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MEMORANDUM

Date: October 6, 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 September 14, 2010 Director's Summary.

Budget

General Fund (100) – Agency 300 - On the expenditure side, the General Fund (Fund 100, Agency 300) is currently reporting expenditures 34% or \$37,480 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 72% or \$197,942 over the YTD budget. This positive variance is primarily due to early payment by Wet-n-Wild. Enhancement Fund is currently 13% or \$78,269 under the YTD operating budget for expenditures.

Lake Fund (240) – Agency 302 - Lake Fund (Fund 240, Agency 302) is currently reporting revenues at 16% or \$50,020 over the YTD budget. Lake Fund is reporting operating expenditures under budget at 13% or \$39,427.

Superintendent Report

Spur Cross Ranch Conservation Area (SCRCA): There were 13 interpretive hikes conducted with over 100 happy hikers participating.

Park staff continues to monitor biological events occurring at the solar oasis. John Gunn at the request of the chamber of commerce, served as a tour guide for a reporter doing a feature on hiking activities in the Town of Cave Creek.

Ranger Smith spent several days cross training two other rangers of the varied activities occurring at Spur Cross.

Cave Creek Regional Park: The horse concessionaire will be returning to the park on October 9th followed by Park Hosts on November 1st.

This month we also welcome a new commercial vendor, Yoga Breeze.

The Cave Creek Thriller is the first race in the Desert Runner Trail Series and is being held on October 30th.

October 6, 2010

Director's Summary

Page 2 of 4

The second annual Cave Creek Bike Festival is being held on November 13th. All proceeds from this event will go toward the acquisition of open space. The event includes a 20-mile race/ride along the lands slated to be protected between Spur Cross Ranch Conservation Area and Cave Creek Regional Park.

The Nature Center Souvenir displays are undergoing a facelift.

Sarah Steele, from the Desert Outdoor Center, will be moving to Cave Creek and Jenny Work will be moving the Desert Outdoor Center.

McDowell Mountain Regional Park: The summer series of night mountain bike races was completed in September. The series was sponsored by Slippery Pig Bike Shops who provided dinner free of charge to all participants. Attendance was the best the park has had to date.

The Park set a record in July when 146 riders came out and participated in the Summer Mountain Bike by the Moon Light event.

The Park welcomed three new residents in September when Lily, Scarlett and Lady left their home at Lake Pleasant to take up residence in the new tortoise habitat at McDowell Mountain Regional Park. Two seed mixes have been purchased to plant within the Tortoise Habitat to feed the new arrivals. A second mix was purchased to plant outside the habitat and around the back of the Visitor Center to fill in the disturbed soil, provide food and cover for wildlife coming to the pond for water during the night.

During the first and second weekend of September there were two main events held at the park. A 12-Hour Training run for the Javelina Jundred attracted 183 runners who had the option of running 15.4, 31, 46 or 60+ miles between 6 pm and 6 am.

The first female only mountain bike event, the Wahine Warrior mountain bike race, took place at McDowell Mountain Regional Park with 80 participants. The race was supported by mountain bike manufacturers who would like to see the event become a major event for women who enjoy riding and racing mountain bikes.

Interpretive Ranger Amy Ford offered 21 programs in September, from the North Trail to the Dixie Mine. The popularity of her programs continues to grow each month as shown by the increase of attendance.

Usery Mountain Regional Park: There were 32 interpretive programs offered in September with a total of 506 participants. The most popular programs centered around animals at night and included All About Scorpions Brown Bag (64 visitors); the Scorpion Hunt (78 visitors); the Animal Flashlight Hide & Seek Walk (47 visitors); and the Brown-Bag on Tarantulas (38 visitors). Cale Morris from the Phoenix Herpetological Society entertained 87 visitors with his scaled reptilian friends.

The Arizona Science Center returned this September for the home school series at Usery Park. Once a month through March, MJ Campbell from the Science Center will teach an interactive class in the Nature Center. The Park's interpretive ranger, Brennan Basler will teach an experiential environmental class relating to the indoor topic on the Desert Hawk Trail behind the center. Through increased marketing from both agencies, the class has had high registrations. The Science Center requested a second Friday each month to accommodate more home schooled families.

A beautifully constructed monument sign was built at the entrance to the Nature Center with lettering still to come.

An old kiosk at the archery range was recycled from the parking lot, refurbished with a new roof and moved to the entrance of the upper courses providing a more usable information space.

October 6, 2010

Director's Summary

Page 3 of 4

San Tan Mountain Regional Park: The Park offered 7 programs during the month of September which brought in 210 participants. The highlights of the month were the scorpion scavenger hunt and man of the mountain (history of San Tan) hike. The park also hosted a candlelit service to honor Arizona fallen soldiers from the Iraq and Afghanistan wars with various members/representatives of the community in attendance.

