

The Fish Tale

August 2026 Newsletter

Gunnison Gorge Anglers

Colorado Trout Unlimited
Fly Fishers International



President's Message

Dear Gunnison Gorge Anglers Members, Volunteers, and Friends,

The 2026 water year is the warmest and one of the driest on record resulting in record low flows throughout the Colorado River Basin including the Gunnison River Basin. Recent decisions by the Bureau of Reclamation reduced Gunnison River flows downstream of the Gunnison Tunnel diversion to around 240 CFS, that is below the decreed base flow 300 CFS. *This week flows increased back to 300, but Whitewater is now below its decreed base flow.* These low flows will certainly have negative impacts on the health of the Gunnison River, its fishery, and the recreation opportunities associated with the river. Warm water temperatures harm trout by lowering oxygen levels and speeding up their bodies' need for energy, creating a dangerous lack of

oxygen. Stress and death rates rise quickly when temperatures pass 68°F. Water temperatures above 70°F and dead fish have already been documented in the Gunnison River above and below Pleasure Park. Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) has enacted a voluntary fishing closure on the lower Gunnison.

In response, TU staff in coordination with GGA volunteers have started routinely monitoring water temperatures and documenting fish mortality associated with rising water temperature in the Gunnison Gorge and the Gunnison River below Pleasure Park. The goal of this effort is to create a fish mortality and water temperature database that can be used to better inform water management agencies, decision makers, and the public on the impacts of low flows and elevated water temperatures on the Gunnison River trout fishery.

We need volunteers to assist with these efforts. If you are interested in volunteering for half a day to monitor water temperature or fish mortality, please email Claire at gunnisongorgeanglersctu@gmail.com with the subject line "Gunnison River volunteer". There is a volunteer sign up calendar and trackers for entering fish and temperature data.

Finally, the GGA Board of Directors recently approved a contract with Cary Dennison (Cow Creek Consulting) to assist GGA and TU by attending water management agency and stakeholder meetings to create more awareness of the impacts that low flows and rising water temperature have on the Gunnison River trout fishery and advocate for some near-term flow modifications through the remaining hot months. Cary has over 20 years of experience working on water resources and restoration projects throughout the Gunnison River Basin and elsewhere in the West.

Water management decisions in Colorado are very complex involving multiple state, federal and local agencies, and a complex array of water rights and environmental compliance requirements. While a 300 CFS minimum flow has been established to protect the ecosystem of the Gunnison River in Black Canyon National Park, a healthy trout fishery is not a specific factor in the decision-making process. At this point, GGA's efforts focus on building public support for healthy trout fishery, collecting data which clearly demonstrates the impacts of low flows and elevated water temperatures on the fishery, and identifying practical water management solutions that meet the water users needs and protect the trout fishery. Partnering with others who share our vision and approach provides the best opportunity for success.

Yours in conservation,

John Hamill, President
Gunnison Gorge Anglers
Hamilldsrt50@msn.com

Upcoming Events

- **Fly Fishing Outing** - We are taking a break this August, see you next month!
Keep scrolling to see photos from last month's outing.
- Flies & Lies is on summer break, returning in September or October
- **Troutapalooza and International Fly Fishing Film Festival - September 23rd**
at the Sheridan Opera House in Telluride. Tickets [here](#) .
- **September Fly Fishing Outing** - TBD. We are planning something special with our friends at Grand Valley Anglers!
- **GGA's "Summer" Bash - October 9th** at Baldridge Park in Montrose

Other News and Current Events

Have you heard that last month USFS and CPW crews worked together to save 103 native cutthroat trout from the Gold Mountain fire? This is an incredible story for native fish, and a cool example of agency collaboration. You can read more about it [here](#) .

Check out this Uncompahgre River [survey](#) from our friends at UWP about the river and recreation in Ouray County. Participants receive a 10% off coupon to Tacos del Gnar.

Get excited for Troutapalooza! We will see you at the Sheridan Opera House on September 23rd for the IF4 films and our annual fundraiser. [Tickets](#) include entry, a light dinner, and the International Fly Fishing Film Festival films. There will also be a bar, silent auction, and live auction with fly fishing gear, trips, and items from local businesses. The New Sheridan Hotel is offering a 20% discount for Troutapalooza attendees. Visit www.newsheridan.com and enter code "TOTU" for 20% off stays the nights of 9/22/26 and 9/23/26. Please call the hotel for questions or to extend your stay.

Always wear PFD's and consider safety whenever you are on the river. GGA star Bill Frangos saved an ill-equipped runaway tuber during our last fishing outing. We definitely want everyone to be able to fish another day!

Want to host a fishing outing? Let us know! Send us an email to gunnisongorgeanglersctu@gmail.com with Fishing Outing in the subject line. The chapter will accommodate snacks, beverages, and some flies. You are not expected to teach fly fishing or guide, just explain how you like to fish that water and have fun.

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<https://gunnisongorgeanglers.tu.org/>

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Newsletter Submissions: [Google form](#)

CTU Event Calendar: <https://coloradotu.org/events>

THANK YOU SPONSORS



Gunnison River Expeditions
8949 Pleasure Park Rd
Hotchkiss, Colorado
970-872-3232



Service Fly Shop serving the greater Montrose Community
Gunnison River, Uncompahgre River, Cimarron River
1325 Mayfly Dr. Montrose CO 81401 - www.montroseanglers.com
970249-0408 - info@montroseanglers.com



RIGS Fly Shop
1075 Sherman Street #101
Ridgway, Colorado 81432
Phone: 970-626-4460



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970-856-5077





July fly fishing outing at
Riverbottom Park

