funded activities include water supply reliability and groundwater recharge projects, monitoring and data collection, and funding for the previously noted 2025 GSP updates. Del Puerto Water District served as the lead applicant on behalf of the Subbasin, and signed the grant agreement with DWR in October.

3. Drainage Activity Summary

Grassland Basin Drainage Management Steering Committee Activity Summary

- Prepare for and lead GBD Steering Committee meeting on November 18.
- Prepare GBD Budget

Work was initiated to develop the FY 2023-2024 GBD Activity Agreement budget.

- Regional Board Grassland Bypass Project Stakeholder Meeting

A Regional Board meeting is scheduled for January 2023. Prepared preliminary information for presentation at the meeting.

- Mitigation Subcommittee. Organized and led the November mitigation subcommittee meeting.
- Legal Issues

Ongoing support is provided to support the legal issues that the Authority is involved in.

- Mud Slough Restoration Project

The Water Authority adopted the CEQA for the project in December 2021. There were comments received on the project from the State Board, California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) and a group of commenters led by the Planning and Conservation League (PCL). A meeting is being scheduled with CDFW to review and move the project forward.

- 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. Work continues on permitting issues from Merced County and landowner issues.

- The SJRIP biological monitoring report was completed and submitted to regulatory parties.
- Compliance Monitoring

Work is continuing to comply with the monitoring requirement of the 2019 Revised WDRs and with the December 2019 Use Agreement. This monitoring includes particulate sediment and fish collection and analysis to continue to analyze possible impacts of very infrequent discharge from the Grassland Bypass Project to Mud Slough and the San Joaquin River. Work was completed to develop the program for 2023.

- Grassland Drainage Area Coalition

Work continues to provide coverage for farmers within the Grassland Drainage Area for the Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program. Reporting forms are being prepared to send to farmers in late 2022 for reporting 2022 nitrogen application.

- Work is ongoing to support the Prop 84 Grant administered by Panoche Drainage District for improvements to the San Joaquin River Improvement Project.

San Joaquin Valley Drainage Authority Activity Summary

- Development of FY 23-24 SJVDA Budget including consultant scopes of work.

Work is underway to develop the FY 23-24 SJVDA Activity Agreement budgets.

- Participated in quarterly call with the Regional Board on the Irrigated Lands program compliance.
- Prepare and lead San Joaquin Valley Drainage Authority Board meeting on November 1, 2022.

Topics included development of plan to comply with CVSALTS Nitrate Control Program through a management zone. Research of various means to comply are being researched. A meeting is being coordinated with the Delta-Mendota Subbasin Coordination Committee to investigate overlap of services.

- Westside San Joaquin River Watershed Coalition

Work continues to provide coverage for farmers within the Grassland Drainage Area for the Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program. 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. Reporting forms are being prepared to send to growers for reporting 2022 nitrogen application. Development of monitoring program for 2023.

- Groundwater Protection Formula, Values and Targets

Coalitions are developing a methodology to establish nitrogen loading values and targets as required by the WDRs. Ongoing work includes meeting with other coalitions and staff developing the values and targets along with supporting that work through the SJVDA budget.

- Management Zones

The Central Valley Basin Plan's Nitrate Permitting Strategy divided the Central Valley into Priority 1, Priority 2 and non-Prioritized basins. The Westside Coalition is in Priority 2. Priority 1 basins have developed and begun to implement their nitrate programs. The Regional Board is expected to issue notices to comply to Priority 2 basins in early 2023. The Westside San

Joaquin River Watershed Coalition is in a Priority 2 basin and therefore is expected to receive a Notice to Comply from the Regional Board in 2023. The Westside Coalition is working to develop a plan to help form a Management Zone to comply with the requirements. The Management Zone will incorporate all dischargers of nitrate to groundwater, including municipal wastewater plants, dairies and industrial dischargers. The Management Zone will need to identify domestic wells that are high in nitrate and develop and plan to provide alternative water. This added program will significantly increase the SJVDA budget to support this work and is being supported through the SJVDA budget. Coordinated follow up meeting with GSA coordinating committee.

- Salt Control Program

Phase I of the Salt Control Program involves the development of a Prioritization and Optimization Study (P&O Study). Currently, consultants are compiling data in order to characterize current salinity conditions of both surface and groundwater across the Central Valley. Phase I of the Salt Control Program is expected to last years. This work is being supported through the SJVDA budget.

- Prop 84 Real Time Program Grant

Work continues on upgrading various monitoring stations and gathering monitoring data. Remaining work includes maintaining the stations and modeling to determine and manage salt discharges to the San Joaquin River.