

## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** UGRWCD Board Members  
**FROM:** Taylor Local Users Group  
**DATE:** June 9, 2020  
**SUBJECT:** Taylor Local Users Group Meeting Minutes

A TLUG meeting was held on June 9, 2020 via teleconference. Attending the meeting were the following TLUG members:

Andy Spann, representative for irrigation users  
Pete Dunda, representative for property owners  
Ernie Cockrell, representative for Taylor Placer  
Mark Schumacher, representative for whitewater recreation interests  
Ryan Birdsey, representative for flat water recreational interests  
Roark Kiklevich, representative for wade fishermen  
Julie Vlier, UGRWCD Board Member, TLUG Chair

Also present: Erik Knight (BOR); Ryan Christianson (BOR); Ed Warner (BOR); Tom Fowlds (BOR); Mike McBride (GCEA); Matt Feier (GCEA); Dustin Brown (Scenic River Tours); Dan Brauch (CPW); Sonja Chavez and Beverly Richards (UGRWCD).

Julie Vlier (Chair) called the meeting to order.

The meeting summary from the May 20, 2020 meeting was included with the meeting information. Julie Vlier asked if there were any changes or comments on the summary. There were no changes made and the meeting summary was finalized.

Erik Knight with BOR gave the Colorado Basin River Forecast Center water supply and model forecasts. The numbers have not changed much from those supplied at the May 20 meeting. The current number still shows a total runoff inflow of about 69,000 acre-feet. This results in a continued dry year classification for the water-year. As a result of the runoff forecast, they are projecting a storage amount in Taylor Park Reservoir of just over 71,000 acre-feet in 2020.

Erik also provided a graph which included inflows, outflows, and reservoir content. Based upon the June 1 forecast, reservoir content is projected to be

the maximum of 94,000 acre-feet at an elevation of 9,324 feet which is six feet from full.

The preliminary operations plan for June 1 was included in the handouts. The operations plan is based on a dry year and is projected to result in 71,079 acre-feet of end of year storage. Releases are currently at 247 cfs and will bump up to 300 cfs beginning June 15 and will remain there through the end of July. After July, releases will decrease to 250 cfs where they will remain until the end of September.

Julie Vlier requested feedback from TLUG members on the June 1 forecast and water needs. Ernie Cockrell (Taylor Placer) said the proposed plan looks good and he had no other comments.

Andy Spann (irrigation users) said the plan looks good for now but there may need to be a change in mid-July. He will have to see how flows continue through July 15 to see if changes need to be made later in the year, possibly in September. Otherwise he is fine with the proposed plan.

Ryan Birdsey (flatwater recreation) said the reservoir elevation itself is good and he thinks the schedule of releases are also good. The group should continue with the proposed plan.

Mark Schumacher (whitewater recreation) said he likes the plan the way it is proposed, and we could possibly make adjustments in September if necessary.

Pete Dunda (Taylor property owners) said the proposed plan looks good from both a wade fishing and river flow perspective. Beaver Creek has peaked, and he would like input on Lottis Creek and Crystal. Peaks have occurred on both Lottis Creek and Taylor River for the year.

Roark Kiklevich (wade fishing) said the plan looks good and hopefully we can maintain these flows going forward.

Julie Vlier said she appreciates the information provided regarding the proposed flows and can continue to evaluate as the months proceed and may have to sacrifice flows in September. She asked for input from other attendees. Dan Brauch from CPW said the plan looks great and he had nothing to add.

It was the consensus of the group to continue with the proposed operations plan and possibly reevaluate in September if needed.

Matt Feier and Mike McBride with GCEA were in attendance to discuss the hydropower project proposed for the Taylor River basin. They are currently in the early stages of developing a project for a 200 to 500kw hydroelectric facility.

Julie Vlier said it would be helpful to understand the background of this project as hydropower has been evaluated extensively. She asked how the 200 to 500kw range was determined and noted earlier community concerns in general about the potential impacts to the environment from such a facility.

Mike McBride said that there will be some upgrading needed in the area closest to the dam, though major system upgrades are not anticipated. A study completed prior to 2012 examined impacts of a 500kw facility and found that they were minimal. There are a number of reasons for staying with this proposed size of facility.

Mike also said that in a 2016 hydropower study the streamflows needed for a 200kw facility were 20-28 cfs, which is well below even the lowest of streamflows in the river. The needs for the 500kw facility were also lower than normal streamflows. These facilities could run year-round at full capacity without the need to manage or manipulate the flows.

Julie Vlier asked if the evaluations of potential facilities consider climate change or less water in the future. Mike said these evaluations are based upon historical data and do not account for future conditions and these have not been considered yet in the process.

Ernie Cockrell said GCEA had indicated their intent to not build a project that would interfere with flow rates on the Taylor River. He has some concerns about hydro peaking interfering with any work that has been done by this group to protect the health of the river. Mike said they are committed to not asking for changes in streamflows. They have been working on the operations agreement to make sure every concern is addressed. This will include not making any attempts to change the streamflows for power generation. Based on the current flows, they have more water than is needed and any increase in flows would not increase the generation, so making no changes to the streamflows is a priority.

Julie Vlier said she has concerns about the protection of water rights as well as the protection of processes this group have in place. Mike said the operations would be based upon run of the river. Currently they are only evaluating the smaller facility but if they were to evaluate a large project, this group would be invited to be involved from the beginning.

Ryan Christianson with BOR said they are currently in the LOPP process of evaluating this proposed project. They will be working to protect all stakeholders in the process and will be trying to minimize all possible impacts. Sonja Chavez asked if there will be additional time to comment. Ryan said they are at the beginning of the process but will also be going through the NEPA process with their biggest concern being protecting users and stakeholders. Mike McBride said they are welcoming input all along the way.

Julie Vlier thanked GCEA for providing the Taylor Hydropower Project update.

Julie notified the TLUG that she is completing her four-year term on the Upper Gunnison Board of Directors and will not be seeking a second term. She will no longer be serving as the Upper Gunnison District representative to TLUG effective at the end of June. The TLUG thanked Julie for her leadership.

The next TLUG meeting is scheduled for July 8, 2020, beginning at 10:00 a.m.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:45 a.m.