The new San Tan Interpretive Ranger visited with several Parks such as Spur Cross, Usery, McDowell, and White Tank to shadow each Park Ranger and become more familiar with the County Park System.

Estrella Mountain Regional Park: The Park had 27 interpretive programs that attracted 404 participants. The programs included True Treasure Tales, Full Moon Scorpion Hike, Kids Meet Smokey Bear, Talk Like a Pirate Day and Eureka – Gold Panning Program. During the full moon scorpion hike, Ranger Pat sold all of the Scorpion lights that were on site.

The Tortoise habitat has been undergoing some renovations including adding additional grass and rerouting the lazy river. One of the tortoises is currently with the vet at the Phoenix Zoo to treat an infection.

White Tank Mountain Regional Park: Ranger Bill Talboys won Best of the Best APRA Award for his Kids Photo Hike Program.

The new Nature Center is open and staff is operating out of their new offices! All the computers, phones, files, souvenirs and snakes were moved and many of the retail displays are on exhibit for sale to the public. Everyone is busy preparing for the grand opening November 13th.

Lake Pleasant Regional Park: National Public Lands Clean Up Day was a big success with 311 people from the public, various companies and organizations donating their time to clean the park. Park staff organized group assignments including underwater with divers, shoreline with kayaks and people with trash pickers, pruners and paint brushes. The park received a facelift through much appreciated public support.

The Park is continuing the partnership with Peoria Fire to promote water safety. A meeting was held to work on coordinating and developing a CPR class at the lake for all those interested in getting certified. The class will allow those as young as 12 to participate in the certification process with tentative class date of November 6th.

The Park is working with the Coalition of Arizona Bicyclists to host a Traffic Skills for Bikers 101 to teach roadway safety. Arizona Department of Transportation has provided pamphlets explaining the rules of the road and safety to use in conjunction with the materials for distribution. The class is open to those 14 years of age and entails a lecture piece; parking lot obstacle courses; instructor demonstrations; ride on roadways throughout the City of Peoria; a written examination; and an awards ceremony. The tentative date for class is November 13th.

The Park is partnering with a local vendor to promote horseback riding and the tentative plan is to have horses on-site for petting, education and horseback riding, etc. Tackle and other horse-related equipment will be discussed and used for demonstrations.

A Quagga Mussel Team is being organized to combat the mussel problem and promote awareness. Parties involved include Arizona Game and Fish Department, Lake Pleasant, Scorpion Bay Marina, and Pleasant Harbor Marina. A meeting was held on September 21st with Maricopa County Sheriff's Office to share ideas and concerns regarding the law enforcement aspect with the new Arizona Revised Statutes pertaining to Quagga Mussels or Invasive Species. The next meeting is scheduled for November 3rd with Bureau of Reclamation, Water District, Central Arizona Project, lake vendors, Maricopa County Sheriff Office, attendees on the invitation list. Potential guest speakers include a representative from Lake Mohave or United States Bureau of Reclamation.

Desert Outdoor Center: The Desert Outdoor Center had a booth at Valley Forward's EarthFest Educators Night held at the Phoenix Zoo. Over 120 teachers stopped by the booth to get brochures about the outdoor educational

October 6, 2010

Director's Summary

Page 4 of 4

opportunities at the Desert Outdoor Center. The president of our Friends Group, Scott Currier, attended the event and assisted staff in discussing programming options with teachers. Scott was a great help since he is an elementary school teacher who regularly brings his class to the Desert Outdoor Center.

The Desert Outdoor Center and Lake Pleasant staff once again coordinated with Cabela's to conduct another Get Wet Beginning Kayak training session with 24 participants on September 19th. This session was created to give an opportunity to some of the people on the stand-by/overflow list from the August 6th classroom session to get out on the water.

The first coordination meeting for Lake Pleasant Camp's 2011 season was held on Sept 22. There are improvements we would like to add to the program including following merit badge requirements; shooting sports merit badges (rifle, archery, maybe shotgun); more training for CITs (counselors in training); class outlines for every merit badge; and adding new merit badges.

For the second year staff is working with the Lake Pleasant Sailing Club to conduct "Ladies Day at the Lake" in early October. Registration for the event currently is running at two-thirds capacity, with 37 of the 55 available slots already filled. The slots are limited by the number of sailing craft available.

Coming and Going in Human Resources

The Trails Technician position with the Trails Crew has been filled effective 10/04/10.

Interviews for the Park Maintenance Supervisor position at Lake Pleasant have been completed. A candidate has been chosen and we are waiting for the fingerprint/ background check results.

A Park Maintenance Worker from Lake Pleasant resigned and there is currently an internal department transfer to replace the position. If no one applies for transfer, a hiring freeze exemption will be requested to recruit the position internal-county-wide.

Interviews will be held on October 6th for the vacant Park Maintenance Worker position at Utery.