

**AGENDA  
OURAY CITY COUNCIL**

**Monday, April 20, 2026 - 4:00 PM**

**Ouray Community Center  
320 6th Ave  
Ouray, CO 81427**

**VIRTUAL OPTION - <https://zoom.us/j/9349389230>**

Meeting ID: 934 938 9230 Passcode: 491878 Or dial: 408 638 0968 or 669 900 6833

**Ouray City Council Work Session**

- Changes to this agenda can be found on the bulletin board at City Hall
- Electronic copies of the Council Packet are available on the City website at [www.cityofouray.com](http://www.cityofouray.com). A hard copy of the Packet is also available at the Administrative Office for interested citizens.
- Notice is hereby given that a majority or quorum of the Planning Commission, Ouray Economic Development Committee, Beautification Committee, Tourism Advisory Committee, Main Streets Committee, and/or Parks and Recreation Committee may be present at the above noticed City Council meeting to discuss any or all of the matters on the agenda below for Council consideration

1. CALL TO ORDER
2. VIA FERRATA
  - a. BRIEF HISTORY
  - b. CITY'S OPERATION PLAN
    - Schedule for Season
      - Open / Closure Dates
      - Daily Hours of Operation
    - Staffing Plan
      - Hours and Compensation
      - Responsibilities
    - Permit Requirements (City)
    - Communications Plan
    - Seasonal Budget
    - Emergency Plan
  - c. AGREEMENTS WITH CGOs
    - Companies
    - Fee Structure
    - Priority Access
  - d. POSSIBLE FEE STRUCTURE FOR UNGUIDED PARTIES
    - Number of Participants per Season
    - Proposed Fee
    - Collection Logistics
    - Additional Insurance Requirements (City)
  - e. UNDERWEIGHT PARTICIPANTS POLICY (<88LBS)



This operations and employee manual is the property of the City of Ouray's Parks and Recreation department. It is supplied to employees, land managers, insurance underwriters and professional organizations. All the information contained within the manual is private and confidential and is the property of The City of Ouray.

Created April 2021 Revised April 2026

# GENERAL OPERATING PROCEDURES AND GUIDELINES FOR THE OURAY VIA FERRATA

## Location of Operations

The Ouray Via Ferrata (OVF) is a city-owned recreational facility, operated under contract by the Parks and Recreation department. The OVF is located on the east side of the Uncompahgre River Gorge. The Ouray Via Ferrata consists of two independent climbing routes that run along the canyon in opposite directions. The Upstream and the Downstream routes both begin at the Ranger Station which is located off the Ice Park Loop trail at the South end of the New Frontier access trail. The Downstream Route travels north along the canyon wall and is 4000 linear feet long, with a rating of 4b. The Downstream Route ends at the CR361 bridge. The Upstream Route travels South along the canyon wall and is 5000 linear feet and has a rating of 4b+. The Upstream Route ends in the "Deep South" area of the Ouray Ice Park.

Both routes are varied with sections of narrow rock ledge, rungs across blank rock sections, climbing and descending sections and cable traverses – with the entire route protected by continuous safety cable.

The route is positioned entirely on the east side of the ice park gorge with no interference arising with the ice climbing routes, operations or activity. Care has been taken to create this Via Ferrata with the additional purpose of using it to access, and not interfere with, existing and potential new rock climbing routes on the eastern ice park cliff faces. This construction is intended to be a "core" Uncompahgre Gorge installation with future expansion in all directions feasible.

Features of the Ouray Via Ferrata include:

Downstream Route:

- approximately 4000+ linear feet of anchored cable protected / rung enhanced trail
- one 35' long cable wire bridge across the Uncompahgre Gorge at the beginning of the route
- 200 rung "Stairway to Heaven"
- 1 rest spot with a bench and a shade tree
- two technical early exits located approximately  $\frac{1}{3}$ , and  $\frac{2}{3}$  of the way through the course.
- one ascending "Sky Bridge" at the North end of the route spanning the gorge for approximately 75' at 35 degrees in angle
- "Sky Climb" bypass around the "Sky Bridge"
- wide variety of vertical and horizontal route sections with interesting and varied movement designed, implemented, and installed by local climbing professionals and engineers

#### Upstream Route:

- approximately 5000+ linear feet of anchored cable protected / rung enhanced trail
- One 55' long cable wire bridge across the Uncompahgre Gorge at the start of the route
- one ascending "Helix Ladder" at the beginning of the route ascending the gorge for approximately 65' at a slightly overhanging in angle
- One early exit located about  $\frac{1}{2}$  way through
- 2 crux pitches with climbing that is slightly overhanging. The climbing includes both ascending and descending.
- "Beach" rest area along the Uncompahgre River
- "Leap of Faith" has you jump across the Uncompahgre Gorge.
- Ascend the "Cables of Doom" to the exit, located in the "Deep South" of the Ouray Ice Park
- wide variety of vertical and horizontal route sections with interesting and varied movement designed, implemented, and installed by local climbing professionals and engineers

## Fees, Dates and Hours of Operation

The Ouray Via Ferrata is free and open to the public. Commercial guiding operations are only allowed with an operating permit issued by The City of Ouray Parks Department. The Ouray Via Ferrata is open May 1st – October 31st. Hours of operation are 8:00am – 4:00pm, seven days a week. Closures may occur due to weather or other environmental concerns. The season may also be extended or shortened at the judgment of the Parks and Recreation Director.

## Weather

The Ouray Via Ferrata is open typically May 1st – October 31st. Weather closures on the OVF are decided by the ranger working. The Ranger should call the Visitor Center to notify them of the closure and expected reopening.

The decision to close the OVF is based on the weather forecast, route conditions, and ground saturation. Rain, lightning, high river levels, snow and ice accumulation are all factors that may close the route. Potential for rockfall, flooding and mass trail erosion are also considered.

Weather Forecasts can change quickly in the mountains. Weather patterns can also be regional. Weather related closures are often made the morning of the closure to be sure current conditions, updated weather models and actual route conditions are considered.

Route closures are announced by 7:30 am on the day of the closure. The general public can find the notifications on Instagram and Facebook. The ranger on duty will call the City of Ouray Visitor Center who will reach out to Guide Services, Rental Agencies and Ouray Mountain Sports to give notification of the closure. The social media posts and emails will note if the closure is all day or a few hours. Re-opening days will also be posted with the closure notification. Old closure posts will be removed when no longer valid. The Instagram posts will tag the City of Ouray, The Ouray Visitor Center, Guide Services, Rental Agencies, Surrounding Climbing Groups/Clubs, and other community stakeholders.

If the OVF routes are closed, the general public is not permitted to climb. The ranger is expected to stay on duty during the closure. Permitted guided parties can climb at their own risk. Guide services are responsible for their own operational decisions regarding weather, however should an unsafe situation occur such as rockfall, treefall, flooding, or severe weather above and beyond reasonable conditions the ranger may deny guides services access.

## Rules and Regulations

All employees are expected to be knowledgeable of and obey the Ouray Via Ferrata rules at all times. The rules are posted in Via Ferrata manuals and at the Ranger Kiosk. The Ouray Via Ferrata rules can also be found on the Ouray Via Ferrata website, [ourayviaferrata.org](http://ourayviaferrata.org). In addition, employees should educate recreational and guided climbers of all rules and regulations.

## Required Safety Gear

The ranger on staff will conduct a gear check of every climber and guided party. Every person must have a climbing helmet, climbing harness, and an EN958 rated EAS Via Ferrata tether to access the Ouray Via Ferrata. ANY CLIMBER WHO DOES NOT HAVE THE PROPER SAFETY GEAR WILL BE DENIED ACCESS TO THE OURAY VIA FERRATA. NO EXCEPTIONS WILL BE MADE FOR INADEQUATE GEAR. Inadequate gear includes but is not limited to homemade tethers, rope access equipment, or other climbing gear. Closed toe shoes and gloves are highly recommended, but not mandatory.

Beginning on May 1, 2023 the Ouray Via Ferrata will no longer allow participants outside of the manufacturer's weight requirements (88lbs-265lbs/40kg-120kg) to climb the Upstream or the Downstream Route without a professional guide using appropriate belay techniques in conjunction with a VF lanyard. This rule change no longer allows recreational parties to belay participants under 88 lbs or over 265 lbs. Unguided participants who are outside of the manufacturer's weight requirements will not be allowed to access the Via Ferrata, and they will be denied entry by the OVF Rangers.

# GENERAL OPERATING PROCEDURES AND GUIDELINES FOR THE OURAY VIA FERRATA RANGERS

The following ranger procedures and guidelines apply to all Ouray Via Ferrata ranger staff.

Friends of the Ouray Via Ferrata has developed and maintains the employee manual for the management and operation of the Ouray Via Ferrata Rangers. It is expected that rangers and staff will consult and or review the manual prior to opening day each season. The Ouray Via Ferrata is open May 1st – October 31st.

As of April 2026 the Via Ferrata ranger manual, rules and regulations and all corresponding policies are managed by the city of Ouray. This manual is a reflection of new management and procedures.

## Ranger Positions

The Ouray Via Ferrata Rangers are employed and managed by the City of Ouray. Rangers are to report to the parks and recreation director or their appropriate designee.

