

MINUTES
Taylor Local Users Group
August 5, 2026 9:00 a.m.

TLUG Attendees:

TLUG Representatives Present:

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

TLUG Representative Absent: David Fisher (Homeowners Interests)

Other Attendees:

Sonja Chavez (UGRWCD)
Beverly Richards (UGRWCD)
Giulio Del Piccolo (Colorado Parks and Wildlife)

Attendees Via Zoom:

Ernie D. Cockrell
David Gochis (Airborne Snow Observatory)
Dustin Brown (Scenic River Tours)
Andrew Limbach (US Bureau of Reclamation)
Dennis Cakebread (Crystal Creek HOA)
Dirk Schumacher (Three Rivers Resort)
Caleb Foy (Colorado River District)
Patrick Plumley (GAS Representative)
Ryan Unterreiner (Colorado Parks and Wildlife)
Luke Mecklenburg (Attorney General's Office)

I. Approval of Minutes

Don Sabrowski called the meeting to order. The minutes from July 7, 2026 and July 27, 2026 were presented for review and approval. No corrections were presented.

Mark Schumacher moved and Roark Kiklevich seconded approval of the July 7, 2026 minutes. The motion carried.

Mark Schumacher moved and Ernie Cockrell seconded approval of the July 27, 2026 minutes. The motion carried.

II. Upper Gunnison Basin Water Supply Report – Beverly Richards

Beverly presented slides showing that drought conditions continue to degrade in Gunnison County. This degradation is due to the lack of precipitation and extreme warm temperatures that have occurred since the beginning of August. Streamflow also continues to decline with current conditions still well below the historical average. The seven-day forecast for August 3 through August 10 shows that the basin may not receive any precipitation in that time frame, which is a departure from normal of one-half to one inch of precipitation.

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

Andrew reported that the August 1st official forecast was 33,000 acre-feet for the April to July period which was an increase of 500 acre-feet from the mid-July forecast. He stated that this was 1,500 acre-feet below the lowest amount ever recorded, which was in 2002. Based upon the 24-month study from the CBRFC, this projection is based upon five similar years and the fact that the area has seen significantly less monsoonal activity than forecasted. Also included in the projection is the fact that base flows have continued to decline. No changes were made to the operations plan presented at the July 27 meeting and the end of year content is forecasted to be 50,254 acre-feet or 35% of average.

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

David Gochis provided information from a model run that was initiated on August 4. Based on the forecast, there is a strong likelihood that precipitation will be relatively low in the four-to-seven-day time frame. There is a strong indication of good precipitation later in August however the site he uses for precipitation forecasting has been over forecasting through most of the summer. There continues to be uncertainty with late season monsoon activity.

Dave said that baseflows have continued to decline, dropping from 2.6 thousand acre-feet (TAF) to 1.8 TAF in Taylor Reservoir inflow since the previous forecast. Recent storms added small peaks and some temporary baseflow increases but flows have now receded to prior baseflow levels. With regard to soil moisture, most SNOTEL Light sites are not transmitting, and NRCS has indicated that this is a networking issue. Cottonwood Pass has resumed some measurements and the values at the site are somewhat elevated due to precipitation events in late July but recently have begun to decline.

Patrick Plumley (citizen) asked if there was any modeling being done on the Taylor Reservoir flow releases and how this might be impacting the fishery and habitat all the way down the Upper Gunnison River. Sonja Chavez said there has not been any modeling of

stream flow relative to historic flows and air temperature. Giulio Del Piccolo said that CPW is watching conditions very closely but there is not much room for alternative operations of Taylor Reservoir this year.

Dave Gochis said there had been discussions about discrepancies between releases out of the reservoir and the amount measured at the Almont gage. They have been tracking this through their model, but they could also extract additional information from the model to see what the impact could be on flows. Ryan Birdsey asked if it was possible to get more accurate information on flows from the tributaries below the reservoir. Sonja Chavez said this is a possibility to install gages on these sites but the cost benefit may be low.

V. Preliminary TLUG Draft Operational Release Recommendations

Each representative was asked to provide input on flow recommendations provided by Reclamation.

Ernie proposed a modification to the operations plan by dropping releases earlier than originally suggested. He originally proposed dropping flows from 150 cfs to 125 cfs on August 19 which could result in an additional 500 acre-feet in the reservoir. This may not be enough so he also suggested that the releases could be reduced even earlier. His suggestion was that once the releases are reduced to 150 cfs we should wait a couple of days and drop to 125 cfs. He also suggested meeting again in mid-August to discuss the release schedule further.

Mark Schumacher said that he was fine with what was proposed in the operations plan. He suggested that if the proposed reductions begin at 5:00 p.m. on August 6 that any further reductions should only occur once every twenty-four hour period to allow fish and macroinvertebrates a chance to adjust.

Sonja Chavez said it is an option to return to the Four Parties and request to go a little below 50,000 acre-feet to address concerns about water temperature impacts on the fishery.

Don Sabrowski said that if we go too much below 50,000 acre-feet it could snowball into next year's 1st fill. Ryan Birdsey said his main concern is the elevation in the reservoir. He is not opposed to the proposal from Ernie with staging the releases down even further to provide a buffer in the reservoir, but he is not a proponent of going below 50,000 acre-feet.

Andy Spann said that most irrigators are writing off August and September water. They were grateful for the work that the TLUG group did to maintain flow earlier in the year. He agreed with the proposal to cut releases earlier in August, but he felt that dropping below 50,000 acre-feet could make it more difficult next year.

Roark Kiklevich also agreed that the reservoir should stay above 50,000 acre-feet and that it might be necessary to build a bit of a cushion going into establishing the 55 cfs winter flows. The proposed operations plan that was agreed upon is as follows:

- August 8 Reduce releases to 150 cfs
- August 12 Reduce releases to 125 cfs (hold until August 28)
- August 29 Reduce releases to 70 cfs (through September)

Mark Schumacher said he was not sure what benefit these reductions would bring.

The group agreed to meet again in two weeks to analyze the situation and determine if any further changes were needed.

Andy Spann moved and Ryan Birdsey seconded approval of the proposed operation changes. The motion carried with Mark Schumacher opposed.

VI. Miscellaneous Matters

Sonja indicated that the District continues to monitor Elk and Gold Mountain Fires. Conditions on the Elk Fire continue to deteriorate due to hot and dry conditions.

VII. Action Items

- Dave Gochis will share slides from his presentation.
- Dave Gochis will also follow up on the information from NRCS about the SnoLite stations and provide that information to staff to share with the rest of the TLUG.
- UGRWCD staff will discuss the ability to get field measurements for stage and temperature readings on the four tributaries below the reservoir.
- Andrew Limbach will provide a new table based upon the proposed changes.

VIII. Citizen Comments

There were no Citizen Comments.

IX. Next Meeting Date

The next TLUG meeting is scheduled for August 17, 2026, at 9:00 a.m.

X. Adjournment

The August 5, 2026 meeting was adjourned by TLUG Chairman Don Sabrowski at 10:21 a.m.