



To: Honorable Mayor Clark and Ridgway Town Council
From: Preston Neill, Town Manager
Date: June 11, 2025
RE: **Town Manager's Report**

INTRODUCTION

This monthly report serves as an update to the Town Council and community members on key projects, activities, and community issues.

HEY, RIDGWAY! EVEN WITH THE RECENT RAINS, WE STILL NEED TO CONSERVE WATER

The rains our region experienced last week were wonderful. All of us welcomed that moisture with open arms. We can only hope that we see more of that as we get deeper into the summer months. Even with the recent rains, we need to continue using water wisely. Every drop is going to count toward a healthy and sustainable water supply.



Nearly 50% of residential water use occurs outside your home. The good news is, it's easy to save water outdoors. To check out some easy tips for conserving water outdoors, click [HERE](#).

With the Town of Ridgway continuing to work on the [Beaver Creek Diversion Restoration Project](#), the Town currently has Stage 1 Voluntary Water Restrictions in effect. The Ridgway Town Council has continually expressed a desire to conserve water in times of need to ensure effective and safe delivery of water to our community. The following Voluntary Water Restrictions, as described in the Town's [Water Conservation and Management Plan](#), shall remain in effect until modified or revoked by further order of the Town Council:

- No irrigating between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m., or when windy, in order to minimize evaporation, and anytime on Mondays.
- Properties located on the SOUTH side of Hwy 62 and Hunter Parkway – irrigate only on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays.
- Properties located on the NORTH side of Hwy 62 and Hunter Parkway – irrigate only on Wednesdays, Fridays and Sundays.

For more information on the Voluntary Water Restrictions or the Beaver Creek Diversion Restoration Project, please email pneill@town.ridgway.co.us or call 970-626-5308.



MURAL WORK ON ARTSPACE RIDGWAY SPACE TO CREATE BUILDING HAS COMMENCED

Professional muralist Yulia Avgustinovich has arrived in Ridgway and has begun her mural work on the southeast corner walls of the Artspace Ridgway Space to Create Building. The work is expected to take two to three weeks to complete.

The mural will feature a dynamic composition of blooming flowers—symbolizing hope and renewal—alongside depictions of grazing cattle and horses as well as local wildlife, such as wild turkeys, elk, and an eagle soaring above. The aim of this new public art piece is to reflect the town's unique history, natural beauty, and creative spirit.



The artist's design was selected through a rigorous and competitive process, following a formal Request for Proposals seeking submissions from experienced artists both local and nationwide. Through the proposal requirements, interested artists were asked to submit a rough draft of the intended artwork. An ad hoc committee was assembled, made up of local artists and Town and Artspace representatives. The committee collectively and collaboratively reviewed all 17 submitted proposals and interviewed the final candidates. Ultimately, the committee was unanimously impressed with Yulia's proposal, the artistic quality of her previous work and her demonstrated success executing murals of similar size and scope across Colorado and beyond.

Throughout the process, the committee was focused on having a final selection with strong visual impact, representing the rich natural beauty that surrounds and encompasses the Town of Ridgway. Subsequent to the committee's selection, Artspace and the Ridgway Town Council gave their thumbs up to proceed with Avgustinovich's design.

This project is funded with a grant from the Department of Local Affairs/Colorado Main Street Program via the Town of Ridgway's FUSE Creative Main Street Program, and a grant from the Western Colorado Community Foundation: Dave and Mary Wood Fund.

For questions about this work, please contact Preston Neill, Ridgway Town Manager, at pneill@town.ridgway.co.us or 970-626-5308.



MARSHAL'S OFFICE UPDATE

From Shane Schmalz, Town Marshal:

As part of our ongoing commitment to work with our county partners we are providing training support to new officers with the Ouray Police Department. Due to their agency transition with entire new staffing we have taken on the initial training of their newest officer who is a recent graduate of Colorado Mesa University's criminal justice program and law enforcement academy. Thanks to the support of the Ridgway Town Council and staff, we have the necessary staffing in place and experienced officers with diverse backgrounds to provide this support to our county partners.

We took delivery of our 2025 Ford F150 power boost hybrid approximately six weeks go. Last week, we took delivery of our Ford F150 Lightning EV. With several unexpected delays, we now have it in service.

GET READY! THE COLORADO HOME ENERGY REBATE PROGRAM IS LAUNCHING SOON

From the Colorado Energy Office:

The Colorado Energy Office (CEO) is finalizing the Home Energy Rebate Program and will share details soon! We are excited to offer the following rebates later this year:

- **Home Electrification and Appliance Rebates (HEAR)** will support high-efficiency electric appliances and other upgrades for low- and moderate-income households living in single-family homes and for owners and operators of multifamily buildings smaller than 50,000 square feet.
- **Home Efficiency Rebates (HER)** will support whole-home energy efficiency improvements for households living in manufactured/mobile homes and multifamily buildings 50,000 square feet or larger.

