

**Upper Gunnison River Water Conservancy District
Board of Directors Annual Meeting Minutes
Monday, August 25, 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 Monday, August 25, 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 (via Zoom), Rebie Hazard, John Perusek, Don Sabrowski, Hannah Cranor-Kersting, Joellen Fonken, Brooke Zanetell and Brian Stevens.

Board members absent: Camille Richard and Jeff Writer

Others present:

Amanda Aulenbach, Wet Meadows Program Director

Sonja Chavez, UGRWCD General Manager

Jules Iovino, UGRWCD Water Resources Fellow

Leon Katona, Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment

John McClow, UGRWCD General Counsel

Beverly Richards, UGRWCD Office/ Senior Program Manager

Ari Yamaguchi, UGRWCD Water Resources Specialist

Angela Miller, UGRWCD Administrative Specialist III

Tom Rozman, Colorado Division of Water Resources

Greg Peterson, Peterson Ranch

Kathleen Curry, Peterson Ranch

Robert Sakata, Department of Natural Resources (via Zoom)

Jesse Kruthaupt, Trout Unlimited (via Zoom)

1. CALL TO ORDER

President Don Sabrowski called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. There were nine board members present, which constitutes a quorum (six members).

2. INTRODUCTION & WELCOME: ANGELA MILLER, ADMINISTRATIVE SPECIALIST

3. AGENDA APPROVAL

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

4. APPROVAL OF JULY 27, 2026 MINUTES

Director Fonken moved and Director Asay seconded approval of the July 27, 2026 Minutes. The motion carried.

5. TREASURER'S REPORT

- There is a bond coming due at the end of September. Staff will advise the Board on disposition of the bond.

6. 2027 DRAFT BUDGET REVIEW

- Most line items on the 2027 Draft Budget were initially increased by 5% from 2026.
- The Hazardous Waste Collection budget item increased from \$2,000 to \$4,000 due to costs of the program.
- In the Capital Outlay Expense line item, the 2027 planned amount is \$25,000, which includes \$15,000 for Phase 2 of the Xeriscaping project and \$10,000 for potential renovation of the Suite A office reception area.
- The Coal Creek Watershed Coalition line item has a \$7,000 placeholder. Staff recommend moving this under the water quality budget line item and prioritizing broadly applicable, high-priority TMDL-related sampling.
- The Taylor Park Project Expense line item of \$12,000 is the annual maintenance cost-share paid to the Uncompahgre Valley Water Users for Taylor Park Dam and this amount is adjusted every five years.
- Staff will meet with the Finance Committee to further refine the budget before the next board meeting.

7. CDPHE UPDATE ON TWO-YEAR INTEGRATED REPORT – LEON KATONA

- Presentation on impaired waters in the state and water quality in the Gunnison basin.
- 303(d) List of Impaired Waters and the two-year integrated study.
- Arsenic is commonly found in waters around the state including the Upper Gunnison basin and comes from natural background geologic sources.
- Colorado's 2024 Integrated Water Quality Report can be found at:
<https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/38204ef388f642a5b04089124d541b90>.
- The UGRWCD has a joint funding agreement with USGS to regularly monitor water quality and quantity in the Upper Gunnison basin. Results have shown that we have not had any statistically significant increases in any pollutant. Staff noted that this could change given drought conditions this year due to lack of water for dilution.

8. GENERAL COUNSEL UPDATE

- The Record of Decision and 2027-2028 Operating Guidelines for Lake Powell and Lake Mead were released on Friday.
- Preferred alternative models Lake Powell releases of 5–12 million acre-feet/year; lower basin shortages up to 3.6 million acre-feet.
- Tiered Framework: August projections set release levels by Lake Powell elevation (high: $\geq 3,565$ ft; mid: 3,540–3,565; low: $< 3,540$).
- Monthly monitoring will be done to maintain 3,510 ft elevation.
- Upon release of the Record of Decision the state of Nevada filed a lawsuit. This was filed on Monday against Secretary of Interior alleging NEPA and APA non-compliance and seeks injunction on 2027-2028 framework operations.
- If enjoined, operations will likely revert to 1970 long range operating criteria (minimum 8.23 MAF release; lower basin shortages capped at 600K acre-feet).
- Compact Risk: The Upper Basin's 10-year average delivery is approximately 84 million acre-feet as of end of 2025; prolonged litigation could erode this.
- The Bureau of Reclamation is making \$100 million available to the Upper Division States through the Upper Colorado River Commission to support conservation and contribution activities beginning in water year 2027.
- The Board discussed the initial draft criteria for participation in the contribution program prepared by CWCB staff.