## Parks Director and Park Operations Manager

The leadership team is responsible for managing the Ouray Via Ferrata Rangers, climbers, permitted guide services and volunteers. Duties include but are not limited to:

- Hiring seasonal rangers
- Scheduling rangers
- Scheduling and overseeing training of rangers
- Updating and managing the Via Ferrata Google drive
- Responding to emails and managing the Ourayparks@cityofouray.com account

- Enforcing all rules and regulations of the Ouray Via Ferrata
- Overseeing Ouray Via Ferrata daily operations
- Checking for required safety gear, assuring gear is properly attached to the climber.
- Delivering a safety brief to climbers and guides
- Recording user data in the notebook and on the google form
- Assisting climbers including rescues and evacuations
- Writing end of season reports, including climber usage, data and guide service usage. End of Season Reports are due by November 15th.
- Cleaning and furnishing the Ranger Station
- General maintenance to the area around the shack and entrance trails

## Via Ferrata Ranger

The Ouray Via Ferrata Ranger is responsible for managing the Ouray Via Ferrata climbers and permitted guide services. Duties include but are not limited to:

- Conducting Ouray Via Ferrata daily operations
- Enforcing all rules and regulations of the Ouray Via Ferrata
- Checking for required safety gear, assuring gear is properly attached to the climber
- Delivering a safety brief to climbers and guides
- Recording user data in the notebook delivering the sheets weekly to the Parks Director
- Assisting climbers including directing climbers and coordinating emergency services
- Cleaning the Ranger Station
- General maintenance to the area around the shack and entrance trails
- Trail construction
- Pick up trash on trails surrounding the OVF
- Restroom cleaning
- Notifying the Visitor Center of any changes to the operations

## Ranger Station

The Ranger Station is located at the entrance to the Ouray Via Ferrata. The lock box code is 0523. The Ranger Station is the base of operations for the OVF rangers. Employees will report to the shack at the beginning of each work day. Rangers can store personal items at the shack. NO food can be stored in the shack. First aid kits, communications devices, and rescue equipment will all be stored in the Ranger Station. The phone number for the Ranger Station is (970)-325-3022

## Required Employee Paperwork

Once per year, or as necessary, each employee intending to work for the following year will need to submit the following minimum paperwork:

- Employee acknowledgement and model release found at the beginning of this manual
- Updated resume as necessary
- Updated certifications as necessary
- Updated driver's license as necessary
- Updated payroll information as necessary (w-4, I-9, etc.)

Each new hire will be required to submit all of the aforementioned plus various other required state and federal documents as necessary.

## Professional Appearance

All rangers are expected to maintain a professional and neat appearance while working – this includes clean uniforms and appropriate grooming/hygiene. All rangers are expected to be on- time and well prepared for their ranger assignments.

## Drug and Alcohol Policy

City of Ouray employees are not allowed to use non-prescription/illicit drugs at any time while working. The use of prescription drugs that are known to affect/impair physical or mental performance are also not allowed while working in the field with clients. Alcohol should not be consumed at any time during the working day by City employees. Employees who are identified or reported as impaired by drugs or alcohol during working hours will be immediately terminated.

If there is reasonable suspicion, the city may require that the employee submit to an appropriate test for a particular illicit substance. The decision to test is based on a reasonable and articulated belief, formed after observing specific contemporaneous physical, behavioral or performance indicators that an employee is under the influence of drugs or alcohol. Failing a required drug or alcohol test, including failure to cooperate with such testing, is grounds for termination.

Ouray Via Ferrata climbers are not allowed to use non-prescription/illicit drugs at any time before or during a climb – if they are identified by the Ranger as using these substances, the ranger should not allow the climber access or continue on the route. Climbers should be advised not to take prescription drugs known to affect/impair physical or mental performance before or during their climb.

## Theft

Note that theft is not only the unlawful taking of another person's property but also includes the borrowing of equipment or items from The City of Ouray, a guide company or a person, without the permission of that guide company or persons knowledge. Discovered instances of theft may result in immediate termination or other disciplinary action.

## Medications Policy

Friends of the Ouray Via Ferrata employees will not administer prescription or over-the-counter drugs to climbers or an injured party.

## Communication Plan

The Ouray Via Ferrata Rangers have an Operations Manual and Employee Handbook to follow. The documents were completed in April of 2021, and updated in 2022 to include the Upstream Route and 2026 when the City took over the operations. Within the Operations Manual are the protocols for assisting a climber and protocols for dealing with conduct violations. This manual also includes an emergency action plan, emergency call down list, and online incident reporting forms. Each month the rangers will submit a report to the City of Ouray Parks Department. This report will include but is not limited to incidents and other ranger activity. All incident reports and monthly ranger reports will be included in the end of season report.

The Ranger is responsible for communications with the guide services, the public and other stakeholders. All stakeholders and the public can reach the Parks department by email ([Ourayparks@cityofouray.com](mailto:Ourayparks@cityofouray.com)).

- The Ranger will communicate with the Ouray Parks department and Visit Ouray. The Visitor Center will notify guide services and Ouray Mountain

Sports using direct email. This includes any operational changes, emergencies, closures or change in operating hours.

- Rangers will communicate any operational changes or closures with the public by calling the Visitor Center [\(970\) 325-3954](tel:9703253954). The Visitor Center and communications team will populate the Via Ferrata website, instagram, FB and other social media platforms as well. The Visitor Center will also notify the approved CGO's and Ouray Mountain sports.
- 911 will continue to be the emergency number for OVF climbers to call. Before the start of the season the Parks and Recreation Director will submit an employee roster to the Ouray County Sheriff's Department. In case of emergency dispatch will contact the Sheriff. The phone list and schedule will allow the officer on duty to directly reach the OVF Ranger on duty. Coordination of emergency personnel can be communicated directly between the OVF Ranger, Ouray Mountain Rescue Team and the Ouray County Sheriff.

In addition the rangers will use the Ranger Station as the basecamp for the rangers. First aid and rescue supplies will be stored in the shack. Rangers will continue to record daily user data which will be collected via a Google Form. Monthly user data will be given to the Parks Director each month. This data will be used to produce the post season report.

## Ranger Expectations

Rangers are hired on as seasonal employees. The season typically runs from May 1st – October 31st each year. Rangers are scheduled for 8 hour shifts. The shift begins at 7:30 am and ends at 4:00pm. Some split shifts may be assigned. Shift assignments will be scheduled ahead of time and any absence is the responsibility of the employee to cover. The maximum hours per week that can be worked is 40 hours.

At the beginning of each shift, rangers will report to the Ouray Via Ferrata Ranger Station, located in the New Funtier climbing area. The lock box code is 0523. The Ranger Station is the station in which rangers will operate out of each day. First aid kits, communications devices, and rescue equipment will all be stored in the Ranger

Station. Rangers can also store personal gear at the shack for the season. NO FOOD can be stored in the Ranger Station.

In general, maintain a disposition of being self-contained so you can spend your entire shift outside. You are responsible for your own safety and well-being, please come prepared to work each day with the appropriate climbing safety gear. Please bring a fully charged cell phone, as well as plenty of food, water and warm layers each day for yourselves.

If you have a suggestion to improve the ranger operation please note that in an email and send it to the the Parks and Recreation Director at [Jbrown@cityofouray.com](mailto:Jbrown@cityofouray.com)

Failure of the ranger to comply with the Ouray Via Ferrata rules and safety regulations can lead to termination.

## Ranger Duties and Daily Operations

Rangers should introduce themselves and welcome all incoming climbers, guides and other interested parties.

Rangers should record climber data in the provided notebook and then complete a google form entry for every climbing party. Please also record the following data about each person date, time, total # of climbers, total # of guide's, where climbers are from. Please record the info on the ranger log and cross reference the self sign In box. Please highlight any self sign in's added to the log in red and highlight guided climbers in yellow.

Rangers must perform a safety check of the climber's gear to ensure every climber has a climbing helmet, climbing harness, and an EN958 rated EAS Via Ferrata tether. ANY CLIMBER WHO DOES NOT HAVE THE PROPER SAFETY GEAR WILL BE DENIED ACCESS TO THE OURAY VIA FERRATA. NO EXCEPTIONS WILL BE MADE FOR INADEQUATE GEAR. Inadequate gear includes but is not limited to homemade tethers, rope access equipment, or other climbing gear. Equipment designed for industrial use or rope access work is NOT allowed.

Beginning on May 1, 2023 the Ouray Via Ferrata will no longer allow participants outside of the manufacturer's weight requirements (88lbs-265lbs/40kg-120kg) to climb the Upstream or the Downstream Route without a professional guide using appropriate belay techniques in conjunction with a VF lanyard. This rule change no longer allows recreational parties to belay participants under 88 lbs or over 265 lbs. Unguided participants who are outside of the manufacturer's weight requirements will not be allowed to access the Via Ferrata, and they will be denied entry by the OVF Rangers.

Closed toe shoes and gloves are highly recommended, but not mandatory.

Once the gear check is complete rangers will conduct a safety briefing to educate climbers on how to properly use the Ouray Via Ferrata. The safety brief is meant to warn and inform all climbers before they access the Ouray Via Ferrata. The Ranger will open and close the entrance gate to be sure the climbers clip into the cable properly, understand what a cable section is, and demonstrate proficiency moving from one cable section to the next.

