



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: July 11, 2024

RE: Activity Agreements – Staff Report for June, 2024

This memorandum serves as the Staff Report for June 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)

Self Help Enterprises (SHE) continues its work to update Community Water Needs Assessments for disadvantaged communities (DACs) in the Westside San Joaquin IRWM Region. A first draft of the assessment update that will be presented to community members is expected sometime in August. The document will be used to identify and prioritize the most critical drinking water needs for DACs in the region, especially during drought years.

An Amendment to the Agreement for the Proposition 1 Round 1 IRWM Implementation Grant for the Westside San Joaquin IRWM Region was submitted in June. Time extensions are needed for the IRWM grant-funded portions for two of the five projects. Local Project Sponsors have requested the Agreement be extended to September 30, 2025 with no funds requested after the end of calendar year 2025.

The IRWM Roundtable of Regions (ROR) has completed an internal draft of a transition plan for the future of the association. The group is attempting to move IRWM forward without having DWR identify specific IRWM tasks or funding for the immediate future. The draft transition plan is expected to be released to the regions in July.

2. Sustainable Groundwater Management Activity (SGMA) Activity Summary

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).

General SGMA Activities

Limited public comments were received on the draft single Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) for the Delta-Mendota Subbasin. Several public outreach efforts on the draft were conducted including two webinars and a public meeting. Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA) representatives continue to meet with State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) staff to address identified priorities, including a well mitigation policy. SWRCB staff wants to see a funding mechanism in place adequate enough to meet the responsibility of repairing or replacing wells if it becomes necessary due to groundwater management in the Subbasin. GSAs are working on a framework to meet the staff's undefined threshold.

The fate of the drafted single GSP will be determined by the SWRCB based on SGMA legislation. The original six plans were first deemed "incomplete" and then "inadequate" by the Department of Water Resources. The "inadequate determination triggered SWRCB oversight. The Delta-Mendota Subbasin is one of six critically overdrafted subbasins in the San Joaquin valley facing a probationary designation by the SWRCB. The Tulare Lake Subbasin has already been placed on probation, the Tule Subbasin faces a September probationary hearing, and the Kaweah Subbasin hearing is scheduled for January. A probationary hearing for the Delta-Mendota Subbasin is tentatively scheduled for the first quarter of 2025.

Coordinated Activities

GSAs are collecting water quality data as a part of SGMA requirements. Per the draft single GSP, water quality data must now be collected twice annually. The new monitoring regime also calls for testing of additional water quality constituents based on SWRCB staff guidance.

GSA representatives are working with some valley-wide efforts that address both water supply reliability and water quality. The Central Valley Salinity Alternatives for Long-Term Sustainability (CV-SALTS) is updating its archetype study of San Joaquin Valley basins. The Delta-Mendota Subbasin is first on the list of Priority 2 groundwater basins. Study team consultants have requested significant data from the GSAs to assist with the CV-SALTS effort.

The Technical Committee of the Water Blueprint for the San Joaquin Valley is also reaching out to Delta-Mendota Subbasin GSAs. The Committee seeks a better understanding of water supply needs based on the draft single GSP and overall SGMA compliance challenges. It is anticipated that information from the GSAs will be included in the Unified Water Plan.

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 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 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. 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.
- 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. 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.