

MINUTES
Taylor Local Users Group
September 4, 2025, 8:30 a.m.

TLUG Attendees:

TLUG Representatives Present:

Don Sabrowski, TLUG Chair

Ernest Cockrell (Taylor Placer via Zoom)

Roark Kiklevich (Wade Fishing Interests)

Mark Schumacher (Boating Interests)

Andy Spann (Irrigation Interests)

Ryan Birdsey (Flatwater Recreation Interests Via Zoom)

Not Present:

David Fisher (Property Owners Interests Via Zoom)

Other Attendees:

Sonja Chavez (UGRWCD)

Attendees Via Zoom:

Dustin Brown (Scenic River Tours)

David Gochis (Airborne Snow Observatory)

Doug Forshagen (Crystal Creek Homeowners)

Pete Dunda (Taylor River Resident)

Patrick Plumley (Gunnison River Resident and Fishing Enthusiast)

I. Approval of Minutes

Don Sabrowski called the meeting to order. The minutes from the August 5th TLUG meeting were presented for review. The minutes were approved by consensus.

II. Upper Gunnison Basin Water Supply Report – Sonja Chavez

Sonja presented PowerPoint slides showing the current drought conditions in the Upper Gunnison Basin, highlighting the development of extreme and exceptional drought areas. She displayed precipitation data, including 30-day and 7-day totals, as well as a 7-day forecast, noting that the basin is currently at 82% of its median precipitation for this time of year. The

presentation also included a comparison of precipitation between the western and eastern parts of Colorado, with the Front Range receiving more rain than the western slope.

III. CBRFC Water Supply Update and USBR Model Forecast – Conor Felletter, USBR

The Taylor Park Reservoir September 1, 2025, forecast decreased by 100 AF compared to the August forecast.

The observed April through July runoff into Taylor Park Reservoir was 61,000 AF (65% of average). This runoff forecast puts the year in the Dry Year category with an end of October target content of 61,000 AF. The current forecast and release plan results in an October 31st content of 61,800 AF which provides the TLUG with an 800 AF buffer for any potential future drops in basin water supply.

Releases from Taylor Park Dam are currently at 225 cfs. The next change in the model is to reduce to 200 cfs on October 1st.

All TLUG representatives present supported the forecast provided by USBR for the month of September. Unless the September 15th forecast shows a significant decline in hydrology the TLUG will maintain releases at 225 cfs through September and lower the release rate to 200 cfs on October 1.

IV. WRF-Hydro Model Forecast Reports (ASO, Inc.) – Dave Gochis, ASO

David Gochis presented information from the WRF-Hydro forecast. He explained that the WRF Hydro model run aligns well with CBRFC. The small difference between the two models is likely a result of continued uncertainty of how much rain we will get. The overarching story is that across the Upper Gunnison Basin, stream baseflow values are the lowest to date until the most recent rains we received. These are a good reflection of antecedent soil moisture content so we should watch it to plan for how it may affect runoff efficiency next year. Baseflows in September are even lower than what we saw last year in November. Soil moisture at the Snotel and Snolite stations (Trail Creek, Cottonwood Pass and Mirror Lake) are trending on the very dry side. The forecast from the GFS model over next seven days shows modest monsoon activity. The GFS model is a little more positive than the European model. Over the next week or two there are at least two pushes of tropical moisture. Cool temperatures and regular afternoon cloud cover should keep evaporative demand lower in the Upper Gunnison.

V. Winter Flow Release Calculations Clarification

Ryan Birdsey asked for clarification on the calculation for determining winter flow release, specifically the instructions on “rounding to the nearest whole number” in the formula. As requested, the General Manager looked into and is providing the TLUG with a summary to help clarify what Ernie was explaining from the stipulation about where rounding happens:

1. **Determination of October 31 Minimum Storage Object for Dry Years.** Table 2 “Minimum Storage Objectives in Dry Years” summarizes the October 31 minimum storage objectives based upon the preliminary May 1 and June 1 forecasted inflow. As an example, if the final forecasted inflow as of June 1 is >60,000 AF but ≤61,000 AF (which is our current situation), then the table rounds up the October 31 end of year storage objective to be 61,000 AF.
2. **Winter Operations and Determination of Winter Flow Rates.** Winter flow rates are set based on or before November 1 based upon actual reservoir content on October 31. As an example, if the actual content of the reservoir on October 31 is less than 70,000 AF but more than 60,000 AF then we have to use the following formula to determine the winter release in cfs:

$$75 + .001 \times (\text{Actual October 31 content} - 60,000) \text{ rounded to the nearest whole number}$$

Carrying out this formula using the hypothetical example that this year we end up with a reservoir content of 61,523 AF on October 31, UGRWCD’s interpretation of the formula above is that the rounding takes place after you do the math and get the flow rate in cfs. In this case, the math result looks as follows:

$$\begin{aligned} &75 + .001 \times (61,523 - 60,000) \\ &= 75 + .001 \times (1,523) \\ &= 75 + 1.523 \\ &= 76.523 \text{ which when rounded becomes} \\ &= 77 \end{aligned}$$

In either case, rounding before or after, the difference in the resultant winter flow rate isn’t worth “falling on a sword over” given that we can’t control dam releases any better than within a range of 5-7 cfs. Consider the math in the example below when we have a hypothetical end of year storage content of 61,499 AF and we do rounding both ways:

$$\begin{aligned} &75 + .001 \times (61,499 - 60,000) \\ &= 75 + .001 \times (1,499) = 75 + 1.49 = 76.49 \text{ or } 77 \text{ cfs when rounded to the nearest whole \#} \end{aligned}$$

OR, ALTERNATIVELY

$$\begin{aligned}
&= 75 + .001 \times (1,499 \text{ rounded to nearest whole number prior to doing math} = 1,000) \\
&= 75 + .001 \times (1,000) \\
&= 75 + 1 = \mathbf{76 \text{ cfs}}
\end{aligned}$$

The difference between 77 and 76 cfs is 1 cfs and we can't control the dam release to within this degree of accuracy so either way we do it, the UGRWCD is fine with it.

Finally, Ernie did a great job of explaining what happens in a year when the October 31 end of year storage content is *less than* 60,000 AF. As a hypothetical example, the end of year storage content on October 31 is 58,400 AF. In this situation, the stipulation says that the rate of release shall be reduced from 75 cfs **by 2.5 cfs** for *every 1,000 AF* that the reservoir content is below 60,000. In this case, because we didn't fall below 58,000, we would reduce the winter flow rate by 2.5 cfs to 72.5 cfs.

VI. SEPTEMBER MID-MONTH REVIEW

Connor Felletter (USBR) will provide the mid-month forecast by September 17th via email, although he will be on a tribal river trip the following week and unable to meet. The TLUG agreed to communicate via email if any changes are needed in the release schedule to account for any significant downward trends in the forecast.

Water Management and Conservation Article Discussion

The group agreed to consider drafting an end-of-year article about water management and drought conditions in 2025.

VII. MEETING ACTION ITEMS

- Connor will provide a mid-month forecast by September 17th via email.
- Sonja to prepare a newspaper release about anticipated Taylor River flow releases for September.

VIII. Meeting Adjournment