



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: September 12, 2024

RE: Activity Agreements – Staff Report for August 2024

This memorandum serves as the Staff Report for August 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)

The California Department of Water Resources (DWR) approved a grant agreement amendment for the Proposition 1 Round 1 IRWM Implementation Grant. Local project sponsors requested a time extension for work to September 30, 2025 with no funds requested after the start of calendar year 2025. The extension will allow grant-funded work to be completed on two of the five projects. IRWM grant-funded work on two other projects has been completed, but the projects will progress with other funding. The fifth project was completed.

Self-Help Enterprises is finalizing a draft Community Water Needs Assessment for disadvantaged communities (DACs) in the Westside San Joaquin IRWM Region. The document will be used to identify and prioritize the most critical drinking water needs for DACs in the region, especially during drought years. The draft assessment will be distributed to an IRWM Activity Agreement Member subcommittee for review and input.

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

General SGMA Activities

The twenty-three Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSAs) in the Delta-Mendota Subbasin are in the process of adopting a single Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) developed during the past 16 months. The single GSP was created in response to DWR's determination that the six

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).

revised GSPs submitted in July of 2022 were “inadequate”. Per SGMA legislation enacted in 2014, the “inadequate” determination transferred the Delta-Mendota to the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) for oversight. Five other San Joaquin Valley groundwater basins are also subject to SWRCB oversight of amended GSPs. According to a schedule previously released by the SWRCB, the Delta-Mendota faces a possible probationary hearing in March, 2025. A draft SWRCB staff report on the deficiencies identified by DWR is anticipated by November. The first draft of the new single GSP was submitted to Board staff in late May, with the final version transmitted at the end of July.

Coordinated Activities

GSA representatives and staff are continuing outreach efforts to educate local growers and the public about the single GSP. Outreach activities were supported by a Facilitation Support Services (FSS) grant through DWR. The latest outreach effort was a late-August webinar giving an overview of the single GSP and how it may affect agricultural operations in the basin. The webinar recording is linked at the Delta-Mendota SGMA website (deltamendota.org)

The previous FSS agreement expired at the end of August. An application for additional outreach through June of 2025 has been submitted. FSS activities including translation are provided by DWR at no cost to the GSAs.

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 in progress and should be completed soon. 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 been extended to December of 2024 and the remaining funds will be used for the purchase of spare monitoring equipment.