## Example of Ranger Daily Operations

- The OVF opens at 8:00am. You can park at the kids wall in the employee parking area. Please arrive at the shack by 8:00am. Move the sign at penstock to show participants only and chain it back to the bridge. Flip route signs to open. Open the shack door and windows. Door code is 0523.
- The Ranger Station is your place. It is often chilly and windier than anywhere else in Ouray. Please bring plenty of snacks and water for the day. Please have a charged cell phone for the day. There is no electricity or plumbing in the shack. For restrooms you can walk back to the perimeter trail outhouse. Please close the Via Ferrata while you are not on site during restroom breaks. Plan to be at the shack from 8:00am-4:00pm
- In the shack there is a backpack that has a fake snake on it. This is to keep the mice away. In the backpack there is a rescue cache with a rope, rescue kit, water, an extra lanyard and a first aid kit. This is yours to use if needed.
- Your main job is to greet the climbers as they come in. Be sure each climber has a helmet, harness and an EAS lanyard. No homemade lanyards are allowed. Gloves are highly recommended. All lanyards should be directly attached to the belay loop with a girth hitch per the manufacturer's guidelines. Please point out the resting carabiner

and be sure the climbers can identify where/how to rest. No other climbing gear is needed or recommended.

- All climbers must be between 88–265lbs. There is a scale in the shack to weigh small people. If a climber appears to potentially be over the required weight limit, ask if anyone in the group is under or over the weight requirements. If the climber is outside of the weight parameters they must be accompanied by a guide that is an American Mountain Guide Association Single Pitch Certified Guide or higher. Please offer dignity and privacy in these conversations as they may be sensitive for folks.
- Under no circumstances should a ranger or any other employee of the City of Ouray provide climbing equipment to patrons. This makes you as an individual liable for the functionality of that equipment and the patrons ability to use it.
- We collect data on every group that comes through. You will see the book in the downstream kiosk. Please fill out the paper form in the ranger station. Each morning rangers will check the sign in log and add any self-registered information to the ranger log. Note that guided parties count guides separately from climbers. Each guide service is charged \$20 per climber so please do not include guides as climbers. We do not collect the fee onsite. These fees are collected at the end of the season and checked against the guide services records. Accuracy is paramount.
- If there is an emergency on the OVF the climber will call 911 and dispatch will call the sheriff and you. Please have your cell phone on at all times and relay the Ranger Station number to emergency services. If you need to leave the shack during a rescue please provide emergency services your phone cell number,
- If you have questions or serious emergencies occur, contact the Parks Director or Park Operations manager. Phone list is in the shack.
- Your day ends at 4:00. Please close up the shack, lock the door and flip all signs.

## Quick Ranger Brief For climbers

Walk climbers to the start of their route. Each climber gets a quick brief about the route.

The Downstream Route:

- passing zones are marked with yellow signs
- the two early exits are marked with yellow signs
- The downstream route has a split and climbers can climb the sky bridge or the sky climb. The route then comes back together and everyone exits on the same cables.
-

Please watch all climbers clip in and be sure they can make the transitions properly. Use the teachable moment to explain 1 climber per vertical cable and two per horizontal cable. Do not

Model the climb unless the climber needs the instructions to move. Let the climbers try it themselves and coach them along as needed. Should a climber not demonstrate the physical ability to complete the route in the first section, hold traffic and ask them to return to the ranger station. Advise the climber to get a guide to build skill and expertise before climbing unguided.

The Upstream route:

- One person at a time on the bridge and the helix ladder
- The route has one early exit, which is a bridge, note that the route gets much harder after the exit.
- The end of the route finishes with a jump across the canyon. Both exits lead to the perimeter trail

Ask if the climbers have any questions. As they begin the route have the climbers

- Clip into the white rope to get started
- Remind them that the cable is always a hand hold

Please watch all climbers clip in and be sure they can make the transitions properly. Use the teachable moment to explain 1 climber per vertical cable and two per horizontal cable.

OVF use suggestions, rules and other OVF notes:

- ALL climbers must have an EN958 rated energy absorbing Via Ferrata lanyard system. NO homemade lanyards, tethers or climbing equipment allowed. There is a lot of vertical climbing and descending on the VF route. In the event of a fall, The EAS system will expand and dissipate the load. A standard climbing sling, daisy chain or other personal attachment system will be overloaded by the static fall and may break and or cause injuries. Equipment designed for industrial use or rope access work is NOT allowed.
- Anyone under 88 lbs or over 265 lbs is outside of the manufacturer's weight requirements (88lbs-265lbs/40kg-120kg) to climb the Upstream or the Downstream Route without a professional guide using appropriate belay techniques in conjunction with a VF lanyard. NO recreational parties are

allowed to belay participants under 88 lbs or over 265 lbs. Unguided participants who are outside of the manufacturer's weight requirements will not be allowed to access the Via Ferrata, and they will be denied entry by the OVF Rangers.

- Gloves and closed toe shoes are recommended
- The Ouray Via Ferrata routes are one way
- 1 person per cable section
- Climbers must Stay clipped in at all times. Even on the walking sections.
- 2 carabiners on the cable section as you are moving, do not walk with one attachment carabiner in your hand.
- Please stop and stand securely when jumping carabiners over cable attachments.
- Use you hands on the cable or rungs
- Feet will be on the rock or rungs
- Please do not wrap arms or legs around cable or rungs
- Be cautious of loose rocks on the walking sections
- Give each other space of at least one cable section on the vertical sections to avoid someone falling on another climber
- There are passing zones on the route marked with a yellow sign that says "passing zone". There are also zones before each bridge. Please use the passing lanes, which provide a secondary cable to pass and take breaks. Please yield to faster parties
- One passing zone has a bench and a tree, this is about half way. An early exit can be found at the bench.
- The 2nd early exit is after the 3 towers or "M climbs". The exit is marked with a sign and will take you to the ice park loop
- Stay clipped all the way to the end.
- Secure water bottles, phones and other valuables so you don't lose them or hit another party
- In case of emergency dial 911. Look for a silver disc near you and a relay number to dispatch. The discs mark the section you are in.
- Ask if they have any questions or need further clarification

Additional information for climbers, guides and interested parties

- Donation boxes are located at the beginning and end of the Ouray Via Ferrata. Donations can also be made online at [The Ouray Via Ferrata](#)
- Please tag photos on social media with the Friends of the Ouray Via Ferrata
- Please “like” friends of the Via Ferrata on social media
- Please leave a review of the Ouray Via Ferrata route on google, yelp or trip advisor
- Tell your friends and family about your experience to help us spread the word

## Commercial Guiding on the Ouray Via Ferrata

Commercial guiding on The Ouray Via Ferrata is allowed by permitted guide services only. Operating permits are issued by the Ouray Parks Department. The City of Ouray reviews applications each year and issues operational permits based on the guide service application. Applicants are subject to a review at the end of the operating season. Renewal of the operating permit is dependent on the review by the City of Ouray. An application fee of \$1,000 is required for CGO's (Certified Guide Operators) to obtain a permit and a \$20 fee is charged to the commercial guide service per climber, per day. The \$20/ guided climber fee will pay towards the \$1,000, once 50 climbers have been exceeded the additional charge will be paid at the end of the season.

Please see the list of approved guide services on the Ouray Via Ferrata website or review the permitted services on the contact list in the Ranger Station. Copies of each CGO permit are posted in the Ranger Station.

## Pirate or Illegal Guiding

The Friends of the Ouray Via Ferrata does not condone illegal or “pirate guiding” in any form or capacity on the Ouray Via Ferrata climbing route. Guides cannot operate on the Ouray Via Ferrata unless they are operating under the permission of a permitted guide service. Persons who are found to have engaged in illegal guiding activities – either by the Rangers, relevant land management officials, City of Ouray Officials, other guides, the AMGA or other agencies – may be immediately and permanently banned from the Ouray Via Ferrata. Law Enforcement should be called if the Ranger cannot remove the illegal guide from the Ouray Via Ferrata. The Parks

and Recreation Director should be updated immediately with the name of the individual and organization.

## Reporting a Pirate or Illegal Guide

- Bring the Parks Director into the loop as soon as possible
- Fill out an incident report form [Conduct or rule violation form](#)
- Be prepared with the following information
  - What happened, where it happened, when it happened and who was involved
  - Other people or agencies that have been notified of the incident
  - Anticipate having multiple conversations with the Parks department designee, the Parks Director and law enforcement agencies

## Patrolling the Ouray Via Ferrata

Rangers are not required to patrol the Ouray Via Ferrata if only one ranger is on duty. If more than one ranger is on duty, patrols are encouraged. Each morning please walk the entire route to ensure the Via is safe for operations. Report any potential risks to the Parks Director. Rangers can patrol the Via Ferrata route by walking along the top of the west side of the Uncompahgre river gorge, or they can climb the Via Ferrata route. A patrol is a means to check on the traffic flow, enforce rules, and check on climber progress and welfare. While on a patrol each Ranger is responsible for their own safety and well-being. The required Ouray Via Ferrata safety gear must be used at all times while climbing the Ouray Via Ferrata. All safety rules and regulations must be followed by each ranger while climbing the Ouray Via Ferrata. Failure of the ranger to comply with the safety rules can lead to termination. When on patrol Rangers should carry a charged cell phone, basic first aid and a basic rescue kit.

## First Aid Kit

When on patrol of the Ouray Via Ferrata, OVF Rangers are encouraged to carry a basic first aid kit. Rangers are responsible for maintaining the ranger station basic first aid kit. If more than basic first aid is needed, dial 911 and request the help of the Ouray Mountain Rescue Team. 911 can also be used to reach the Ouray County Emergency Medical Services. Look for a silver disc near the incident and relay number to dispatch. The discs mark the climbing section or route location of the incident.

