



## MEMORANDUM

TO: SLDMWA Board of Directors, Alternates

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

DATE: June 9, 2022

RE: Activity Agreements – Staff Report for May 2022

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This memorandum serves as the Staff Report for May 2022 regarding specified<sup>1</sup> 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)*

Work continues on the Proposition 1, Round 1 grant project. We are waiting for the release of the final Guidelines and Proposal Solicitation Package for Proposition 1, Round 2 funding. Under an agreement between IRWM Regions in the SJRFA, the Westside San Joaquin Region is eligible for up to \$955,000 for projects in SJRFA. DWR could begin accepting applications in August.

#### *Tulare-Kern Funding Area (TKFA)*

\$14.4 Million will be available for IRWM regions in the TKFA for the Proposition 1, Round 2 solicitation and application. IRWM regions in the funding area have yet to decide how the funds will be split across the region.

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

SLDMWA Staff is working with project proponents in both funding areas to refresh the Opti database of projects. The updated project list will be used to inform project selection for the Proposition 1, Round 2 solicitations in late summer/early fall.

Staff also continues work on a project to engage with Disadvantaged Communities (DACs) in the Westside San Joaquin Region and learn about each community's priorities and funding needs that align with the objectives of the WSJ IRWMP. The development of tailored funding matrices will help DACs be ready for grant and other funding opportunities that align with their needs and priorities.

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<sup>1</sup> 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**

### **Northern and Central Delta-Mendota Regions**

The Northern and Central Management Committees directed staff to continue using Zoom for public participation meetings. Committee members are required to attend meetings in-person for purposes of achieving a quorum and to vote on action items unless other Brown Act provisions are followed.

April 30 was the deadline for collecting Spring Water Level readings across the Subbasin. Collected data must be uploaded to the DWR SGMA portal by the end of June.

### **General SGMA Activities**

GSP groups are waiting for a grant agreement from DWR for \$7.6 million in grant funding awarded to the Subbasin SGMA Round 1 Implementation funding. Received funds will go toward items including implementing groundwater recharge projects, amending Groundwater Sustainability Plans (GSPs), and filling data gaps. Agreements are expected to be finalized in May.

A subcommittee of Delta-Mendota Subbasin representatives continues its series of meetings with DWR SGMA program staff to discuss the incomplete determination given to the Delta-Mendota Subbasin's six GSPs. The 23 GSAs must make necessary changes, approve, and adopt the revised Plans by July 20, 2022.

SLDMWA staff is working with local project sponsors to maximize the use of grant funds from the Proposition 1/68 GSP Development/Implementation Grant. The last day for reimbursement eligible work was April 30, 2022. The final invoice must be submitted by June 30, 2022.

## **3. Drainage Activity Summary**

### **Grassland Basin Drainage Management Steering Committee Activity Summary**

- *Mitigation Subcommittee*

The mitigation subcommittee oversees the expenditure of the \$435,000 that was provided to Grassland Water District for use to augment wetland water supplies after 2019 when the Grassland Bypass Project was meeting water quality objectives. To date activities have centered on rehabilitating wells to augment supplies.

- *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). Discussion are being held with the permitting agencies (SWRCB and CDFW) on final project details.

- *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. To date, five of the observation wells have been installed. The remaining five were delayed due to permitting issues from Merced County and landowner issues, which are in the process of being addressed.
- *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.
- *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.

### **San Joaquin Valley Drainage Authority Activity Summary**

- *General*  
Continue management of the Westside San Joaquin River Watershed Coalition to comply with the Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program. Distribute by mail paperwork requirements for 2021 reporting year. 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. Prepare for annual grower meetings including district meetings. Enter farmer evaluation and nitrogen summary reports into coalition database. Meet with members to answer program questions.
- *Groundwater Protection Formula, Values and Targets*  
Coalitions are developing a methodology to establish nitrogen loading values and targets as required by the WDRs. The coalitions have calculated current values by township (36 square miles) and will propose interim targets and longer-term final targets for each township. If a township does not meet the approved GWP Targets, Coalitions will need to amend their Groundwater Quality Management Plan to include new management practices designed to meet the township's GWP Target. If a Coalition has elected to comply with the state's Nitrogen Permitting Strategy through the Management Zone alternative, the Coalition will have significantly more time to meet final GWP Targets.

- *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.

- *Salt Control Program*

Phase I of the Salt Control Program involves the development of a Prioritization and Optimization Study (P&O Study). Work on the P&O Study is being done under the direction of the CV-SALTS executive committee. 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.

- *Prop 84 Real Time Program Grant*

Work continues on upgrading various monitoring stations and gathering monitoring data. \$457,000 of grant billed to date with \$420,000 remaining. Remaining work includes maintaining the stations and modeling to determine and manage salt discharges to the San Joaquin River.