



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: April 4, 2024

RE: Activity Agreements – Staff Report for March 2024

This memorandum serves as the Staff Report for March 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)

Staff continues its work with Self Help Enterprises (SHE) to update Community Water Needs Assessments for disadvantaged communities (DACs) in the Westside San Joaquin IRWM Region. The updated assessments will be used to identify and prioritize the most critical drinking water needs for DACs in the region, especially during drought years. SHE has been documenting past efforts to assist DACs by AA members and cataloguing emerging projects.

The California Department of Water Resources (DWR) granted an extension to the Proposition 1 Round 1 IRWM Implementation Grant for the Westside San Joaquin IRWM Region. Work on the two remaining projects must now conclude by March 31, 2025. Well construction is complete for the Broadview Aquifer Storage and Recovery Project sponsored by Westlands Water District. With well installation complete, work will now focus on above-ground tasks. The project will benefit the aquifer below the Corcoran clay to address potential subsidence. Construction work is nearly complete on the IRWM funded portion of Orestimba Creek Recharge and Recovery Project. It will provide 60 acres of recharge ponds and associated infrastructure, and is sponsored by the Central California Irrigation District.

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

General SGMA Activities

Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) groups in the Subbasin approved submittal of the Delta-Mendota Subbasin's Water Year 2023 Annual Report. The report was submitted to DWR April 1, 2024 as required. Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSAs) are already collecting data for the Water Year 2024 Annual Report. Spring high water level readings must be taken between February 1 and April 30 annually. Data must be uploaded to the SGMA portal by June 30.

GSP groups continue work projects and tasks funded by the SGMA Round 1 Implementation Grant. Work is underway on several projects including a groundwater banking demonstration project and installation of an interconnected surface water monitoring (ISW) network along the San Joaquin River.

Coordinated Activities

The D-M Subbasin Coordination Committee continues to develop a single GSP in response to an inadequate determination levied by DWR against the amended six plans submitted by the Subbasin last summer. DWR noted four deficiencies in its determination. The revised single GSP will now be judged by the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB). The Subbasin faces a possible probationary hearing before the SWRCB in the first quarter of 2025. GSA representatives continue to invite SWRCB members to tour the Subbasin and see the efforts to achieve groundwater sustainability. The next tour for an SWRCB member and staff is scheduled April 23, 2024.

3. Drainage Activity Summary

Grassland Basin Drainage Management Steering Committee Activity Summary

The Grassland Bypass Channel gates were opened on January 3 as a result of storm events and remained open through February 28, when they were closed. Selenium water quality levels exceeded the water quality objective in Mud Slough from February 20 to March 2. Regional Water Quality Control Board staff is aware of the exceedances as well as activities to prevent future exceedances.

GBP Activities

- **General administration:** Review and approve consultant billing. Field review of drainage conditions and correspondence with SJRIP manager.
- **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 are in the process of reviewing that letter.

April 4, 2024

- 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. Special monitoring for fish and invertebrate selenium levels has occurred annually, along with efforts to collect particulate samples for selenium analysis.
- 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 but will take some time to complete. 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. Assist in the formation of the narrative for upcoming Regional Board Workshop.
- Management Practices Effectiveness Program: Attend conference call meetings of the MPEP group. Developing work schedules to implement nitrogen control measures for farmer member compliance. Along with other Coalitions provide written comments to Acceptable Ranges final report to be presented to Regional Board for public 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.
- 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). Consultants are compiling data in order to characterize current salinity conditions of both surface and groundwater across the Central Valley. This work is being supported through the SJVDA budget.

Memo to SLDMWA Board of Directors

April 4, 2024

- 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.