

River Watch Items for the December 2025 UWP Board Meeting

- River Watch items of interest in December 2025
 - For December, River Watch sampling was reduced to the six lower sites on the Uncompahgre River (4 sites), Dallas Creek and Cow Creek. Potters Ranch and Ridgway Town on the Uncompahgre River were sampled on December 2nd. Cow Creek and Below Ridgway Reservoir sites were sampled on December 7th, and Dallas Creek and the Uncompahgre site at CR24 are planned for sampling on December 9th.
 - If there is a lack of ice on Dallas Creek a streamflow measurement is planned for December 9th.
 - Two new volunteers, Susie Meade and Claire Barker, participated in December sampling, so it looks like we will have three teams of two people for sampling through the winter months.
- Precipitation and Streamflow:
 - Table 1 shows Snow Water Equivalent data for the Gunnison Basin and two SNOTEL sites in the Uncompahgre Watershed as of December 8th, 2025. The snowpack improved from November to early December, but the Gunnison Basin and the Uncompahgre sites still lag significantly behind the median SWE amounts for this time of year.

Table 1. Snow Water Equivalent (SWE) data for the Gunnison Basin, the Idarado SNOTEL and the Red Mountain SNOTEL as of December 8th, 2025.

Date	Gunnison SWE 15 site avg (in)	Gunnison % of Median	Idarado SWE (in)	Idarado % of Median	Red Mtn SWE (in)	Red Mtn % of Median
11/12/25	0.3	16	0.0	0	0.7	25
11/24/25	1.3	50	1.0	48	1.7	39
12/08/25	2.8	72	2.2	69	3.8	63

- The USGS gauge on the Uncompahgre near Ridgway showed enhanced discharge after the October rains, then since October 28th discharge has tracked closely with the median curve although 1-2 cfs lower. Discharge on the morning of December 8th was 52.4 cfs and the median was 54.0 cfs.
- Streamflow on Dallas Creek followed a pattern similar to the Uncompahgre starting on about November 7th, tracking with the median curve on average but with diurnal variations on the order of 4-5 cfs. There has been no new data since December 1st due to icing conditions at the gauge site. The last report on December 1st showed a discharge of 22.6 cfs with the median for the date being 20 cfs.
- On Cow Creek, except for the enhanced flow after the October rain, discharge has been below average since the beginning of the 2026 Water Year. There have been a few flow peaks greater than 20 cfs since December 1st. Average discharge between December 1st and 8th is 22-25 cfs.
- Sneffels Creek water quality data for 2024
 - The first metals' data from River Watch site **Below Atlas Mill** on Sneffels Creek, established by UWP in 2024, became available recently. The site is at the upstream beginning of stream Segment COGUUN09_B. River Watch site **Bridge at Camp Bird Rd**, established in 2023, is at the lower end of stream segment COGUUN09_B. In the 2022 303(d) List, this segment was listed as impaired for dissolved lead and zinc because sufficient data were lacking since the previous 303(d) assessment to warrant removing them. The two River Watch sites were added to fill the gap in data since 2019 and also to aid the ongoing TMDL assessment for this stream segment.

Figures 1- 4 compare water quality parameters at the two sites for data collected between June and October 2024. The sites are about 1.5 miles apart with an ore processing site (currently inactive) and a mine discharge located between the two sampling sites. There are also a few streams that enter Sneffels Creek between the two sites. Figure 1 shows a comparison of total alkalinity. For each month

alkalinity at the downstream site exceeded alkalinity at the upstream site by 4-7 mg/liter. The month to month changes were similar at both sites and alkalinity steadily increased after July as streamflow decreased.