9. BASIN WATER SUPPLY UPDATE

- Blue Mesa Reservoirs is dropping approximately 1% per day and is projected to reach minimum power pool by end of 2026. Current releases are at 1,240 cfs versus approximately 500 cfs inflows.
- Inflows for the month of August into Taylor Reservoir were 1,800 cfs which is less than the CBRFC forecasted 4,000 cfs for the month of August. The TLUG group has reduced releases out of the reservoir to 100 cfs starting August 17 through 30th, then to 75 cfs on August 31st where it will remain through the month of September. On October 1, flows will be reduced to 55 cfs where it will remain through the winter.
- Target end-of-season storage content: 50,000 acre-feet which is below the target of 60,000 acre-feet as per the stipulation. For background on end of year storage during significant drought years, end of year storage in 2002 was 42,000 AF and it took several years to recover.
- Fish spawning flows must remain consistent during spawning periods and further reductions are not feasible at this time.

- Forecasters are saying that there is a 90% chance of a strong El Nino event in fall/winter 2026–27, but precise precipitation amounts remain uncertain for the Upper Gunnison Basin.

10. GENERAL MANAGER, COMMITTEE, AND STAFF UPDATES

- Fund Raising - Contracts are now in place with the Colorado Water Conservation Board for Water Supply Reserve Funding and with the Colorado River District Community Funding Partnership in support of the following projects:
 - Cain Borsum Ag Irrigation Diversion Improvement with Fish Passage,
 - South Krueger and Moran Irrigation Diversion Improvement with Fish Passage
 - Cement Creek Irrigation Diversion Improvement & Stream Restoration
 - Lower Woodcock Cochetopa Creek Stream Restoration
 - Sargents No.2 Irrigation Improvement & Stream Restoration
 - Tingley Ditch Irrigation Diversion Improvement & Stream Restoration
- The District is working with the Gunnison Conservation District, Natural Resources Conservation Services, and Trout Unlimited to develop a Targeted Conservation Proposal (TCP) for the Ohio Creek Sub-basin.
- Colorado River District (CRD) East River Basin Tour was held on August 5. This was a tour of the same sites toured by the CWCB.
- The District is still monitoring ongoing wildfires in the area. The Elk Fire is currently at 7,200 acres and 35% containment. Staff are working with representatives in Hinsdale County and the Town of Lake City on plans related to post-wildfire water quality and quantity monitoring.
- Forest & Watershed Health Work Session Planning – No progress to date, but staff will report back to the board as soon as we have a template and speakers identified.

11. DIRECTOR UPDATES

Directors provided comments about water issues in their divisions

12. MISCELLANEOUS MATTERS

- Board and staff provided an update on the Colorado Water Congress Summer Conference Items of discussion at the conference included: Forest restoration, drought impacts on local economies and Colorado Ag Water Alliance drought resilience projects.

13. CITIZENS' COMMENTS

No citizen comments.

14. FUTURE MEETINGS

Future meetings for the District were provided.

15. SUMMARY OF REGULAR MEETING ACTION ITEMS

- Staff will compile board input on conservation program criteria to CWCB before September 15th.
- Staff will share CDPHE Integrated Water Quality report links with full board.
- Beverly Richards will schedule a future cloud seeding presentation for the full Board.
- Staff will assist with outreach for October 13-14 drill seeder workshop via social media.
- Sonja Chavez will attend City Council meeting being held on Thursday, August 27 where they will discuss the Gunnison wastewater treatment project and will raise CPW fishery consultation questions from Director Zanetell.
- Staff will share Greg Powers (Division 4 Water Commissioner) contact with Director Fonken.
- Sonja will follow up with Representative Hurd's office to formalize a board visit.
- Sonja will draft comments on CWCB criteria for contribution program.

16. ADJOURNMENT

Board President Don Sabrowski adjourned the August 24, 2026, Regular Board Meeting at 7:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Rebie Hazard, Secretary



Don Sabrowski, President