

## **Incline Friends Statement on Reopening the Manitou Incline May 28, 2020**

*The Incline Friends, a nonprofit organization dedicated to maintaining and sustaining the Manitou Incline, have adopted the following statement regarding reopening the Incline and Manitou Springs's proposal to introduce a paid reservation system.*

### **Short-term (during the pandemic)**

The Incline Friends have urged respect for Manitou Springs's action to keep the Incline closed since March 18 due to pandemic concerns.

Current public health conditions enable reopening the Incline with a limit of 50 to 100 users per hour, as Manitou Springs staff have indicated. Accordingly, we request that Manitou Springs Council vote to reopen the Incline at its June 2 meeting. We propose a reopening date of June 5.

We have offered to assist Manitou Springs by deploying volunteer social distancing ambassadors to encourage compliance with the per-hour usage limit and other measures intended to protect public health. Specifically, we recommend the following guidelines:

- No more than 100 people entering the Incline per hour
- Carry a mask and wear it when passing or being passed
- Step off to the side when resting
- No downward flow on the Incline—return down on the Barr Trail

We expect a high level of compliance because of users' awareness that failure to comply could result in a renewed closure of the Incline.

Developing a temporary reservation system could take months, especially since it would require the concurrence of Colorado Springs and the U.S. Forest Service. Making the reopening of the Incline contingent on development of a reservation system is both unacceptable and unnecessary.

### **Long-term (beyond the pandemic)**

We acknowledge that the Incline's popularity has created significant pressure on the Ruxton Avenue corridor, and we have expressed our readiness to work with Manitou Springs to mitigate those impacts.

Charging a fee for the Incline would be very difficult to enforce. However, our primary objection is to requiring a reservation to use the Incline. Open, unlimited access to the Incline must be retained for local users who travel up Ruxton Avenue to the Incline by shuttle, walking, jogging, or biking. They are not making any contribution to traffic and

parking problems in the Ruxton corridor, and as such, their ability to enjoy this much-loved resource when they so desire should not be restricted.

We have no objection to the adoption of traffic or parking restrictions on Ruxton Avenue.

We look forward to participating in discussions toward a long-term Incline management solution that is equitable and beneficial for all parties.