



MEMORANDUM

TO: SLDMWA Board of Directors, Alternates

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

DATE: October 10, 2024

RE: Activity Agreements – Staff Report for September 2024

This memorandum serves as the Staff Report for September 2024 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)

Staff is working with Self-Help Enterprises on a draft Community Water Needs Assessment for disadvantaged communities (DACs) in the Westside San Joaquin IRWM Region. The goal of the assessment is to identify and prioritize the most critical drinking water needs for DACs in the region, especially during drought years. The draft assessment may be distributed to an IRWM Activity Agreement Member subcommittee for review and input before the end of October.

2. Sustainable Groundwater Management Activity (SGMA) Activity Summary

General SGMA Activities

All but one of the 23 Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSAs) in the Delta-Mendota Subbasin have adopted the single Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) to sustainably manage groundwater. The single plan replaces the six revised GSPs submitted to the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) in July of 2022 and deemed “inadequate” in early 2023. The single GSP addresses “deficiencies” identified by DWR in the six failed plans. Per SGMA legislation enacted in 2014, the “inadequate” determination transferred the Delta-Mendota to the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) for oversight. A draft SWRCB staff report on the deficiencies identified by DWR is now not expected until the end of the calendar year with a potential probationary hearing for the basin pushed back to June of 2025.

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).

As part of the GSP process, GSAs are now working out the details of Pumping Reduction Plans (PRPs) specific to identified geographic “zones” in the Subbasin. The PRPs are the mechanism GSAs will use to avoid “undesirable results” for the Sustainability Indicators being monitored, which include groundwater levels, subsidence, water quality, loss of storage, and interconnected surface water. The PRPs are due to be implemented starting in January 2025.

Coordinated Activities

GSA representatives and staff are continuing outreach efforts to educate local growers and the public about the single GSP. Outreach activities have been supported by a Facilitation Support Services (FSS) grant through DWR. An application for additional outreach through June of 2025 is pending at DWR. FSS activities including translation are provided by DWR at no cost to the GSAs, and have been instrumental in GSA efforts to communicate with a broader range of stakeholders.

3. Drainage Activity Summary

Grassland Basin Drainage Management Steering Committee Activity Summary

The Grassland Bypass Channel gates have remained closed since February 28. Selenium concentrations in Mud Slough and the San Joaquin River remain below the water quality objective.

GBP Activities

- General administration: Review and approve consultant billing. Field review of drainage conditions and correspondence with SJRIP manager. The 2023 Annual Monitoring Report was received and accepted by the Regional Board.
- 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. A letter from CDFW regarding the MOU status was received the last week of January and we have requested a follow up meeting with CDFW to discuss alternatives.
- 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 are required at eight locations at a frequency that varies from monthly to daily. Fish tissue samples were collected in April. Results are pending but expected soon.
- Grassland Drainage Area Coalition: Work continues to provide coverage for farmers within the Grassland Drainage Area for the Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program. Farm evaluation surveys will be sent out to farmers in 2024.
- 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 nearing completion. Other projects are in design phase.

San Joaquin Valley Drainage Authority Activity Summary

- Participated in conference calls with the Regional Board to respond to 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. Analyze pyrethroid Focused Outreach data for follow up MPIRs. Respond to Regional Board's comments of recent Surface Water Focused Outreach.
- Groundwater Protection Formula, Values and Targets: Coalitions have developed a methodology to establish nitrogen loading Values and Targets as required by the WDRs. Collaborating with other Coalitions to help formulate a set of questions that an Expert Panel convened by the SWRCB will need to answer concerning nitrate 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. Acceptable Ranges 6-Year report was presented to Regional Board in May 2024 and the Coalition is awaiting their comments.
- Central Valley Groundwater Monitoring Collaborative: Attend conference call meetings to give direction to program. Work with other coalitions and staff to coordinate and collaborate with SGMA efforts regarding groundwater quality monitoring and reporting.
- Management Zones: Work continued to develop plan for compliance within the Westside Coalition. Attend meetings with other Management Zone dischargers to begin formation of official Management Zone. Continue to negotiate with Dairy group to determine percentage of cost share. Attend Central Valley Salinity Coalition meetings to inform SJVDA regarding Management Zone formation. Provide Coalition monitoring data for analysis to inform Dec. 2024 MZIP submission.
- Salt Control Program: Phase I of the Salt Control Program involves the development of a Prioritization and Optimization Study (P&O Study). The Delta Mendota subwatershed was chosen as the Archetype to develop salt targets for the other areas of the P&O Study. Collaborate with Consultants to provide local water quality and supply data through District Managers. Work with GSAs to eliminate double efforts between both programs 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. The project has will close out at the end of this year.