



# MEMORANDUM

TO: SLDMWA Board of Directors, Alternates

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

DATE: October 6, 2022

RE: Activity Agreements – Staff Report for September 2022

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This memorandum serves as the Staff Report for September 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**

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

Project proponents are awaiting word on applications submitted to DWR as part of the Proposition 1 Round 2 IRWM Implementation Grant Program. Del Puerto Water District submitted an application for \$950,000 from the San Joaquin River Funding Area. Westlands Water District submitted applications for two projects in the Tulare Kern Funding Area.

Staff continues to update the list of projects in the Opti database to be sure the most recent project information is available for project prioritization and ranking. Staff will seek input from the working group to design and implement a tiered list of projects for a formal ranking action of all projects.

Staff participated recently in the IRWM Roundtable of Regions (ROR) bi-monthly meeting. Items discussed included a presentation from DWR on the 2023 Water Plan Update. A public draft of the update is expected to be released in March, 2023.

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

### **Coordinated Activities**

Comments were received on all six Groundwater Sustainability Plans that were resubmitted to Department of Water Resources (DWR) in July. The deadline for comments was September 19,

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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).

2022. As written in the GSPs, local Groundwater Sustainability Agency's (GSAs) intend to address the comments in the 2025 GSP updates.

Groundwater level monitoring began September 1, 2022, in the subbasin. GSAs have until the end of October to collect data, and until the end of November to submit the data to DWR.

### **General SGMA Activities**

DWR and Del Puerto Water District are expected to finalize a grant agreement for \$7.6 million dollars from the state's SGMA Round 1 Implementation Grant Program. Del Puerto Water District served as the lead applicant on behalf of the Subbasin. Information on funding that will be available in the Round 2 Grant Program and the process for submitting applications is expected this month. DWR anticipates the deadline for applications will be the end of November, 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 and delivery facilities to augment supplies. To date approximately 46% of the funding has been expended.

- *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. 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.

- *Wellhead Treatment*

Because of the protracted drought there has been interest by farmers to install well head treatment devices to remove salt from groundwater and augment water supplies. The issues of required permitting are being investigated by a staff and legal consultants.

- *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. 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. 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. 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.

- *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. This work is being supported through the SJVDA budget.