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MEMORANDUM

Date: May 4, 2010
To: Parks and Recreation Department Commissioners
From: R.J. Cardin, Director
Re: **Director's Summary of Current Events**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R.J. Cardin".

Listed below are issues that the department has been involved with since the April 13, 2010 Director's Summary.

Budget

Monthly Financial Report – March FY2010

General Fund (100) – Agency 300:

On the expenditure side, the General Fund (Fund 100, Agency 300) is currently reporting expenditures 7.9% or \$41,336 under the year to date (YTD) budget.

There are no revenues collected within the General Fund.

Enhancement Fund (241) – Agency 305:

Enhancement Fund (Fund 241, Agency 305) is currently reporting revenue at 6.1% or \$155,054 over the YTD budget.

Enhancement Fund is currently 3.8% or \$93,448 under the YTD operating budget for expenditures.

Lake Fund (240) – Agency 302:

Lake Fund (Fund 240, Agency 302) is currently reporting revenues at 9.9% or \$110,274 over the YTD budget.

Lake Fund is reporting operating expenditures under budget at 7.1% or \$89,297.

Spur Cross Fund (225) – Agency 306:

Spur Cross Fund (Fund 225, Agency 306) is reporting revenues at 45% or \$ 100,041 under the YTD budget.

Spur Cross Fund (Fund 225, Agency 306) is reporting operating expenditures under budget at 8.4% or \$17,779.

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Superintendent Report

Spur Cross Ranch Conservation Area (SCRCA): Visitation has been heavy all month with ~ 800-1000 per week coming out to the Park. There were 25 programs conducted with more 285 park visitors participating. 5 groups came out for special hikes with the park staff.

Archeology days were held in cooperation with the Arizona Archeological Society. Numerous guided hikes and brochures were provided to the public.

A site visit with Dr. Dornan of the Arizona State University (ASU) Geography Department was completed to evaluate the Elephant Mountain debris flow. Part of the mountain sloughed off during the winter storms. ASU students will be measuring and documenting the debris field.

Park staff participated in the Carefree Earth Days event at the request of Carefree Councilman Bob Coady.

Usery Mountain Regional Park: Revenue has increased significantly over April last year from \$72,400 to \$99,000 including souvenir sales around \$8,000 for the month. Sales in the Nature Center have been excellent.

There were 95 interpretive programs offered in the April with a total of 2201 participants and 675 repeat attendees. The interpretive ranger's brown-bag talks in the Nature Center are seeing many repeat campers, winter visitors and community members.

Camping is seeing a \$4,500 increase and had consistent overflow since the end of January through the Easter weekend.

McDowell Mountain Regional Park: Revenue in April exceeded April last year by approximately 50%. There were 18 programs conducted and several outreaches to nearby schools. The cooler than normal temperatures extended the season and kept the park busy much longer than expected.

Spotting scopes donated to the park last year are helping the park staff and volunteers keep an eye on Great Horned Owl and a Red Tail Hawk nests in the park. A young chick has been spotted in the Red Tail nest and hatchlings are expected any day in the Great Horned Owl nest.

The speaker's platform in the plaza at the Visitor Center is complete. This raised platform was constructed and then topped off with flagstone; it will be ready for a series of speakers, or weddings.

The mountain bike team from Bicycle Showcase worked on the Scenic Trail; cleaning it and installing some dips to move water off the trail. The team together donated 52 hours of trail work in April.

San Tan Mountain Regional Park: During the month of April, the park offered 18 interpretive programs to the delight of 648 program participants. The highlight programs of the month included Rascal the Rabbit's Wild Adventure, Stargazing for Everyone and the Scorpion Scavenger Hunt, with each program bringing in over a hundred people.

On Sunday, April 11, the park, in association with the Friends of San Tan Mountain Regional Park, hosted a pond dedication ceremony to highlight the opening of the wildlife pond and recognize the individuals that helped establish the pond and picnic area.

Estrella Mountain Regional Park: Easter Sunday was the busiest day of the year at Estrella with approximately 7900 visitors and 1971 vehicles in the park for a great day.

There were 58 programs conducted with 1280 participants. Several Girl Scout and Boy Scout groups come to hike with programs conducted to help them enjoy their outdoor experience and work on merit badge requirements. There were 10 programs for 180 scouts.

The District 5 Earth Day cleanup was held at Estrella in April. Approximately 75 individuals representing 7 groups (youth basketball, baseball and boxing as well as 1 service organization) came out for the event. Weeds were

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removed from the front and back of the nature center. In exchange for their service the teams earn money from funds set aside for these district sponsored events.

Several scouts have completed Eagle Scout projects that included constructing an entry sign for the Nature Center/Park Office and landscaping at the rear of the Nature. The area was leveled around the fire-pit and 7 tons of decomposed granite was spread.

White Tank Mountain Regional Park: There were 19 Interpretive Ranger programs for the month of April, with 11 outreach programs and 8 in park programs scheduled with a projection of 1,813 participants.

