



Maricopa County

Parks & Recreation Department

41835 N Castle Hot Springs Rd
Morristown, AZ 85342-9887
Phone: 602-506-2930
Fax: 602-372-8596
www.maricopa.gov/parks

MEMORANDUM

Date: August 16, 2018

To: Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission

From: R.J. Cardin, Director

Re: Director's Summary of Current Events

Listed below are activities the department has been involved with during **May, June, and July 2018**.

From the Office of the Director

- **Anne Lynch** served on the Parks Commission for nearly 32 years. During May's Commission meeting, a thank you card was available for signatures and notes. Along with the card, a Hassayampa Key Moment folder and picture was sent to her. Anne called our office and was very appreciative to have received these items. She promised to attend an occasional commission meeting to ensure Parks continues with the foundations laid out during her tenure. Anne is a true park champion and will be missed and fondly remembered!
- **Keating Peak:** On August 8, 2018, Department staff attended the Arizona State Board on Geographic and Historic Names regular board meeting. On the agenda for new docket items for discussion and possible action, was the recently submitted Charles Keating IV Peak naming proposal for an un-named peak in Estrella Mountain Regional Park. Naming of the highest peak in the park is proposed to honor the Navy Seal who was killed in action in Iraq in 2016. Family, friends, and the County collaborated on the naming application that was submitted in June of 2018. The Board heard the item but did not take action on the Keating Peak proposal. Staff will continue to pursue this item.
- **Southwest Wildlife Conservation Center (SWCC):** Staff continues to work with the respondent to the published Request for Expression of Interest for the native wildlife rescue conservation and nature center at McDowell Mountain Regional Park for a potential site location as well as the drafting of a Use Management Agreement. SWCC's first desire was to have the Center at the northern end of the park; however, that location was not financially feasible. Our Park Planner proposed new site locations and we conducted a site visit in July with SWCC and Black Rock Studio (McDowell Sonoran Preserve's Architectural & Design team). SWCC has hired Black Rock Studio to perform a feasibility study on one of the locations presented. Staff will continue to gather public input on this potential project through the McDowell Park Master Plan Update process that is currently underway.
- **Park Visitor Count:** FY18 attendance increased by 4.9% system wide. McDowell and San Tan Parks saw the largest increase with 32.9% and 16.6%.

Board of Supervisors Agenda Items:

Date/Status	Tracking Number	Summary
5/9/2018 Approved	C-30-185-020M-00	IGA with the Arizona Game and Fish Commission Related to Maricopa County Parks: Approve an IGA that will allow the County and AGFD to work collaboratively for the common purpose of maintaining, improving and managing outdoor recreation opportunities, wildlife resources and their habitat, and educating the public.
5/9/2018 Approved	C-06-18-434-7-00	Donation Report for April 2018: Cash value of \$1,011.18
5/9/2018 Approved	C-30-18-021-D-00	Donation for Parks Memorial Bench: Accept the restricted monetary donations for memorial benches to be placed within Utery and White Tank Mountain Regional Parks.
6/13/2018 Approved	C-30-18-022-2-00	Increase to Revenue and Expenditure Authority: Approve an appropriation adjustment increasing the FY18 Parks and Recreation Department Donation Fund Operating revenue and expenditure appropriation by \$10,000 to reflect additional revenue.
6/13/2018 Approved	C-30-18-023-2-00	Transfer from Parks Souvenir Fund to Parks Enhancement Fund: Approve an operating fund transfer of \$20,000 from the Parks Department Parks Souvenir Fund to the Parks Enhancement Fund.
6/13/2018 Approved	C-30-18-024-D-00	Donation for Parks Memorial Benches: Accept the restricted monetary donations for memorial benches to be placed within Utery, White Tank, and McDowell Mountain Regional Parks and the Hassayampa River Preserve.
6/13/2018 Approved	C-06-18-491-7-00	Resignation and Appointment to the Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission: Accept the resignation of Anne Lynch, representing Supervisorial District 3, effective January 2, 2018. Approve the appointment of Eric Mears to the Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission, representing Supervisorial District 3. The term of appointment will be effective June 13, 2018 through December 31, 2018.
6/13/2018 Approved	C-06-18-484-7-00	Donation Report for May 2018: Cash value of \$619.89
8/1/2018 Approved	C-06-18-508-7-00	Donation Report for June 2018: Cash value of \$111.50
8/1/2018 Approved	C-30-18-025-D-00	Donation for Parks and Recreation: Accept the non-monetary donations of 400 admission tickets (\$17,596 value) from Wet 'n' Wild Phoenix for the Parks and Recreation's 2018 Interpretive Ranger summer programs and social media contest prizes.
8/1/2018 Approved	C-30-19-001-D-00	Donation for Parks Memorial Benches: Accept the restricted monetary donation for memorial benches to be placed within San Tan Regional Park.
8/1/2018 Approved	C-30-08-027-1-03	Amendment Two to Use Management Agreement Between Maricopa County and Casey at the Bat: Approve Amendment Two exercising the last renewal option through June 30, 2023.

