



## 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: March 7, 2024

RE: Activity Agreements – Staff Report for February 2024

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This memorandum serves as the Staff Report for February 2024 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)**

Construction continues on the two remaining projects funded by the California Department of Water Resources Proposition 1 Round 1 IRWM Implementation grant. Sixty acres of recharge ponds and associated infrastructure are being installed as part of the Orestimba Creek Recharge and Recovery Project sponsored by Central California Irrigation District. The Broadview Aquifer Storage and Recovery Project sponsored by Westlands Water District will benefit the aquifer below the Corcoran clay to address potential subsidence.

Staff is participating on the technical committee for the Water Blueprint for the San Joaquin Valley. In addition to identifying solutions for water supply reliability south of the Delta, the technical committee is exploring the feasibility of transferring/selling excess flood flows to maintain beneficial use.

Self Help Enterprises (SHE) continues its work to update Community Water Needs Assessments for disadvantaged communities (DACs) in the Westside San Joaquin IRWM Region. The updated assessments will be used to identify and prioritize the most critical drinking water needs for DACs in the region, including recommendations for navigating drought years.

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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).

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

### **General SGMA Activities**

Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) groups continue work projects and tasks funded by the SGMA Round 1 Implementation Grant. The Coordination Committee approved selection of a consultant to perform construction management of well installation for an Interconnected Surface Water (ISW) Monitoring Network. ISW is one of the sustainability indicators DWR and the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) will use to determine whether a subbasin is operating sustainably under the provisions of SGMA. The monitoring network installation including the construction management aspect will be reimbursed by grant funds.

As February came to a close, a draft of the Delta-Mendota Subbasin's Water Year 2023 Annual Report is being reviewed by Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSAs). The annual reports are required under the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA). The Annual Reports must be submitted via DWR's SGMA Data Portal by April 1, 2024. This year's annual report data is taking on added significance as it will be used to inform the single Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) now under development for the Subbasin.

### **Coordinated Activities**

The D-M Subbasin Coordination Committee is diligently working to develop a single GSP for the Subbasin. Technical subcommittee members met with SWRCB staff in February to discuss the Subbasin's approach to addressing water quality concerns. GSA representatives believe a single GSP will help the Subbasin address inadequacies identified by DWR in its analysis of the original six GSPs submitted in early 2020. The Subbasin faces a probationary hearing and direct SWRCB oversight unless SWRCB members approve the revised single GSP.

## **3. Drainage Activity Summary**

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

The Grassland Bypass Channel gates were opened on January 3 as a result of storm events and remained open through February 28, when they were closed. Available data indicates that GBP operations are meeting water quality objectives.

### **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 15<sup>th</sup> 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 are in the process of reviewing that letter.

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- 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. 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. 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 in progress but will take some time to complete. Other projects are in design phase.
- Due to a levee failure on the CCID Outside Canal, a critical drainage culvert was washed out. That culvert has been replaced and is currently operating.

#### **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 on annual monitoring report.
- Groundwater Protection Formula, Values and Targets: Coalitions have developed a methodology to establish nitrogen loading Values and Targets as required by the WDRs. Review documents and provide input for upcoming presentation to Regional Board.
- 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 develop Acceptable Ranges methodology to be presented in report form to Regional Board for public review and approval.
- 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 meetings with other Management Zone dischargers to begin formation of official Management Zone. Prepare the contracts and agreements that will be used going forward. Attend Central Valley Salinity Coalition meetings to inform SJVDA regarding 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

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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. The project has been extended to December of 2024 and the remaining funds will be used for the purchase of spare monitoring equipment.