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## MEMORANDUM

Date: September 14, 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 August 10, 2010 Director's Summary.

### **Budget**

**General Fund (100) – Agency 300** - General Fund (Fund 100, Agency 300) ended the fiscal year reporting operating expenditures \$42.84 **under** the approved budget. There are no revenues collected within the General Fund.

**Enhancement Fund (241) – Agency 305** - Enhancement Fund (Fund 241, Agency 305) ended the fiscal year reporting revenues at 10.5% or \$360,720 **over** the approved budget. Enhancement Fund ended the fiscal year reporting operating expenditures at 5% or \$167,392 **under** the approved budget.

**Lake Fund (240) – Agency 302** - Lake Fund (Fund 240, Agency 302) ended the fiscal year reporting revenues at 9.7% or \$171,183 **over** the approved budget. Lake Fund ended the fiscal year reporting operating expenditures at 6.4% or \$120,868 **under** the approved budget.

### **Superintendent Report**

**Spur Cross Ranch Conservation Area (SCRCA):** There were nine interpretive hikes conducted with over 160 happy hikers participating.

Park staff continues to monitor biological events occurring at the solar oasis. This month's highlight was the photo capture of a mountain lion visiting the pond for a late night drink and possible snack.

**Cave Creek Regional Park:** There were 16 interpretive programs offered in August with a total of 184 participants and 24 repeat attendees. Five new programs were introduced to our visitors included; Freaky Friday Scorpion Hunt, Clay Mine and Desert Myths Daytime Hike, Movie in the Park - Lion King, Mountain Lion Presentation and New to Arizona. The other programs included; Fitness Focused Hike, Sonoran Desert 101, Snake Feeding, Full Moon Hike, Stargazing and Venomous Creatures.

**September New Program Highlight - Tiny Tumbleweed Trekking** - This twilight program will be geared for our youngest Valley hikers! *Tumbleweed Treks* are 1-mile in length and along the way we do our best saguaro impersonations and howl like coyotes as the sunset glows between the hills.

**Usery Mountain Regional Park:** The Park had an awesome July with 49 programs and 1,028 participants. There were 35 interpretive programs in August with 347 participants. The highlights for both months were scorpion hunts, summer movies, full moon hikes and the ever-popular brown bag series.

**September 14, 2010**

Director's Summary

Page 2 of 4

**McDowell Mountain Regional Park:** Operating revenues in August were up over August of 2009, however the 2009 monthly totals included a donation from the previous fiscal year which combined with operations bumped the monthly total to a higher number.

The summer series of night mountain bike races continues to attract large numbers of participants. A record turnout was recorded for the first night ride in August with 145 riders participating and the second ride attracted 126 riders.

This month's Full Moon Hike was held on a cloudy, dark night and had 73 participants.

The pump track is open daily to riders. New park visitors and many regular mountain bikers are trying it out and offering positive comments. Work is still being done, as long as raw dirt is available for adjustments and reconfiguration.

A horse roundup was held in and around the park with volunteer cowboys working for nearly two weeks rounding up a herd and transporting the horses to new pastures north of the valley and away from the park.

The weather station donated to the park by the Phoenix Triathlon Club was installed on top of the Visitor Center and is providing accurate daily/monthly averages and totals.

Work continues on the Tortoise Habitat, an Eagle Scout project whose family also pitched in to help with the work. There are just a few additions needed for completion of the project.

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 in the evening and over night.

The Park is receiving good weekly media coverage of park programming in the Fountain Hills Times.

**San Tan Mountain Regional Park:** The Park offered seven programs with 188 eager participants. The highlights of the month were the scorpion scavenger hunt, moonlight bike ride and mountain bike skills clinic.

The Park was pleased to welcome Adam Martell as the new (and first) Interpretive Ranger at the park. The new ranger has a diverse background in wildlife and public education, with a strong passion for connecting people with nature.

Usery and Estrella Maintenance Workers continue to assist with various park maintenance duties.

**White Tank Mountain Regional Park:** The Park had a busy month with 875 visitors participating in the 16 programs offered. The moonlight hike at the end of July was promoted in the newspaper on July 22<sup>nd</sup> and was enjoyed by 180 people. Our popular stargazing event was attended by 159 visitors on August 21<sup>st</sup>.

The Ranger attended and ran a booth at the Cabela's Fall Outdoor event on August 21<sup>st</sup> and met with many customers.