The rainy season was a tremendous help with increasing park attendance to view the Waterfall trail as well as the wild flowers throughout the park.

Lake Pleasant Regional Park: For the reporting month of April, Lake Pleasant conducted 34 programs with a total participation count of 1406 public attendees.

The 6th Annual Lake Pleasant Dam Good Run/Walk/Hike was completed with great success. A majority of participants utilized the pre-registration, a minimal amount utilized day-of registration.

The 9th Annual Easter Egg Hunt was a big success. With work and dedication of a park host, there were over 3000 eggs and hundreds of toys donated for the event. Over 200 children participated in the egg hunt. A goal for next year is to come up with a potential new location to accommodate all the kids.

Another "Images of America" book signing event was conducted at the Lake Pleasant Nature Center, where the books "Lake Pleasant" and "Peoria" were signed by the authors. The increase in sales and visitors at the center that Saturday showed the event was a big success.

The wildflower hikes were a big hit this past March and April, but now we must wave good-bye to those flowers and welcome the blossoms of the many variety of cacti in our parks.

The 3rd annual Lake Pleasant Scuba Adventure Day was May 1 from 8am to 3 pm. We received good advertising of the event including an article in Dive Training Magazine and Channel 15. The event was for both certified scuba divers and non-divers, and open to the general public. People participated in the "Discover Scuba" "Try Kayaking" and "Slippery Snorkel" activities, and watched scuba divers, while checking out the many displays. Certified scuba divers went out on several dive boats to exciting dive locations; they tried the underwater obstacle course and underwater navigation contest, and even won prizes at the underwater treasure hunt and desert lobster catch.

Paddle Fest 2010 will be coming mid May. This is a joint event with the Desert Paddlers of Arizona. This event will be open to the public and will include a number of paddling activities to showcase the different aspects and sports of paddling.

Desert Outdoor Center (DOC): For the Boy Scouts of America Jamb-o-rama a DOC ranger will attend the 100th anniversary event at Kiwanis Park in Tempe on April 10th to help promote Lake Pleasant Camp. This event has over 8,000 participants.

Wedding facility rental activity has dramatically increased the past month, with many tours being given by staff and hosts. As a result, we currently have 4 weddings booked in the Fall 2010 and a few more tentative bookings in the Spring 2011. Most of this interest has been generated by internet searches and word-of-mouth.

The Lake Pleasant Camp online registration was opened on April 1st. The DOC has already received many registrations and continues to receive more every day. Also, staff is receiving many calls to schedule swim checks for camp participants, which will be held on May 15 and 29.

DOC staff met with staff from Lake Pleasant to discuss joint programming events for FY10-11. Adhering to the notion that training and educational opportunities will occur at the DOC and recreational pursuits resulting from the training will occur at the Lake. Three events representing 6-7 days were put in the calendar: three days of continuing the cooperative venture with Cabela's to offer kayak lessons in August 2010, a 2-3 day fitness retreat complimenting the

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Dam Run in April 2011 to be held independent of the run but during that weekend for those who might want to participate in both events, and a one-day "SCUBA Expo" in April/May 2011 to highlight aspects of the sport relating to technique and important improvements in gear function and safety.

Contract Updates

Buckeye Hills Regional Park: Up-coming events at Joe Foss Shooting Complex: May 8th – Range Officer Training Course; May 23rd – Civilian Marksmanship Program Shoot.

Working with the Sportsman Club on a directional sign to be placed along Hwy 85 (on County property).

Archery Range – five (5) lanes operational.

Shotgun Range – obtained licensed contractor license; going through County permit process, i.e. dust control, planning and zoning, etc.

HVAC issues remain unresolved – Facilities and Contractor issues have been on-going since site occupied by Sportsman Club.

Estrella Mountain Regional Park: RV Park – evaluation process continues as to acceptance of proposal and proceeding with Use Management Agreement discussions.

Use Management Agreement discussions continue for horse riding concession.

Discussions continue for management of the rodeo arena complex.

Lake Pleasant Regional Park: Automated Access Gate for marina slip and dry storage renters is operational.

Paradise Valley: Review process continues for golf course management, operation and maintenance.

All Parks: Selected the zip line concessionaire – Use Management discussions are on-going. Initial site is Estrella with consideration for Lake Pleasant. Update of the Master Plan will be required for both sites and Lake Pleasant will require environmental studies.

Grant Updates

During April 2010, the Department submitted grant applications for the *Interpretive Display* projects with the following tribes: Ak-Chin Indian Community Grant, Gila River Indian Community Grant and Tohono O'odham Nation Community Grant

Marketing Updates

To promote services and activities offered by the parks, the Department staffed booths at the following high-profile events:

March 26 – 28 – Arizona Game and Fish Expo – Over 35,000 individuals attended the Expo to obtain information on recreational opportunities around the state.

April 20 – Arizona National Guard Earth Day – Approximately 500 military personnel and students visited the event.

Experience Your Future – Over 8,000 youth attended the event held at the University of Phoenix Stadium to speak with exhibitors about future career opportunities.