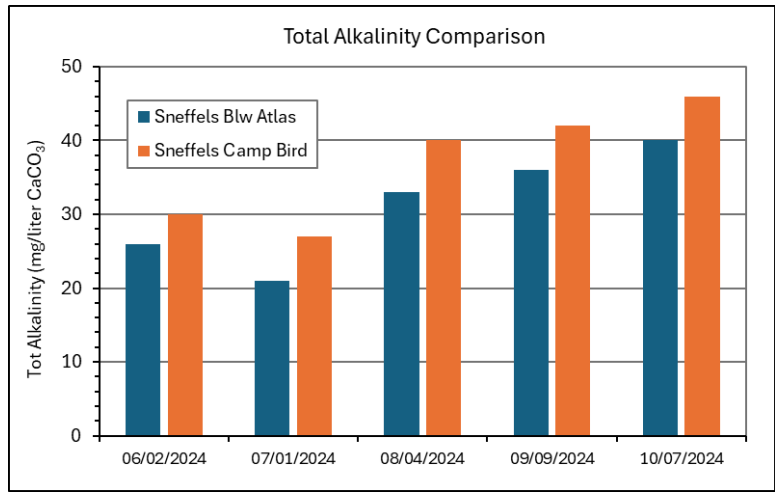


Figure 1. Total alkalinity measured at Blw Atlas Mill (blue bars) and Bridge at Camp Bird Rd (tan) in 2024.

A comparison of total hardness is shown in Figure 2. The harness differences were similar to alkalinity with the downstream site having greater hardness for each month, but only slightly greater in July. Also, there was very little change at the two sites between June and July high flow months.

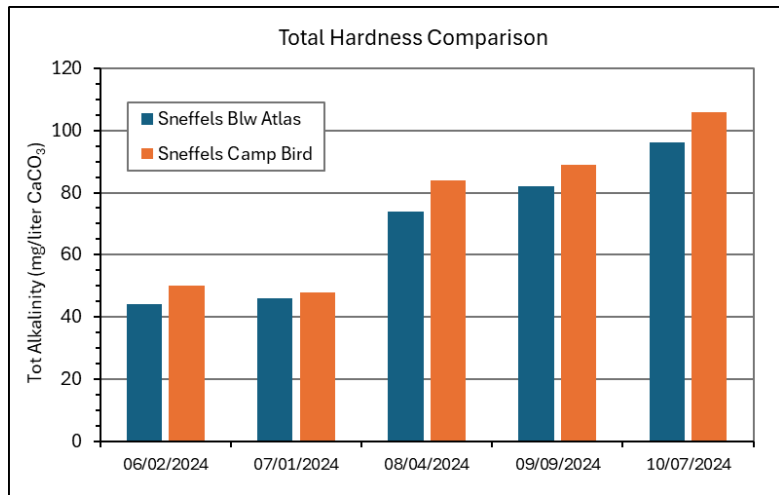


Figure 2. As in Figure 1, except showing a comparison of total hardness.

Total iron concentrations are shown in Figure 3. In contrast to alkalinity and hardness total iron concentrations were largest in June and July during the high streamflow months, with the downstream site having the higher concentration in both months. The three low-flow months had very low iron concentrations and no distinct month to month pattern. In October the downstream site had no detectable iron.

Dissolved zinc concentrations are shown in Figure 4. For June, August, September, and October zinc concentrations were markedly higher at the downstream site, while in July the zinc concentration was much higher at the upstream site. Both concentrations in July exceeded the chronic aquatic life standard for zinc, as did the Camp Bird site concentration in June. As with iron, there was no consistent increase or decrease in zinc concentrations the last three months, although both sites had zinc

concentration increases between August and September, then concentration decreases between September and October.