Administration

The purpose of the Administrative Division is to provide strategic direction, leadership, administrative and financial support to the Director and employees of the department so they can produce the results necessary to achieve the departmental mission and vision. The following information is provided as a high level overview of the activities of the Administrative Division:

Financial/Budget Status:

- **FY18 Budget Status:** As of this report, final reporting has not been closed by the County's central budget office.
- **FY19 Budget Status:** As of this report, all budget data has not yet been loaded into the County's central budget system.

Parks Financial Division:

Purchasing: Requisitions and P Cards							
	Requisitions Received	Requisitions Processed (approval issued)	Average Turnaround (In Days)	Same Day Turnaround	Longest Turnaround	P-Card Transactions	
July	166	129	10.4	26	32	27	
Purchasing: Capital Projects							
	Project Requisitions Received	Projects Completed (Scope Sheet returned)	Project Change Orders Recd				
July	26	0	0				Total projects funded in fiscal year: 38

Accounts Receivable: TOTALS											
Total outstanding revenue at the start of each month, no filters for future events, reservations, concession payment plans											
	Outstanding Invoice 30+ days Number	Outstanding Revenue 30+ days Total	Outstanding Invoices 60+ days Number	Outstanding Revenue 60+ days Total	Outstanding Invoice 90+ days Number	Outstanding Revenue 90+ days Total	Outstanding Invoice 120+ days Number	Outstanding Revenue 120+ days Total	OUTSTANDING REVENUE TOTAL All		
July	2538.1	376586.74	12464.1	5325	3057	0	19285.15	146094.37	\$565,350.46		
Accounts Receivable: CAMPING											
	Unpaid Reservation Fees Number	Unpaid Reservation Fees Total	Use Fees 30+ days Past stay Number	Use Fees 30+ days Past stay Amount	Use Fees 60+ days Past stay Number	Use Fees 60+ days Past stay Amount	Use Fees 90+ days Past stay Number	Use Fees 90+ days Past stay Amount	Use Fees 120+ days Past stay Number	Use Fees 120+ days Past stay Amount	TOTAL FOR MONTH
July	45	45	0	0	0	0	2	132	6	1248.8	1425.8
Accounts Receivable: DESERT OUTDOOR CENTER											
	Unpaid Reservation Fees Number	Unpaid Reservation Fees Total	Use Fees 30+ days Past stay Number	Use Fees 30+ days Past stay Amount	Use Fees 60+ days Past stay Number	Use Fees 60+ days Past stay Amount	Use Fees 90+ days Past stay Number	Use Fees 90+ days Past stay Amount	Use Fees 120+ days Past stay Number	Use Fees 120+ days Past stay Amount	TOTAL FOR MONTH
July	17	1275	1	270	0	0	0	0	1	3778.5	5323.5
Accounts Receivable: SPECIAL USE PERMITS											
	Unpaid Application Fees Number	Unpaid Application Fees Total	Fees 30+ days Past event Number	Use Fees 30+ days Past Event Amount	Use Fees 60+ days Past Event Number	Use Fees 60+ days Past Event Amount	Use Fees 90+ days Past Event Number	Use Fees 90+ days Past Event Amount	Use Fees 120+ days Past Event Number	Use Fees 120+ days Past Event Amount	TOTAL FOR MONTH
July	5	500	0	0	1	1183.1	0	0	0	0	1683.1

Contracts:

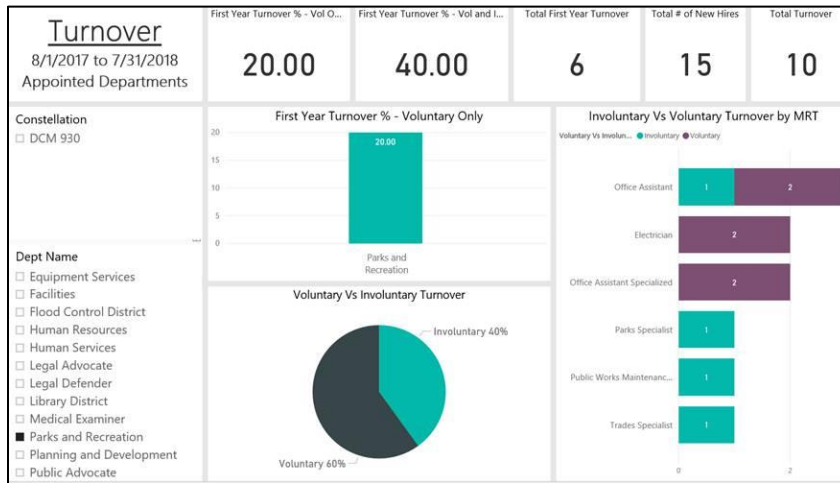
- **Adobe:**
 - Special Use Permits Issued:
 - Wet N Wild
 - o September 2 – Fireworks
 - o Sept 2018 – April 2019 – Farmer's Market
- **PKRA/AKA:** On March 20, 2018, the solicitation for an Invitation To Negotiate (ITN) to promote, manage, maintain and improved the existing PKRA and AKA complexes or provide an alternate facility was published. Three groups submitted responses on June 26, 2018, with multiple proposals for the facility. The Evaluation Committee is currently reviewing all proposals.
- **Wet N Wild:** In June, **Six Flags Entertainment Corporation** acquired the rights to operate Wet N Wild. Six Flags is the largest regional theme park operator in the world. Although there are no immediate plans to make changes to the existing facility, we believe this change of management will not only provide cross-visitation for Six Flag membership and season passes holders, but may add an influx of capital for improvements.
- **Legacy Sports Update:** The Department has received an updated business plan, pro forma information and a letter of intent from a financial institution for financing the project. The County Finance and Legal Departments are performing due diligence on these documents.

