

MINUTES
Taylor Local Users Group
July 7, 12:00 p.m.

TLUG Attendees:

TLUG Representatives Present:

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

Other Attendees:

Sonja Chavez (UGRWCD)
Beverly Richards (UGRWCD)
Julio Del Piccolo (Colorado Parks and Wildlife)
Patrick Plumley (GAS Representative)

Attendees Via Zoom:

Ernie D. Cockrell
David Gochis (Airborne Snow Observatory)
Dustin Brown (Scenic River Tours)
Reece Carpenter (US Bureau of Reclamation)
Andrew Limbach (US Bureau of Reclamation)
Doug Forshagen (Crystal Creek HOA)
Dirk Schumacher (Three Rivers Resort)
Caleb Foy (Colorado River District)

I. Approval of Minutes

Don Sabrowski called the meeting to order. The minutes from June 9, 2026 were presented for review and approval. No corrections were presented.

Mark Schumacher moved and Roark Kiklevich seconded approval of the June 9, 2026 minutes. The motion carried.

II. Upper Gunnison Basin Water Supply Report – Beverly Richards

Beverly presented slides showing that severe to extreme drought conditions are ongoing in Gunnison County. The basin continues to experience degradation in drought conditions, particularly in Hinsdale and Saguache counties, due to the lack of precipitation. Streamflow continues to decline with current conditions ranging from 12 to 20% of the historical average. Forecasts show that the basin could receive minimal precipitation within the next seven days.

III. USGS Response to Gage Readings at Dam Outlet and Almont Sites – Sonja Chavez, UGRWCD General Manager

General Manager Sonja Chavez said she spoke with USGS about the gage reading on the Taylor River that was brought up at the previous meeting. She was told that shallow groundwater could be responsible for the additional flow in the river that is being measured at Almont. She indicated that there have always been differences in flow between the two sites and that we are simply more aware of the groundwater contribution this year because of the lack of tributary flow input we see visually.

IV. CBRFC Water Supply Update and USBR Model Forecast – Andrew Limbach, USBR

Andrew reported that the July 1st official forecast was 32,000 acre-feet for the April to July period which was a decrease of 1,000 acre-feet from the mid-month forecast. For the operations plan, he proposed a reduction in flows beginning on August 16th and continuing until the winter flow rate of 55 cfs is reached on October 1st. This plan will place the end of year storage content at 50,000 acre-feet on October 31st.

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

David Gochis provided information from a model run that was initiated on June 30th. The forecast showed a drop of 2.6 thousand acre-feet (TAF) in Taylor Reservoir inflow from the previous forecast. The big driver of the change is low Upper Taylor River mainstem contributions. This was due to continued hot, dry, and windy conditions. The East River at Almont has come down a little from the previous forecast by about 1,000 acre-feet. With regard to soil moisture, most SNOTEL Light sites have dried out (except Cottonwood Pass). The steepness of flow decline and severity of hot and dry weather has brought the model forecast down resulting in lower base flow contributions at most stream gage sites.

Taylor model also looked at tributary flow contributions between Taylor Dam and Almont, and consistent with USGS's response, the difference is explained by ground water contribution. Finally, Dave discussed the weather prediction for the next seven days. There is an indication of weak monsoon activity, but the fourteen-day forecast shows a more robust monsoon signal.

VI. Preliminary TLUG Draft Operational Release Recommendations

Each representative was asked to provide input on flow recommendations provided by Reclamation. Ernie suggested making some changes to August flows and emphasized that scenario should consider a gradual rather than abrupt ramp down.

Mark felt that the group should not be considering changes to August this early in July as it effectively ends the rafting season. He suggested that the group wait to see what happens with monsoon and could evaluate conditions and changes at August meeting.

Andy asked if we could go back to the Four Parties to discuss the possibility of going below the 50,000 acre-feet current floor previously proposed by UGRWCD and approved by Four Parties. Sonja indicated that she was happy to have a discussion with them but wanted to model the impact this might have on second-fill next year, especially if this year is followed by another drought year.

Ernie suggested the group meet again in late July rather than waiting until the August meeting. Andrew Limbach said he would be able to provide an interim forecast the last week of July and provide to the TLUG and that hopefully this information will encompass improvements from rain. Dave Gochis said he could provide a weather forecast in the 3-to-5-day timeframe.

VII. Miscellaneous Matters

Sonja indicated that the District is aware of and monitoring the Gold Mountain Fire which has now moved into Gunnison County and within the District's political boundaries. She also said the Water Quality Control Commission relaxed enforcement on temperature due to extreme drought conditions.

Blue Mesa is now projected to fall below minimum power pool in early August rather than October. The Uncompahgre Valley Water Users is contemplating a call in 2027 if we have another drought year in 2027. A call would require them to dry up the river through the Black

Canyon reach which will have early season effects on junior water users (i.e., rights later than 1907 Tunnel) in the Upper Gunnison Basin.

Action Items:

- Staff will share the USGS Ag Return Flow video clip with TLUG members.
- Staff will contact Caleb Foy to model impacts of a sub-50,000-acre-foot storage amount on the 2027 second fill combined with the Blue Mesa scenario.

VIII. Citizen Comments

There were no citizen comments

IX. Next Meeting Date

The next TLUG meeting is scheduled for July 27, 2026, at 9:00 a.m.

X. Adjournment

The July 7 meeting was adjourned by TLUG Chairman Don Sabrowski at 1:19 p.m.