



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: June 6, 2024

RE: Activity Agreements – Staff Report for May, 2024

This memorandum serves as the Staff Report for May 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)

Supply chain and other construction issues continue to push back completion dates for the two remaining projects funded under the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) Proposition 1 Round 1 IRWM Implementation Grant for the Westside San Joaquin IRWM Region. Three of the five projects funded under the grant have been completed. Active projects include the Orestimba Creek Recharge and Recovery Project and the Broadview Aquifer Storage and Recovery Project. Previously completed were the City of Huron Groundwater Supply Well and Recharge Project, the North Valley Regional Recycled Water Project-Turlock Component, and the West Stanislaus Irrigation District Pumping Plant Modernization Project.

IRWM was referenced multiple times during a DWR Webinar on the California Water Plan Update 2023. Though the success of IRWM programs statewide was mentioned, no specific tasks nor funding sources to further fund IRWM activities were identified by DWR presenters as part of the Plan Update. Staff continues to participate in the statewide IRWM Roundtable of Regions organization and with both the San Joaquin River and Tulare Lake Funding areas that include the Westside San Joaquin IRWM Region.

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).

2. Sustainable Groundwater Management Activity (SGMA) Activity Summary

General SGMA Activities

A public draft of a single Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) for the Delta-Mendota Subbasin is now available for review and comment. The GSP was posted on the Subbasin's SGMA website (www.deltamendota.org). Publishing of the draft triggered the beginning of a 30-day public comment period. A webinar, which will be recorded, will give an overview of the revised GSP and offer the public tips on how to submit comments. In an-person public workshop is also planned. The single GSP was compiled to address the "Inadequate" Determination levied by DWR in March 2023 in response to the revised six coordinated GSPs submitted by the Subbasin in July of 2022. Those revisions were in response to DWR finding the original six coordinated GSPs submitted in January 2020 to be "incomplete."

Under the terms of the SGMA legislation, the fate of the new single GSP will be determined by the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB). The Delta-Mendota Subbasin is one of six critically overdrafted subbasins in the San Joaquin valley facing a probationary designation by the SWRCB. A probationary hearing for this Subbasin is tentatively scheduled for March, 2025.

Coordinated Activities

Staff presented at the third Water Leadership Institute session held in May, giving the cohort of about 30 people a more detailed look at broad SGMA legislation, implementation, and compliance activities in the Subbasin. The purpose of the Institute is to provide water education and leadership skills to interested members of the community. It also includes a "train the trainer" component so participants may transfer the knowledge they gained during the session to other members within their communities. The fourth and final session of the institute will include graduation this month. The Institute is a joint effort by Environmental Defense Fund and the Rural Community Assistance Corporation.

GSAs have submitted spring groundwater well level measurements to the local data management system for quality control and quality assurance checks. Groundwater level data must be submitted to DWR by the end of July. The GSAs are now in the window to collect samples as part of required water quality monitoring. The subbasin will be monitoring for new water quality constituents under the single GSP that were not part of the water quality monitoring parameters contained in the original six coordinated GSPs.

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 and the results are expected in June.
- 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 and should be completed within the next 4 months. 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 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. Values and Targets have been conditionally approved by the Regional Board. Collaborating with the other Coalitions to develop a workplan to implement the program.
- Management Practices Effectiveness Program: Attend conference call meetings of the MPEP group. Developing work schedules to implement nitrogen control measures for farmer member compliance. Working with other Coalitions to finalize Acceptable Ranges 6-Year report to be presented to Regional Board in May 2024.

- 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.
- Salt Control Program: Phase I of the Salt Control Program involves the development of a Prioritization and Optimization Study (P&O Study). Collaborate with Consultants who are looking to establish the Delta Mendota subwatershed as an Archetype to develop salt targets for the other areas of the P&O Study. 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.