A basic first aid kit should include but is not limited to

- Latex or rubber gloves, at least two pairs
- Face mask
- Hand sanitizer
- SOAP note and pencil
- Emergency call down list
- Biohazard Bag (1)
- Tourniquet
- Nasal trumpet
- CPR Face Shield
- Trauma Shears
- Irrigation Syringe (1)
- Tampon and/or Maxi pad
- 4X4 Gauze (2)
- 3X4 Non-stick (2)
- Steri Strips (1 pack)
- Band-aids (4)
- Cloth Tape (1 roll)
- Coban (1 roll)
- Antiseptic Towelettes (3)
- Medical Handbook (optional)

In the event of a more serious incident, or an incident with multiple patients, a first aid kit is located inside the Ranger Station. If more than basic first aid is needed, dial 911 and request the help of the Ouray Mountain Rescue Team. 911 can also be used to reach the Ouray County Emergency Medical Services. Look for a silver disc near the incident and relay number to dispatch. The discs mark the climbing section or route location of the incident.

## Rescue Cash

When on patrol of the Ouray Via Ferrata, Ouray Via Ferrata Rangers are encouraged to carry the necessary equipment to get on the Via Ferrata. If a more technical rescue is needed, dial 911 and request the help of the Ouray Mountain Rescue Team. 911 can also be used to reach the Ouray County Emergency Medical Services. Look for a silver disc near the incident and relay number to dispatch. The discs mark the climbing section or route location of the incident.

Ranger rescues should only be implemented for minor incidents such as minor cuts, anxiety attacks, panics, and patrons lacking confidence. Should a more technical rescue be needed please contact emergency services. Should you need to enter the Via Ferrata to help a climber, please close the Via Ferrata and direct the climber to the nearest exit.

Technical rescues are defined as including injury, immobilization, incapacitation, or injuries that require additional support exiting the Via Ferrata. Should the climber be unable to remove themselves with your support contact emergency services.

A Rescue kit is located inside the Ranger Station. Lock box code is 0523. If a more technical rescue is needed, dial 911 and request the help of the Ouray Mountain Rescue Team. Rangers should not belay climbers unless they have been trained and permitted by the Parks department or a qualified 3rd party. 911 can also be used to reach the Ouray County Emergency Medical Services. Look for a silver disc near the incident and relay number to dispatch. The discs mark the climbing section or route location of the incident.

If supplies are used, please note this to the park operations manager via email or text message. Supplies must be restocked as soon as possible.

## Guidelines and procedures in the event of a climber assist, serious injury or death

All 911 calls to dispatch will be directed to the Ouray County Sheriff. The deputy on duty will directly contact the OVF ranger on duty.

### Initial Response

- Close the affected route.
- Walk along the top of the west side of the Uncompahgre gorge to locate the climber or get eyes on the situation. Identify location of patients and determine how many patients there are
- Gain communication with the climbing party. Announce yourself as a ranger and see what assistance is needed.
- Assess the scene and manage any immediate risks to you and others on the scene
- Call for assistance (guides, medical, rescue team, law enforcement)
- Call Parks Director at (970)-325-7077
- If needed, close entrance and stop other climbers from entering the route
- Go to the patient
- Secure the scene
  1. Take precautions for body substance isolation like wearing a face mask and latex gloves
  2. Transport patient(s) and move party to more secure location if necessary
  3. Carry out appropriate first aid
  4. Protect patient from environment
  5. Protect patient(s) from further hazards or complications
  6. Provide food and water if necessary
- Complete records and reports required to maintain patient care:
  1. Patient SOAP note
  2. Ongoing vital signs
  3. incident report form, noting details of what happened
  4. Gather patient/witness statements
  5. Note time of injury, time you arrive on scene, time of evacuation
- Consider self evacuation. Carefully assess if outside help is needed and limit potential for further injury.
- AVOID making guarantees of outcome, guarantee of speedy evacuation, admissions of guilt or wrongdoing

- Once a patient is off of the route, suggest seeking further medical attention. If further medical care is refused, document in the incident form

### In the case of a Fatality

- Do not remove or disturb the body.
- Notify law enforcement.
- Care for the rest of the party
- Direct other climbers away from the accident
- Contact the Visitor Center and let them know the Via Ferrata is now closed for the remainder of the day
- Contact the Parks Director
- Mark the accident site
- Get Witness Statements, even if not a direct witness to the accident

### Documentation

- Make every effort to get all documentation to the Parks Director within 24 hours of the incident. This includes
  - Incident form
  - Witness statements
  - Photographs

### Reporting

- Bring the Parks Director and the Visitor Center into the loop as soon as possible
- Start Calling numbers on the "Emergency Call Down List" [Emergency Call Down List](#) If you do not get an answer leave a message and proceed down the list until you get through to a person
- Fill out an incident report form
- Be prepared with the following information
  - What happened, where it happened, when it happened and who was involved
  - Provide information from SOAP note, patient assessment form

- Your present location
- The phone number you are calling from
- Other people or agencies that have been notified of the incident
- Any plans for evacuation that have been made
- What additional resources are needed (OMRT, litter, helicopter, etc.)
- Anticipate having multiple conversations with the Parks Director, the parks designee, and rescue agencies
- If the patient refuses to seek further medical assistance, please have them sign the declined medical release form. [declined medical release](#)

## Guidelines and procedures in the event of a conduct or rule violation

All 911 calls to dispatch will be directed to the Ouray County Sheriff. The deputy on duty will directly contact the OVF ranger on duty.

You as the ranger can deny access to the Ouray Via Ferrata if a person does not have the proper safety equipment or is acting in a way that is harmful or threatening to other users. Climbers who appear to either mentally or physically be unable to complete the route should not be permitted, this includes intoxication.

### Initial Response to conduct or rule violation

- Announce yourself as a ranger, identify the conduct or rule violation
- Try to de-escalate the situation and/or calm down the person
- Assess the scene and manage any immediate risks to you and others on the scene
  
- Offer a solution to the problem. Ask the person in violation to help remedy the problem.
- If no solution can be made, no remedy can be found, or if the situation can not be resolved, calmly ask the violator to remove themselves from the area or climbing route.

- If the person does not follow your request, call law enforcement for assistance (you can also contact guides and board members for back up) [Emergency Call Down List](#)
- If needed, close entrance and stop other climbers from entering the route until the violator leaves the grounds or law enforcement arrives.
- Record and report the incident.
  - Collect witness names and statements if there are any

## Reporting

- Bring the Parks Director into the loop as soon as possible
- Fill out an incident report form
- Be prepared with the following information
  - What happened, where it happened, when it happened and who was involved
  - Other people or agencies that have been notified of the incident
  - Anticipate having multiple conversations with the City of Ouray, and law enforcement agencies

## Google Drive

All Parks documentation, reports, data forms, incident report forms, contact lists and employee manuals are located on Google Drive. The Friends of the Via Ferrata drive is shared with The City of Ouray staff. The following links are a quick reference to the ranger forms

- Emergency Call Down List [emergency call down list](#)
- Ranger Safety Brief [Ranger Safety Brief](#)
- Guidelines and Procedures In The Event Of Serious Injury Or Death
- Friends of the Ouray Via Ferrata Ranger Staff Response [guidelines and procedures in the event of injury or death](#)
- Guidelines and procedures in the event of a conduct or rule violation [Emergency Call Down List](#)
- Incident Report Form - climber assist, injury, death [incident report form](#)



## Example of Ranger Safety Brief

- Start by introducing yourself as the ranger and welcome them to the Via Ferrata
- Check that all climbers have all the required equipment and meet the weight requirements of the VF lanyard. Climbers must be between (88 lbs-265 lbs to climb unguided). A scale is available in the ranger shack if needed. Be sure the EAS tether is attached properly. Encourage climbers to take off any gear that is not a VF tether.
- ALL climbers must have an energy absorption via ferrata lanyard system (EAS lanyard). NO homemade lanyards, tethers or climbing equipment allowed. There is a lot of vertical climbing and descending on the VF route. In the event of a fall, the EAS system will expand and dissipate the load. A standard climbing sling, daisy chain or other personal attachment system will be overloaded by the static fall and may break and or cause injuries. Equipment designed for industrial use or rope access work is NOT allowed.
- Anyone under 85 lbs must belayed and under the direct supervision of a professional guide. Anyone over 265 lbs also needs a belay.
- Gloves and closed toe shoes are recommended
- The Ouray Via Ferrata route is one way
- 1 person per cable section
- Climbers must stay clipped in at all times. Even on the walking sections.
- 2 carabiners on the cable section as you are moving, do not walk with one attachment carabiner in your hand.
- Please stop and stand securely when jumping carabiners over cable attachments.
- Use your hands on the cable or rungs
- Feet will be on the rock or rungs
- Please do not wrap arms or legs around cable or rungs
- Be cautious of loose rocks on the walking sections
- Give each other space of at least one cable section on the vertical sections to avoid someone falling on another climber
- There are passing zones on the route marked with a yellow sign that says "passing zone". There are also zones before each bridge. Please use the passing lanes, which provide a secondary cable to pass and take breaks. Please yield to faster parties

- One passing zone has a bench and a tree, this is about half way. An early exit can be found at the bench.
- The 2nd early exit is after the 3 towers or “M climbs”. The exit is marked with a sign and will take you to the ice park loop
- Stay clipped in all the way to the end.
- Secure water bottles, phones and other valuables so you don’t lose them or hit another party
- To report a risk or or an unsafe patron call the main Via Ferrata ranger number (970)-325-3022
- In case of emergency dial 911. Look for a silver disc near you and a relay number to dispatch. The discs mark the section you are in.
- Ask if they have any questions or need further clarification

### **Additional information for climbers, guides and interested parties**

-Donation boxes are located at the beginning and end of the Ouray Via Ferrata. Donations can also be made online at [The Ouray Via Ferrata](#)

-Please tag photos on social media with the Friends of the Ouray Via Ferrata

-Please “like” friends of the via Ferrata on social media

-Please leave a review of the Ouray Via Ferrata route on google, yelp or trip advisor

-Tell your friends and family about your experience to help us spread the word

# Via Ferrata: *An Economic Prospectus*

City of Ouray, Colorado

---



## **Introduction & Purpose**

There are between 1500 and 2000 via Ferrata routes currently in operation in Western Europe. In Canada and the United States there are likely less than 10 total. Some of the European routes have counted more than 15,000 annual visitors. To put this in perspective, our best estimates suggest that the Ouray Ice Park receives approximately 12,000 to 15,000 user days per year – and that use occurs in an approximately 90 day season.

