



MEMORANDUM

TO: SLDMWA Board of Directors, Alternates

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

DATE: July 14, 2022

RE: Activity Agreements – Staff Report for June 2022

This memorandum serves as the Staff Report for June 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)

The IRWM Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) and Activity Agreement Members each held meetings in June to discuss project selection to apply for Proposition 1 Round 2 Grants. Projects in the Westside San Joaquin (WSJ) Region are eligible for \$955,500 in funding, based on a prior agreement. Projects in TKFA must compete against all others from the funding area, including those from outside the WSJ region. The application deadline is August 18, 2022.

Staff is collecting information about the work of irrigation and water districts in the Westside San Joaquin Region on how they are engaging with Disadvantaged Communities (DACs). Leveraging established relationships and building off of work already accomplished will guide the development of tailored funding matrices will help DACs be ready for future grant and other funding opportunities, or take advantage of technical assistance that is available.

Staff continues to take part in meetings and webinars including the IRWM Roundtable of Regions (ROR) and the IRWM ROR Disadvantaged Communities and Tribal Working Group.

2. **Sustainable Groundwater Management Activity (SGMA) Activity Summary**

Coordinated Activities

The Coordination Committee concluded revisions on the six Groundwater Sustainability Plans (GSPs) for the Delta-Mendota Subbasin in response to DWRs determination that the plans were “incomplete.” In its letter, the Department detailed four “deficiencies” and identified

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).

recommended corrective actions. The Committee accepted the revisions that were made and recommended all 23 GSAs in the Subbasin adopt the amended GSP. The GSAs are now in the process of formally adopting the amended plans so they can be submitted to DWR by the July 20, 2022 deadline.

Spring Groundwater Level Elevation data was submitted to DWR prior to the July 1, 2022 deadline. GSAs can now begin collecting water quality samples from Representative Monitoring Network sites and submitting the information to the subbasin Data Management System. The deadline to collect water quality monitoring samples is the end of August. GSAs have until September 30, 2022 to upload the data.

General SGMA Activities

DWR will finalize an agreement with GSP groups in the subbasin on a \$7.6 million dollar SGMA Implementation Grant awarded to the Delta-Mendota Subbasin. The funds will be used for projects and activities including water recharge and enhancement, installation of monitoring equipment and sites, studies, and completing revisions to “incomplete” GSPs and the 5 year GSP updates. Del Puerto Water District served as the lead applicant on behalf of the Subbasin’s 23 GSAs.

All deliverables and the final invoices were submitted to DWR for the Proposition 1/Proposition 68 SGMA Implementation Grant. This funding helped to produce the Subbasin’s six GSPs, a Well Census and Inventory for the subbasin and a Subsidence Characterization and Project Feasibility Study.

3. Drainage Activity Summary

Grassland Basin Drainage Management Steering Committee Activity Summary

- *Mud Slough Restoration Project*
Review issues with CDFW. Follow up discussions to be held.
- *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. Work with legal team to develop revised conflict of interest guidelines.

- *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. Reviewing drafts that are being developed for submittal in July.

- *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.