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MEMORANDUM

Date: February 26, 2008
To: Parks and Recreation Department Commissioners
From: R.J. Cardin, Director *R.J.C.*
Re: Director's Summary of Current Events

Listed below are issues that the department has been involved with since the February 12, 2008 Director's Summary.

Budget

In response to Commissioner Leija's inquiry, the following budget information is provided, regarding utility expenses.

Park	FY08 Budget	FY08 YTD (thru Jan)	FY07 Actuals	FY06 Actuals
Lake Pleasant	\$ 175,760	\$ 98,008	\$ 197,959	\$ 127,151
Spur Cross	\$ 1,980	\$ 862	\$ 1,209	\$ 1,259
Desert Outdoor Center	\$ 48,167	\$ 37,373	\$ 52,428	\$ 52,066
Desert Parks	\$ 252,948	\$ 133,813	\$ 247,552	\$ * 48,816
Totals	\$ 478,855	\$ 270,056	\$ 499,148	\$ 229,292

* In FY06, Facilities Management paid the desert park utilities directly, so we do not have information for that year in our budget. More information and analysis will become available as we access and learn the Utility Manager software we have just been provided. Charges to this line, include port-a-john maintenance, waste removal, electric and water.

Superintendent Report

Spur Cross Ranch Conservation Area (SCRCA): Staff made a presentation at the County Safety Fair regarding desert awareness.

At the request of the Town of Cave Creek Mayor, a presentation was made, to the Town Council & citizenry, on how to deal with and minimize human-wildlife conflicts.

Twenty-three interpretive programs were offered during the month of February with over 300 participants.

Usery Mountain Regional Park: Thirty-seven interpretive programs were performed in February with a total of 1,132 participants and 167 repeat visitors. Stargazing was a hit with 200 participants, the Toddler Cruises is always popular and the new Eco-Tour is showing success.

With consultation from Arizona Game and Fish Department, we relocated the 3D archery range to an area near the service road. It opened to the public the first week of February with excellent feedback from archers.

Coconino Rural Environmental Corp (CREC) provided the park with one full day of trail maintenance work on the Wind Cave Trail.

McDowell Mountain Regional Park: Southwest Wildlife Rehabilitation and Education Center released a brother and sister pair of badgers at the park on January 31st. Since that time a number of new digging sites have been found and it is clear that both animals are settling into their new home.

The new Interpretive Ranger began her first month of programming with 12 programs and had 205 participants.

A bat survey was completed around and in the Dixie Mine. Park staff and personnel from other state agencies, searched both the east and west adits (nearly horizontal passage from the surface in a mine) and found a single Townsend's Big-Eared Bat.

San Tan Mountain Regional Park: The month of February was very successful for the park. The revenue for the month increased by 65% from this time last year with a 92% increase in visitor attendance. Over the past year, the park has increased its revenue by 113% and attendance by 114%.

San Tan offered 12 programs during the month of February to 385 event attendees. The program highlights of the month included London's Ride (a horse charity ride to benefit the Phoenix Children's Hospital Center for Cancer and Blood Disorders) and Edu-Prize Elementary School Educational Outreach Presentation.

Estrella Mountain Regional Park: Goodyear hosted their annual rodeo at the Estrella arena on February 15, 16 and 17. The event was well attended on all three days for roping, riding and barrel racing. Events like this one and Western Heritage day should help to promote the arena area for other events.

Over 600 park visitors participated in 37 interpretive programs throughout the month.

The park is now gearing up to host the 10th Annual Hike for the Homeless sponsored by St. Joseph the Worker and a Mountain Bike Association race on the competitive track.

Cave Creek Regional Park: Twelve different interpretive programs were held this month, with a total of 113 attendees. The most well-attended program was the Clay Mine Moonlit Hike, with 26 participants. A total of 490 people took guided horse rides from the trail ride concession in January, attracting 146 additional groups of people to the park.

Construction of the Maricopa Trail segment that connects Cave Creek Regional Park to Spur Cross Ranch Conservation Area has begun. Maricopa Trail segment from Apache Spring to Cave Creek Park has been roughed in, connecting to the park at the Go John Trail.

The Desert Botanical Garden has asked Cave Creek Regional Park to be a weekly contributor to its popular weekly *Wildflower InfoSite* during the months of March and April. This popular website is read by visitors to the area who want to know where to go to see wildflowers.

White Tank Mountain Regional Park: Super bowl week preparations and coordination meetings culminated in a series of expanded hikes and programs drawing the public to the park. Program and hike attendance increased 50 to 75% during the week surrounding the Super Bowl. During the Super Bowl week, Interpretive Rangers came to White Tank Park from our other county parks to assist. The expanded events attracted many people who said it was their first time to the park. Overall counts indicated that about 80% of attendees said they had not been to White Tank Park before.

Lake Pleasant Regional Park: ADA compliant benches for the Roadrunner Campground restrooms were built in house by the park maintenance staff. By building and designing the units in house the cost was \$40 per unit verses purchasing manufactured units for \$300.

Marketing for events and programs - Dam Run and Safe Boating Celebration appears on all community calendars including those for the specific target audience (i.e., runners, boating).

Desert Outdoor Center: In conjunction with Department efforts to reduce expenditures, aspects of the DOC's heating and cooling system are being reviewed by Department personnel from the DOC and the Construction Crew. Earlier efforts in January with the designer of the computerized control system identified some areas, such as the exhaust fan and air handling louvers that needed to be adjusted. The department electricians corrected some ventilation problems. The manufacturer of the solar thermal HVAC system will soon provide a means to convert production of heat (BTUs) into electricity, thus affording an accurate means to measure the contribution of this system to the facility's temperature control mechanism.

The DOC will host the National Association for Interpretation's Regional Workshop from Feb 28 through March 2. There will be a Dino Dig dedication, planned for April 5th in conjunction with a Stargazing event.

DOC's 10th anniversary is being planned for August 2008. This event will be a celebration and "thank-you" for selected teachers who have regularly come to the DOC and other individuals and agencies who have made significant contributions.

Contract Updates

Adobe Dam: A selection of the proposed vendor for the management, operation and maintenance of the Aquatic Facility currently known as Waterworld Safari has been completed and discussions have begun to enter into a Use Management Agreement.

The City Planning Commission moved to initiate actions to remove the Special Permit that restrict future development of Adobe Dam Regional Park. A public meeting is scheduled for March 20, 2008.

Grant Updates

We have submitted two grant applications with Arizona State Parks for State Lake Improvement Funds (SLIF).

Agua Fria Conservation Area Access to allow boating access to the Agua Fria arm of upper Lake Pleasant by providing a controlled primitive roadway with fencing, a boat launch ramp and parking facilities. Grant amount request is \$958,173.

Lake Pleasant Nav-Aid Boat to replace the existing boat and trailer which was purchased in the year 2000. The existing boat currently has approximately 5,800 operational hours which is near its operational lifespan. Grant amount request is \$189,039.

We were recently notified that both of our Boating Safety grants submitted by Lake Pleasant were awarded by Arizona Game & Fish Department. We will receive \$2,958 to apply to our Carbon Monoxide Awareness Campaign and \$6,500 to purchase 300 various size and type life jackets to be loaned to those who have a temporary need while at the Lake. We plan to implement both programs with our Safe Boating Campaign in May.

Marketing Updates

The department purchased a photo gallery software package which will allow us to visually showcase the parks on the website. To test the software, Parks is featuring a wildflower photo gallery on the home page (www.maricopa.gov/parks).