It is our belief that a high quality via Ferrata route in Ouray represents a significant opportunity to dramatically increase spring, summer and fall tourism in the County. We expect that this increase will manifest both in the form of new destination tourists, as well as additional overnight “capture” of existing tourists who will have good reason to stay another night to enjoy the unique and novel challenge of this emergent outdoor recreation trend.

The following analysis considers the potential economic benefits to the citizens of Ouray following the development of a via Ferrata.

## Highlights

- There are more than 12,000 via Ferrata routes in Western Europe but less than 10 in North America, including Canada.
- Ouray has a unique opportunity to be “first in” on a burgeoning new sport – similar to its position when the Ice Park developed.
- A via Ferrata will result in significant increases in both shoulder seasons (spring and fall) as well as drawing additional guests in the core summer season.
- Currently the Uncompahgre canyon is primarily used as a winter destination with between 12,000 and 15,000 visitors accessing it for ice climbing during the short 90 day season.
- The season length for a via Ferrata is twice as long as the winter season at approximately 180 days.
- It is expected, that although during the initial years of operation the number of users will be modest, the total use within a five year period should easily approach the numbers seen in the winter, albeit spread out over a much longer season.
- This report makes very conservative forecasts about the number of “new” visitors that the via Ferrata will attract over time, even so, the forecast numbers and expenditures are substantial.
- There are significant differences in the expenditure patterns of day, overnight, and guided parties.
- Total expenditures by new visitors stimulated by via Ferrata development should ultimately result in nearly \$5 million in new local expenditures, 48 new full time jobs, \$145,000 in additional tax revenue, over 4000 additional lodging nights, and nearly \$14,000 in new LOT revenue.

## Baseline Assumptions

### *Seasons of Operations*

The Ouray Ice Park season runs from approximately mid-December to mid-March, a season of about 90 days. The potential season for a via Ferrata would likely run from early May to late October, as season nearly twice as long, at 180 days. There are numerous known benefits to attracting visitors during the shoulder seasons of spring and fall. Intensifying summer use is also desirable, particularly as it relates to increasing the overnight duration of trips and/or converting what might otherwise be day trips through Ouray into overnight stays.

### *Winter Visitation*

Currently, we estimate that the Ouray Ice Park receives 12,000 – 15,000 visitors during the ice season. Previous analysis of these numbers suggests that the multiplied effects of all visitor expenditures well exceed \$1.5 million during the 90 day ice season.

### *Summer Visitation*

Because a via Ferrata will be in use May through October, this timeframe is referred to as “summer” in this report. Currently, LOT reporting for 2015 reveals that 78,361 room nights are rented in Ouray during the summer time period. Longwoods International Colorado specific data suggests room night parties comprise, on average, 2.9 visitors. However, internal data tracking amongst guide services suggests that climbing party group size is closer to 1.7 persons per party and we use that number for this analysis. Given these baselines, the total estimated number of overnight summer visitors to Ouray in 2015 was approximately, 133,000. Some percentage of these are multiple night stays which results in double counting – consequently 133,000 does not translate directly to unique trips. In response, lacking a more refined analysis, we have rounded the number down to achieve a conservative estimate of 100,000 unique visitors. For reference, it is worth noting that CDOT records over 830,000 annual vehicle trips through the south Ouray counting station on Highway 550 (station ID 105577).

### *Guided vs. Unguided Visitation*

The distinction between guided and unguided groups is important because the best data we have suggests the following:

1. Guided parties are often, or on average, somewhat more affluent than unguided parties
2. Excellent long-term data has determined that more affluent tourist parties spend more money on lodging, meals, entertainment, and shopping.
3. Guided parties are nearly always destination tourists spending at least one if not more nights at their destination
4. Recreation tourists in guided parties add a fourth category of expenditure to the lodging, meals, and entertainment categories, and that fourth category is – guides. This is relevant because there is a current, and ever-growing, number of year-round Ouray individuals and families that make their entire household income from recreational guiding activities.

Furthermore, it may be a reasonable (although undocumented or unanalyzed) assertion to claim that outdoor recreation oriented industry may be the fastest growing employment sector in the City of Ouray. In any event, building the opportunity for additional income in the summer will only further progress this trend and allow more people to become active and contributing members to the Ouray community, school district, and civic life.

Approximately 9%-12% of Ice Park visitors climb with a guided group from one of the 9 guide services operating in the park. We suggest that the percentage of guided groups utilizing a via Ferrata will eventually be higher, perhaps more than twice the current amount.

Although admittedly speculative, the following factors suggest this is a reasonable forecast. 1) via Ferrata is a relatively new sport and current understanding of its operation by the general public is low, 2) it requires specialized equipment and the paucity of via Ferrata routes in north America advises that the number of recreationists possessing the equipment is also low, 3) although via Ferrata is a much lower risk activity than traditional rock or ice climbing, constant exposure to extreme heights inherent to the sport contributes to a perception of high risk by novices and so many parties may seek out the assistance of a professional, at least for the first time out, 4) via Ferrata is a family friendly, destination activity and many parties may prefer the simplicity of pre-booking a trip with a guide as part of their vacation itinerary.

#### *Expenditures per Visit*

Longwoods International Colorado specific tourism study allocates average expenditures as:

1. Day visitors spend \$71 per person per day
2. Overnight visitors spend \$338 per person per day

Previous analysis has estimated that guided parties spend more per day than is typical when gear purchases/rental and guide fees are taken into account, the estimated daily expenditure for guided parties is \$687 per person per day.

## Projected Visitation

It is difficult to project the use of a recreational asset that has not yet been constructed. This problem is further complicated by the fact that it is an asset serving a nascent sport for which there is little data in North America. This section attempts to make conservative and educated estimates based on reasonable inferences.

The USFS has made an undocumented (and likely not a thoroughly researched) assessment that something approaching 6,000 annual visitors currently use the via Ferrata in Telluride. We might further venture that the basis of this estimate was casually computed on informal counting of daily uses over a few days and then multiplied by some unknown (but probably reasonable) season length. Despite the weaknesses inherent in this second or third-hand information, the estimate seems reasonable enough to serve as a reference point.

There are several factors that should be factored when considering the use of Tellurides' via Ferrata including: 1) Telluride's via Ferrata operating season is significantly shorter than Ouray's – beginning sometime in mid-June and typically ending in September or early October due to snow coverage, 2) Telluride's via Ferrata was never sanctioned by the USFS, and in fact, was put up surreptitiously, 3) consequently, the Telluride via Ferrata has never been actively marketed, in fact, it was known as a "local's secret" and its location and existence was actively hidden and downplayed for many years, 4) the via Ferrata has no signage or authorized parking areas, 5) finally, the Telluride via Ferrata was not professionally constructed or planned and its recreational quality and reputation may, or may not, be considered equal to a legally sanctioned and professionally planned and built via Ferrata.

Given these factors, we propose the following to frame a conservative five-year forecast for via Ferrata visitation in the City of Ouray:

1. **Year 1:** use will be modest – primarily due to the developing nature of the sport in the United States. We estimate total annual visitation in Year 1 will be at 10% of the current visitation to the Ice Park in winter – i.e. about 1,200 total users. This number is regarded as highly conservative given the current reference number of 6,000 visitors to the Telluride via Ferrata.
2. **Year 2:** use will double over year 1 due to growing curiosity and interest in the sport, especially by Ouray overnight and pass through visitors who witness users on the constructed via Ferrata route. Again, a still conservative number given our Telluride reference point.
3. **Year 3:** will see continued geometric growth of users as marketing efforts mature and numerous media publications and social media coverage gain traction and the asset gains wider regional, state and national recognition.
4. **Year 4:** experiences another doubling of growth, wherein total user days begin to approach the total seasonal use of the Ice Park during winter. We believe this remains a conservative forecast due to the disparity of season length. That is, the via Ferrata season is double the season length of the Ice Park but total visitors are still assumed to remain less than current Ice Park visitation.

5. **Year 5:** we expect a plateau in visitation at numbers roughly equal to total visitation in the Ice Park. Further growth will be arithmetic and not geometric. This plateau could be overcome by the development of further phases of via Ferrata route construction.

The following chart outlines these assumptions and gives context compared to Ice Park use during the winter months. Note that the conservative estimate of 12,000 users is used throughout this analysis and calculations when determining year 5 total visitation.

