



MEMORANDUM

TO: SLDMWA Board of Directors, Alternates

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

DATE: May 6, 2021

RE: Activity Agreements – Staff Report for April 2021

This memorandum serves as the Staff Report for April 2021 regarding specified¹ Water Authority activities not separately addressed on the Board meeting agenda.

1. Integrated Regional Water Management (IRWM) Activity Summary

San Joaquin River Funding Area (SJRFA)

Representatives from the various IRWM Regions in the SJRFA met recently to discuss the status of the current Disadvantaged Community Involvement (DACI) grant program and the Proposition 1 Round 1 IRWM Implementation grant agreement (Round 1) and prepare for anticipated Round 2 funding. The pursuit of environmental documents/permits and plans for the project's design, construction and landscaping continue for the City of Newman NEWS (Newman Environmental Wetland System) project. Tasks for this project are on schedule for completion prior to the July 2022 deadline. A draft Proposal Solicitation Package (PSP) for Round 2 IRWM Implementation grant proposals is expected this summer with a final PSP released near the end of the calendar year. Staff will work with consultants to update the Opti project database in preparation for project ranking and selection for Round 2.

Tulare-Kern Funding Area (TKFA)

SLDMWA staff participated in a kick-off meeting with project proponents on the Proposition 1 Round 1 IRWM Implementation grant funding for the Westside-San Joaquin Region. The grant will be administered through SLDMWA and includes funding for four projects within the SJRFA and one project within the TKFA.

The TKFA's project supported by this funding is City of Huron Groundwater Supply Well and Recharge Project, which will construct new groundwater and monitoring wells for the City of Huron, a designated DAC. The supply well will generate approximately 766 acre-feet annually,

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).

reducing the community's need to purchase water by meeting more than 50% of its drinking water demands.

General Westside-San Joaquin Integrated Regional Water Management Plan (IRWMP)

SLDMWA staff continues its participation in the Roundtable of Regions (ROR), a statewide IRWM information and advocacy group. The ROR is working to insert IRWM specific language into separate bond proposals making their way through the state legislature. An information sheet on the benefits that the SLDMWA-managed IRWM program provides to the Westside-San Joaquin Region is under review and is expected to be shared as part of an overall IRWM advocacy day at the Capitol in May.

2. Sustainable Groundwater Management Activity (SGMA) Activity Summary

Northern and Central Delta-Mendota Regions

SLDMWA staff and consultants are meeting with individual Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSAs) and GSA member agencies to review each GSA or member agency's first quarter Tracking Tool for GSP Implementation. The tools help GSAs and member agencies stay on track with monitoring, SGMA compliance and GSP implementation tasks.

County representatives in the Northern and Central Regions continue to discuss a process for GSAs to provide input on well permit applications within each GSA's boundaries. Some GSAs are expressing uneasiness about provisions in the ordinances that give GSAs the authority to approve or deny new well applications. Some GSAs may need extra personnel to review well construction applications, especially if the number of applications spikes as drought intensifies through the growing season. Stanislaus County officials intend to do a test of its proposed review process with new well applications in May. Merced County officials are meeting with individual GSAs to discuss changes to their well ordinance. The new ordinance could be in place this summer. Fresno County officials are reviewing a legal decision before deciding how to proceed on this topic.

The Northern and Central Management Committees held their regular monthly meeting in late April. The Management Committees received an update on the well census and inventory project, which is attempting to map all production wells in the Northern and Central Regions. Individual GSAs are reviewing maps generated with information from DWR and other public agencies and are asked to provide additional information, if any, on the materials under review.

The Central Delta-Mendota GSA held its first quarterly meeting of the fiscal year in April. Action items included:

- Annual election of officers
- Approval of the GSA's most recent fiscal year audit
- Authorization of an RFP to conduct an annual audit for the current fiscal year

General SGMA Activities

A kickoff meeting was held with members of the Subbasin Technical Working Group, Coordination Committee, and GSI Environmental Inc, the selected consulting firm leading the

subsidence characterization and project feasibility study for the Subbasin. The project schedule, deliverables, and preliminary data needs/sources were discussed. The study will be supported by funds from the Subbasin's Proposition 68 Sustainable Groundwater Management (SGM) grant.

The Subbasin's spring water level monitoring window closed April 30. GSAs have until July 1 to submit water level data to the Monitoring Network Module through DWR's SGMA Portal. The SGMA Portal now accepts sustainable management criteria (SMC) data for water level monitoring sites. SLDMWA staff will coordinate with each GSP Group to ensure SMC and spring water level data are uploaded to the Portal before the July 1 deadline. Wells within the water quality Representative Monitoring Network not already taking water quality samples as part of the Warren Act pump-in program must do so beginning May 1 with a deadline of August 31 to complete sampling. Staff participated in informational workshops and webinars including the State Water Board's Workshop on Drinking Water Assistance available for Disadvantaged Communities, the quarterly meeting of San Joaquin Valley SGMA Points of Contact, and the Resources Agency San Joaquin Valley Regional Meeting for the 30 by 30 Plan.

3. Drainage Activity Summary

Grassland Basin Drainage Management Steering Committee Activity Summary

Wetland Mitigation Fund – the GBD have been working with the local wetland managers and Reclamation to develop projects to fund wetland area improvements using funds accumulate during the 2009 Use Agreement. The funds amounts to \$435,245. Currently the process is waiting for Reclamation to receive approval from the Oversight Committee Work continued to process the funds.

Threat to Fish Report – The GBD are required to submit a report on July 31, 2021 under Section 13267 of the California Water Code that would include all data available on fish tissue sampling since the beginning of the Grassland Bypass Project since 1996. The request focuses on selenium and was in part triggered by deformed split tail found at the federal pumps in 2011. Consultants have been retained and some sampling is to occur this spring to augment this report. Field sampling occurred and the report is being prepared.

Mud Slough Mitigation Project – the project to restore Mud Slough (north) flows to the Newman Lake north of Highway 140 is ongoing. A CEQA Initial Study is being developed for the project and will be circulated for public comment in late April, early May. Once the public comments are reviewed and addresses the Authority will be asked to approve the project likely in June, 2021. After CEQA approval permits will be submitted to the State Water Resources Control Board, the Corps of Engineers and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. Work continued to finalize the CEQA documents for public distribution.

Discussion were held with a possible treatment supplier to treat drainage water from the SJRIP.

Other ongoing activities – continue to review GBD invoices, manage storm flow activities, prepare annual monitoring reports, support for ongoing litigation and data management and management of the Third Party Group for the Grassland Drainage Area Coalition to implement the Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program.

Memo to SLDMWA Board of Directors

May 6, 2021

Page 4 of 4

Grassland Basin Drainage Management Steering Committee Activity Summary

Continue management of the Westside San Joaquin River Watershed Coalition to comply with the Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program. Follow up calls and emails were answered to assist farmers in completing their paperwork requirements. Manage field monitoring program and provide update of the management plan to the Regional Board. Review invoices from consultants and prepare letters to admin staff. Continue to update membership database. Prepare video for annual outreach and management plan compliance. Assist grower members in completing the required reporting forms.

Participate in group conference calls regarding surface and groundwater management plans, groundwater protection formulas and the CVSalts prioritization and optimization studies. Prepare outreach plan. Meet with Regional Board and consultants on status of compliance issues including monitoring and management plans. Prepare high vulnerability mapping by township.

Assist in preparation of letter regarding AB 377.

Management continued for the Prop 84 Real Time Management Program Grant for compliance with the San Joaquin River Salt and Boron TMDL. Follow up and direct field work in northerly stations.