

Minutes of the Ouray Ice Park Advisory Team (IPAT) Special Work Session June 25, 2020

The Team met with representatives of the OIP Contracted Guide Services (CGSs) in Ouray's Rotary Park on June 25, 2020, and we were able to spread out among the picnic tables. Thanks for keeping respectful distances and having masks for the closer encounters.

Attending were Elías de Andrés Martos, Katie Beringer, Nate Disser, Angela Hawse, John Hulburd, Grant Kleeves, Pat Ormond, Frank Robertson, Todd Rutledge, Lance Sullins, Josh Vincent, Matt Wade, and John Wood. Gary Dunn could not attend so Frank filled him in prior to the meeting.

We talked through a summary of the preliminary analysis of data from the past season as compared to the previous one.

The '19-'20 season was shorter than the '18-'19 season (about 11 weeks vs. about 14), but plentiful water and cold temps gave us a longer plateau with more routes (about 130 open anchors through the prime period vs. about 120 the prior season). These counter-balancing factors resulted in about the same amount of terrain available in the two quite different seasons. Applying the 1.8 people per anchor from the middle case of our model loading scenarios to the raw counts of anchors open through the season gave us a Functional Capacity estimate of 17,000, almost the same as last season in our second season of data collection.

The numbers given, while correct, were unfortunately in one case not the one intended for the key metric and in another misidentified.

Because of confusion in extracting data from multiple sources and attempting to automate the functional capacity model (work in progress), instead of using the daily actuals reported by the CGSs (total of 2015 for the season) I gave the total of the sample counts from the Ambassadors' walk-throughs (about 1500). The upshot is that instead of being under 10%, Commercial use was 12% of Functional Capacity, as compared to about 13% the prior season.

Because of miscommunication on data series underlying the analysis, the total visitors I reported (under 10,000) was in fact only the Recreational Users, with the total of all User categories about 12,000, a smaller reduction from 12,400 across the prior season.

So, use was not off as much as we thought, and the gap to the 15% Commercial target is not as big.

My apologies for these misstatements – *mea maxima culpa*.

Matt Wade gave a quick overview of allocation practices in the broader outdoor recreation and land management arena. The group understands that the Ice Park is unique, in that the ice is built by OIPI each season, and has many factors outside our control in the production of this variable resource. The Management Agreement also specifies the proportions of capacity OIPI should target in managing among the User groups. The subject of the use metric was again raised; OIPI has considered allocation units other than Service Days (SDs) - we actually analyze with User counts - but is not ready to make a change this year.

The Baseline Allocation for the 2020-21 season will remain at 600 Service Days, and the proportions of that allocation among the CGSs will not change at this time. The OIPI Board has approved an incremental 100 Service Days as a Provisional Allocation above Baseline for the coming season as an adaptive management trial increase.

65 SDs of the incremental allocation will be divided among the incumbent CGSs, with the provision that they must be used on weekdays.

35 SDs will be reserved for new entrants (guide services or individual guides who do not currently have a contract with OIPI) who submit proposals to be evaluated by OIPI.

New entrants must meet the same qualifications as incumbent CGSs (insurance and certifications) and make the case that they have the capacity to effectively use their proposed allocations.

New entrants will be able to use any allocations awarded on both weekdays and weekends.

Allocations not awarded may be applied to a renewed Flex Day program, TBD.

The allocation period will again be from opening through Presidents Day and open use for all CGSs will again be pulled in from early March to the Tuesday after Presidents Day as done last season.

Matt has volunteered to lead an off-line discussion among the CGSs as to what is the best way to divide up the incremental 65 SDs for incumbents. That community's recommendation will feed into the August IPAT meeting discussion and OIPI's decision on awarding the Provisional Allocation. If the group can provide a unanimous agreement on which CGSs should get how much in the split, our work is done. If not, OIPI will look at other factors, such as consistency of allocation use, as well as the cases made by CGSs for an increase in proposals after the August IPAT meeting if needed to resolve the question. In any case, allocation letters will go out on September 1 as always.

There was also spirited discussion of how we manage over-capacity traffic in the Park, with the key idea being the opportunity to alleviate crowding by addressing groups other than Commercial ones. We already require Institutional Groups to pre-register and they have typically not exceeded their 10%. OIPI budget does not support staffing or infrastructure to undertake controlling access to the Park or managing a reservation system for Recreational Users. It was suggested to distribute a limited number of belay tags that could be checked by the Ambassadors. OIPI will consider how we might better control over-crowding on peak weekends and holidays, including getting the word out on our web site that those periods are best avoided if other arrangements can be made.