- Buckeye Hills (Joe Foss Shooting Range):** Arizona State Rifle and Pistol Association (ASRPA) is doing an excellent job of managing the range. In June, they held a number of training courses for volunteers, including New Volunteer Orientation Courses, First Aid/CPR/AED classes and NRA Range Safety Officer certification classes. ASRPA also reported a record number of shooters during the summer months:
 - o May attendance 592 shooters
 - o June attendance 443 shooters
 - o July attendance 335 shooters

Human Resources:

- Welcome New Employees:**
 - o Peter McCormick, Navigational Aide, Lake Pleasant – 6/4/18
 - o Adam Kenya, Park Maintenance, Lake Pleasant – 6/18/18
 - o Christopher Matthews, Contact Station Assistant – 6/18/18
 - o Cassidy Solper, Interpretive Ranger, DOC – 7/2/18
 - o Cody Contner, Interpretive Ranger, Lake Pleasant – 7/16/18
 - o Johnny Bishop, Park Maintenance, Lake Pleasant – 7/30/18
- Promotions/Transfers:**
 - o Stephanie Motzer, Promoted to Office Assistant, Lake Pleasant
 - o Charles Sizer, Maintenance Worker, Transferred from Lake to Hassayampa
 - o Kim Richard, Position change from Volunteer Coordinator to HR Specialist
- Departing Employees:**
 - o Jeff Strom, Electrician, Trades Crew
 - o Karen Albers, HR Specialist, HQ
 - o Mary Hansen, Contact Station (T), Lake Pleasant
 - o Betty Refec, Contact Station (T), White Tank
 - o Mary Larson, Office Assistant, Hassayampa
 - o Casey Clayborn, Park Maintenance, Estrella
- Open positions and recruitments:**
 - o Park Office Assistant Specialized, Hassayampa – Full Time approved FY19
 - o Contact Station Assistants (3), Lake –
 - o Contact Station Assistant, Usery – Approved temporary to full time status FY19.
 - o Park Maintenance, Lake – Recruitment Open
 - o Park Maintenance, White Tank – New position FY19
 - o Park Maintenance, Estrella – On hold
 - o Park Natural Resources Specialist, Planning & Development – New position FY19, interviews scheduled
 - o Volunteer Coordinator, HQ – Interviews Scheduled
- August 2017 – July 2018 Turnover/Recruitment Data:**





Volunteer Program:

- FY18 Year-End volunteer hours:

	Jul-17	Aug-17	Sep-17	Oct-17	Nov-17	Dec-17	Jan-18	Feb-18	Mar-18	Apr-18	May-18	Jun-18	FY18 YTD Total
FY18 Total Dept. Hours	3506	4936	4911.5	6682	11841	12353	13804	12148	13250	8708	3813	3422	99375
Financial Savings	\$84,635	\$116,292	\$115,715	\$157,428	\$278,974	\$291,037	\$325,222	\$286,207	\$312,170	\$205,160	\$89,834	\$80,622	\$2,343,297
% Diff comparison/prev. FYTD						12%				7%			
# of Volunteers-current month	102	115	406	181	573	372	342	236	335	183	151	93	
# of Park Hosts	24	21	32	63	108	113	121	113	116	99	34	26	
Park Host Hours	2490	2085	2610	4900	9527	10088	11511	9286	11051	7114	2894	2496	
# of Community Volunteers	31	31	40	41	48	49	44	50	64	56	52	37	
Community Volunteer Hours	757	611	828	856	798	809	860	809	1220	984	761	521	
# of Episodic Volunteers	46	61	334	62	397	187	156	52	153	28	65	30	
Episodic Volunteers Hours	252	2234	1472	389	1044	948	1127	317	609	211	159	94	
MCSO Prisoner Service Hours				500	260	500	300	400	370	300	300	300	
FY17 Month Total Hours	2945	3146	5113	6283	9900	10972	13274	11967	13168	9120	4618	5030	
FY17 Year YTD Hours	3739	6688	11256	18083	29402	41369	55609	67506	80779	88631	92607	96526	
FY17 Financial YTD Savings	\$69,384	\$143,504	\$263,966	\$411,994	\$645,238	\$903,738	\$1,216,473	\$1,498,416	\$1,808,654	\$2,023,521	\$2,132,321	\$2,250,828	
Current Value-\$24.14													
Previous Value-\$23.56													