Ice Park Season Approximate Length	90 days
Via Ferrata Season Approximate Length	180 days
Current Ice Park Estimated Visitors	12,000-15,000

	<b>Forecast via Ferrata Visitors</b>	<b>Average Visitors per Day</b>
<b>Year 1</b>	1,200	7
<b>Year 2</b>	2,400	13
<b>Year 3</b>	4,800	27
<b>Year 4</b>	9,600	53
<b>Year 5</b>	12,000-15,000	66

Remember that the visitors per day in the above chart is only an average. Some days there will be markedly more and some much less, even zero. The average only gives a coarse estimation of daily use. It seems reasonable to expect that these numbers may have a margin of error of +/- 20%.

## Economic Impacts

Given projected annual visitors to a via Ferrata, an estimate of a total economic impact can be built. In order to conduct this analysis it seems prudent to break visitorship into two categories: 1) “new” visitors – that is, visitors who come specifically to participate in the via Ferrata and otherwise, would not have visited, and 2) “converted” visitors, that is, visitors who are visiting or passing through Ouray but will take advantage of the via Ferrata. Some converted visitors will opt to stay an additional night to participate.

Approximately 800,000 to 1 million travelers traverse all or portions of the San Juan Scenic Byway every year. Specific data concerning Ouray visitors is somewhat sparse, but there is good information available concerning visitor counts and trends from both the Ouray Box Canyon and Hot Springs offices. Undoubtedly, better data exists (but was missed in this reports iteration) and a future refinement of this analysis may be able to establish more concrete estimates. Although these two data points cannot capture the full spectrum of visitation to Ouray we will utilize them as baseline information when making estimates.

### *Current Visitors and Trends*

From the following chart we can see that there is a steady, organic, increase in visitation, particularly to the hot springs pool facility. This increase in visitorship has occurred without significant improvements to either the Box Canyon or the Hot Springs.

<b>Box Canyon</b>	<b>Visitors</b>	<b>% increase over 2014</b>
May	322	8%
June	1432	13%
July	576	3%
August	497	4%
September	1109	15%
October	314	8%
<b>Hot Springs</b>		
May	11798	17%
June	20970	14%
July	32485	12%
August	22377	3%
September	14334	35%
October	7360	13%

### *New Visitors*

This is the most difficult category to estimate. First, we can see from the data above that substantial year-over-year increases are occurring at two recreation assets in Ouray. Second, the forecast of visitors to the via Ferrata seems reasonable given the Telluride baseline and existing Ice Park visitation. But the question remains as to what portion of those 1,200 visitors to the via Ferrata can be classified as “new”, that is, they arrive solely as a result of a via Ferrata?

Longwoods International Colorado Travel Year reports in 2014 that Colorado trips for outdoor recreation has been trending toward a consistent 7% year-over-year increase statewide; it is also worth noting that more than half of these trips originated in-state (not counting skiing trips); that is, they are Coloradan’s visiting Colorado. This is potentially important because the relative short in-state drive times may result in day or weekend overnight trips to participate in a new recreational facility such as a via Ferrata.

It seems reasonable, prudent, and highly conservative to estimate that in Year 1 only 7% of the projected via Ferrata visitors can be classified as new. Stated another way, we are using the annual increase of new outdoor recreation tourists at the statewide level to estimate the percentage of “new” tourists visiting Ouray to participate in a via Ferrata. It seems likely this is a gross underestimation but functional for our year 1 forecast. Further, it seems reasonable to increase this geometrically, year-over-year, with our via ferrata vistorship, at least up to year 4. Following year 4 we only anticipate normal arithmetic user growth. This means that 7% of year 1 visitors will be new, 14% of year 2 visitors will be new, 28% of year three, plateauing at 56% percent in year 5 solely attributable to the via Ferrata. The following chart illustrates our total projected new visitors annually.

<b>Year</b>	<b>Total via Ferrata Visitors</b>	<b>New Visitors</b>
Year 1	1,200	84
Year 2	2,400	336
Year 3	4,800	1,344
Year 4	9,600	5,376
Year 5	12,000	6,720

Remember that “new” in this context designates visitors that arrive solely due to the via Ferrata, the remaining visitors are classified as “converted” (see following section). The distinction is important due to differing expenditure patterns and economic impacts of these two categories of users have. New users bring new expenditures while only some of the converted users spend new dollars - they are assumed and calculated as contributing less because they are in the area for other purposes and would have made expenditures with or without the presence of the via Ferrata.

### Converted Visitors

The assumption is that the remainder of the total via Ferrata users will be converted; that is, visitors who are in Ouray for other purposes (e.g. hot springs, jeeping, etc) but decide to participate in the via Ferrata as an additional activity while in Town. We conservatively estimate that 10% of these converted visitors will opt to stay an additional night in town to participate.

Year	Converted Visitors	Converted Visitors Staying an Additional Night for via Ferrata
Year 1	1,116	112
Year 2	2,064	206
Year 3	3,456	346
Year 4	4,224	422
Year 5	5,280	528

### Economic Outcomes of via Ferrata

Several assumptions frame our economic outcomes and they are as follows:

1. All new visitors are considered overnight visitors at \$338 per person per day<sup>1</sup>
2. Ninety percent (90%) of converted visitors are considered day visitors with \$71 expenditure per person per day – no additional new expenditures are attributed to these persons due to the via ferrata and their expenditures are not counted in the following charts
3. Ten percent (10%) of converted visitors staying an additional night expend \$338 per person for one additional day
4. Twenty percent (20%) of new visitors are counted as guided parties, increasing their per diem expenditure to \$687
5. Twenty percent (20%) of converted visitors are counted as guided parties increasing their per diem expenditure to \$687

Using these assumptions the following direct expenditure chart emerges.

Year	New Visitors	Direct Expenditures New Visitors	Converted Visitors	Direct Expenditures Converted Guided Parties <sup>2</sup>	Converted Visitor Staying Night	Converted Overnight Visitors Direct Expenditures
Year 1	84	\$ 28,392	1,116	\$ 153,338	112	37,721
Year 2	336	\$ 113,568	2,064	\$ 283,594	206	69,763
Year 3	1,344	\$ 454,272	3,456	\$ 474,854	346	116,813
Year 4	5,376	\$ 1,817,088	4,224	\$ 580,378	422	142,771
Year 5	6,720	\$ 2,271,360	5,280	\$ 25,472	528	178,464

<sup>1</sup> Longwoods 2014 expenditure data

<sup>2</sup> Only guided parties are counted here as it is assumed that converted day visitors utilizing the via Ferrata will not increase their daily expenditures. Again, this is a conservative estimate because it assumes that 1) entrance to the park is free and or visitors will not become members of the park to visit, 2) that they own the necessary equipment and purchased it elsewhere, 3) that enjoying the via Ferrata has no extension effect on their visit.

The total direct and multiplied (secondary) expenditures are listed in the table below.

Year	Total Direct Expenditures All Parties	Total Multiplied Expenditures All Parties
Year 1	\$ 219,451	\$ 335,760
Year 2	\$ 466,925	\$ 714,395
Year 3	\$ 1,045,939	\$ 1,600,287
Year 4	\$ 2,540,237	\$ 3,886,562
Year 5	\$ 3,175,296	\$ 4,858,203

The following table outlines conservative estimates of new potential sales and LOT tax revenue stemming from additional visitors. At the far right column is an accounting new Full Time Equivalent Employees (FTE) creation facilitated by expenditures.

	New Lodging Nights <sup>3</sup>	New LOT Tax	New Sales Tax <sup>4</sup>	FTE
Year 1	115	\$ 345	\$ 10,073	3
Year 2	319	\$ 957	\$ 21,432	7
Year 3	994	\$ 2,982	\$ 48,009	16
Year 4	3,411	\$ 10,232	\$ 116,597	38
Year 5	4,264	\$ 12,791	\$ 145,746	48

<sup>3</sup> Longwoods data suggests that party size for Colorado visitors is 2.9, data tracking by San Juan Mountain Guides for recreationally oriented visitors suggests a somewhat smaller party size of 1.7 visitors and this number is used in this report.

<sup>4</sup> Sales tax data is somewhat overstated due to the fact that some of the portion of expenditures is spent on untaxed service categories

## Conclusions

The development of a via Ferrata route in the Uncompahgre canyon represents a significant boon to the City of Ouray and its economy, particularly as a new summer draw and shoulder season attraction.

The numbers in this report admittedly rely on incomplete data and reasonable inferences. However, the weakness of data has been mitigated to some degree by utilizing severely conservative estimates. Consequently, errors in calculations are most likely on the upside, meaning that if the numbers are incorrect, it seems most likely that the numbers will be higher, not lower, than those presented in this report.