We are continuing with weekly nature center/library construction meetings. On August 21<sup>st</sup> a walk through was done and most items on the punch list were completed. Solar panels and automated blinds have been installed while the landscaping is still in progress. Retail displays, artifact displays and cash wrap have been purchased and will be delivered in September. The vending machines at the Nature Center café have also been ordered per Library District specifications.

The wildlife viewing pond is progressing nicely. The windmill is up and pumping water with the blowing wind! The pond liner is in place, a gravel layer added and decorative rocks and stumps have been installed. Plumbing to the pond still needs to be completed.

**Lake Pleasant Regional Park:** There were 34 programs offered at Lake Pleasant in August and 505 people attended the programs.

**September 14, 2010**

Director's Summary

Page 3 of 4

A partnership with Cabela's for a beginner kayak program has been very successful. The August 6<sup>th</sup> program at Cabela's pulled at least 150 people at the talk. Lake Pleasant offered several weekends for the "Get Wet" on-water kayaking program and filled four full session days. This program generates needed revenue for the park and offers a great opportunity for the public. By the response we have witnessed, the demand for such a program is high.

The Great Scorpion Hunt was offered twice this month with good attendance at both programs. The August 12<sup>th</sup> program included a star watch program afterwards, where people enjoyed watching the meteorite showers from the visitor center.

The Pleasant Paddlers Program has been doing very well, especially the full moon paddle tours. The last three tours saw an average of 50 people for this fun activity. This program has the greatest amount of return visitors of any offered by the park.

The park is currently preparing for the October 9<sup>th</sup> triathlon. Four Peaks Racing will have their first triathlon at Lake Pleasant due to the Tempe Town Lake situation. With the expectation of 500 participants, we are currently working on a course with the least impact on park visitors, campers and boaters.

We are currently in the permit process for a November triathlon and a November swim-only race.

We are working with local businesses to participate in the new sponsorship opportunity provided by the county. Our first sponsor, Coca Cola, is currently working on filling out the paperwork for submittal.

The Park is contacting local volunteer groups to announce the September 25<sup>th</sup> National Public Lands Day cleanup event. Several local groups are also contacting the lake to announce their participation. Cabela's, Target, United States Navy, and Coca Cola will be joining the event as well as local dive shops and scout groups.

We are continuing to reach out to local Native American museums and retailers to take part in a Native American Celebration.

We have also been in communication with the Phoenix Sports Commission to set a cooperative planning session.

In partnership with Arizona Game & Fish Department (AZGFD) and the new state law, an intern has been setting up a "quagga mussel" information table in the visitor center every Saturday. This is to inform the public about the invasive quagga mussels and the new state law. This is in addition to the ongoing education to boaters at the launch sites.

The Agua Fria Conservation Area (AFCA) Mitigation Fence has been cleared by the Bureau of Reclamation and we will solicit for bids from fence companies to build three miles of four strand barbwire fence on the AFCA northern border.

The AFCA Technical Team is waiting for a reply from the AZGFD on work order issues and can then proceed with the development of facilities on the ground at the AFCA.

**Desert Outdoor Center (DOC):** Cabela's Get Wet Beginner Kayaking Program had a total of 75 people participating in this program in August. DOC staff drafted a business plan that, among other things, benchmarked price point for this event. We determined that \$35 per person for an evening lecture and 3 hours practical experience on Lake Pleasant was marketable. Over 150 people showed up for the evening lecture! We had to schedule additional days in October and December to accommodate the overflow of interest. A total of \$2,625 in revenue has been generated by this programming thus far. To improve this training, and in preparation for planning this programming next summer we developed a survey to gather comments on our efforts this year. Initial responses indicate a high degree of customer satisfaction. This program is one of several "Joint Programs" offered by Desert Outdoor Center staff in cooperation with the Lake Pleasant staff.

Boy Scouts of America Camp Close-out meeting was held on August 10<sup>th</sup>. The overall participation was just below 2009 levels and programming ran well. Another meeting will be held in September to discuss possible changes and additions in programming for the 2011 season.

**September 14, 2010**

Director's Summary

Page 4 of 4

**Coming and Going in Human Resources**

The Interpretive Ranger position at San Tan was filled effective August 9<sup>th</sup>.

The Executive Assistant position at Headquarters was filled effective August 23<sup>rd</sup>.

The new Customer Service Specialist position at Headquarters was filled effective August 30<sup>th</sup>.

Interviews for the Park Maintenance Supervisor position at Lake Pleasant were held and no one was hired. The position was re-posted and interviews from new posting will be held on September 8<sup>th</sup>.

Interviews will be held on September 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> for the Trails Technician position with the Trails Crew.