- FY19 Year-to-date volunteer hours:

	Jul-18	FY19 YTD Total
FY19 Total Dept. Hours	2743	2743
Financial Savings	\$67,725	\$67,996
% Diff comparison/prev. FYTD		
# of Volunteers-current month	95	
# of Park Hosts	23	
Park Host Hours	2140	
# of Community Volunteers	34	
Community Volunteer Hours	485	
# of Episodic Volunteers	36	
Episodic Volunteers Hours	129	
MCSO Prisoner Service Hours	0	
FY18 Month Total Hours	3506	99374.5
FY18 Financial YTD Savings	\$84,635	\$2,343,297
Current Value-\$24.69		
Previous Value-\$24.14		

Planning and Development Division

Vulture Mountain Recreation Area Update

- The 60% design work with EPS is complete on park amenities and the MCDOT roadway design. Staff is currently working on the 60% - 100% final design phase. Department staff have also updated the Plan of Development with edits requested by the BLM. The NEPA (National Environmental Policy Act) process is in progress and the Department completed the initial review of chapters one and two. Cultural review of the Vulture project is currently under review with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and should be completed within the next 30 days.

Project Management

- Final site design elements are underway for the new restroom buildings for McDowell and Usery Mountain Regional Parks as well as the shower building at White Tank Mountain Regional Park. Work continues at Hassayampa River Preserve roadway fencing and future host site projects.
- Estrella Park renovations are moving forward, initial ramada construction is complete. Phase I water system improvements are complete including back flow prevention, water system isolation valves, and turf area and irrigation system renovations. Major electrical renovations are complete to the west side of the park ramadas.
- The Lake Pleasant Evapotranspiration (ET) bed testing project has been completed. Required by the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ), the department's consultant is measuring evaporation from the beds as they were filled to capacity. This testing was to identify leaks and any required repairs in preparation for an entire site individual permit in lieu of 17 separate permits currently issued by ADEQ for the lake. The report is now being completed by the engineering firm.
- Three new courtesy docks were installed at Lake Pleasant in July. The Parks and Recreation Department partnered with Maricopa County Facilities Management to plan and install these improvements.

Park and Open Space Planning

- The Department has been meeting with the Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) to discuss the North Lake Pleasant planning process. Staff has engaged with BOR and BLM (Bureau of Land Management) to re-define the problem statement, update mappings and exhibits, discuss the NEPA process, and obtain a categorical exclusion for fencing to secure sensitive conservation areas from the impacts of unauthorized off-road travel in the park.
- The McDowell Mountain Regional Park Master Planning process is progressing. To date, there have been seven internal meetings, various public/partner and staff/volunteer meetings, and a second stakeholder meeting was held in July. In the overall planning process, we are currently in the public input stage and approximately 30% of the way through the planning process. To date, the planning process has been smooth with great input from the public, stakeholders, and partners.

Trades Crew

- The Trades and Trails Crews are working on the last sections of pipe rail fencing along the road at the Hassayampa River Preserve. This internal fabrication and installation is saving valuable capital improvement funding for the department.
- The Trades Crew welcomed a new employee. Park Electrician Matthew Dalton started on August 13, 2018. Matthew came to Parks and Recreation from a private electrical contracting business. Matthew will concentrate on learning the parks and facilities as well as performing electrical PM work on numerous parks. Welcome Matthew.
- The Trades Crew completed the repair of the 8" water main at the Lake Pleasant Cottonwood area. The waterline was washed out by floodwaters crossing the road at the Cottonwood picnic area at the lake. Staff was able to locate some pipe a quarter mile downstream of the crossing. Staff is working on a design to prevent this type of damage from occurring in the future.
- Trades Crew electricians installed all new LED lighting on the light poles for the 10-lane boat ramp at the lake; the previous lighting was dim. The new LED fixtures are a great improvement for visitors to the lake.

Trails Crew

- The Trails Crew recently completed a new trail at Usery Mountain Regional Park. The new trail, called the Lost Sheep Trail, is a 1.5-mile connecting trail from the Moon Rock Trail to the Park Nature Center.
- The Trails Division has been busy with the recent monsoon storm inspections and cleanup at Cave Creek, Estrella, and McDowell Regional Parks as well as the Hassayampa River Preserve. Staff are monitoring trail erosion in the parks as well as assisting with tree and branch removal at the Hassayampa River Preserve.

