

**Upper Gunnison River Water Conservancy District
Board of Directors Regular Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, May 19, 2026, at 5:30 p.m.**

The Board of Directors of the Upper Gunnison River Water Conservancy District (UGRWCD) conducted a regular Board Meeting on Tuesday, May 19, 2026, at 5:30 p.m. at the Upper Gunnison River Water Conservancy District, 210 West Spencer, Suite A, Gunnison, Colorado and via Zoom video/teleconference.

Board members present: Stuart Asay, Rosemary Carroll, Joellen Fonken, Rebie Hazard, John Perusek, Don Sabrowski, Andy Spann Brian Stevens, and Jeff Writer.

Board members absent: Camille Richard and Brooke Zanetell

Others present:

Amanda Aulenbach, UGRWCD Wet Meadows Program Director
Alex Baca, UGRWCD Summer Assistant
Jeff Chagnon, Rain Enhancement Technologies (via Zoom)
Sonja Chavez, UGRWCD General Manager
Hannah Cranor-Kersting, Gunnison County Extension Director
Isabel Gourley, UGRWCD Summer Technician
Taylor Gresham, Rain Enhancement Technologies (via Zoom)
Evan Jones, Colorado Division of Water Resources
Jules Iovino, UGRWCD Water Resources Fellow
Leon Katona, Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (via Zoom)
John McClow, UGRWCD General Counsel (via Zoom)
Scott Morris, Rain Enhancement Technologies (via Zoom)
Beverly Richards, UGRWCD Office / Senior Program Manager
Rowen Roberson, UGRWCD Summer Technician
Tom Rozman, Colorado Division of Water Resources
Randy Seidl, Rain Enhancement Technologies
Sue Uerling, UGRWCD Administrative Asst. / Communications Specialist
Ari Yamaguchi, UGRWCD Water Resources Specialist

1. CALL TO ORDER

President Don Sabrowski called the meeting to order at 5:35 p.m.

2. AGENDA APPROVAL

Director Stu Asay moved and Director Rebie Hazard seconded approval of the agenda. The motion carried.

3. APPROVAL OF APRIL 27, 2026 BOARD MEETING MINUTES:

Director Stuart Asay moved and Director Brian Stevens seconded approval of the April 27, 2026, board meeting minutes. The motion carried.

4. TREASURER'S REPORT

Treasurer John Perusek noted that inflation has been creeping up. He reported that the District had a \$500,000 treasury note that matured. He said that \$300,000 was invested in a new treasury note that will mature in November 2027 and the remainder was deposited in ColoTrust money market for liquidity.

5. PRESENTATION BY RANDY SEIDL, RAIN ENHANCEMENT TECHNOLOGIES

Randy Seidl, Taylor Gresham, Scott Morris and Jeff Cagnon, all with Rain Enhancement Technologies gave a presentation about their company's rain enhancement system. They reported that the advantages of their system are: it can be installed and operational in a week; the system can be activated and deactivated remotely; can coordinate with current water management systems; seeded rain events during warmer weather can help offset winters with low snowpack; solar powered; does not use chemicals; comes with a guarantee of 10 percent moisture enhancement; and flexible financing options for the \$750,000 purchase price.

There were follow-up questions from the Board about how they determined their 10 percent enhancement guarantee and whether or not the system resulted in "cloud theft" from regions in and around the geographic area being seeded. They reported that their results are based on data collected from units they are operating in Moab, Utah and Grand County, Colorado, as well as units they have in foreign countries.

6. PRESENTATION BY EVAN JONES, GUNNISON RIVER ACCOUNTING

Evan Jones of the Division of Water Resources instructed the Board on where they can find the Gunnison River spreadsheet on their website and how to navigate through the various columns to find results on streamflow, reservoir inflow and data used to determine the timing of the first and

second fill at Taylor Park Reservoir. The spread sheet can be found [here](#).

Counselor John McClow explained the history behind the creation of the spreadsheet and more details about the administration of the second fill in Taylor Park Reservoir.

