



MEMORANDUM

TO: SLDMWA Board of Directors, Alternates

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

DATE: August 4, 2022

RE: Activity Agreements – Staff Report for July 2022

This memorandum serves as the Staff Report for July 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)

A total of three projects from the Westside San Joaquin IRWM Region will be submitted for consideration by the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) for potential funding from the Proposition 1 Round 2 IRWM Implementation Grant Program. Under a previous Cooperative Agreement, a project in the San Joaquin River Funding Area (SJRFA) is eligible for the remainder of the funding amount available in Proposition 1 IRWM funding, or approximately \$950,000.00. The development of a Decision Support Tool for the Del Puerto Canyon Reservoir Project was selected to move forward. There is no such cooperative funding agreement in the Tulare-Kern Funding Area (TKFA) and all applications will be competitively analyzed by DWR for the remaining funding for that Funding Area. Two projects from Westlands Water District will compete with projects from the TKFA's seven other IRWM regions.

Staff continues to collect information about the work of irrigation and water districts in the Westside San Joaquin Region on how they are engaging with Disadvantaged Communities (DACs). The development of tailored funding matrices to help DACs be ready for future grant and other funding opportunities will be guided by work already accomplished and leveraging established relationships.

Staff continues to take part in meetings and webinars including meetings with other IRWM groups in the two funding areas the WSJ IRWM region is a part of, the IRWM Roundtable of Regions (ROR), and the IRWM ROR Disadvantaged Communities and Tribal Working Group.

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

Coordinated Activities

All six amended Groundwater Sustainability Plans (GSPs) for the Delta-Mendota Subbasin were submitted to DWR by the July 20, 2022 response deadline. The 23 GSAs in the Subbasin had six months to respond to DWR's determination of the GSPs as "incomplete" in late January. In its letter, the Department detailed four "deficiencies" and identified recommended corrective actions.

Each of the 23 GSAs formally adopted the amended plans after public hearings that were held from late June through mid-July. DWR posted the six GSPs to the SGMA portal, and have opened a 60-day comment period on each. DWR is unclear on when it will complete review and either approve the amended plans or deem the plans as "inadequate," which would trigger State Water Board intervention.

GSAs are in the process of collecting water quality monitoring data from Representative Monitoring Network Wells in the Subbasin. The information will be stored in the Subbasin's data management system and uploaded to DWR's SGMA Portal. Water Quality monitoring must be completed by the end of August. Fall groundwater level monitoring will begin September 1, 2022.

General SGMA Activities

DWR is working with Del Puerto Water District on a grant agreement for \$7.6 million dollars in grant funds from DWR's SGMA Round 1 Implementation Grant Program. Del Puerto Water District served as the lead applicant on behalf of the Subbasin. The funds will be used for projects and activities including water recharge and enhancement, installation of monitoring equipment and sites, studies, and completing revisions to "incomplete" GSPs and the 5 year GSP updates.

3. Drainage Activity Summary

Grassland Basin Drainage Management Steering Committee Activity Summary

- *Mud Slough Restoration Project*
Review issues with CDFW. Follow up discussions to be held.
- *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. To date, five of the observation wells have been installed. The remaining five were delayed due to permitting issues from Merced County and landowner issues, which are in the process of being addressed.
- *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.

- *Other ongoing activities*

Continue to review GBD invoices, 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. Work includes participation in activities for groundwater protection values.

San Joaquin Valley Drainage Authority Activity Summary

- *General*

Continue management of the Westside San Joaquin River Watershed Coalition to comply with the Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program. Distribute by mail paperwork requirements for 2021 reporting year. 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. Enter farmer evaluation and nitrogen summary reports into coalition database. Meet with members to answer program questions. Preparation of membership database for submittal to Regional Board by July 30.

- *Groundwater Protection Formula, Values and Targets*

Coalitions are developing a methodology to establish nitrogen loading values and targets as required by the WDRs. The coalitions have calculated current values by township (36 square miles) and will propose interim targets and longer-term final targets for each township. If a township does not meet the approved GWP Targets, Coalitions will need to amend their Groundwater Quality Management Plan to include new management practices designed to meet the township's GWP Target. If a Coalition has elected to comply with the state's Nitrogen Permitting Strategy through the Management Zone alternative, the Coalition will have significantly more time to meet final GWP Targets. Reviewing drafts that are being developed for submittal in July.

- *Management Zones*

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.

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The Management Zone will need to identify domestic wells that are high in nitrate and develop and plan to provide alternative water.