

Minutes of the January 5, 2022 Meeting of the Ouray Ice Park Advisory Team

The Ice Park Advisory Team held its regular meeting from 7 - 9 pm on January 5, 2022 in the Ouray Community Center.

Attending were Tres Barbatelli, Kitty Calhoun, Pete Davis, Tim Foulkes, Dawn Glanc, Angela Hawse, John Hulburd, Todd Jesse, Grant Kleeves, Micah Lewkowitz, Diane Mielcarz, Dolgio Nergui, Peter O'Neil, Pat Ormond, Jacob Raab, Frank Robertson, Todd Rutledge, Lance Sullins, Logan Tyler, Bayley Wood, John Wood, and Dan Zokaites.

Agenda:

- Update on Operations - Pete
- Update on Events and Fundraising - Peter
- Reminder on CGO Training and AMGA SoP - Frank
- Update on CGO Partnership Program from Charlie
- Discussion of Sustainability Agenda - All
 - Effective water use practices and messaging
 - Sustainability program evaluation criteria (per suggestion from Angela)

Pete told the Team about the extensive actions taken through the opening of the Park to improve infrastructure and operations: new trails for better access, including beautiful work by Jeff Skoloda on stiles for penstock crossings, steps and rungs for the steeper sections, benches for gearing up in multiple locations, comprehensive signage and updated maps, anchor assurance, including shoring up pads and 70+ new glue-in bolts, new decking on walkways, ladders across open water in the gorge, and refurbishment of the Powder House and Sugar Shack.

He described how the early season ice farming has focused the use of limited water where it does the most good and the challenges of dealing with conditions – all to an amazingly good opening on December 25, considering our recent warm temps and even rain. That said, we are down considerably in terms of capacity compared to the outstanding profile early last season (~90 anchors open vs. almost 150). More ice is coming in as we hit the remaining areas on cold nights and clear snow, and we will see how capacity develops.

As always, Field Staff went through a custom RfR training at the beginning of the season, and Steve and Tim also got SPRAT (rope access) certifications (thanks, Mike). We are in the process of updating the route guide and will also revise the Operations Manual with the latest improved methods, including more on ice farming techniques.

Unfortunately, the Trestle area is closed for the season with ongoing repairs to the penstock still not cleared by FERC, but new terrain is opening in the area between New Funtier and South Park, as well as new routes Between the Bridges, and (thanks to Logan) all new bolts and anchors for dry tooling routes at the Gazebo Wall. Rangers have been making announcements helpful to Park Users from the Chalet deck as the line to get in forms each morning.

Peter updated us on our three major events and progress with funding. The All In Ice Fest is already in the books as a resounding success in our first shot at enabling increased participation by historically-marginalized communities. The Ouray Ice Fest is set for January 20-23, with the comp tower up and the routes being set; multiple CGOs will offer clinics during Fest and on other weekends. Great thanks to the Wright Opera House for providing the venue for evening programs free of charge. The UIAA North American Championships will be held right here in Ouray February 3-5.

Grants for many \$100Ks from GOCO, OEDIT, Colorado Tourism, Colorado Lottery, the City of Ouray, Telluray Foundation, the Gates Family Foundation, and others will support both the livestreaming of competitions and a documentary program for broadcast on all of these events.

The test hole for the pumping station in Canyon Creek has been dug and Ouray Silver Mines reports the assignment of their recreational water right to, along with a supplemental right for, the City, making good progress through the approval process. OSM has already spent nearly \$100K on the water right and engineering – we are forever grateful. OIPI is raising \$1.1 M to secure this new water source for the Park, adding to the City's portfolio and ensuring future supply for the Park. That's on top of over \$250,000 a year to build and operate the Park so CGOs can make a living, IGE can conduct their educational and recreational programs, and recreational users can come to Ouray from all over the world to have a great climbing experience and contribute to the local economy.

A new economic impact study with Kent State University is under way. The local components will be derived from public records, but there is a QR code for visitors to take a survey feeding into assessment of outside contributions – CGOs are encouraged to make their clients aware of the importance of their input to achieving an understanding of the winter economy that we can use for grant applications and management decisions going forward. It will also underpin support for continued allocation of limited water supply to our recreation use, along with continuously improving water use effectiveness and messaging around our best practices for this non-consumptive use.

Thanks to Charlie for a summary of responses from a half-dozen CGOs to the call for partnership to support accessibility to the Park by a more diverse User base. See idea below on asking for help from folks who understand the challenges best as to how we might go about that objective.

Lance told us about Peak's dunk-tank event during Fest (Friday), with fun for all, fundraising/prizes, and freezing body parts for the lucky few...

Frank clarified the expectation for training by CGOs, with Angela providing insight into the AMGA Scope of Practice and its roll-out. While a lot of details must be addressed to manage it, the expectation is for guides to meet or exceed the requirements of the SoP to operate in the Park next season. Not all CGOs are guiding, there are multiple organizations that offer training, and the Park is a unique operating environment. The baseline principle is that CGO personnel operating in the Park will have training consistent with safe operations, and OIPI will determine whether the expectation is met.

As we look toward the May '22 Sustainability Plan deliverable to the City, suggestions from John on the water use effectiveness item above, from Angela on developing a set of evaluation criteria for program elements, and from Kitty on forming an advisory team of principals as we seek to provide access to the Park by under-represented communities will be folded into the agenda we have been pursuing.

We remind everyone to review the rules (CGOs, please don't drive up to the Chalet parking to drop or pick up clients) and remind ourselves that all Users must observe them (Rangers, Rec Users have to take down their anchors after 3 hours, too...).

There was a Staff question on training programs conducted in the Park by organizations for their personnel: such sessions are Institutional Group Events, requiring a separate permit, and CGO Service Days for guiding are not fungible to that purpose.