7. GENERAL COUNSEL UPDATE

2026 Legislative Session: Counselor John McClow reported that nearly 585 legislative bills were passed during the 2026 legislative session with very few water bills approved. He reported that two bills dealing with data centers, which the UGRWCD Legislative Committee opposed, were not successful.

No Till Drill Seeder Review: Counselor McClow and General Manager Chavez provided information about Gunnison County CSU Extension request that the District own the new seeder. Previously, the District determined that they wanted to support experimentation with drought tolerant grass hay species to help ag producers prepare for a hotter and drier climate, increase the agricultural community's drought resiliency, and make water resources go further while still producing quality forage with high nutritional content. The drill seeder is critical to our basin's ability to further this initiative.

Hannah Cranor-Kersting with the Gunnison County Extension office noted that her office has seen high interest in having such a seeder available for lease, since none of the dealers in the area have one in the basin. She reported that the drill seeder is currently being stored outside on the Colorado State Forest Service property and that they have agreed that the equipment can stay there, although board members recommended storing it with a seal tarp to protect it from sun damage. Ms. Cranor-Kersting explained that for her organization to rent out the seeder, those interested will have to wade through several layers of governmental review before releasing the equipment for use. Her suggestion is that the District could take ownership of the equipment and her office could handle the leasing arrangements. The cost to the District would be to purchase the equipment for \$1.00 and the county would do regular maintenance.

General Manager Chavez said she would need a motion to authorize the General Manager to purchase the drill seeder from Gunnison County Extension in the amount of \$1.00 and execute any additional agreements related to storage, maintenance, and on-going program support. She said staff will come back to the board with a proposal for an appropriate rental fee for the seeder during the development of the 2027 budget. General Manager Chavez or Extension Agent Cranor-Kersting will announce the availability of the drill seeder at the next Stockgrowers meeting.

Director Andy Spann moved and Director Rebie Hazard seconded approval to Authorize the General Manager to purchase the drill seeder from Gunnison County in the amount of \$1.00 and execute any additional agreements including but not limited to agreements for storage, maintenance, and on-going program support. The motion carried.

8. BASIN WATER SUPPLY REPORT

Senior Program Manager Beverly Richards said she attended the Water Conditions Monitoring meeting earlier in the day. Presenters at the meeting said that there is an active monsoon season in the forecast. They also said that we are definitely moving into El Niño conditions and that there is a chance for a “super” El Niño later in the year. However, forecasters have not pinned down if it will occur in the Gunnison River basin. Ms. Richards also provided the May 1 forecast for streamflows in the Upper Gunnison basin which are likely to be in the range of 20 to 30% of the median amount.

9. GENERAL MANAGER AND COMMITTEE REPORTS

Strategic Planning: Civic Consulting Collaborative (CCC) and the Strategic Planning Core Team met on May 6th and reviewed and discussed the board retreat agenda and strategies. She reminded the Board that the retreat will be on June 10th at the Gunnison County Library at 9 a.m. The District will arrange for a social get-together following the retreat.

Taylor Local Users Group (TLUG): TLUG Chair Don Sabrowski reported that despite very low water supplies, all of the TLUG water user representatives have been cooperative about coming to agreement on flow regimes and releases taking into account our poor hydrology and limited water supply. Both the agricultural producers and rafting community asked for an increase in releases about a month earlier in the season with the understanding that there will likely not be enough supply left by late July to continue irrigating and rafting operations. Chairman Sabrowski said the next big concern will be stream temperature impacts to the fishery in August when air temperatures are typically high and streamflow is low.

The Four Parties group met earlier in the day, and they were generally supportive of the operations plan that was developed and exceeding the 60,000 acre-foot minimum storage objective as requested by the TLUG given the unrepresented drought year. The 4 Parties requested a meeting in early August to provide an update and asked that the operational plan not exceed a minimum storage objective of less than 50,000 acre feet at this time

The next TLUG meeting is June 9th at 1 p.m. General Manager Chavez reminded the Board of the Taylor Park Reservoir Hydro Power Plant Tour on July 27, 2026, and it was noted that the District must provide a list of anyone participating in the site tour to the US Bureau of Reclamation.

