

River Watch Items for March 2022 UWP Board Meeting

- River Watch items of interest as follows:
 - River Watch sampling for March 2022 was accomplished between the 1st and the 5th. No problems were encountered. Samples collected in February and March were shipped to CPW on March 8th.
 - The shortage of syringe filters was temporarily solved when Gary found a bag of them in his barn. These should keep us going through May 2022 if none are sent from River Watch.
- Streamflow from early January through early February is summarized as follows:
 - Warm weather at the end of February thawed out most of the stream gauges on the Uncompahgre. However, Dallas Creek and Cow Creek gauges were still reporting ICE as of March 3rd.
 - At the USGS gauge near Ouray flow was steady at about 25 cfs through February 27th, then flow increased markedly to peaks as high as 70 cfs as temperatures increased. The historical median flow was 25 cfs.
 - The USGS gauge near Ridgway was iced up until February 20th, then flow increased to about 70 cfs by March 3rd. The median flow on the 3rd is about 49 cfs.
 - The USGS gauge below Ridgway Reservoir had a constant release of 46 cfs, the same as January, and slightly lower than the median of 50 cfs. Two manually measured discharges showed values of 43.7 and 44.4 cfs.
 - The USGS gauge on Dallas Creek was iced up through the period ending on March 3rd.
 - The Colorado state gauge on Cow Creek reported ice throughout the period but values of ~23 cfs reported on March 3rd seem reasonable. The long-term average for that date is about 16 cfs.
- A good storm during the last week of February brought snowpack totals in the southwest part of the state back to values a bit closer to “normal”. The Gunnison Basin still dropped from 117% of its 30-year median in early February to 104% in early March. The February storm strongly favored the Uncompahgre Plateau where the Columbine Pass SNOTEL reached 19” of SWE, 120% of its 30-year median. This total is 104% of the median peak value at Columbine. The Red Mtn Pass SNOTEL gained 3.2” of SWE (16.4” total) which kept it at about 94% (had 95% in early February) of its long-term median. The Idarado SNOTEL increased from 73% to 80% (8.5” SWE) of its median, gaining about 2.6” of SWE.
- I took a closer look at the EPA “How’s My Water Way” page. I found it quite useful in several ways once you get used to the search features. Since I had recently been looking at water quality data from the Sneffels/Canyon Creek watershed, I focused on that region. From the **Community** tab I searched for Sneffels Creek and selected the Aquatic Life option. This produced the map in Figure 1 which shows the entire Sneffels/Canyon Creek watershed and the impairment status of the different stream segments. If you click on a segment like COGUUN05_E, the short segment below Governor Basin, a water quality report becomes available. The report, updated with the 2022 303(d) list, shows the COGUUN05_E segment impaired for aquatic life (unhealthy macroinvertebrate population, and metals Cd, Pb, and Zn, and Mn for water supply).

Once you are on the watershed of interest another option is **Monitoring** and selecting that “button” gives you the map in Figure 2 that shows all monitoring sites. In addition to the map this page also provides a list of the monitoring sites. Either from the map or list you can select a site and retrieve all its water quality data from the National Water Quality Data Portal. Once you are on this **Monitoring** page, I found it easier to retrieve data, compared to searching for specific sites on the Water Quality Portal site. Data for Segment COGUUN05_E come almost entirely from Atlas Mill

Sites SC-02 and SC-03, with the most recent data coming from sampling events in August and October 2016, but most data were from 2012 to 2015.

