

Minutes of the January 2, 2019 Ouray Ice Park Advisory Team Meeting

The Ouray Ice Park Advisory Team met at 7 pm in the San Juan Room of the Ouray Community Center.

Agenda:

Adopt Minutes of October 10 Meeting	Team
Ice Park Operations and User Data Collection	Dan
OTO's 2018 Ouray Winter Recreation Survey Results	Kat
Discussion of Opportunities for the Rest of the Season	All

Attending were Dan Chehayl, Elias de Andres Martos, Nate Dissler, Dawn Glanc, Micah Lewkowitz, Braydin Mehnert, Diane Mielcarz, Kat Papenbrock, Frank Robertson, Katie Sickles, Lance Sullins and Matt Wade. Grant was in Patagonia, getting wind-burnt before topping out Aguja Guillaumet.

The Team adopted the minutes from the October 10, 2018 meeting.

Dan gave us a very positive report on operations in the Park; it is in fantastic shape despite limited water, thanks to cold temps and a lot of great work by Staff and volunteers. The South end except for New Funtier opened on December 15 and a bunch of local guides cleared the snow in Scottish Gullies just in time to get it sprayed down to open much of the north end along with New Funtier on January 5.

Dan showed examples of data the Ambassadors have been collecting four days a week since opening day, on number of folks in the park at daily opening, during each morning and afternoon, user category, where they were climbing at each snapshot, number of anchors available, percent occupancy in each area and a tally of interventions with commentary.

On this last point, people getting prompted to don their helmets and advised on anchoring issues were most common. Dawn asked what reference was available on these issues and Dan pointed to rules, equipment listings and anchoring tutorials available on OIPI's web site and in the Ouray Ice Park Guide. It was also suggested that Staff or guides could stage demonstrations of effective anchoring techniques in the park. We had positive comments on the Ambassadors being in the park, the orientation / support they provide and the data coming from them being a good foundation.

Lance had followed up with us about his ideas on high-resolution data for high-congestion areas and Dan is working to line up volunteers to complement the overall user info Ambassadors are already capturing. An off-line working group volunteered to hammer out the details of what info we need and how best to go about it. The City's new intern will be joining the effort after Ice Fest. We will collect and analyze the data on use of the park through the season, with focus on busy weekends but also sample mid-week, to help make the experience great for everyone and then to inform our discussions of next season's transition to consolidated OIPI management of all user groups.

The Team began a more comprehensive discussion of water. The ongoing drought has everyone involved looking at a new reality of less water than we thought we had. The City has moved to establish residential metering over the next couple of years and is coping with multiple other water-related priorities in a highly-constrained budget environment.

The city being very busy with winter visitors has resulted in the tanks dropping below 30% and the City notifying the park not to use any water on a couple of recent occasions; multiple other nights we have been allowed to use less than half of “normal” rates. Public Works is asking for us to aim for as even a use rate as possible and Dan will work with Joe Coleman to see how the intrinsically intermittent draws for making ice can be managed to minimize impact.

Katie presented data from Joe on water use measured by the City system so far this season. Dan pointed out that this data is only part of the picture and that to understand the overall situation it must be complemented by data from OIPI operations and placed in context of historical use rates. We asked that the raw data handed out not be further distributed. Dan will get with Joe to put together a comprehensive report for review at our next meeting.

It was agreed that an independent source of water for the ice park should be explored. While the City is looking at their shares in Weehawken Creek, there is no budget or potential for immediate relief there. Dawn let the team know that John Woods has introduced a possible Public-Private Partnership for new water infrastructure at City Council and the Team agreed that we should open discussion with interested parties toward possible Ice Park involvement. Dan will also get with water engineers for the City and OIPI to see how best to get at the many considerations to even start this exploration.

Kat gave us a very interesting summary of the latest survey of winter recreational visitors conducted by the Ouray Tourism Office. Where before ice climbing had been under-represented in the annual data, the use this year of OIPI contacts brought the prominence of our community in Ouray’s winter economy to the fore. The full report and detailed data are available on OTO’s website under Membership links.

The Team also went a ways into the discussion of user allocations going forward before recognizing that we need to get data turned into insight before we can really go there.

The meeting adjourned at 8:45.