



MEMORANDUM

TO: SLDMWA Board of Directors, Alternates

FROM: John Brodie, Water Resource Programs Manager
Joe McGahan, Regional Drainage/Westside Watershed Coalition Coordinator

DATE: January 12, 2023

RE: Activity Agreements – Staff Report for December, 2022

This memorandum serves as the Staff Report for December 2022 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)

Work continues on the Proposition 1 Round 1 IRWM Grant administered through SLDMWA. The three projects with tasks to complete include the West Stanislaus Irrigation District Pumping Plant Modernization, the Orestimba Creek Recharge and Recovery Project, and the Broadview Aquifer Storage and Recovery Project. Work has already been completed on the Turlock Component of the North Valley Regional Recycled Water Program and the City of Huron Groundwater Supply Well and Recharge Project.

2. Sustainable Groundwater Management Activity (SGMA) Activity Summary

Coordinated Activities

Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSAs) established a timeline and task list for timely completion of the required 2025 Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) Updates. The Updates must be finalized in less than two years so they can be adopted by all 23 GSAs in the Subbasin, including local governments, prior to submitting in January 2025. The tasks include updating the Coordination Agreement adopted with the original GSPs in January, 2020.

Fall groundwater level data was submitted to DWR by the January 1, 2023 deadline. It is part of the data that will be used for the Water Year 2022 Annual Report. The report must be submitted to DWR by April 1, 2023.

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

Work continues on projects funded by the \$7.6-million-dollar SGMA Implementation grant awarded to the Subbasin. The focus of the participating GSP groups is to fill data and monitoring gaps for Interconnected Surface Water and Subsidence.

3. Drainage Activity Summary

Grassland Basin Drainage Management Steering Committee Activity Summary

- Prepare for and lead GBD Steering Committee meeting on December 16.

Present the FY 2023-2024 budget for approval.

- Regional Board Grassland Bypass Project Stakeholder Meeting

A Regional Board meeting is scheduled for January 2023. Prepared preliminary information for presentation at the meeting.

- Mud Slough Restoration Project

The Water Authority adopted the CEQA for the project in December 2021. There were comments received on the project from the State Board, California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) and a group of commenters led by the Planning and Conservation League (PCL). A meeting is being scheduled with CDFW to review and move the project forward.

- 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. Work continues on permitting issues from Merced County and landowner issues.

- Preparation for Storm Events

Weather forecasts predicted considerable rain for late December. Preparations were made for discharges which started late December.

- Compliance Monitoring

Work is continuing to comply with the monitoring requirement of the 2019 Revised WDRs and with the December 2019 Use Agreement. This monitoring includes particulate sediment and fish collection and analysis to continue to analyze possible impacts of very infrequent discharge from the Grassland Bypass Project to Mud Slough and the San Joaquin River. Work was completed to develop the program for 2023.

- Grassland Drainage Area Coalition

Work continues to provide coverage for farmers within the Grassland Drainage Area for the Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program. Reporting forms are being prepared to send to farmers in late 2022 for reporting 2022 nitrogen application.

- Work is ongoing to support the Prop 84 Grant administered by Panoche Drainage District for improvements to the San Joaquin River Improvement Project.

San Joaquin Valley Drainage Authority Activity Summary

- Development of FY 23-24 SJVDA Budget including consultant scopes of work.

Work is underway to develop the FY 23-24 SJVDA Activity Agreement budgets.

- The monitoring plan for the Westside Coalition was updated for the 2023 monitoring year. This included coordinate with laboratories and sub consultants.
- Westside San Joaquin River Watershed Coalition

Work continues to provide coverage for farmers within the Grassland Drainage Area for the Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program. 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. Reporting forms are being prepared to send to growers for reporting 2022 nitrogen application.

- Groundwater Protection Formula, Values and Targets

Coalitions are developing a methodology to establish nitrogen loading values and targets as required by the WDRs. Ongoing work includes meeting with other coalitions and staff developing the values and targets along with supporting that work through the SJVDA budget.

- Management Zones

Continue efforts to comply with the CVSalts Nitrate Control Program through a management zone. A meeting and presentation was made to the San Luis and Delta-Mendota Coordination Committee to investigate overlap of efforts.

The Central Valley Basin Plan's Nitrate Permitting Strategy divided the Central Valley into Priority 1, Priority 2 and non-Prioritized basins. The Westside Coalition is in Priority 2. Priority 1 basins have developed and begun to implement their nitrate programs. The Regional Board is expected to issue notices to comply to Priority 2 basins in early 2023. The Westside San Joaquin River Watershed Coalition is in a Priority 2 basin and therefore is expected to receive a Notice to Comply from the Regional Board in 2023. The Westside Coalition is working to develop a plan to help form a Management Zone to comply with the requirements. The Management Zone will incorporate all dischargers of nitrate to groundwater, including municipal wastewater plants, dairies and industrial dischargers. The Management Zone will need to identify domestic wells that are high in nitrate and develop and plan to provide alternative water. This added program will significantly increase the SJVDA budget to support this work and is being supported through the SJVDA budget. Coordinated follow up meeting with GSA coordinating committee.

- Salt Control Program

Phase I of the Salt Control Program involves the development of a Prioritization and Optimization Study (P&O Study). Currently, consultants are compiling data in order to characterize current salinity conditions of both surface and groundwater across the Central Valley. Phase I of the Salt Control Program is expected to last years. This work is being supported through the SJVDA budget.

Memo to SLDMWA Board of Directors

January 12, 2023

Page 4 of 4

- Prop 84 Real Time Program Grant

Work continues on upgrading various monitoring stations and gathering monitoring data. Remaining work includes maintaining the stations and modeling to determine and manage salt discharges to the San Joaquin River.