



Upper Gunnison River Water Conservancy District

MEMORANDUM

TO: UGRWCD Board Members
FROM: Taylor Local Users Group (TLUG)
DATE: June 9, 2021
SUBJECT: Taylor Local Users Group Meeting Minutes

A TLUG meeting was held on Wednesday, June 9, 2021 via Zoom video/teleconference. Attending the meeting were the following TLUG members:

Ernie Cockrell, representative for Taylor Placer
Pete Dunda, representative for property owners
Roark Kiklevich, representative for wade fishing interests
Don Sabrowski, UGRWCD Board representative and TLUG Chair
Mark Schumacher, representative for whitewater recreation interests
Andy Spann, representative for irrigators

Also present: Dan Brauch (CO Parks & Wildlife); David Gochis (National Center for Atmospheric Research-NCAR); Erik Knight (BOR); Ches Russell (Scenic River Tours); Jason Ullman (DWR), Ed Warner, (BOR) Sonja Chavez, Beverly Richards, Jill Steele and Sue Uerling (all UGRWCD staff)

Chair Don Sabrowski called the meeting to order at noon and asked Bev Richards to read the names of those participating via Zoom. Andy Spann was welcomed back to the group with good wishes for his rehabilitation.

Erik Knight of the Bureau of Reclamation provided an update on Taylor River Operations. Erik noted that conditions have not varied much from the previous May 1st forecast with Taylor Reservoir holding at about 59 percent of average, still leaving year end storage at about 58,000 feet in elevation, which is slightly higher than the last forecast. The Colorado River Forecast Center is forecasting about 24,000 acre feet of inflows for the month of June, and so far these figures are right on track. Erik noted that this could change with the hot temperatures predicted for the next couple of weeks. Erik noted that the peak occurred on June 5th, so inflows will likely drop

210609 TLUG Meeting Summary

going forward. Erik said that even though there was less snow accumulation in 2021 than in 2020, the snow melted off a little more slowly this year. Erik noted that even under the minimum probable scenario of 45,000 AF of 2021 runoff, resulting in very low end-of-season storage in 2021, it would still be possible to get back up to the average year-end season storage target of 70,000 AF in 2022 assuming there will be average precipitation and average runoff conditions in 2022.

David Gochis of the National Center for Atmospheric Research (NCAR) reported that NCAR's June 1st seasonal water supply forecasts for the Upper Gunnison basin show that values have mostly held steady for the Taylor River basin, while the East River values at Almont have trended downward a little. David reported that the Taylor River's median inflows for April through September 2021 are expected to be about 28,340 acre feet with the median total Taylor Reservoir inflow for the year coming in at 51,500 acre feet. He also said that all of the Snotel sights have long since melted out with the Schofield site melting out last as of June 3rd. David said there is not much snow left in the basin, but he agreed with Erik that the snow did melt off a little more slowly than last year.

Erik Knight then reviewed the three different worst case drought inflow model scenarios that were included with the meeting materials. Erik noted that the three models are based on historical data with April-July 2021 runoff volume assumptions of 58,000 AF; 49,000 AF and 45,000 AF.

Erik reiterated that even with the worst-case scenario of 45,000 AF of runoff, it would still be possible to reach 70,000 AF in 2022 with average precipitation, average runoff and the current release schedule. Erik said the biggest changes to these models will be when the focus shifts to post run-off, especially if conditions remain very dry during summer and fall. Erik asked if there were questions about the scenarios he provided. None were raised.

Chair Don Sabrowski asked for input on flow requests and questioned if it would be helpful for the rafting and agricultural interests if the group attempted to extend the season a little further by keeping releases at 250 cfs through the end of June and then bump it up to 300 cfs later in July. Mark Schumacher said that this would not really be saving any water but would just be shifting it to later, but that he did not have a problem with Don's suggestion.

Andy Spann agreed that he did not see this as a water saving measure but just shifting it later, but he worried that if irrigators are not seeing the releases they need for irrigation in late June and early July, they will just go to the river and create diversions for their needs which will affect users downstream.

Ernie Cockrell asked if there was a little boost from the Spring Creek draw down if the group could continue to be a little more conservative on the front end by keeping the current releases of 250 cfs through June 16th, bumping up to 275 cfs June 16th through July 15th rather than increasing to 300 cfs on July 1st? Ernie noted that he

210609 TLUG Meeting Summary

does not have a lot of confidence with the projected inflows based on last year's results and said that if conditions get worse, "you can't get the water back once it's gone."

Andy Spann suggested that the releases be kept at 250 cfs through June 16th, 275 cfs June 16th through 30th and then bumping up to 300 cfs July 1st through July 15th. Chair Don Sabrowski asked for a roll call vote. The motion carried unanimously.

Chair Don Sabrowski asked Dan Brauch of CO Parks and Wildlife (CPW) to update the group on Spring Creek Reservoir operations. Dan reported that CPW started drawing down the reservoir on Tuesday (June 8). Dan said the maximum the outlet pipe can handle will be between 60 and 70 cfs and that plans are still on target to have Spring Creek drawn down completely by August.

UGRWCD Manager Sonja Chavez reviewed the Gunnison River Festival (GRF) schedule for the upcoming weekend, noting that registration for the Taylor River races begins at 4:30 p.m. on Friday, followed by the awards ceremony, live band and barbecue at 6:45 p.m. at Campfire Ranch Campground/Gunnison Mountain Park. Sonja said there will be education workshops and tours on Saturday and the GRF Fun Run registration will begin at 9 am on Sunday, June 13 at the Van Tuyl Trail. See the full schedule at: www.gunnisonriverfestival.com.

Under miscellaneous updates, Sonja noted that according to Steve Anders from the USGS, the new gages at Texas and Willow Creeks were installed about three weeks ago and they are now collecting data. Rating curves are being developed and we should be able to rely on data beginning in July.

Chair Don Sabrowski asked the group if they wanted to resume in-person meetings. The consensus was to hold the meeting in person with the option of attending via Zoom, so the July TLUG meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, July 7th at 9 am at the UGRWCD conference room at 210 West Spencer, Suite B in Gunnison. The Zoom login information for the meeting will be provided with the July agenda.

Representative Pete Dunda announced that his band will play for the 4th of July Dance in the Three Rivers Pavilion from 2 to 5 p.m. He encouraged guests to bring their own snacks and drinks and help keep the tradition alive. Mark Schumacher noted that this will be the 100th Anniversary of the Three Rivers Pavilion.

There were no citizen comments.

Chair Don Sabrowski adjourned the meeting at 1 p.m.