In summary, the following conclusions follow from this analysis:

1. The City of Ouray has a unique opportunity to be “first in” on the development of a world class via Ferrata route. This opportunity is akin to that experienced by the Ice Park in the 1990’s. Ouray was “first” in the business of developing a world class manufactured ice climbing asset and has capitalized grandly on the resultant novelty and subsequent explosion of what was once a marginalized and unknown sport. There is every reason to believe that exactly the same opportunity exists with the development of an exceptional quality via Ferrata.
2. A via Ferrata represents the capitalization of tremendous latent potential in an environment that is currently only used for 90 days a year. Completion of a via Ferrata allows the leveraging of a magnificent natural asset into a year-round recreation destination.
3. A via Ferrata is in-keeping with the adventurous and authentic experience of the Uncompahgre Canyon without compromising the areas natural integrity. Experiencing the canyon through a thrilling and genuine summer climbing experience adds an entirely new dimension to the overall Ouray mountain experience.
4. In summary a via Ferrata, could, within 60 months or less, significantly enhance the City of Ouray’s standing as a marquis outdoor recreation destination while also generating substantial revenue for citizens, business, and City government. The numbers in brief:
  - a. Over 4000 new lodging nights
  - b. Nearly \$13,000 in new LOT
  - c. Over \$145,000 in additional sales tax revenue
  - d. Perhaps most importantly, 48 new full time equivalent jobs for Ouray citizens.

Practically speaking these numbers represent the ability of Ouray businesses to turn part-time or seasonal employees into year-round wage earners and permanent residents. Increased visitation and expenditures afford opportunities for current businesses to expand and new businesses to initiate and flourish. Additional employees and expenditures translate into citizens being able to purchase homes and increase disposable incomes furthering their participation as active members of the community. Flourishing homeowners, individuals, and families form the basis of the community and civic life. And it is to these ends that we should look when determining the true return on investment of any new project.

*About the Author:*

Andrew Klotz has twenty years of experience working on economic and planning projects with hundreds of government and private sector clients. He has been published by the *American Planning Association*, *Builder Magazine*, and by the *Colorado Municipal League*. He has been a featured speaker at numerous conferences including *Rocky Mountain Land Use*, *Smart Growth*, APA state and regional events, *Sonoran Institute* conferences, and has provided council to Colorado state legislators on fiscal policy. Past clients and projects include: the Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA), National Park Service (NPS), United States Forest Service (USFS), Bureau of Land Management (BLM), the State of Colorado (DOLA), Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) and the Sonoran Institute. Additionally, scores of municipal, state, county, not-for-profit and agency clients throughout the western states of Colorado, Utah, New Mexico, Arizona, Wyoming, Montana and Nevada. A small sampling of highlighted regional projects include economic and comprehensive planning in La Plata County, Ouray County, San Miguel County, Town of Telluride, City of Durango, Lake City, Teton County (WY), City of Aspen, Pitkin County, Mountain Village, Montrose County, Delta County and many others.

## AGREEMENT FOR PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

THIS AGREEMENT (“Agreement”) is made and entered into as of the date of the last signature hereto (“Effective Date”), by and between the CITY OF OURAY, a Colorado home-rule municipality (the “City”), and \_\_\_\_\_, applying as an independent contractor (“Contractor”).

WHEREAS, the Contractor wishes to provide Via Ferrata guiding and instruction services for the public within the Uncompahgre Gorge (the “Park”), which is owned by the City; and

WHEREAS, the City desires that Contractor perform the services of Via Ferrata guiding and instruction services for the public as an independent contractor, in accordance with the provisions of this Agreement, and more fully described in the License Application attached as **Exhibit A** (the “Services”); and

WHEREAS, the City wishes to grant Contractor a revocable, non-exclusive license to provide the Services (the “License”) in the Park during the 2026 Via Ferrata season, roughly early May through early November as determined by the City Parks and Recreation Director or designee (the “Guiding Season”);

WHEREAS, Contractor desires to perform such duties pursuant to the terms and conditions provided for in this Agreement; and

WHEREAS, the parties hereto desire to set forth certain understandings regarding the services in writing.

NOW, THEREFORE, in consideration of the mutual covenants and agreements contained herein, the parties agree as follows:

1. License to Provide Services. The City Parks and Recreation Director or designee hereby approves of and permits Contractor to provide the Services subject to the terms of this Agreement. The City agrees to retain Contractor and hereby grants Contractor a revocable and non-exclusive License to provide the Services set forth herein during the 2026 Guiding Season in the Park, and as further specified in **Exhibit A**, attached hereto and incorporated herein by reference and Contractor agrees to so serve, on the following conditions:

- a. Contractor warrants and represents that it has the requisite authority, capacity, experience, and expertise to perform the Services in compliance with the provisions of this Agreement, the Ouray Via Ferrata Rules established by the Friends of Ouray Via Ferrata and available at <https://ourayviaferrata.org/rules/>, and all applicable laws and agrees to perform the Services on the terms and conditions set forth herein.
- b. In the event of any conflict between this Agreement and **Exhibit A**, the provisions of this Agreement shall prevail.

- c. All Contractor's employees, agents, contractors or subcontractors operating as guides in the Park (collectively referred to herein as "Employees") have current first aid certifications. All Employees will be certified at the "Wilderness First Responder" level or higher medical accreditation at the Time of providing the Services. Contractor shall ensure its Employees are physically present in the Park at all times the Contractor is conducting guiding activities. Contractor shall not permit any of its Employees who do not have current first aid certification to operate within the Park.
- d. Contractor agrees that it has the best knowledge and expertise and is in the best and often only position to identify, evaluate, and mitigate risks associated with the Contractor's activities under this License. In recognition of the Contractor's unique position, expertise, and abilities in the field of guided via ferrata climbing and instruction, and as partial consideration of the granting of this License, the Contractor specifically, knowingly, and intentionally assumes the entire risk of all activities of the Contractor and its Employees under this License.
- e. Contractor and each Employee have 1) completed an American Mountain Guides Association ("AMGA") Rock Guide Course, or 2) possess an AMGA Single Pitch Instructor ("SPI") Certification. The City, in its sole discretion, and in specific circumstances, may require additional information on Contractor employees.
- f. Contractor and each Employee have never been found liable by any court of negligence or fault in the death or injury of any client, and to the best of Contractor's knowledge, no such litigation is currently pending or threatened.
- g. Contractor has each Employee and client sign a release and liability waiver prior to guiding, attached hereto as **Exhibit B**, and such release names the City and Friends of Ouray Via Ferrata as released parties.
- h. Contractor is solely responsible for and shall pay any and all federal, state, and/or local tax and employment liabilities, including but not limited to worker's compensation benefits, associated with Contractor's business during the term of this License.
- i. Contractor has obtained insurance in the amounts and under the terms and conditions required in paragraph 8 below.
- j. Contractor's operations and activities shall be in conformance with all applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations and requirements.
- k. The Contractor shall notify the City of all accidents, as soon as possible and in no event later than five (5) hours following any accident involving any: (1) property damage greater than Five Hundred Dollars (\$500.00) in value, (2) personal injury requiring medical attention, or (3) death.

1. The Contractor's "Ouray Via Ferrata 2026 Guiding Application" (the "License Application"), attached as **Exhibit A**, is true, accurate, and complete in all details and is hereby incorporated as a part of this License and all of the Contractor's covenants, statements, and representations included therein are likewise incorporated herewith as if part of the License. The representations and warranties contained in this License

and the License Application do not contain any untrue statement of a material fact or omit to state any material fact necessary in order to make the statements and information contained in License and the License Application not misleading.

- m. Contractor understands that route closures due to weather, route conditions, or other such circumstances which directly affect the usability and/or safety of the Ouray Via Ferrata route(s) are the purview of the Park Ranger and/or City Parks and Recreation Director or designee. The City shall communicate all such closure decisions to Contractor in a timely manner via email or other electronic means and are final.

2. Revocable. The License granted herein shall be revocable by the City upon notice to Contractor.

3. Consideration. In exchange for the License, Contractor shall pay the City a "License Fee" which shall be the greater of either: (a) a minimum fee, as determined by the City Parks and Recreation Director and approved by the City Council each year; or (b) \$20 per guided client and an additional per patron fee as adopted by the City Council. Contractor shall pay the City \$1,000.00, which shall count toward the total License Fee owed to the City no later than Friday, May 22, 2026 or prior to conducting any guiding activities at the Park, whichever is earlier. Contractor shall pay the remainder of the License Fee no later than Friday, November 13, 2026. No later than the date of its final payment to the City, Contractor must submit an accounting of completed payments from guided clients redacting any personal identifying information to allow the City to cross-reference the accounting with its own records.

4. Term. Unless extended by written agreement of the parties, the Term of this Agreement shall be from the Effective Date until the end of the 2026 Guiding Season.

5. The City's Obligations/Confidentiality. The City shall provide Contractor with reports and such other data/information as may be available to the City and reasonably required by Contractor to perform hereunder and Contractor is entitled to rely on that information. No project information shall be disclosed by Contractor to third parties without prior written consent of the City or pursuant to a lawful court order directing disclosure. All documents provided by the City to Contractor shall be returned to the City at termination of this Agreement. Contractor is authorized by the City to retain copies of such data and materials at Contractor expense during the term of this Agreement.