To receive the rebate, Coloradans must work with a contractor registered in the Home Energy Rebate Program contractor network to install improvements. CEO will share details about contractor requirements soon.

CEO anticipates launching the Home Energy Rebate programs in 2025, pending federal approval. Rebates will be available for an anticipated four-year period, through the summer of 2029 or until funds are spent, whichever occurs first.

Please share this information broadly with your network and keep an eye out for updates to [our website](#). We will continue to share important information with this Home Energy Rebate Program contact list.



TOWN HALL PO Box 10 | 201 N. Railroad Street | Ridgway, Colorado 81432 | 970.626.5308 | www.town.ridgway.co.us

RIDGWAY CONCERT SERIES

THE TOWN OF RIDGWAY & PICKIN' PRODUCTIONS

**THE 18TH ANNUAL
RIDGWAY
CONCERT
SERIES**

JULY 3
HIGH STEP SOCIETY
The Little Mercies

JULY 10
DAN TYMINSKI BAND
Mama Lingua

JULY 17
J & THE CAUSEWAYS
Improvement Movement

JULY 24
ARTIKAL SOUND SYSTEM
Angela Autumn

JULY 31
TAJ FARRANT
Seth Mulder & Midnight Run

Food Vendors, Beer, Wine & Margaritas
No dogs or Outside Alcohol Permitted

FREE - 6PM SHOWTIME

HARTWELL PARK
Ridgway - Colorado

Ridgway Real Estate - Alpine Bank - Chipeta Lodge Resort & Spa
MTN Lodge Ridgway & The Million Roadhouse - Dave & Julie Duff
Billings Artworks - Todd W. Hoffman Foundation
The Market at Ridgway - Orvis Hot Springs - KVN Public Radio

PDP Marketing MMXXV



BEAVER CREEK DIVERSION RESTORATION PROJECT WEBPAGE

<https://townofridgway.colorado.gov/beaver-creek-diversion-restoration-project>

UPDATE ON TELLURIDE FOUNDATION'S NEW DOWN PAYMENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

From Elaine Demas, Vice President Operations with the Telluride Foundation:

We launched the program in April and on May 13th closed our first loan. A learning process for sure.

Our first Shared Appreciation DPA loan went to a wonderful family of 4 from Ridgway; the Patton's. Lori Patton works for the town of Ridgway and her husband Brian works for Artistic Solutions in Telluride. They have two teenage children who attend the Ridgway Schools. They purchased a brand-new home built (and subsidized) by the Home Trust of Ouray County. It is one-half of a very nicely constructed duplex located on the east side of town. The purchase price was \$330k; their DPA loan amount was \$50k.

The next Shared Appreciation DPA loan in the queue is over here in Telluride (a town of Telluride employee), then back over to Ouray for our third loan which is being awarded to two bakers. These folks own the local bakery in Ouray, have been baking in the community for 20 years and this is their first home purchase. This particular loan, because the family earns under 100% AMI is being partially funded by the State of Colorado (total loan \$50k with \$25k coming from the state and \$25k coming from our program) stretching our dollars as far as possible.

Purchase prices thus far have been under \$450,000 so our maximum sales price of \$850k seems to be giving us enough flexibility to serve our workforce.

In addition to these new Shared Appreciation loans, we have awarded four \$5,000 Forgivable DPA loans; One in Telluride (couple works at Telluride Science & TELSki), one in Norwood (works at Brown Dog) and two in Ouray (folks work for Ouray County and the Voyager Youth Program in Ridgway).

A few additional and interesting data points:

Since launching in April, seven applications have been denied during the Pre-Qualification process. Reasons for the denial varied...Income too High, Home outside of the Foundations' Service Area, Have not been working in the community for at least 12 months etc. All in all, it feels like the program is serving those we have always intended it to, hardworking members of our regional workforce; those without existing resources to purchase a home... It's working!!!



UPCOMING UNCOMPAHGRE WATERSHED PARTNERSHIP EVENTS

From Tanya Ishikawa, UWP Executive Director:

Saturday, June 28: 17th Annual Ridgway RiverFest, Noon to 5 p.m., Rolland Park, Ridgway, CO
<https://ridgwayriverfest.org/>

This annual festival offers an afternoon of family-friendly fun and education in celebration of the Uncompahgre River Watershed – free to festivalgoers from near and far with all-age river races, awards and prizes, information about local nature and outdoor recreation, live music, food, and beverages. It is a fundraiser for the Uncompahgre Watershed Partnership, providing awareness and funding for our rivers, water resources, the need for conservation and important water quality and riparian area monitoring and restoration activities.

