

River Watch Items for the November 2025 UWP WRWG Meeting

- River Watch items of interest in November 2025:
 - November River Watch sampling included low flow nutrient sampling at the six low altitude sites. Three sites were sampled on November 12th, and the other three were sampled on the 13th. Due to the lack of snowfall, the nine high altitude sites were still accessible. The four sites along US550 were sampled on November 4th and the four along Camp Bird Rd were sampled on November 9th. County Road 7 was still open so the East Fork Dallas Creek site was sampled on November 7th.
 - On the sampling trip to the East Fork of Dallas Creek the first official streamflow measurement using the new Global flow meter was made. Discharge was measured at 10.5 cfs. Measurements with the Global were also taken at Governor Basin (1.3 cfs) and Atlas Mill (3.0 cfs). A measurement on Imogene Creek was not possible since the creek was mostly frozen over. Due to ice, streamflow was also not measured at Commodore Gulch on the November 4th sampling trip.
 - The search for new River Watch volunteers made some progress. One new volunteer accompanied Amy Relnick when she sampled the US550 sites, and Claire Barker went with Ronna Edgett-Underwood for sampling Cow Creek, CR24 and the Below Ridgway Reservoir sites. Claire has been sampling nutrients for Science on the Fly at the latter two sites.
- Precipitation and Streamflow:
 - As of November 12th, the Gunnison Basin had 16% of its median Snow Water Equivalent (SWE) and 114% of its median precipitation. Most of the precipitation came as rainfall in early to mid-October. For the same date, the Idarado SNOTEL showed no SWE, but had recorded 140% of its median precipitation (5.6 inches). The Red Mtn Pass SNOTEL had 25% of its median SWE and 128% of its median precipitation (6.4 inches).
 - Streamflow at the USGS gauge near Ridgway was mostly below median flow from mid-June to October 11th. A rain event resulted in flow well above the median from October 11th to the 28th, with a peak flow of 627 cfs on October 14th. Flows in November dropped to values much closer to the median curve. On November 12th, the flow was 63.4 cfs and the median flow for that date was 66 cfs.
 - After reaching a minimum in storage on September 4th, Ridgway Reservoir storage has been steadily increasing and on November 12th storage was 65,720 acre-feet, about 3,200 acre-feet above the median storage. There was a large increase in storage following the October rainfall event.
 - Discharge at the USGS gauge on Dallas Creek for the 2025 Water Year (ending 9/30/24) is shown in Figure 1. The CWCB 20 cfs instream flow (ISF) period is shown by the red arrow and 20 cfs is indicated by the black dashed line. Binck (2022) found that flow on Dallas Creek was mainly impacted by irrigation diversions between April 15th and June 15th, but in what were classified as Dry years, the flow also dropped below 20 cfs for much of the summer. The discharge pattern in Figure 1, where flow was below 20 cfs from about April 1st until June 1st, and for most of August, resembles what Binck (2022) classified as a Dry year. Interestingly, in terms of snowpack, WY 2025 was relatively wet with the Red Mtn Pass SNOTEL site accumulating 92% of its peak snow water equivalent (SWE) in April 2024. This suggests that the runoff efficiency was poor, at least in the Dallas Creek drainage.

Discharge measurements taken on Dallas Creek by UWP's River Corps member are shown in Table 1, together with measurements at the USGS gauge which is about 3.25 miles downstream. USGS gauge measurements were adjusted for travel time between the two sites. Table 1 also shows discharge measurements taken on the Hyde-Sneva ditch in Ridgway, about two miles downstream of the ditch diversion on Dallas Creek. Stream measurement sites and diversion locations are shown on the map in Figure 2. Binck (2022) found the average May and June diversions at two of the four ditches between the River Watch and USGS sites totaled about 8.6 cfs, but the total of the four apportionments are much higher, so at any one time diversions could be as high as the ISF recommended low flow of 20 cfs.

