

River Watch Items for the April 2025 UWP Board Meeting

- River Watch items of interest:
 - April River Watch sampling is taking place between April 7th and April 13th. Sampling at the Below Ridgway Reservoir and Cow Creek sites was completed on the 7th and included our first streamflow measurements by Virginia Weiskopf (RiverCorp). At the site below the reservoir streamflow using the Tracker II flow meter was measured at 159.9 cfs, compared to the USGS gauge flow of 161 cfs. On Cow Creek streamflow was measured at 18.2 cfs using Tracker II, while the DNR gauge, about a mile upstream, showed an average flow of 18.45 cfs over roughly the same time period.
 - We received supplies for high-flow nutrient sampling which will likely occur at the lower sites in May and the higher sites in June.
 - I submitted two requests to River Watch for: 1) establishing a new site on Red Mtn Creek below the region of the creek where the B2E restoration project is planned; and 2) relocating the E Fork Dallas Creek site below Lower Blue Lake to a location accessible by vehicle, about a half mile north of the Blue Lake trailhead parking. Both requests were granted, so we will begin sampling these sites as snow cover permits, probably June 2025.
- Snowpack, Precipitation and Streamflow:
 - Table 1 indicates that SWE total in the Gunnison Basin increased by 1.5 inches between March 7th and April 5th, but the percentage of the median fell from 89% to 74%. In the Uncompahgre watershed, the Idarado SNOTEL showed a loss of 1.8 inches of SWE between the 23rd and 31st of March. Overall Idarado gained 2 inches between March 7th and April 5th and ended at 94% of its median SWE. Note that on April 7th, the median date when SWE peaks at Idarado, the SWE total was at 93% of the median. The Red Mtn Pass SNOTEL gained 3.3 inches between March and April and ended with 91% of the median SWE. The median SWE peak at the Red Mtn site is not until April 25th.
 - At the USGS stream gauge near Ridgway there was evidence of snowmelt runoff between the 23rd and 31st of March, matching the SWE loss at the Idarado SNOTEL. Several discharge peaks greater than 100 cfs were recorded during this period. By April 3rd flow had dropped back below the median flow and on April 6th flow was down to 49.8 cfs when the median was 74 cfs.
 - Flow on the Uncompahgre River below Ridgway Reservoir showed that reservoir releases continued at 161 cfs (since April 3rd), well above the median of 75 cfs.
 - On April 6th Ridgway Reservoir storage was 72,070 acre-feet, while the median storage was 63,300 acre-feet. Storage peaked at 72,590 on April 3rd and has been slowly decreasing since then.

Table 1. SWE totals and percentages of medians for the Gunnison Basin, and Idarado and Red Mtn SNOTEL sites.

Date	Gunnison SWE 15 site avg (in)	Gunnison % of Median	Idarado SWE (in)	Idarado % of Median	Red Mtn SWE (in)	Red Mtn % of Median
11/09/24	2.8	215	1.9	238	5.5	220
12/11/24	5.2	123	3.9	108	8.1	125
01/09/25	7.1	101	5.8	104	10.8	104
02/05/25	8.0	83	7.5	94	12.8	91
03/07/25	11.6	89	11.0	100	18.0	101
04/05/25	13.1	74	13.0	94	21.3	91