BLUE LAKES TRAILHEAD CLOSURE

From Daniel Malta, Public Affairs Officer with Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre and Gunnison National Forests:

On June 2, the Blue Lakes area closed for trailhead construction and restoration efforts. Since our initial press release last month, we've received valuable inquiries from visitors and community members. To ensure clarity and provide additional information, we've put together a set of FAQs addressing these inquiries.

Thank you for your patience and for being part of our community. Your engagement and enthusiasm mean a great deal to us, and we look forward to welcoming you back to the Blue Lakes area once the construction and restoration is complete.

Blue Lakes Trailhead Closure Order FAQs

Ouray Ranger District

Closure Dates: June 2 – August 2025

Q: Are there other ways to access the Blue Lakes since the primary trailhead is closed?

A: Yes. Visitors can access the Blue Lakes via Yankee Boy Basin and Blue Lakes Pass by doing an out-and-back hike. Visitors should be aware that this is a very different experience than accessing from the Blue Lakes Trailhead. Access to this area requires 4WD, a high clearance vehicle and some technical driving skills, depending on how far you drive up the road. The hike from the Upper Yankee Boy parking area and bathroom to Lower Blue Lake is approximately 9.5 miles round trip. It includes a 3,000-foot descent into the Blue Lakes Basin, followed by a 3,000-foot ascent to return and complete the route. Visitors should expect more primitive trail conditions with a high degree of exposure along the trail. Visitors should also be aware that parking is limited in this area. Please do not park along the road or on alpine vegetation.



Q: Can users still access Blaine Basin?

A: Users can still access Blaine Basin from either County Road 5 or from the Dallas Trailhead off County Road 17.

Q: Will the parking area be bigger now? What sort of improvements are being made?

A: The parking lot will occupy the existing footprint of the current parking area. The new parking area will have improved drainage, one new double vault restroom in a new location and delineated parking spaces for visitors. This will help improve the parking experience for visitors and provide better access to and from the trailhead.

Q: What uses is the closure area limited to?

A: All uses, including hiking, are not allowed within the closure area.

Q: Can I access Blue Lakes from Dallas Trail?

A: No, the area closure includes 1.6 miles of the Dallas Trail (#200) from the junction with Wilson Creek Trail (#202) and the junction with NFR 851.1.

Q: When will the new permit system be in place?

A: We are currently working with Recreation.gov to develop the details and logistics for the permit system. We do not have a hard implementation date currently. The earliest we anticipate it beginning would be for the 2026 season.

Q: When will the Blue Lakes area close, and for how long?

A: The temporary closure begins June 2, 2025, and is expected to last through August 2025. The area will reopen as soon as it is safe to access.

Q: Why is the Blue Lakes area closing?

A: The closure is necessary for trailhead construction and restoration efforts as part of the Blue Lakes Visitor Use Management Plan. The goal is to improve visitor experiences and ensure the long-term sustainability of the site's natural resources.

Q: What improvements are being made?

A: Projects during the closure include:

- Reconstructing the trailhead parking area
- Installing two new vault restrooms
- Adding kiosks, signage, and interpretive panels
- Cataloging invasive plants
- Developing designated camping areas
- Restoring social trails and impacted sites



Q: Who is funding the improvements?

A: The project is funded by the Great American Outdoors Act (GAOA).

Q: Which trails will be affected by the closure?

A: The closure includes the Blue Lakes Trailhead, accessed from County Road 7, and extends to the Mount Sneffels Wilderness boundary. Portions of the Dallas and Wilson Creek trails, adjacent to the trailhead, will also be closed.

Q: How will restoration areas be protected during construction?

A: Temporary fences will be installed to preserve restored areas.

Q: Where can I get updates on the closure?

A: For more details, visit <https://www.fs.usda.gov/r02/gmug/projects/61979>.

UPCOMING MEETINGS AND EVENTS

- **Town Council Regular Meeting** – June 11, 2025 at 5:30 p.m. in-person at Town Hall and virtually via Zoom
- **FUSE Committee Meeting** – June 17, 2025 at 5:30 p.m. at the Decker Room
- **Planning Commission Meeting** – June 18, 2025 at 5:30 p.m. at Town Hall and virtually via Zoom
- **Sustainability Advisory Board Meeting** – July 1, 2025 at 5:00 p.m. at Town Hall and virtually via Zoom
- **First Concert of Ridgway Concert Series!** – July 3, 2025 at 6:00 p.m. at Hartwell Park
- **Town Council Regular Meeting** – July 9, 2025 at 5:30 p.m. in-person at Town Hall and virtually via Zoom
- **Second Concert of Ridgway Concert Series!** – July 10, 2025 at 6:00 p.m. at Hartwell Park

JOKE OF THE DAY

From Steven Schroeder, Public Works Maintenance Operator II:

I caught my son gnawing electrical cords, so I grounded him. He's doing better now and is conducting himself appropriately.