

River Watch Update for the July 2026 UWP WHWG Meeting

- River Watch items of interest July 2026

- July 2026 River Watch sampling was conducted between July 2nd and July 10th. We managed to get the Governor Basin sample on July 10th before the road closure that is scheduled to begin on July 13th. If the closure schedule holds, we can get an August sample on August 1st or 2nd before a lengthy closure that begins on August 3rd and extends through November 30th.
- In July our RiverCorps member, Elliot Risch, took streamflow measurements at all but one River Watch site without stream gauges. Flows continued to drop to values well below July averages at all sites. At Commodore Gulch the StreamStat July average is 8.93 cfs and 0.42 cfs was measured on July 7th. At Below Atlas Mill on Sneffels Creek the StreamStat July average is 18.2 cfs and 6.0 cfs was measured on July 10th.
- On July 2nd Tanya and I attended a virtual meeting with River Watch staff regarding the proposed charges for sampling more than two sites per RW group (for UWP it would be sites above our original 6). It was interesting hearing about other RW groups like the Roaring Fork group that samples 23 sites and already subsidizes CPW with additional funds. We indicated that UWP would be willing to pay up to about \$300 for sampling a full-year equivalent site. Since eight of our sites are half-year sites, that would amount to paying for four full-year sites.

- Streamflow:

- Discharge at the USGS gauge on the Uncompahgre River near Ridgway showed three distinct runoff periods since March 1st: March 16th to April 6th; May 11th to May 20th; and May 24th to June 20th. The peak discharge over all three periods was 234 cfs on May 15th. The median peak discharge of > 500 cfs occurs on about June 15th. The discharge on July 11th was 69 cfs and the median for that date is 288 cfs.

On Cow Creek the highest 2026 flow of about 75 cfs occurred on March 26th. A second peak of 69 cfs occurred on May 14th. A very low flow period, mostly less than 2 cfs, occurred between April 8th and May 11th. Since June 4th discharge on Cow Creek has been below 10 cfs. On July 11th discharge was 2.5 cfs when the average for the date is about 60 cfs.

Since March 27th discharge at the USGS Dallas Creek gauge has been at least 10 cfs on only two days. Since June 29th discharge has been less than 2 cfs. On July 11th discharge was 0.83 cfs with a median value of 58.65 cfs. Table 1 compares discharge data measured at the Dallas Creek River Watch site, the Dallas Creek USGS gauge and the Hyde-Sneva Ditch in Ridgway. Discharge at the River Watch site exceeded USGS discharge by 0.67 to 2.45 cfs on the four dates shown. In April and May, the River Watch to USGS differences were similar to the discharges measured in the Hyde-Sneva ditch, while in July the Hyde-Sneva discharge was much less than the River Watch to USGS difference.

Table 1. Discharge data for the Dallas Cr River Watch site, the Dallas Cr USGS site, and the Hyde-Sneva ditch in Ridgway. River Watch and Hyde-Sneva measurements were made with the Tracker 2 flow meter.

RW Site	Date	Tracker 2 Discharge (cfs)	USGS Site	USGS Gauge Discharge (cfs)	CR24 to USGS Difference (cfs)
Dallas Cr at CR24	4/20/2026	1.41	3.25 mi below RW site	0.74	-0.67
Dallas Cr at CR24	5/3/2026	1.50	3.25 mi below RW site	0.52	-0.98
Dallas Cr at CR24	6/3/2026	4.20	3.25 mi below RW site	1.75	-2.45
Dallas Cr at CR24	7/8/2026	3.84	3.25 mi below RW site	1.99	-1.85
				Hyde-Sneva/CR24	CR24 to Hyde-Sneva
			Hyde-Sneva ditch	Fraction of Tracker	Difference (cfs)
Hyde-Sneva Ditch - Ridgway	4/20/2026	0.81	~2 mi from Dallas Cr	0.58	0.60
Hyde-Sneva Ditch - Ridgway	5/5/2026	1.08	~2 mi from Dallas Cr	0.72	0.43
Hyde-Sneva Ditch - Ridgway	7/8/2026	0.68	~2 mi from Dallas Cr	0.18	3.16