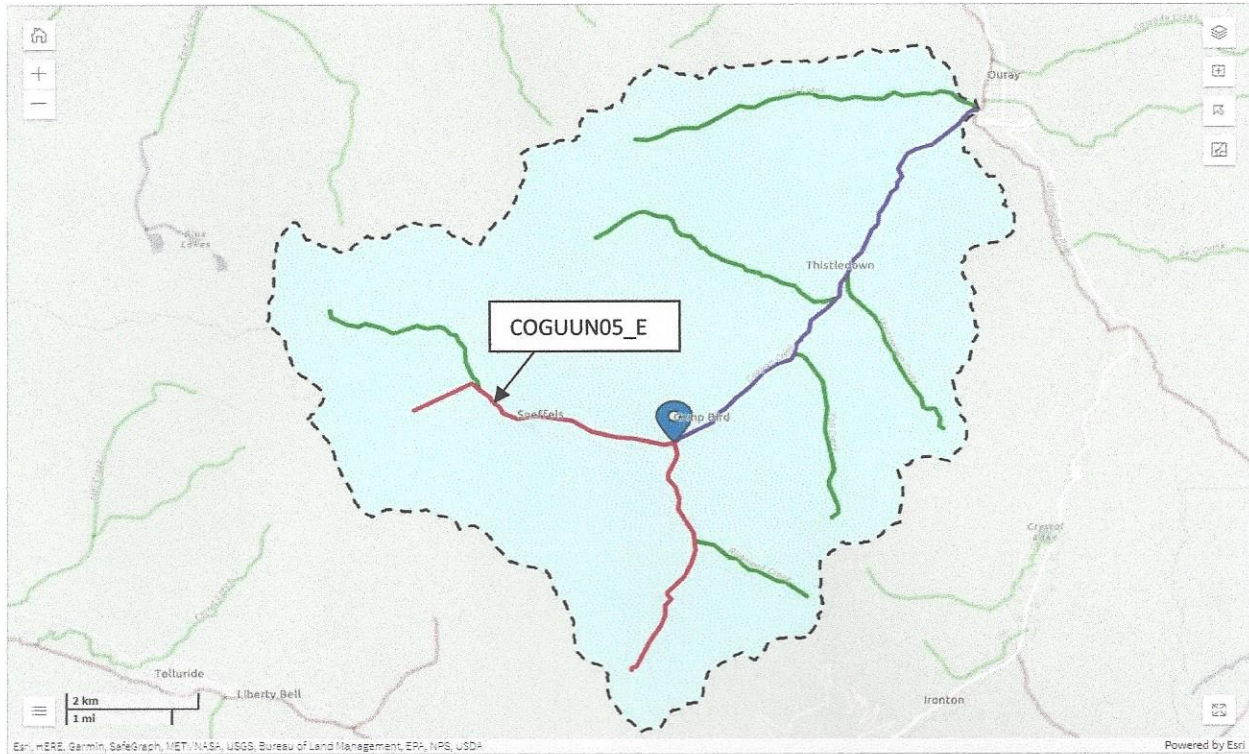


Figure 1. Map showing the Sneffels/Canyon Creek watershed with stream segments color coded based on impairment for aquatic life. Green=unimpaired, Red=impaired, and Purple=insufficient data.

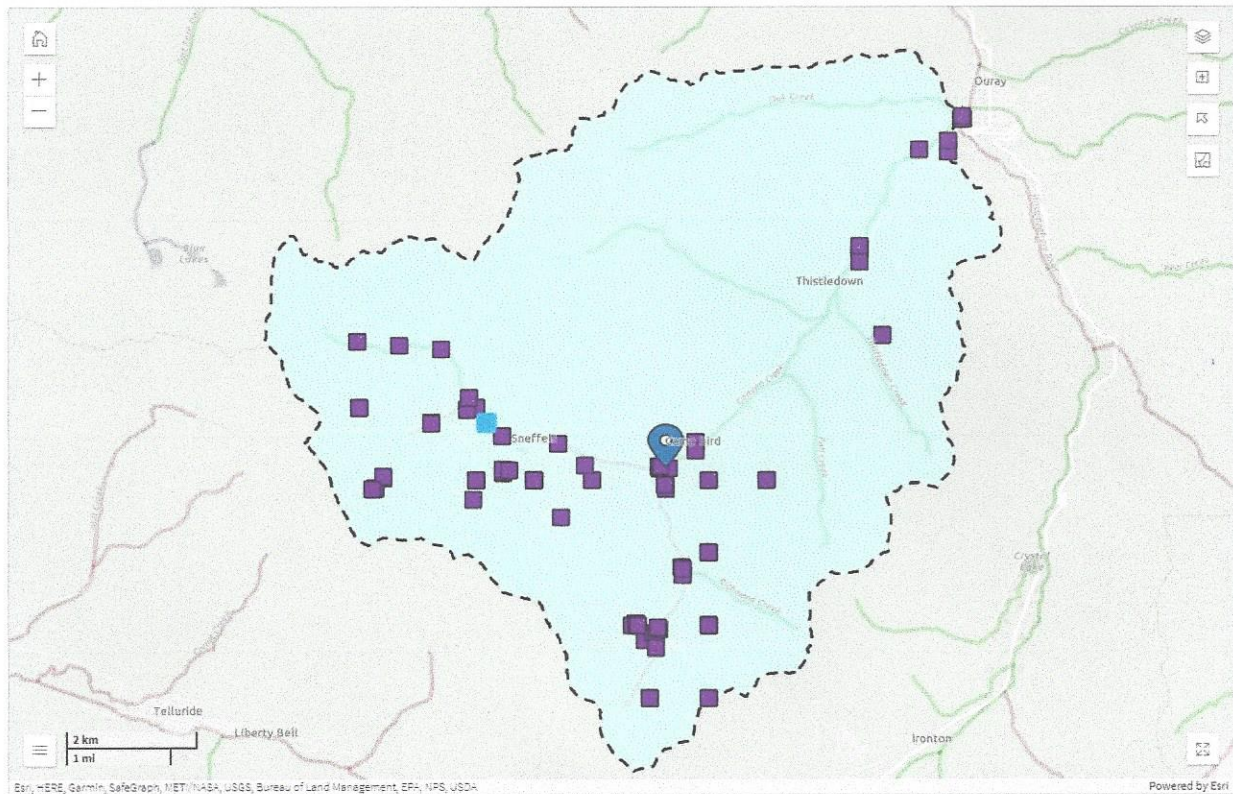


Figure 2. As in Figure 1, but with the map showing all current and past water quality monitoring sites in the Sneffels/Canyon Creek watershed.