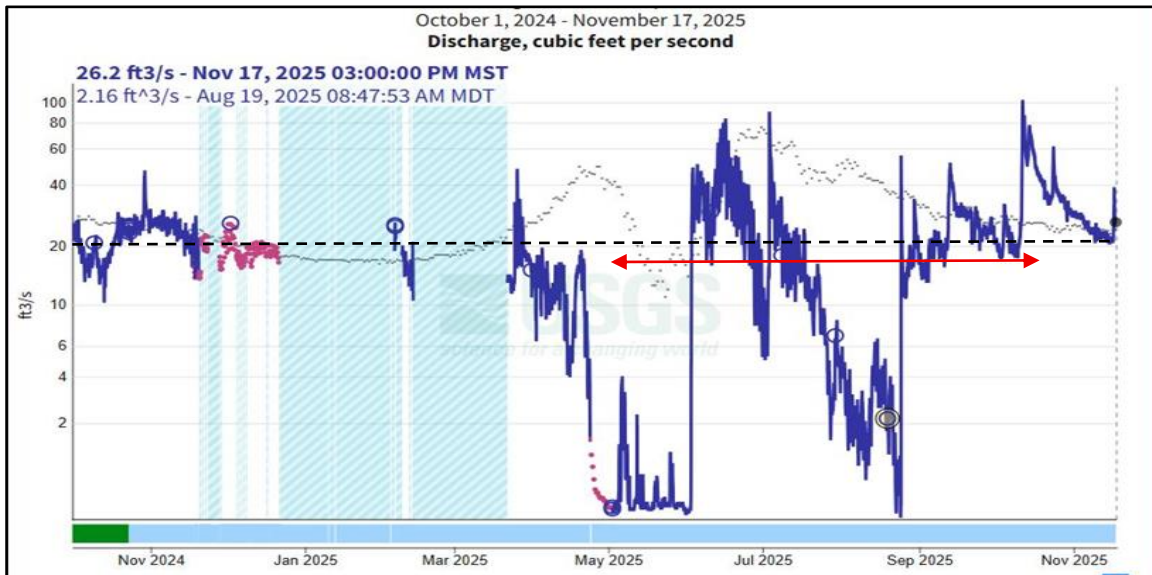


Figure 1. Dallas Creek discharge graph from Oct 1st, 2024, to Nov 17th, 2025. Red line shows the CWCB instream flow right from 1 May to 14 October. Black dashed line marks the 20 cfs ISF limit for that period.

Table 1 indicates that discharge measurements taken in April, May and August were below the winter or summer ISF recommended low flows at the USGS gauge. Measurements taken between April and August indicated discharge at the USGS gauge was 1.7 cfs to 12.7 cfs lower than discharge at the River Watch site 3.25 miles upstream, not surprising based on water right allocations between the two sites. May 4th measurements indicated nearly all the water in the creek was removed by the diversions below the River Watch site. The measurements in September and November, presumably taken after irrigation diversions had ceased, showed discharge increased by two to three cfs between the two sites.

Hyde-Sneva ditch measurements In Table 1 indicate that 2.41 cfs was returned to the Uncompahgre River in July, and 1.37 cfs in August. The August discharge amounted to 44% of the flow measured at the River Watch site on the same day, and this return flow was nearly equivalent to the USGS discharge of 1.34 cfs. Return flows measured in September and November were much lower, dropping to only 0.08 cfs in November when, presumably, no irrigation was occurring.

Table 1. Discharge measured at the Dallas Cr River Watch site, the Dallas Cr USGS gauge and the Hyde-Sneva ditch in Ridgway. Last column shows the difference between the River Watch site and the USGS gauge. For the Hyde-Sneva data, the fraction of the ditch flow compared to the River Watch site flow is shown in the lower part of the 5th column. Red stars indicate discharges below the ISF flow right.