Maricopa Trail and Trail Facilities:

- Description: The following trail segments are currently in progress – 9, 11, 12, 18, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33 and 35.
- The following portions of the Maricopa Trail easements were obtained from the Arizona State Land Department. The auction was held July 24th. These four segments will complete the Main Loop of the Maricopa Trail when the trails are constructed this fall.
 - Segment 35 – North and south of I-10 on the Tuthill Road alignment.
 - Segment 12 – North of SR303 on Lake Pleasant Road.
 - Segment 11 – East of SR303 on Happy Valley Parkway.
 - Segment 33 – Rainbow Valley – BLM land to Estrella Community.
- Agreement preparation/negotiations:
 - Estrella Community – Segment 33, new route.
 - Bureau of Land Management – Waiting for the Travel Management Plan completion on the proposed route between Estrella Mountain Park and Buckeye Hills Park.
 - Goodyear – Sign maintenance and Rainbow Valley route.
 - Queen Creek – Re-route of trail to existing trail systems.
 - Sun Corridor Trail connecting Pinal County to the Maricopa Trail via the Pinal County Trails Master Plan.
- Construction
 - Segment 15 – Contractor re-routing trail around new construction of EPOCOR water facility.
 - Segments 29, 31 & 32 - Gilbert - Re-route of trail to existing trail systems.
 - Segment 32 - Chandler - Re-route of trail to existing trail systems.
 - Segment 35 – Buckeye – Set new signs along approved route.
- Maintenance
 - The following segments had maintenance completed this period. This includes grooming the tread, brushing and signage:
 - Segment 22 – Set double signs at all locations and surveyed locations.
 - Segment 9 – Set additional signage and surveyed locations.
 - Segment 8 - Set additional signage and surveyed locations.
 - Segment 35 – Estrella Park to White Tank 3 Dam.
- Trailheads
 - Segment 35 – Northern Avenue – Proposed location will allow user's access due to weekend closures of the gate to the Case/New Holland Proving Grounds. Waiting for Maricopa Water District approval.
 - Segment 11 – Sun Valley Parkway - Proposed location will allow users access due to the Maricopa Water District cutting off access on Greenway Road. MCDOT and Flood Control District had a dispute that has delayed this development.
 - Kiosks – The Maricopa Trail + Parks Foundation has secured grants from the Arizona State Parks RTP and REI to purchase eleven kiosks for trailhead placement. We installed kiosks at the following locations: Anthem Trailhead, Andy Kunasek Trailhead, Trilby Trailhead and the Cave Creek Ranger District.

Parks Operations Report

Cave Creek

- In May, the park hosted six interpretive programs with 86 participants attending. The highlighted program for the month: *In Search of Scorpions* with 21 attendees.
- In June, the park hosted seven interpretive programs with 223 participants attending. The highlighted program for the month: *Friday Night Hike* with 67 attendees.
- In July, the park hosted seven interpretive programs with 145 participants attending. The highlighted program for the month: *Full Moon Hike* with 42 attendees.
- The interpretive ranger and park supervisor have been busy designing a wildlife pond that will be located by the Nature Center. Construction will begin in August/September with a target date for completion of November 1, 2018.

Desert Outdoor Center:

- Another successful summer partnering with the Boy Scouts of America Grand Canyon Council to offer the Lake Pleasant Aquatics and Nature camp for its 13th season. We had 235 participants this summer, which is up 15 percent from last season, earning over 500 merit badges. New offerings this summer were swimming, music, STEM, moviemaking and Pulp & Paper. In addition, we offered a new non-merit badge program, *Trail to First Class*, which had 20 participants working hard to advance through the many ranks of Boy Scouts to get one step closer to becoming an Eagle Scout. Also as part of camp, we hosted about 30 staff members, of which 13 were part of the Counselor-In-Training program teaching young youth important job skills and training.

