

River Watch Update for the June 2026 UWP Board Meeting

- River Watch items of interest June 2026
 - June 2026 River Watch sampling includes high flow nutrient samples intended to be collected between May 29th and June 13th. As indicated below in the streamflow discussion, high flow on the Uncompahgre probably occurred in mid-May so our high flow samples for 2026 will be collected in flows markedly less than typical high flows. The six lower sites on the Uncompahgre River, Dallas Creek and Cow Creek were sampled on June 2nd and 3rd. As evidenced by the fact that a wading streamflow measurement could be taken on the Uncompahgre at Ridgway, flow on the Uncompahgre was quite low for June. The four high elevation sites along Camp Bird Road were sampled on June 7th and the four sites along Highway 550 above the Red Mtn Creek and Uncompahgre confluence were sampled on June 8th. The last site on the East Fork of Dallas Creek will be sampled on June 11th.
 - In June our RiverCorps member, Elliot Risch, took streamflow measurements at all River Watch sites without stream gauges. As expected, flows at all sites were lower than StreamStat model estimates for June.
 - I submitted our 2026-2027 River Watch MOU that indicates we will maintain sampling of the same 15 sites we had for the current year.
 - After reviewing the results of the survey related to their proposed Contribution System, River Watch has proposed three dates for discussion of the system. The dates are as follows if others would like to hear the details of the discussions. I can participate on any of these dates. Note that the earliest implementation of a system would not be until 2027-2028 (2026-2027 year begins July 1st).
 - 10-11am, Thursday June 18th
 - 9-10am, Friday June 26th
 - 11am-12pm, Thursday July 2nd
- Streamflow:
 - Discharge at the USGS gauge on the Uncompahgre River near Ridgway from March 1st through June 9th is shown in Figure 1. Two periods of enhanced runoff are evident; one between March 19th and April

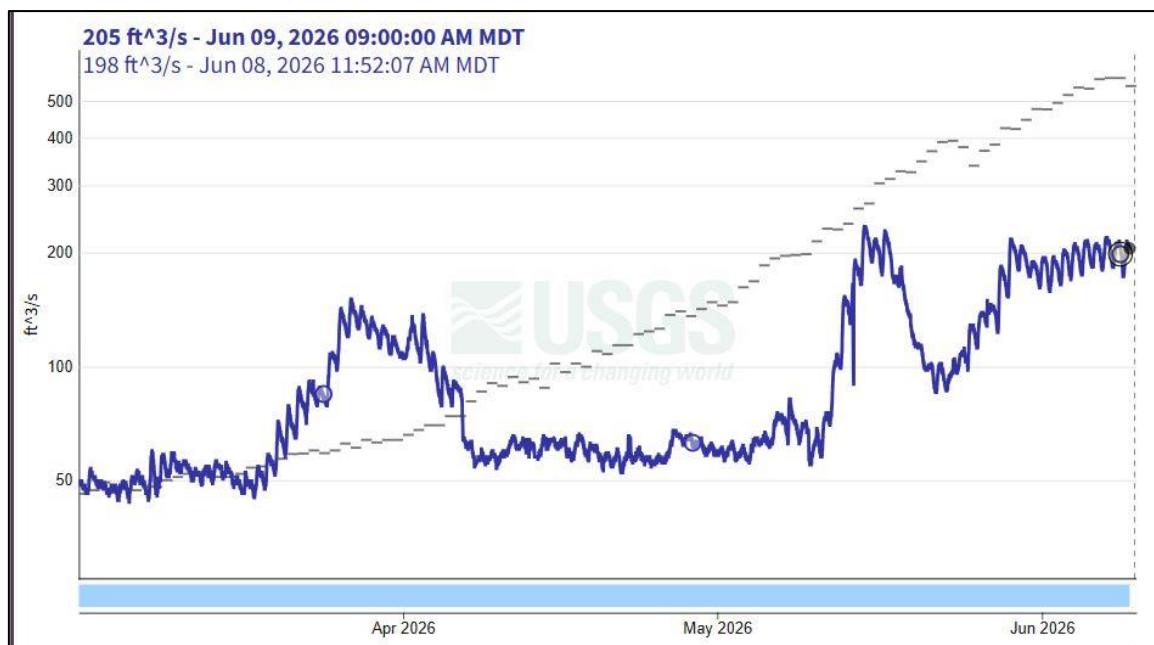


Figure 1. Uncompahgre River discharge at Ridgway from March 1st through June 9th. Gray line represents the median discharge.

6th, and a second period between May 11th and May 20th. To date a very modest peak flow of about 231 cfs was noted on May 15th. Since May 28th a steady diurnal pattern has existed with flows about 200 to 300 cfs below median flows. The flow on June 9th was 205 cfs with the previous low flow for June 9th being 217 cfs.

An interesting observation in this year of very low flows is that the flow at the USGS gauge near Ouray has been 20 to 30 cfs higher than the flows at Ridgway about 10 miles downstream. In May the average flow at Ridgway exceeds the flow at Ouray by about 23 cfs, and in June the average Ridgway flow exceeds Ouray by about 55 cfs. This year irrigation diversions apparently exceed the contributions from several creeks between the two sites.

Recent Dallas Creek discharge has been oscillating between 0.2 and 4 cfs. The highest 2026 discharges at the USGS gauge were noted between February 21st and March 11th. A peak 2026 discharge of about 45 cfs occurred on March 2nd. Discharge at the gauge has been below 10 cfs since March 27th, and below 6 cfs since April 5th. On June 9th the 25th percentile was 11.75 cfs.