

River Watch Items for the July 2023 UWP Board Meeting

- River Watch items of interest:

- High flow nutrient samples and metals samples from June were shipped to CPW on 12 June. Sampling this month at 11 of our sites was conducted on 30 June, 1 July, 3 July, and 6 July. This included our first sample at our newest site near the mouth of Sneffels Creek. Flows at all sampling sites were still relatively high as indicated by the streamflow graph in Figure 2.
- On 7 June I picked up supplies at Project 7 Water Authority in Montrose for collecting samples (at Blue Lake) for *E Coli* analysis. I also paid them for analysis of the first 12 samples. At Ashley's request we will add a blank sample each month at one of the three sites. The first Blue Lake sampling trip (see Figure 1) was conducted on 26 June and *E Coli* samples were delivered to Project 7 by about 5 pm that same day.
- Receipt of supplies from River Watch has been delayed the past two months resulting in the need to borrow nitric acid from both Ridgway and Ouray volunteers. The tiny bottles we receive don't last long with 12 sampling sites.
- I prepared a River Watch display for Riverfest and we presented it to fest-goers at the River Watch booth on 24 June. We received a fair number of detailed questions and comments. Comments were all quite favorable.



Figure 1. River Watch volunteer John Hulburd collecting an *E Coli* sample at Blue Lake on 26 June 2023.

- Precipitation, streamflow, and reservoir storage:

- Snow water equivalent (SWE) data from the NRCS SNOTEL site was not available when I checked on 10 July. Snow is still visible at the upper elevations of the San Juans and streamflow indicates that the runoff season continues. Average total precipitation on 10 July from 15 SNOTEL sites in the Gunnison Basin was 31.8 inches for the water year, which is 133% of the median for the date.
- Figure 2 shows the streamflow graph at the USGS gauge on the Uncompahgre River near Ridgway for the period May 1st through July 10th, 2023. The graph shows streamflow followed the general pattern of historical medians, but with 2023 values being 100 to 300 cfs higher. Flow on 10 July was about 430 cfs, near the 75th percentile and about 130 cfs above the median for the date.
- Except for a cool weather period in early to mid-June, Cow Creek and Dallas Creek had flows in May through June that tended to exceed median or average values. After about 17 June Dallas Creek flow increased to values ≥ 100 cfs, well above medians of 40 to 60 cfs over the same

- period. Similarly, after 20 June flow on Cow Creek increased to flow > 200 cfs, but then gradually declined to about 90 cfs on 10 July.
- At Ridgway Reservoir storage increased steadily through June, and although the rate of increase has slowed since July 1st, the total storage of 80,650 acre-feet on July 10th was at about the 75th percentile. The maximum observed storage was 84,240 acre-feet in 1991.

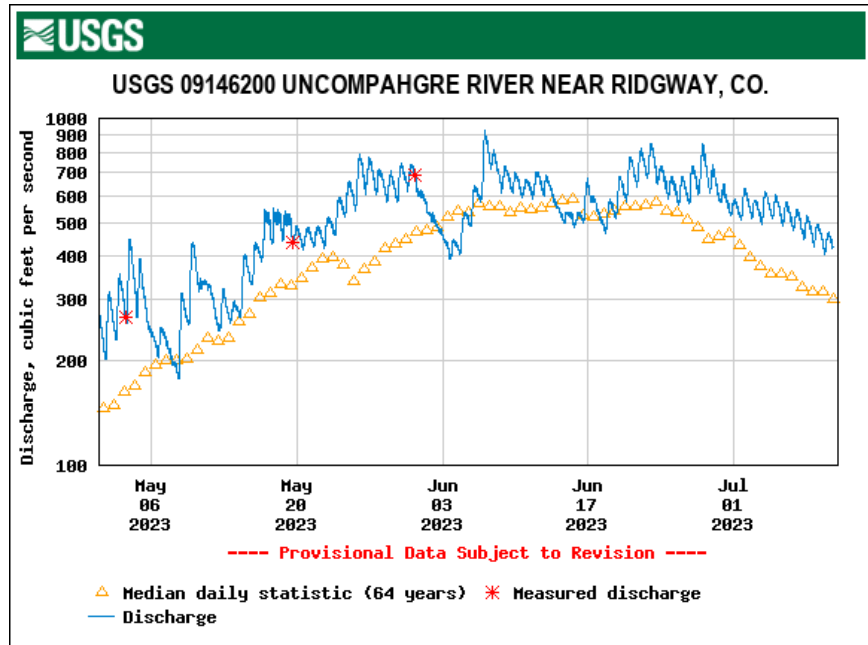


Figure 2. Graph of streamflow at the USGS gauge near Ridgway for the period 1 May to 10 July 2023. Median values are shown by triangles and manual measurements are shown by red asterisks.