

# Upper Gunnison Drought Contingency Plan: Stakeholder Minutes

September 25<sup>th</sup>, 2024

## **Task Force Attendees:**

Liz Smith (Gunnison County)  
Chase Cordora (Western Colorado University)  
Lisa Bickford (Gunnison County Emergency Management)  
Janna Hansen (Town of Crested Butte, PROST)  
David Gardner (Gunnison Public Work Director)  
Marlene Crosby  
Bob Robbins  
Steve Ogden  
Cody Tusing  
David Carr  
Bill Kettechagen  
Gretchen Rank  
Ben Prior  
Brandon Diamond (Colorado Parks and Wildlife)  
Jeff Writer (SGM)  
Krystal Brown (Gunnison Highschool)  
Gavin Vasquez (Gunnison Highschool)  
Riego Koepsel (Gunnison Highschool)  
Andrew Breibart (Bureau of Land Management)

## **Via Zoom:**

John Coy (Hinsdale County)  
Raquel Flinker (Colorado River District)  
Robert Sakata  
Jonathan Houck (Gunnison County Commissioner)  
Brinnan Carter (National Park Service)  
Jon Hare (High Country Conservation Advocates)  
Lee Traynham (BOR)  
Savannah Nelson (Sunshine Creatives)

## **Staff/Consultants:**

Carrie Padgett (Harris Water Group)  
Stacy Beaugh (Strategic By Nature)  
Sonja Chavez (UGRWCD)  
Alana Nichols (UGRWCD)

## **I. Introductions & Agenda Review:**

Stacy Beagh provided an overview of the meeting goals, which included learning about the Upper Gunnison River Drought Contingency Plan process and its significance. The meeting also aimed at developing potential mitigation strategies and response actions for the Drought Contingency Plan. Stakeholders were encouraged to gain insight into diverse perspectives on drought experiences and the impacts on water users and associated interests. The meeting sought to facilitate discussions that would support the Upper Gunnison River Water Conservancy District (UGRWCD) and water users in advancing the mitigation and response actions process.

## **II. Drought Contingency Plan DCP:**

Carrie Padgett provided an overview of the Upper Gunnison Drought Contingency Plan (DCP) process. The Task Force is in the final stages of the vulnerability assessment and is transitioning into the mitigation and response action phase. To date, the Task Force has identified 10 overarching goals that the Upper Gunnison DCP will focus on to enhance the basin's resilience to drought. These goals will serve as a foundation for determining both short-term and long-term mitigation and response actions for the Upper Gunnison Basin.

## **III. Review and Refine DCP Goals:**

The goals outlined for the Upper Gunnison Drought Contingency Plan (DCP) serve as overarching objectives for the plan's success. If the plan is successfully implemented, these goals will guide the basin toward increased resilience. Stakeholders were asked to consider the following questions: Which goals are most important to you? Are there any concepts that might be missing? Are there any goals that should be excluded? Additionally, stakeholders were asked whether they believe these goals will effectively set the stage for an actionable plan. To gather input, stakeholders were divided into discussion groups to review these questions.

The following actions were outlined for the Upper Gunnison DCP:

- Ensure the DCP is actionable.
- Protect and enhance the community's built and natural water infrastructure.
- Preserve diverse community values such as safe/quality drinking water, thriving agriculture/ranching, ecosystem health, and a strong recreational economy.
- Be proactive and prepare for the future.
- Use data to inform decision making.
- Advance a collaborative approach to share responsibility, leverage resources, and connect with similar initiatives.
- Be creative to look for win-win and multi-benefit actions and solutions.
- Respect the hydrologic, ecological, and cultural differences in each subbasin.
- Promote a shared and consistent message.
- Inspire community action and a shared responsibility through education.

The stakeholder input gathered will be reviewed by the Upper Gunnison DCP administration team and Task Force to finalize the list of goals for the plan.

#### **IV. Potential Mitigation and Response Actions:**

There are roughly 80 draft mitigation and response actions outlined in the Upper Gunnison mitigation and response actions worksheet categorized into various sectors: recreation, agriculture, environmental, municipal, and education. Stakeholders were asked to review these actions, providing feedback on their relevance and effectiveness within each sector.

The draft mitigation and response actions are available for review through the following link: [Mitigation and Response Actions Document](#).

After stakeholders provide their input, the feedback will be compiled and shared with the Upper Gunnison Task Force. This collaborative process is intended to refine the list of actions and ensure they align with the overarching goals of the DCP, ultimately creating an actionable plan for the Upper Gunnison Basin's drought resilience. The consultants working on the Upper Gunnison DCP will synthesize the input before presenting the results to the Task Force for further review and finalization.

#### **V. Next Steps:**

There will be four upcoming workshops to review and refine the DCP goals and mitigation and response actions.

**Environmental Workshop:** Thursday, September 26 at 1:00 p.m.

**Municipal Workshop:** Wednesday, September 25 at 2:30 p.m.

**Agency Workshop:** Tuesday, October 15 at 1:00 p.m.

**Recreation Workshop:** Wednesday, October 16 at 9:00 a.m.

The next Task Force Meeting will be Wednesday, October 23<sup>rd</sup> at 9:00 a.m.

This meeting was adjourned by Stacy Beagh at 10:48 a.m.