Estrella Mountain Regional Park

- Estrella Park had 21 public programs in May with a total attendance of nearly 200 people. The highlights included *Desert Survival* with 32 attendees, *Home School Happenings* with 26 people, *Birds of Estrella* with 22 bird enthusiasts and *Dinner with the Critters* having 21 captivated attendees.
- The interpretive ranger and a park host assistant led another series of *Archery 101* and *102*. The classes have become very popular and have a waiting list.
- Race Timers had a foot race on May 26th at the park's competitive track. 79 participants pushed their endurance out on the track network, enjoying a morning run in the Sonoran Desert.
- The maintenance staff has been very busy with modifications and repairs to the sprinkler system in order to minimize damage by staying ahead of all the construction crews working on capital improvement projects. Many days there have been up to five different contractors working around the turf area on ramada replacements, electric system repairs, sprinkler system repairs, trenching and moving dirt. The contractor's and the department's project manager have noted that the maintenance team's work has been invaluable in the success of the capital projects.
- Hiking and picnics did ease up in May, but continued. Many of the park hosts left soon after Easter, leaving the year-round hosts and staff quite busy. Word is certainly getting out about the new mile-long paved walking path around the turf area. Park staff has enjoyed seeing use increase on this new amenity in the park.
- Estrella Park had 14 public programs in June with a total attendance of 115 people. Highlighted programs include the *Birds of Estrella* with 18 attendees, a moonlight hike with 19 and an *Arizona Wild Venomous Creatures* with 31 attendees. The interpretive ranger also partnered on an outreach program called *Intro to the Sonoran Desert* at the Avondale Library for 101 attendees.
- Aravaipa Desert Trail Runners held a foot race on June 23rd and 24th at Estrella's Competitive Track. During the evening, overnight and morning, the event had 263 runners testing their endurance in the summer heat. The cooler overnight temperatures helped and overall was much cooler than last year's 115-degree temperatures.
- In June, two electric panels (SES cabinets) were installed, with block wall screens built around them. Trenching was going on across the turf area as electric lines from the SES cabinets went to each new ramada. Trenching and digging also took place for sprinkler system upgrades, including air relief valves and isolation valves. Several domestic water line valves and backflow preventers were replaced which will improve water delivery and maintenance of the system.
- There are city park-like elements like native and non-native trees in Estrella's front country. Over time, a number of trees have died and are being replaced for people to enhance the turf's ambiance and picnic facilities. Last spring's inventory accounted for 350 roadside trees and over 400 trees in the turf picnic areas. In June, 200 native trees were planted around the Super Playground, the new walking path and the turf area. Estrella now has nearly 1,000 trees under its care for the public's enjoyment.
- Estrella Park had 11 public programs in July with 99 people attending. Wet 'n' Wild tickets are an effective incentive for people to come visit the Nature Center during these warmer months; 8 sets of tickets have been given away so far. The park had a 4th of July Fireworks hike led by one of the interpretive volunteers, Darl Haagen. 38 people attended that night hike and was a huge success! Night programs (moonlight hikes, scorpion searches) are the most popular programming offered in the hot summer months followed by indoor kids activities.
- High monsoonal storm winds have broken tree branches around the park and turf area. Small amounts of monsoonal rain has benefited the park and the desert.

- Many of the new ramadas have had decorative rock added to the corner uprights. Electrical work that encompasses overhead lighting, electric connections, and pedestals are nearly complete.
- Estrella Park had ten acres of Bermuda grass hydro-sprayed to the soil this summer. With the increased humidity and rainfall, in addition to supplemental irrigation, the seeds are sprouting and trying to survive in this extreme heat.

Lake Pleasant

- Lake Pleasant offered seven interpretive programs during the month of May to the enjoyment of 49 program participants. The safe kayaking joint-partnership classes with Arizona Game and Fish Department (AZGFD) have reached full capacity. The classes are taught at the Discovery Center by the Interpretive Ranger using the AZ Paddle Sports curriculum issued by AZGFD. Students then spend time on the water with the Ranger.
- During the month of June, there were eight interpretive programs offered including programs that were with the Desert Outdoor Center Boy Scout Aquatics camp. AZ Free Fishing day saw many families coming out to try fishing with the loaner equipment and Ranger Terry's fishing expertise. A seven-year-old girl was able to catch her very first fish - a 3-pound bass.
- July saw seven programs with 228 participants. Before the July 3rd fireworks display began, Ranger Terry provided a program with information on the dam and the lake area.
- The July 3rd Fireworks Show at Lake Pleasant went off rather smoothly. With lower water levels than last year resulting in increased shoreline availability, no park closures were necessary. Traffic moved quickly through the entrance gates thanks to the efforts from the Contact Station staff.
- The new 10-Lane docks arrived at the park just before the July 3rd weekend. With the help of Facilities Management, the Trades Crew, and the Lake's Maintenance and Nav-Aide staff, the docks were assembled and installed prior to the busy weekend. After a recent monsoon storm, staff was able to shift damaged sections caused by boaters crashing into the docks to the side of the ramp area. Lake Pleasant staff and the Trades Crew were able to repair and get these back in use with minimal delay to boaters.
- Facilities Management has been instrumental in getting Phase 2 and 3 of the electrical upgrades to the Desert Tortoise Bajada loop campground started. This area will be closed until the middle of October to complete all the repairs.
- Special thanks to MCDOT for the quick response to repair the roadway and the shoulders in the north lake area from the debris and deep gullies caused by the monsoon storms.