Drought Outreach Campaign: UGRWCD Fellow Jules Iovino shared details about promotional products being produced and distributed for the campaign, as well as social media posts and radio spots to promote awareness and conservation. A copy of the newly published first-grade book “The Adventures of Wonder” was given to each Board member. Arrangements have been made to distribute the books in the next two weeks to first grade students at Gunnison Elementary School (by author Chris Dickey) and at Crested Butte and Lake City Schools.

Water Quality Update: General Manager Chavez noted that the Water Quality Control Commission will be meeting in Crested Butte on June 8, for their Regulation 32-38 hearings and the public is invited to provide comments.

Fundraising: Staff were notified by the RESTORE Committee that the District’s grant application for \$360,000 was finally approved by their board. The District appreciates all of the partners and UGRWCD staff who worked so hard to bring this collaborative project together including Wet Meadows Staff (Director Aulenbach), Trout Unlimited (Jesse Kruthaupt), Gunnison Conservation District (Tonya Carr), National Park Service (Brinnen Carter), NRCS (Ben Prior), and the Gunnison County Cheatgrass Coordinator (Sarah Elzay).

WaterSMART B2E Grant – Gunnison Conservation District (GCD) received notification that Reclamation completed its evaluation of the *Upper Gunnison Basin Environmental Drought Mitigation (B2E)* grant. The grant was initially approved at the end of the Biden administration and then was put on a long hold while the Trump administration reviewed the awards. The project can now move to the next phase to negotiate terms and conditions of a funding agreement. The UGRWCD is the primary sub-awardee to the GCD and will be assisting GCD with fiscal and grant management activities. A press release announcing this was sent to area newspapers.

Gunnison Basin Roundtable Update: General Manager Chavez said the Gunnison Basin Roundtable approved the refurbishment of municipal water storage tanks for Bone Mesa. The original request was \$100,000 and the Roundtable approved \$75,000. The group also discussed the Colorado River operations after 2026 and the different aspects surrounding the potential settlement.

Gunnison River Festival Update: The festival will be Friday, June 12th at Taylor Park with the Taylor Downriver Race and after party and Saturday, June 13th with the Gunnison Whitewater Park festival.

Scientific Endeavors Update: Director Rosemary Carroll reported that she had just concluded her field season and witnessed some alarming impacts related to streamflow as a result of low snowpack/low runoff this season. She is excited that a Congressionally Directed Spending (CDS) request has made it through the first stage of review by Senator Hickenlooper’s office to establish

a remote sensing and hydro-geodesy center at RMBL which will help with many studies focused on water supply and also groundwater within the basin. Lawrence Berkley National Laboratories and the University of Colorado Aerospace Engineering Department are supporters of the establishment and operation of the proposed center. UGRWCD General Manager Chavez provided a letter of support to Hickenlooper's office for the CDS request.

10. MISCELLANEOUS MATTERS

Colorado Water Congress Summer Conference is August 18-20, 2026, in Steamboat Springs. Board members should advise staff if they would like to attend because rooms tend to sell out fast at the Steamboat Grand where the conference is being held.

11. CITIZEN COMMENTS

Leon Katona with the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment clarified that the Water Quality Control hearings will be held just one day in Crested Butte, on June 8th, and will be held in the Elevations Hotel Conference Room.

12. FUTURE MEETINGS

General Manager Chavez referred to the future meetings listed in the Board packet.

13. SUMMARY OF MEETING ACTION ITEMS

- General Manager Sonja Chavez will work with Hannah Cranor-Kersting to publicly announce availability of the Drill Seeder at the Stockgrowers meeting and advertise in the newspaper.
- Board members experiencing differences in spring flows and locations due to low water conditions were encouraged to share them with Director Rosemary Carroll.
- Staff will follow up with Tom Rozman of the Division of Water Resources and share the calendar invite for the visit on Thursday to the Elze Weber Ditch regarding request for emergency funding.

14. ADJOURNMENT

Board President Don Sabrowski adjourned the May 2026 Board meeting at 7:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Rebie Hazard, Secretary



Don Sabrowski, President