



## MEMORANDUM

TO: SLDMWA Board of Directors, Alternates

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

DATE: April 6, 2023

RE: Activity Agreements – Staff Report for March 2023

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This memorandum serves as the Staff Report for March 2023 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)**

Staff is working on an effort to update needs assessments for severely disadvantaged communities and disadvantaged communities (SDACs/DACs) in the Westside San Joaquin Integrated Regional Water Management (IRWM) Region. The project will seek to improve drinking water conditions (accessibility, affordability, quality, and quantity) for communities in the region. The IRWM Activity Agreement Members are reviewing a draft scope of work for Self-Help Enterprises to conduct the Assessment.

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

#### **Coordinated Activities**

The California Department of Water Resources (DWR) in early March deemed the Delta Mendota Subbasin Groundwater Sustainability Plans (GSPs) as inadequate. That determination means the Subbasin is now subject to oversight by the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB). By statute, the first step is for the SWRCB to issue a public notice for a probationary hearing for the Subbasin. That hearing has not been scheduled, though there will be an informational item at the Board meeting on April 4.

The probationary period can last up to one year, but amended GSPs can be submitted to the SWRCB for consideration and approval at any time. GSP groups in the Subbasin are already working on strategies to bring the GSPs to approved status. As with the response to DWR's initial comment letter on the GSPs, Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA) representatives will be

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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).

meeting on a more frequent schedule in an effort to bring the Subbasin's six GSPs to approved status.

Committee members approved the Water Year 2022 Annual Report. The report was submitted to DWR prior to the April 1, 2023 deadline.

The spring seasonal high monitoring window is open for Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSAs) to begin collecting groundwater level data. GSAs must measure groundwater levels in representative monitoring network wells in the Delta-Mendota subbasin by April 30, 2023. The data must be submitted to DWR by May 31, 2023

### **General SGMA Activities**

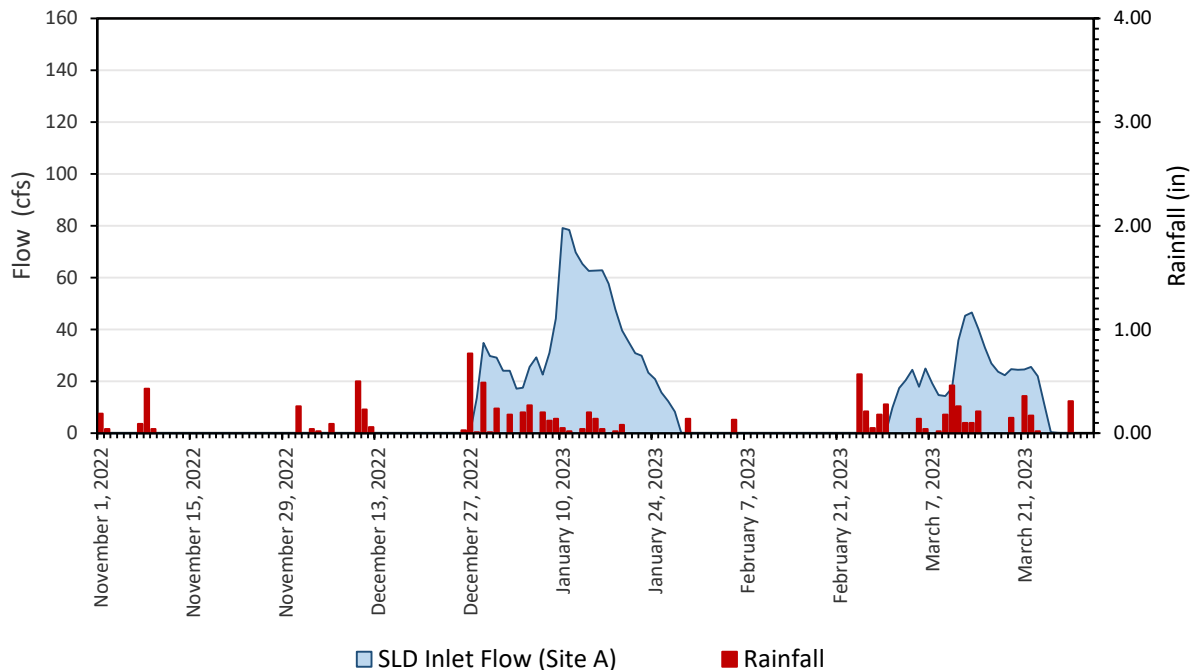
Work continues on a variety of activities funded by a \$7.6-million-dollar SGMA Implementation grant awarded to the Subbasin. Del Puerto Water District is serving as the lead for the Subbasin for the grant agreement. Among the activities is additional monitoring and data collection to track groundwater sustainability Subbasin-wide. A Consulting group was recently selected to design an Interconnected Surface Water Monitoring Network.

### **3. Drainage Activity Summary**

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

For the first time since March of 2021, the gates to the Grassland Bypass Channel were opened on December 27, 2022 to discharge storm-induced drainage in accordance with the Grassland Bypass Project Long Term Stormwater Plan. Wet weather conditions caused discharge to continue through January 27 and a resurgence of storms in February caused the gates to be opened again in late February through March 24<sup>th</sup>. The figure below shows rain fall and discharge from the Grassland Drainage Area into the San Luis Drain measured at Site A. There were no exceedances of the selenium water quality objective at Mud Slough.

## Grassland Bypass Project - Rainfall and Discharge from the GDA at Site A

GBP Activities

- Storm discharge management and reporting: Coordination of sampling; Monitor field conditions; communicate with District managers and staff; monitor water quality.
- Prepare for and attend Grassland Basin Drainers meeting in Los Banos.
- General administration: Prepare consultant agreements for FY 23-24; Estimate monitoring and operations budget.
- Mud Slough Restoration Project: The Water Authority adopted the CEQA for the project in December 2021. GBP management staff are attempting to meet with CDFW to review their concerns and are working with stakeholders to resolve remaining issues.
- 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. Five of the wells have been installed and wet conditions have delayed the installation of the remaining five well. These wells are expected to be installed by the summer of 2023.
- Compliance Monitoring: Monitoring in compliance with the 2019 revised WDRs and 2019 Use Agreement is a continuous and daily effort. Regular flow, water quality and toxicity monitoring is required at eight locations at a frequency that varies from monthly to daily. Special monitoring for fish and invertebrate selenium levels has occurred annually, along with efforts to collect particulate samples for selenium analysis.
- Grassland Drainage Area Coalition: Work continues to provide coverage for farmers within the Grassland Drainage Area for the Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program. Reporting forms were sent to farmer members 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.
- Mitigation subcommittee: Prepare information for meeting on April 5, 2023.

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**San Joaquin Valley Drainage Authority Activity Summary**

- Participate in conference calls with the Regional Board to respond to their questions on surface water quality management plans and required follow up. Working with the Regional Board to formulate a more efficient focused outreach program to address sediment and surface water quality impacts to receiving waters.
  
- 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 were prepared and sent to growers for reporting 2022 nitrogen application. Received forms are being entered into compliance database.
  
- 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 Practices Effectiveness Program.  
Attend conference call meeting of the MPEP group. Developing work schedules to implement nitrogen control measures for farmer member compliance.
  
- Central Valley Groundwater Monitoring Collaborative  
Attend conference call meetings to give direction to program.
  
- Management Zones  
Work continued to develop plan for compliance within the Westside Coalition. An ad hoc subcommittee meeting was organized to receive information and to give direction on management zone formation. Work ongoing estimating alternatives for compliance.
  
- 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.