RW Site	Date	Tracker 2 Discharge (cfs)	USGS Site	USGS Gauge Discharge (cfs)	CR24 to USGS Difference (cfs)
Dallas Cr at CR24	04/11/25	13.39	3.25 mi below RW site	9.39	-4.0
Dallas Cr at CR24	04/23/25	6.29	3.25 mi below RW site	★ 3.45	-2.8
Dallas Cr at CR24	05/04/25	7.14	3.25 mi below RW site	★ 0.26	-6.9
Dallas Cr at CR24	06/09/25	52.39	3.25 mi below RW site	39.70	-12.7
Dallas Cr at CR24	07/08/25	31.14	3.25 mi below RW site	25.80	-5.3
Dallas Cr at CR24	08/09/25	3.12	3.25 mi below RW site	★ 1.34	-1.8
Dallas Cr at CR24	09/07/25	18.11	3.25 mi below RW site	21.15	3.0
Dallas Cr at CR24	11/13/25	20.85	3.25 mi below RW site	22.85	2.0
			Hyde_Sneva ditch	Fraction of Tracker	
Hyde-Sneva Ditch - Ridgway	07/08/25	2.41	~2 mi from Dallas Cr	0.08	
Hyde-Sneva Ditch - Ridgway	08/09/25	1.37	~2 mi from Dallas Cr	0.44	
Hyde-Sneva Ditch - Ridgway	09/07/25	0.62	~2 mi from Dallas Cr	0.03	
Hyde-Sneva Ditch - Ridgway	11/13/25	0.08	~2 mi from Dallas Cr	0.00	

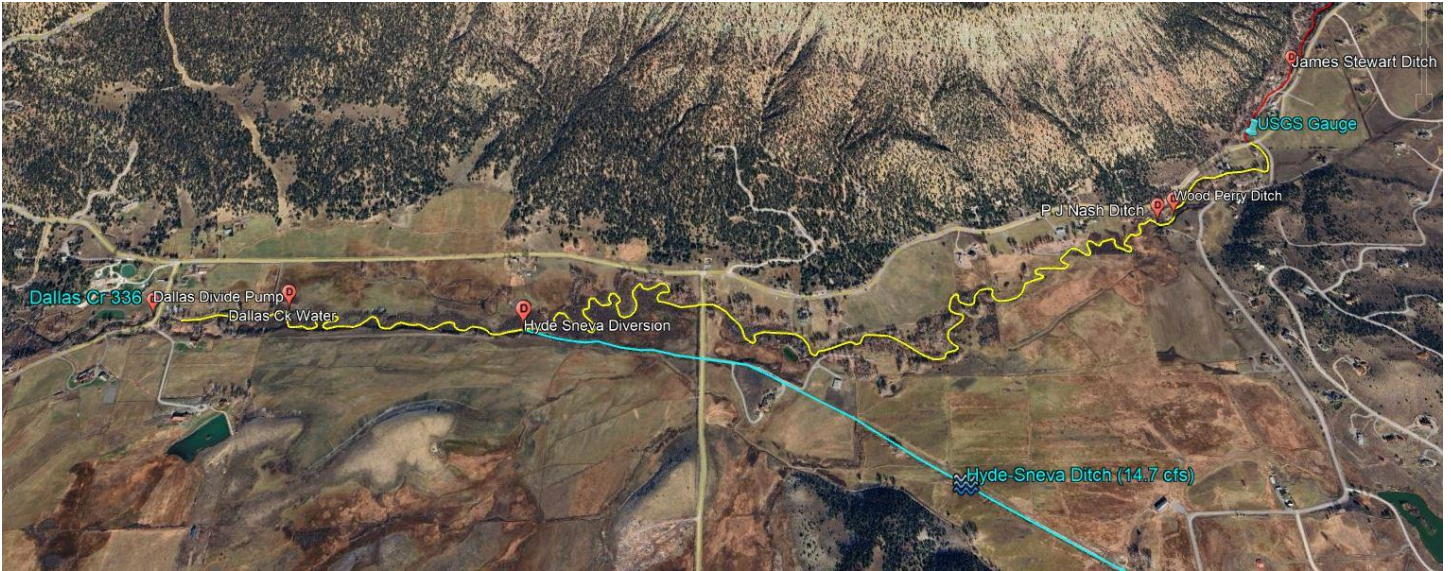


Figure 2. Google Earth map showing a portion of Dallas Creek (yellow line). Irrigation and pump diversions are shown by orange icons. The Hyde-Sneva ditch is shown by the blue line. Streamflow was measured at the River Watch site (Dallas 336) and at the site labeled USGS Gauge. A measurement on the Hyde-Sneva ditch was made beyond the map border in Ridgway.