McDowell

- During the month of May 2018, 11 interpretive programs were offered at the park with 42 people in attendance. The most popular single event of the month was stargazing, which drew 25 people.
- One special event took place during the month of May, *Adrenaline Night Run* took place on May 19, 2018; 362 runners participated plus nearly 150 spectators were in attendance.
- During the month of June 2018, 12 interpretive programs were offered at the park with 69 people in attendance. The most popular single event of the month was the *Desert After Dark* program which drew 14 people.
- We kicked off our *Summer Night Ride Series* in the month of June; one night ride took place on Saturday, June 2nd with 120 people in attendance and ride #2 took place on June 16th with 170 in attendance. Both took place from the Trailhead Staging Area (Pemberton Trail). Fountain Hills Bike Shop co-sponsors this program by providing water, soda and snacks after the ride.
- Ranger Amy assisted Ranger Eric with the Hassyampa Kids Camp held on June 22nd by helping with arts and crafts stations and providing some interpretive programs.
- McDowell Park finished the FY18 strong with increased attendance numbers totaling 101,101 for the year which is a **32.9% increase over FY17** and a 23% increase compared to the highest number of attendance on record at 81,986 in 2014.
- During the month of July, ten interpretive programs were offered at the park with 49 people in attendance. The most popular single program was the *Scorpion Night* program with 16 people in attendance.
- The July *Summer Night Ride Series* took place on July 7th with 125 in attendance and on July 21st with 105 in attendance. Both took place from the Trailhead Staging Area (Pemberton Trail). Fountain Hills Bike Shop co-sponsors this program by providing water, soda and snacks after the ride.

- Park Supervisor Shayla and Ranger Amy attended the Arizona Park and Recreation Association Annual Conference which took place on July 24th and 25th. Both took in several great education sessions and took advantage of some great networking opportunities

San Tan

- In May, San Tan hosted 22 programs with 423 participants. This included a ranger-led *All About Bats* program that drew 60 students and adults from a local charter school and a season-high 23 participants for *Sunset Yoga*, with our park volunteer that is a certified instructor. The ranger also provided an outreach program to a group of 60 kindergarteners at a local elementary school in support of their unit on animal habitats. Wally the Chuckwalla and Cleopatra the Kingsnake were on hand to represent the desert biome and meet the kids up close.
- Also in May, Maintenance Worker Peter, facilitated two trail-work days. One was a regular park program with six volunteers and the other was a scheduled community service event with eight employees of Liberty Mutual Insurance.
- San Tan presented 24 programs for 431 people in June. *All About Gila Monsters* was a popular program bringing in 30 people who were treated to a special guest appearance by Jaws, our Animal Ambassador. There were also good turnouts for the *Monsoon Awareness* class (held on the first day of Monsoon) and *Meet the Critters*, featuring the animals in our critter room and outdoor enclosures.
- For July, San Tan had 21 programs for 356 participants. The program highlight of the month was the indoor classroom *Scorpion Talk* with 56 people and the *Scorpion Search Trail Walk* with a summer high attendance of 175 kids and adults. These numbers accounted for more than half of the month's total program participants.
- In an effort to have staff explore new parks, Peter, Blake and Nikki made a visit to Estrella Mountain Regional Park to meet staff, tour the grounds with Ranger Amanda and get a sense of what the park has to offer. Similarly, Ranger Amanda visited San Tan a week later, touring the park with Ranger Nikki via Kubota and visiting the heavily used Goldmine Trailhead. The rangers also talked about existing programs and new educational opportunities.

Spur Cross

- In May, the park hosted ten interpretive programs with 89 participants in attendance. The highlighted program for the month: *Moonlight Hike* with 27 participants.
- In June, the park hosted seven interpretive programs with 64 participants in attendance. The highlighted program for the month: *Full Moon Hike* with 22 participants.
- In July, the park hosted five interpretive programs with 34 participants in attendance. The highlighted program for the month: *Ruins of Spur Cross* with 16 attendees.
- During the month of July, staff and volunteers were busy removing graffiti from seven saguaros on Black Mountain Trail. Several news media outlets picked up the story and ran the story during several news cast, unfortunately no one has been arrested.
- Also on July 19th, some natural resources at Spur Cross were stolen (Sonoran Desert Toads). The individuals were captured on video by our critter camera at the Oasis Pond between the hours of 9pm - 12:30 am. AZGFD and Maricopa County Sheriff were notified and are investigating. The department also posted the videos on Facebook in hopes that someone would see the video and identify the individuals. The post went viral and 31+ local and national broadcasters reported the incident.

Usery

- Usery Mountain Regional Park offered 19 interpretive programs in May totaling 644 participants, 19 programs in June totaling 720 participants, and 18 programs in July totaling 608 participants.
- The Interpretive Ranger teamed up with Lisa Rivera to offer a few Citizen Science programs focusing on the iNaturalist phone app. Participants learned to use the app to identify and tag different species of plants and animals that can be used for future park research.
- The Southwest District Royal Rangers held a youth 3D Archery Tournament on the 3D course at the archery range.
- The Usery Mountain Archers hosted a Thursday night Archery league running May through August. The league was held every Thursday night during the summer at 7pm and is open to all ages.

