



May 4, 2009

Tag-A-Long Expeditions  
452 N. Main  
Moab, UT 84532

**Subject:** Providing equal access to public lands and serving guests with physical and intellectual disabilities on Colorado River through Westwater Canyon

Colorado Discover Ability (CDA), a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, is a volunteer-based organization in Grand Junction, Colorado. Our mission is to provide educational and therapeutic experiences for people with physical and intellectual disabilities through outdoor recreation. Outdoor therapeutic activities provide our clients the opportunity for self-exploration, building self-confidence, and leisure independence.

The base of our programs is to provide outdoor therapeutic activities at a price in proportion to the socio-economic means of our clients. The individuals, agencies, schools and organizations that utilize CDA's services pay about 25% of our operating costs on behalf of our clients. We raise the balance through grants, donations and fundraising events. Our prices afford individuals with disabilities equal access to the public lands in Colorado and Utah.

CDA owns a fleet of oar rafts, inflatable kayaks, and paddle rafts and has four commercial permits for floating rivers in Colorado. We offer one- to three-day trips on the Gunnison and Colorado rivers. Our volunteer guides who are licensed in Colorado and Utah specialize in river guiding and facilitating river trips for individuals with disabilities. These trips involve:

- Specialty care on- and off-the-river, to include highly trained guides, crew, adaptive equipment, and accessible transportation.
- Guides and crew are knowledgeable in specialty care required by our clients.
- High ratio of guides/crew to passengers, sometimes as high as 1:1.
- Slower trip pace and individualized programs that cater to the needs of people with disabilities and to provide therapeutic value.

For the past few years, CDA has chartered Westwater commercial raft trips at a minor discount to the fees generally charged by you and other licensed river outfitters. These fees are about three times greater than CDA's cost of running same trips. As a result, CDA is unable to provide this opportunity to two out of every three people who would otherwise be qualified.

We understand that it is unreasonable to ask you to reduce your rates by 60% and to increase your overhead so you could provide this service to our clients. Instead we'd like to propose an

alternative approach, where CDA would apply for special use permits to take our clients on Westwater trips. According to federal law, CDA must apply for a commercial special use permit, and we'd like your support for this alternative. Please understand we do not intend to compete with you and we do not believe it is necessary for BLM to reduce commercial or private use to accommodate our clients. The number of clients who would use this service is limited - less than 3% of total current use, and, on average over the past twenty years, a 3% increase in use would not have required BLM to raise the use limits.

We have sent this letter to all companies which operate commercial river trips in Westwater Canyon. We hope that you will support our efforts and we would like to know your thoughts about our approach. Please don't hesitate to contact me in person, by phone, or via e-mail. We will be applying for a special use permit in May 2009.

Sincerely,

Martin Wiesiolek, Board Member  
Colorado Discover Ability, Adaptive Outdoor Recreation  
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cc:

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