

**MINUTES**  
**Taylor Local Users Group**  
**September 8<sup>th</sup>, 2023**

**TLUG Attendees:**

TLUG Representatives Present:

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

Others in Person:

Rory Birdsey (Taylor Park Marina)  
Sonja Chavez (UGRWCD)  
Sue Uerling (UGRWCD)  
Alana Nichols (UGRWCD)

By Zoom:

Doug Forshagen (Crystal Creek Homeowners)  
Dustin Brown (Scenic River Tours)  
Sean Slattery (Irwin Guides)

**I. Introductions & Approval of Minutes:**

Sonja Chavez called the meeting to order at 12:00 p.m. She informed the TLUG group that Chairman Don Sabrowski and Erik Knight were unable to attend the meeting today. Sonja Chavez asked the TLUG if there were any requested changes to the August 8<sup>th</sup>, 2023, meeting minutes. There was no discussion or changes for the August 8<sup>th</sup> meeting minutes. The minutes were unanimously approved.

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

Erik Knight was unable to attend the meeting, however he provided a written update to accompany the September Taylor Operations Report. The actual August 2023 inflow came in at approximately 500 acre-feet lower than the forecast at mid-month. The September 2023 inflow forecast has also decreased by 500 acre-feet from the August mid-month forecast. The current inflows are around 100 cfs and current releases are just under 300 cfs. The 300 cfs release rate is scheduled to continue through the end of September. In order to achieve the end of year storage objective of 75,000 acre-feet, release adjustments need to be made . Erik recommends starting the decrease of releases to 200 cfs one week earlier. In addition, Erik recommends ramping down from 200 cfs to 100 cfs (winter flow rate) four days earlier in October from the 15<sup>th</sup> to the 12<sup>th</sup> (25 cfs

decrease per day). With these adjustments, the October 31<sup>st</sup> end of year storage content is projected to be 75,400 acre-feet.

### **III. Preliminary TLUG Draft Operational Recommendations:**

Sonja Chavez asked the Board if they had any recommendations based on Erik Knight's recommended adjustments to the model forecast.

Mark Schumacher, Roark Kiklevich and David Fisher all agreed with Erik Knight's recommendations. Ryan Birdsey was having some issues with Zoom, but noted in the chat box that he, too, agreed with Erik Knight's recommendations.

Ernie Cockrell noted that he is concerned with the continued decreasing trend in the forecast models. He recommended dropping another 25 cfs daily beginning in the middle of September, which would leave an extra 1,000 cfs to work with. He thinks it would be wise to have some extra cushion to go into the winter with more in storage than 75,000 acre-feet.

Sonja Chavez noted that the final flow recommendation presented to Erik Knight is based on the consensus of the group. Sonja was concerned about moving forward without having Andy Spann on the meeting to provide input for the agricultural community. (Andy was having issues connecting via Zoom.) Sonja noted that she thinks there is time to wait for the mid-month forecast, which should come out in less than two weeks, allowing the group to make additional adjustments then if needed.

Mark Schumacher reported that all of the rafters are planning to continue operations through the end of September.

Ernie Cockrell said there was a significant amount of water released during the summertime and he had suggested several times that more water be held back for storage. He said he is trying not to be insensitive to other user's needs, but he does think it's important to have a buffer of more than 75,000 acre-feet of storage during a wet year.

Sonja Chavez asked for a motion on Erik Knight's recommendation.

Mark Schumacher motioned to approve the flows as recommended by Erik Knight.

Roark Kiklevich seconded this motion. Sonja called for a vote and the motion carried, with Ernie Cockrell opposing.

Sonja Chavez noted that she would reach out to the TLUG after the mid-September forecast comes out, if additional adjustments were needed.

Mark Schumacher asked about the accuracy of the controlled releases. Sonja Chavez replied that the release levels could vary by 3-5 cfs. Mark stated that he believes the accuracy could be off by as much as 10-15 cfs which could require additional adjustments earlier. Rory Birdsey said it sometimes takes dam operator Bill Gallenbeck

three to four days to adjust the releases to the recommended level. Rory said that Bill will be gone for the next three to four weeks.

Sonja Chavez said she'll reach out to BOR and Uncompahgre Valley Water Users Association to make them aware that an adjustment to the forecast might be required in mid-September while Bill is gone.

Andy Spann was finally able to join the meeting via Zoom and Sonja Chavez informed him about Ernie Cockrell's suggestion to hold back the releases a little early to allow for a storage buffer and about the motion that was made and approved by the other TLUG members.

Andy said that he was in agreement with the motion to proceed with Erik Knight's recommended flow schedule. Andy believes there is time before the end of the month to make adjustments if necessary. He noted that as the hay meadows are being cut, they can use a little extra water before headgates are shut off.

Ernie Cockrell asked Sonja when the mid-month report might be available. It was noted that the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month is a Friday, so the report likely would not be released until the middle of the following week. Sonja Chavez suggested Wednesday, September 20, 2023 at noon for the next meeting, if necessary, depending on whether the forecast changes much from the September 1<sup>st</sup> report. Sonja asked if this meeting could be held by Zoom only and the TLUG members agreed.

#### **IV. Miscellaneous Updates:**

Sonja Chavez informed the group that Becky Mitchell, the state of Colorado's Commissioner to the Upper Colorado River Commission, came to the UGRWCD Board of Directors meeting on August 28<sup>th</sup> and noted that it was a good opportunity to visit with her about current water resource issues. Sonja reported there is a new Executive Director of the Colorado Water Conservation Board, Lauren Ris.

The Drought Contingency Planning (DCP) process began this morning with a kick-off Task Force meeting. The Task Force is a diverse group with technical expertise. The Task Force will assist in developing the scope of work and a plan for carrying out the DCP. They will also contribute to outreach efforts, gathering input from representatives and stakeholders. The consultants working on the DCP include Carrie Padgett, who has prior experience with DCP, and Stacy Beagh, a natural resources professional facilitator.

Sonja asked if anyone attending from the public had any comments. None were made.

David Gochis from the University Corporation for Atmospheric Research was on the line and he provided a brief recap of the final WRF-Hydro Taylor Reservoir April-July inflow forecast. His model showed inflows of 118.3 kaf, which was just slightly higher than the observed amount of 118.0 kaf. The current WRF-Hydro April-October inflow forecast, stands at 129,300 acre-feet, but the BOR record anticipates another 1,000 AF will flow

into Taylor. The Taylor River above Taylor Reservoir contributed 57 percent of the total inflow to Taylor Reservoir. The soil moisture trends show a strong depletion due to the lack of a monsoon season. According to the model, the soil moisture is lower now than it was at the start of November 2022. He does believe the groundwater did get a good recharge this year. He will provide a full season summary at the end of September.

Sonja Chavez asked if Dave Gochis could present the WRF-Hydro forecast to the UGRWCD Board of Directors at the September 25<sup>th</sup> Board meeting and he agreed.

**V. Adjournment:**

This meeting was adjourned at 12:22 p.m. by Sonja Chavez.