

**MINUTES**  
**Taylor Local Users Group**  
**June 6<sup>th</sup> , 2023**

**TLUG Attendees:**

TLUG Representatives Present:

Ryan Birdsey (Flatwater Recreation)  
Don Sabrowski (Chair)  
Mark Schumacher (Boating Interests)  
David Fisher (Property Owners)  
Roark Kiklevich (Wade Fishing via Zoom)  
Ernie Cockrell (Taylor Placer via Zoom)  
Andy Spann (Agricultural via Zoom)

Others in person:

Bill Gallenbeck (Taylor Dam Outlet Operations)  
Rory Birdsey (Taylor Park Marina)  
Dustin Brown (Scenic River Tours)  
Doug Forshagen (Crystal Creek Homeowner's Association)

Beverly Richards (UGRWCD)  
Sonja Chavez (UGRWCD)  
Sue Uerling (UGRWCD)  
Alana Nichols (UGRWCD)  
Cheryl Cwelich (UGRWCD)

By Zoom:

Erik Knight (BOR)  
Elliot Manning (Eleven Angling)  
Dave Gochis (UCAR)  
Jeff Deems (ASO)  
John Bocchino (Riffle and Rise LLC)  
Sean Slattery (Irwin Guides)  
Patrick Blackdale (Three Rivers Fishing Outfitting)  
Raquel Flinker (Colorado River Water Conservancy District)

**I. Introduction & Approval of Minutes**

Following introductions Chairman Don Sabrowski asked the Board if there were any requested changes to the May 5<sup>th</sup>, 2023, meeting minutes.

There were no discussions or changes for the May 5<sup>th</sup> meeting minutes.

## **II. CBRFC Water Supply Update and USBR Model Forecast**

Erik Knight presented the CBRFC forecast. He mentioned the June forecast will increase the inflow runoff volume to 118,000 acre-feet for April-July. The inflows to Taylor Park Reservoir will be 126% of average. This is a 5,000-acre-foot increase compared to the mid-May forecast. There was a distinctive decrease in June inflows that dropped just under 700 cfs. The forecast inflows are projected to increase again above 900 cfs in the 10-day inflow projection. The inflows have been moderate because Taylor Park hasn't gotten up to the peak flows expected at this point. The Taylor Park Operations graph shows a projected content of 98% full and a maximum fill of 104,656 acre-feet. This maximum content is about 1 foot under the spillway crest. The release rate is at 450 cfs which is part of meeting the 10-day release requirement. The 10-day peak release was just met yesterday June 5<sup>th</sup>, but the peak release was extended a couple weeks to manage the increase in runoff and prevent the reservoir from spilling. The release flows will drop back down to 400 cfs during the last week of June. There are no other changes to the release schedule moving forward as of now. The end of October shows an increase in content of 77,405 acre-feet which creates a good buffer in case other changes need to be made or someone wants to increase releases.

Ryan Birdsey asked Erik Knight if inflow decrease is due to cooler temperatures up valley. Erik Knight believed it is due to cooler temperatures and possible cloud cover. He does not think we will have a higher peak of inflow than what we have seen so far.

Cheryl Cwelich asked Eric Knight what date they plan to decrease release flows because the Gunnison River Festival (GRF) Taylor Downriver Race is June 23<sup>rd</sup> and higher flows would be better for the race. Erik Knight mentioned they plan to decrease release flows to 400 cfs on June 25<sup>th</sup> which works out well for GRF.

## **III. Latest UCAR WRF-Hydro Model Forecast**

David Gochis presented the latest UCAR WRF-Hydro model forecast. He mentioned there is still a significant amount of snowpack on Cottonwood Pass and showed an image of the pass from two days prior. This forecast was also recently validated by the ASO flight on May 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup>. As of May 27<sup>th</sup>, the Upper Taylor Basin had 72 kaf SWE remaining and East River Basin had 156 kaf SWE remaining. The WRF-Hydro forecast showed an increase at Taylor Reservoir inflow, Texas Creek and Willow Creek. However, the mainstem Taylor River forecast remained identical to what it was from the last WRF-Hydro model. The flow forecasts in the East River and Ohio Creek have started to decrease.

The ASO- assimilation model revealed a steady depletion in the northwest mainstem of Taylor River Basin. However, the model showed there was still a significant amount of

snowpack on the eastern and southern Basin. The ASO flight indicated there is more snowpack overall in the Basin than what was originally estimated. The ASO flight exhibited an elevation profile of a green light in Texas and Willow Creek which indicates a slower rate of melt. When looking at impacts on streamflow plots there is a small difference between forecast cycles on the Taylor River. The streamflow plots for Texas and Willow Creek show a larger proportional increase from latest forecasts. When looking at data from stream gauges Texas and Willow Creek are larger than what was observed last year at this time.

The Blue Mesa Reservoir inflow forecast over the last month had been steady at about 900,000 acre-feet with the combined impact being unaffected according to the WRF-Hydro forecast.

Jeff Deems mentioned the SWE difference between ASO surveys showing more snow persistent in the Texas and Willow Creek drainages compared to Taylor River mainstem drainage above the reservoir.

Don Sabrowski asked David Gochis if there are any anticipated potential problems with the East River flows since we are expecting to see an increase in temperatures.

David Gochis mentioned that issues with peak flows on the East River is not included in the model, but it could be added in the future. What is shown in the next 10 days is data from the historical climate record for sampling. There is high soil saturation in the basin and would not be surprised by accelerated rates down the East River soon.

Sonja Chavez mentioned that during the County Flood meetings, they mentioned that the Town of Crested Butte is watching Coal Creek because it is an area of concern for residents regarding flooding.

Don Sabrowski asked if the stream gauge had undergone maintenance and if the readings were verified/accurate at the dam outlet, Texas and Willow Creeks?

Bill Gallenbeck said that the USGS was out last week checking all stream gauges.

#### **IV. Preliminary TLUG Draft Operational Release Recommendations:**

Sonja Chavez will be attending the Four Parties meeting in the next couple weeks which means the TLUG members need to nail down what recommendations for flows need to be made.

Mark Schumacher and Roark Kiklevich are very happy that combined forecasts have been so accurate.

Ernie Cockrell thinks flows look great. He believes going into the end of the year with a buffer is great. He is very happy to have so much water this year. He agrees with Mark and Roark.

Andy Spann agriculture community is happy. It is great to have water and accurate forecasts models.

Ryan Birdsey said having a full reservoir is good and maybe wants to hold some water back for next year. He suggested we receive our data 24-48 hours before the meetings if possible, so he has time to review the data.

Mark Schumacher agrees.

UGRWCD Post Meeting Note: Per General Counsel, "Having additional storage for next year is prudent; however, we will need a written agreement from the parties to the stipulation that modifies the operating regime set out there."

## **V. Miscellaneous Updates:**

Sonja Chavez mentioned UGRWCD submitted the application to BOR for the snow measurement study and ASO flights for the next three years. She attended the UVWUA meeting and discussed what data they would be using to determine what state of drought they are in and how it affects municipal water providers. They also discussed the nexus between their DCP development and participating in our DCP development because they rely on the Taylor River for their water supply. Their Task Force will be meeting every six months and she will report back to the TLUG. The UGRWCD will be having a DCP kickoff meeting in the middle of June.

Sonja and Beverly are regularly attending Gunnison County's emergency operations planning meeting regarding flows and flooding.

## **VI. Schedule Next Meeting:**

Next meeting planned for Monday July 10<sup>th</sup> at 12:00pm.

This meeting was adjourned at 12:37pm by Chair Don Sabrowski.