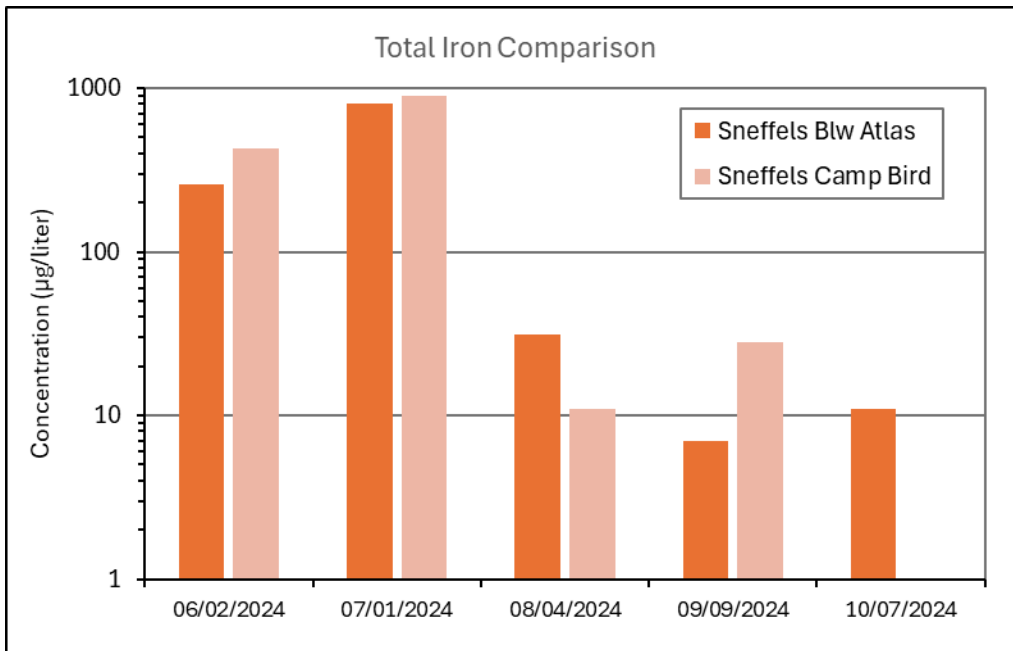


Figure 4. As in Figure 1, except comparing total iron concentrations at the two sites.

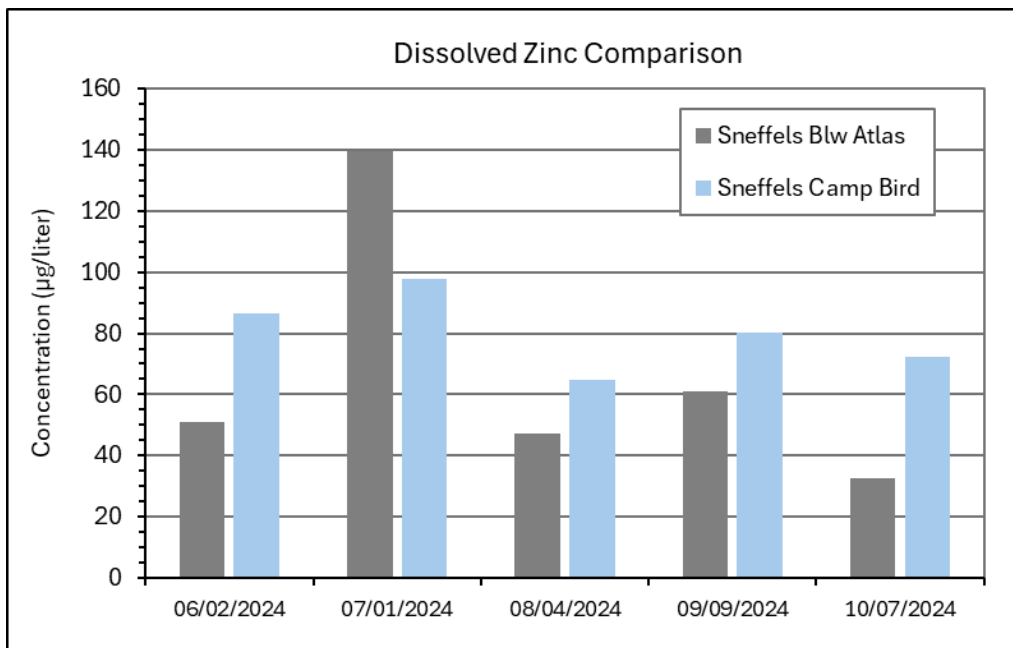


Figure 3. As in Figure 1 except comparing dissolved zinc concentrations at the two sites.