



MEMORANDUM

TO: SLDMWA Board of Directors, Alternates

FROM: John Brodie, Water Resources Programs Manager
Chris Linneman, Regional Drainage
Orvil McKinnin, Westside Watershed Coalition Coordinator

DATE: September 14, 2023

RE: Activity Agreements – Staff Report for August, 2023

This memorandum serves as the Staff Report for August 2023 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)

Three of the five projects in the Westside San Joaquin IRWM Region funded by the Proposition 1, Round 1 Implementation grant are now complete. The West Stanislaus Irrigation District Pumping Plant Modernization Project is now finished. The Project is expected to improve water supply reliability by an estimated 88,000 acre-feet per year. The grant contributed more than \$800,000 to the overall \$5.1 million project. There are still two more projects with work remaining to complete.

The Water Authority executed a Task Order with Self-Help Enterprises to update Community Water Needs Assessments. Self-Help will update assessments previously conducted for the West Side San Joaquin IRWM Region in both the San Joaquin River and Tulare-Kern Funding areas. The updates will focus on current and future water needs for Disadvantaged Communities (DACs) in the region. Staff is currently finalizing a project steering committee consisting of IRWM Activity Agreement member volunteers.

2. Sustainable Groundwater Management Activity (SGMA) Activity Summary

General SGMA Activities

Water quality monitoring data for the year has been collected and will be uploaded this month to the DWR data portal. Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSAs) in the Delta-Mendota Subbasin are now collecting fall water level monitoring data. They have until the end of October to collect water level measurements. These data are used to compile the Subbasin's Annual

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).

report, which is due to DWR by April 1. Though the Subbasins Groundwater Sustainability Plans (GSPs) were determined “Inadequate” by DWR, they must still continue to be implemented until a new GSP(s) is submitted.

Coordinated Activities

GSAs in the Subbasin are working to consolidate the existing six GSPs for the Subbasin into one. No longer under the purview of DWR; GSAs, staff, and consultants are now working with staff from the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) to achieve “approved” status for the single plan. Local GSAs are in the early stages of looking at a Well Mitigation Program for wells, especially domestic drinking water wells, that could go dry during SGMA implementation. SWRCB staff has made it clear such a program will be required if the Subbasin GSP is to be approved.

The GSAs are working to have the single GSP finished prior to SWRCB holding a probationary hearing for the Subbasin. That probationary hearing is estimated to occur in September of 2024. At that time, SWRCB staff may identify additional deficiencies in the Subbasin’s GSPs. So far, none of California’s critically overdrafted subbasins has progressed to a probationary hearing. How the probationary process for GSPs will function remains largely unknown.

3. Drainage Activity Summary

Grassland Basin Drainage Management Steering Committee Activity Summary

The Grassland Bypass Channel gates were closed on March 24th, ending the discharge of storm-induced drainage from the Grassland Drainage Area. Remaining drainage flows have been managed internally by the San Joaquin River Improvement Project since that time. No significant storms are forecasted and it is not anticipated the gates will be opened again in the near future.

GBP Activities

- General administration: Review and approve consultant billing. Field review of drainage conditions and correspondence with SJRIP manager.
- Mud Slough Restoration Project: The intent of this project is to restore Mud Slough in accordance with the 2010 MOU between the Authority and California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW). The Water Authority adopted the CEQA for the project in December 2021, which was not challenged. GBP management staff had a meeting with CDFW on August 15th during which CDFW committed to providing a revised MOU that would outline the specific tasks required to complete restoration of Mud Slough.
- 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. All 10 observation wells have been installed, with the last well completed in June. The GBD are working on developing a monitoring plan to measure groundwater levels and quality.
- 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.
- Proposition 84 Grant: Work is ongoing to support the Prop 84 Grant administered by Panoche Drainage District for improvements to the San Joaquin River Improvement Project. The Short Term Storage Basins construction is in progress but will take some time to complete. Other projects are in design phase.
- 13267 Order Report Part 2: The Authority received a 13267 Order from the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Board) in February 2020. This order required the Authority to submit two reports on water quality and fish tissue data, the first of which was submitted in July of 2021. The second, and final report, is in progress and will be submitted this fall.

San Joaquin Valley Drainage Authority Activity Summary

- Participated 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 under the Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program for farmers within the Westside San Joaquin River Watershed Coalition. 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. Coalition staff submitted membership roll to the Regional Board on July 31, 2023. Collect MPIR forms from the Groundwater and Surface water Focused Outreach which targeted Nitrogen outliers and pyrethroid exceedances.
- Groundwater Protection Formula, Values and Targets: Coalitions have developed a methodology to establish nitrogen loading Values and Targets as required by the WDRs. Approval of the targets was granted June 30, 2023 with two conditions that must be met by April 2024 and July 2024 respectively. Work will begin soon on the outreach to growers to inform them of the targets and their needed cooperation to meet the targets.
- Management Practices Effectiveness Program: Attend conference call meetings of the MPEP group. Developing work schedules to implement nitrogen control measures for farmer member compliance. Work with other Coalitions to produce the required final report.
- Central Valley Groundwater Monitoring Collaborative: Attend conference call meetings to give direction to program. Work with other coalitions and staff to develop an updated groundwater monitoring CQAP.
- Management Zones: Work continued to develop plan for compliance within the Westside Coalition. Attend Valley Water Collaborative budget committee meetings to establish SJVDA FY25 Management Zone budget. Prepare the contracts and agreements that will be used going forward. Contact non-ag Permittees to inform them of the program. Attend Central Valley Salinity Coalition meetings to inform SJVDA Management Zone formation.

- Salt Control Program: Phase I of the Salt Control Program involves the development of a Prioritization and Optimization Study (P&O Study). Consultants are compiling data in order to characterize current salinity conditions of both surface and groundwater across the Central Valley. This work is being supported through the SJVDA budget.
- Prop 84 Real Time Program Grant: Work continues on maintaining the stations, gathering monitoring data, and computer modeling to determine and manage salt discharges to the San Joaquin River. As of March 2023, grant funds billed is \$595,942 with \$259,058 remaining. The project has been extended to December of this year.