



MEMORANDUM

TO: SLDMWA Board of Directors, Alternates

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

DATE: January 13, 2022

RE: Activity Agreements – Staff Report for December 2021

This memorandum serves as the Staff Report for December 2021 regarding specified¹ 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)

Approximately \$955,000 will be available to the Westside-San Joaquin (WSJ) IRWM Region within the SJRFA for the Proposition 1 Round 2 (P1R2) IRWM funding by prior agreement among the IRWM regions in the SJRFA. The Department of Water Resources (DWR) is accepting comments on the draft P1R2 Guidelines and Proposal Solicitation Package until February 8, 2022. Work continues on three projects in SJRFA from the Proposition 1 Round 1 funding, administered through SLDMWA.

Tulare-Kern Funding Area (TKFA)

The WSJ IRWM Region will also prepare an application for the P1R2 funding within the TKFA. There was no prior agreement between the IRWM regions in the TKFA on a funding split. Criteria are being developed for determining which projects in the TKFA will be submitted to DWR. A total of \$34 Million will be available across the TKFA in Round 2.

Draft documents released by DWR say the original March 31, 2022 application deadline will be updated after the comment period closes next month.

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

The WSJ IRWM Region's Project Proponents and SLDMWA staff are updating the Opti database of projects. The Technical Advisory Committee will rank the projects once DWR establishes a list

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).

of priorities, eligible projects and expenses, and completion deadlines for the P1R2 funding opportunity.

Staff is working on an annual report for the WSJ IRWM Region. The report will highlight activities during the 2021 water year across the region. The targeted release date for the report is February 1, 2022.

2. Sustainable Groundwater Management Activity (SGMA) Activity Summary

Northern and Central Delta-Mendota Regions

The Northern and Central Management Committees held their regular joint meeting in mid-December. The Committees approved a strategy for cooperating with other GSP Groups in the Subbasin to apply for an anticipated \$7.6 million of SGMA Round 1 Implementation funding. Round 1 funding is targeted for critically over-drafted subbasins, including the Delta-Mendota Subbasin.

Northern and Central Representatives met with representatives from the Tracy Subbasin for an informal interbasin coordination session in early January. In addition to the draft Tracy Subbasin GSP, discussion items included goals and desired outcomes for long-term interbasin coordination and identifying a process for data and information sharing.

General SGMA Activities

DWR issued an initial “assessment” letter for its evaluation of the approach used by the six GSP Groups in the Delta-Mendota Subbasin. Unlike other similar letters issued previously by DWR’s SGMA unit, this letter provided no detailed comments for local GSP Groups to use in developing strategies to bring the plans into compliance. Each Group is analyzing its own GSP to identify possible areas where DWR might deem them insufficient, based on letters previously issued by DWR to other subbasins.

DWR did say the Delta-Mendota Subbasin’s GSPs will be deemed “inadequate” when the the official evaluation is released later this month. The Subbasin will have six months from the official evaluation release date to submit satisfactory plans or risk implementation intervention from the State Water Resources Control Board.

The Subbasin’s GSP Group representatives are working on project activities to submit for the upcoming SGMA Round 1 Implementation funding opportunity. The funds are from SB 170 and will be administered by DWR. Funding applications are due to DWR by 12 noon on February 18, 2022. Allowable activities include projects and preparing responses to DWR comments on the Subbasin’s GSPs. Per the adopted guidelines, one GSA must submit a single application on behalf of the entire Subbasin.

Work is in the final stages for the Subbasin’s Proposition 68 Sustainable Groundwater Management (SGM) grant. Both a well census and inventory project and a Subbasin-wide subsidence characterization and project feasibility study will be completed by the end of the fiscal year. The consultant conducting the Delta-Mendota Subbasin Subsidence Characterization and Project Feasibility Study will hold the second of a possible three presentations to a special

Technical Working Group meeting in late January. Information from each GSP Group's well census and inventory project will be used in the Subsidence Study.

All GSAs and member agencies worked with staff to upload Fall water level monitoring results to DWR's SGMA Portal prior to the January 1, 2022 deadline. Staff is also working with GSAs to complete volumetric reporting information as part of the Subbasin's Annual Report information. The SGMA Annual Report is due April 1, 2022.

3. Drainage Activity Summary

Grassland Basin Drainage Management Steering Committee Activity Summary

Mud Slough Restoration Project: The project is to restore Mud Slough (north) flows to the Newman Lake north of Highway 140 and to remove structures within the state's China Island Refuge. The CEQA Initial Study was circulated for public comment on June, 30, 2021 and comments were due on July 30, 2021. Comments were received from the State Water Resources Control Board Division of Water Rights, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife and a group of 18 parties comprised of the Planning and Conservation League and others. Consultants have reviewed the comments. The Grassland Basin Drainers Steering Committee reviewed the comments and responses on November 19, 2021 and, recommended adoption of the Final Mitigated Negative Declaration and Project Approval by the Authority at the December 9, 2021 meeting, which was adopted.

Threat to Fish Report: The GBD were required to submit a report on July 31, 2021 under Section 13267 of the California Water Code that would include all data available on fish tissue sampling since the beginning of the Grassland Bypass Project since 1996. Comments were received by the Regional Board and responses are being prepared.

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. Additionally, the program updated the Regional Board on the status of the GBP at the December 9, 2021 Board workshop and is working with the subcommittee overseeing expenditure of the supplemental mitigation fund. Coordinate response to rainfall events regarding possible discharges to the GBP. No discharges were required.

San Joaquin Valley Drainage Authority Activity Summary

Continue management of the Westside San Joaquin River Watershed Coalition to comply with the Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program. 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. Organize and make presentation to outreach meetings for surface and groundwater management plan. Assist grower members in completing the required reporting forms and self-certification requirements. Enter farmer evaluation and nitrogen summary reports into coalition database.

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Participate in group conference calls regarding surface and groundwater management plans, groundwater protection formulas and the CVSalts prioritization and optimization studies. Participate in Central Valley Groundwater Monitoring Collaborative conference calls. Participate in Regional Board quarterly conference calls.

Begin planning for development of Management Zone implementation. Manage ongoing monitoring. Revise the QAPP for the monitoring program.

Management continued for the Prop 84 Real Time Management Program Grant for compliance with the San Joaquin River Salt and Boron TMDL. Follow up and direct field work in northerly stations. Organize and lead September SJVDA Board meeting.