6. Monitoring and Evaluation. The City reserves the right to monitor and evaluate the progress and performance of Contractor and its subcontractors to ensure that the terms of this Agreement are being satisfactorily met in accordance with the City's and other applicable monitoring and evaluating criteria and standards. Contractor shall cooperate with the City relating to such monitoring and evaluation.
7. Independent Contractor. The parties agree that the Contractor shall be an independent contractor and shall not be an employee, agent, or servant of the City. **Contractor is not entitled to workers' compensation benefits from the City and is obligated to pay federal and state income tax on any money earned pursuant to this Agreement.**
8. Insurance Requirements. Unless waived in writing by the City, Contractor shall maintain the following insurance:
  - a. Comprehensive General Liability Insurance. Contractor shall procure and keep in force during the duration of this Agreement a policy of comprehensive general liability insurance insuring Contractor and naming the City as an additional insured against any liability for personal injury, bodily injury, or death arising out of the performance of the Services with at least One Million Dollars (\$1,000,000) each occurrence/ Two Million Dollars (\$2,000,000) aggregate. The limits of said insurance shall not, however, limit the liability of Contractor hereunder.
  - b. Comprehensive Automobile Liability Insurance. Contractor shall procure and keep in force during the duration of this Agreement a policy of comprehensive automobile liability insurance insuring Contractor and naming the City as an additional insured against any liability for personal injury, bodily injury, or death arising out of the use of motor vehicles and covering operations on or off the site of all motor vehicles controlled by Contractor which are used in connection with the Project, whether the motor vehicles are owned, nonowned, or hired, with a combined single limit of at least One Million Dollars (\$1,000,000). The limits of said insurance shall not, however, limit the liability of Contractor hereunder.
  - c. Terms of Insurance.
    - (i) Insurance required by this Agreement shall be with companies qualified to do business in the State of Colorado with a general policyholder's financial rating of not less than A+3A as set forth in the most current edition of "Best's Insurance Reports" and may provide for deductible amounts as Contractor deems reasonable for the Services. No such policies shall be cancelable or subject to reduction in coverage limits or other modification except after thirty (30) days prior written notice to the City. Contractor shall identify whether the type of coverage is "occurrence" or "claims made." If the type of coverage is "claims made," which at renewal Contractor changes to

“occurrence,” Contractor shall carry a six (6)-month tail. Contractor shall not do or permit to be done anything that shall invalidate the policies.

- (ii) The policies described herein shall be for the mutual and joint benefit and protection of Contractor and the City. Such policies shall provide that the City, although named as an additional insured, shall nevertheless be entitled to recovery under said policies for any loss occasioned to it, its officers, employees, and agents by reason of negligence of Contractor, its officers, employees, agents, subcontractors, or business invitees. Such policies shall be written as primary policies not contributing to and not in excess of coverage the City may carry.
- d. Workers’ Compensation and Other Insurance. During the term of this Agreement, Contractor shall procure and keep in force workers’ compensation insurance and all other insurance required by any applicable law. If under Colorado law Contractor is not required to carry workers’ compensation insurance, Contractor shall provide the City an executed Certificate of Exemption From Statutory Workers’ Compensation Law and Acknowledgment of Risk/Hold Harmless Agreement, which shall be attached hereto as **Exhibit C** and incorporated herein by reference.
  - e. Evidence of Coverage. Before commencing work under this Agreement, Contractor shall furnish to the City certificates of insurance policies evidencing insurance coverage required by this Agreement. Contractor understands and agrees that the City shall not be obligated under this Agreement until Contractor furnishes such certificates of insurance.
  - f. Subcontracts. Contractor agrees to include the insurance requirements set forth in this Agreement in all subcontracts. The City shall hold Contractor responsible in the event any subcontractor fails to have insurance meeting the requirements set forth in this Agreement. The City reserves the right to approve variations in the insurance requirements applicable to subcontractors upon joint written request of subcontractor and Contractor if, in the City’s opinion, such variations do not substantially affect the City’s interests. Contractor shall cause and require its subcontractors to include a term in any agreement between Contractor and the subcontractor providing a warranty for its work and Services for the benefit of the City and indemnifying the City from any liability, claims, damages, or losses arising from such subcontractor’s negligence or intentional acts.
- 9. Indemnification. Contractor hereby covenants and agrees to indemnify, save, hold harmless, and defend the City, its officers, employees, and agents from any and all liability, loss, costs, charges, obligations, expenses, attorney’s fees, litigation, judgments, damages, claims, and demands of any kind whatsoever arising from or out of any negligent act or omission or other tortious conduct of Contractor, its officers, employees, agents, or subcontractors in the performance or nonperformance of its obligations under this Agreement.

10. Waiver of Liability.

a. Acknowledgment and Acceptance of Risk. Contractor acknowledges and accepts that its performance of the Services subjects Contractor to potential hazards, risks and dangers, both known and unknown. Without limitation, those risks include acts of God, the force of nature, the negligent and reckless acts of commission or omission by others (herein "Risks"). Contractor acknowledges and agrees that such list in no way limits the extent or reach of this Agreement. Acknowledging the above, Contractor voluntarily agrees and accepts full responsibility for all the Risks, possible risks, hazards and dangers of performing the Services.

b. Waiver and Release. Contractor hereby releases, waives, and agrees not to sue or make any claim against the City, its officers, agents, directors, members, managers, employees, subcontractors or independent contractors ("Protected Parties") from any and all foreseen and unforeseen injury, death, losses, actions, claims, judgments, or damages of any kind and nature, including attorney fees and court cost (singly a "Loss" and together "Losses") that Contractor, its heirs, personal representatives, executors, administrators, successors and assigns may now have or have in the future against the Protected Parties, or any of them on account of personal injury, property damage, lost or stolen property, death or accident of any kind arising out of out of or

in any way related to its performance of the Services, however the Loss or Losses are caused. This Agreement shall serve as a complete release and express assumption of the Risks. Contractor shall be solely responsible for its own safety and well-being, and for all expenses that Contractor may incur that arise directly or indirectly from, on account of, or in connection with performance of the Services.

11. Termination. The License shall terminate on the final day of the 2026 Guiding Season (the "Termination Date") or upon the City providing written notice of revocation to the Licensee. The City may revoke the License and terminate this Agreement without cause if it determines that such termination is in the City's best interest or with cause. Contractor shall not perform any additional Services in the Park following receipt of the notice of revocation of the License and termination of this Agreement unless otherwise instructed in writing by the City. Contractor may terminate this Agreement without cause if it determines that such termination is in Contractor's best interest.

12. Use of Software and other Intellectual Property. Contractor hereby represents and warrants that it has obtained all necessary rights and licenses to use any software or other intellectual property that may be required by Contractor to perform the Services. Contractor hereby agrees to indemnify, hold harmless and defend City against any claim brought against City for improper use or infringement upon any software or intellectual property interest.

13. Agreement Subject to Appropriation. To the extent this Agreement constitutes a multiple fiscal year debt or financial obligation of the City, it shall be subject to annual appropriation pursuant to the City of Ouray Municipal Code and Article X, Section 20 of the Colorado Constitution. The City shall have no obligation to continue this Agreement in any fiscal year in which no such appropriation is made.
14. Responsibilities. Contractor shall be responsible for all damages to persons or property caused by the Contractor, its agents, employees or sub-Contractors, to the extent caused by its negligent acts, errors and omissions hereunder, and shall indemnify and hold harmless the City from any claims or actions brought against Contractor by reason thereof. Contractor shall comply with all applicable laws, rules, and ordinances, as well as any grant fund requirements that may apply to the Services.
15. Entire Agreement. This Agreement, along with any addendums and attachments hereto, constitutes the entire agreement between the parties. The provisions of this Agreement may be amended at any time by the mutual consent of both parties. The parties shall not be bound by any other agreements, either written or oral, except as set forth in this Agreement. Contractor shall not be relieved of its obligations to perform the Service in accordance with this Agreement as a result of any course of dealing with the City. Course of dealing, no matter how long, is not intended to be, and shall not be construed as, an amendment to this Agreement.
16. Governing Law and Venue. This Agreement shall be governed by the laws of the State of Colorado, and venue shall be in the County of Ouray, State of Colorado.
17. Governmental Immunity Act. No term or condition of this Agreement shall be construed or interpreted as a waiver, express or implied, of any of the immunities, rights, benefits, protections, or other provisions of the Colorado Governmental Immunity Act, C.R.S. §§ 24-10-101 *et seq.*
18. Assignability. Contractor shall not assign this Agreement without the City's prior written consent.
19. Binding Effect. This Agreement shall be binding upon, and shall inure to the benefit of, the parties hereto and their respective heirs, personal representatives, successors, and assigns.
20. Survival Clause. The "Indemnification" provision set forth in this Agreement shall survive the completion of the Services and the satisfaction, expiration, or termination of this Agreement.



IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the parties have entered this Agreement as of the Effective Date.

CITY OF OURAY, COLORADO

By: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

CONTRACTOR:

By: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**EXHIBIT A**  
**LICENSE APPLICATION**

**EXHIBIT B**  
**RELEASE AND LIABILITY WAIVER**

**EXHIBIT C**

**CERTIFICATE OF EXEMPTION FROM STATUTORY WORKERS'  
COMPENSATION LAW AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF  
RISK/HOLD HARMLESS AGREEMENT**

The undersigned Contractor certifies to the City of Ouray ("City") that it is exempt from the provisions of the Colorado Workers' Compensation Act.

If Contractor has any employees who will perform the Services or subsequently employs any person to perform the Services as set forth in this Agreement (other than subcontractors, who are not considered employees for the purposes of workers' compensation), it agrees to provide the City with a Certificate of Insurance as required by the Agreement indicating proof of statutory workers' compensation coverage on such persons prior to their start of work for the City.

Contractor acknowledges that it will be engaging in activities which exposes it to the risk of bodily injury, that it is physically capable of performing the activities, and that all necessary precautions to prevent injury to Contractor and others will be taken. Contractor shall not hold the City liable for any injuries sustained, by it or others, which may arise out of or in the course of the work performed for or on behalf of the City, and Contractor agrees to defend, indemnify, and hold harmless the City from all such claims.

CONTRACTOR:

By: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_