- The Park Supervisor set up a booth at the County's Benefits & Wellness Fair in Phoenix promoting annual pass discounts for Maricopa County employees and providing information on county parks.
- The Park Ranger gave a presentation on Nature Based Programming at the Great Outdoors Maintenance and Trails Workshop in Sedona. The workshop, sponsored by Arizona Parks and Recreation Association, was geared for park rangers and trail maintenance staff around the state and had several different municipalities participate.
- The Park Supervisor attended the Arizona Parks and Recreation Association (APRA) Conference in Scottsdale and volunteered on the Conference Committee. This conference helps provide Continuing Education Units (CEU's) needed to maintain the supervisor's Certified Parks and Recreation Professional (CPRP) certification.
- The park received and installed two new memorial benches, one on Merkle Trail and one on Noso Trail.

Vulture Mountains Recreation Area and Hassayampa River Preserve

- May was a slower month at the Preserve with 944 visitors, which was about half the number of visitors from the previous month. Summer heat is settling in and visitation patterns are shifting towards morning visits and quiet afternoons.
- The interpretive ranger, volunteers, and guest presenters provided 13 programs to 106 attendees. Highlights included programming for International Migratory Bird Day with educational informational about bird conservation and challenges that migratory birds face. As part of the general monthly programming, the interpretive ranger offered several discovery stations or temporary displays on a variety of topics in the Visitor Center to reach a wider audience. He also conducted two special outreach programs for the Wickenburg Ranch community. The first was an off-site presentation about rattlesnakes, which was attended by 62 people at the Wickenburg Ranch community center. The second was a night walk at the Preserve for 11 people. The Preserve also partnered with the Wickenburg Conservation Foundation to host a Desert Awareness environmental educational curriculum training for local educators.
- The Preserve worked with the AZGFD to participate in the annual Global Big Day bird count. Preserve staff and department management met on-site with a representative of the Arizona Department of Forestry and Fire Management to discuss future fuel reduction and fire management planning for the Preserve.
- Construction projects continued at the Preserve throughout May. The Trades Crew removed the old, outdated information kiosk at the beginning of the trail system and replaced it with a custom-made steel kiosk that will display updated visitor trail, safety, and educational information. The kiosk is surrounded by a larger concrete pad providing a staging area for volunteers to answer questions and orient visitors as they start the trails.
- In June, visitation to the Preserve declined with the hot weather, but weekends still brought higher attendance than expected. Throughout the month, the interpretive ranger and guest presenters presented six programs to the public with a total attendance of 57 people. The interpretive ranger also led a special night walk for a group of 11 people from the Wickenburg Ranch community. The interpretive ranger also loaned his expertise to assist with the Bird Study merit badge class at the Desert Outdoor Center's annual Boy Scout camp.
- The interpretive highlight of the month was the weeklong Kids Nature Day Camp. The interpretive ranger, park supervisor, several volunteers and the interpretive ranger from McDowell Park engaged 17-20 children ages 6-11 in a variety of fun, hands-on, and STEM-based activities, with a different theme each day; subjects included topics on birds, the importance of water, biodiversity and conservation, etc. Each day included a morning nature walk followed by indoor activities. The campers enjoyed a daily themed snack funded by the Friends of Hassayampa.
- Researchers from the University of Florida did annual fieldwork at the Preserve; continuing an ongoing research study on the effects of a fungus affecting lowland leopard frogs. The Preserve has been part of the ongoing study for years and research has yielded important results highlighting the importance of biodiversity and conservation of protected places like the Preserve.
- Preparation for the construction of the two host site RV pads began in May and will be completed by contractors. The Preserve was closed for two days to allow the contractors to complete utility trenching along the driveway. The addition of these park host sites will increase staffing levels at the Preserve and provide an after-hours presence.
- The park supervisor contacted a rancher whose cattle entered the Preserve area. This new rancher was very responsive and immediately made plans to get his cattle out of the Preserve with minimal impacts.

- July was a mix of excitement and calm at the Preserve. High temperatures coupled with extremely high humidity (over 90% some mornings!) kept visitation expectedly low for the month. A few exciting rare bird sightings did bring in some die-hard birdwatchers. Several unusual hummingbird species like the Ruby-throated, Allen's and a unique and little-studied Allen's/Rufous hybrid, were seen at the Preserve hummingbird feeders mid-month. The Ruby-throated sighting is a first recorded for the Preserve and Maricopa County and one of only a handful of recorded sightings for the entire state. The Allen's hummingbird was also the first confirmed sighting at the Preserve. The Preserve also provides critical habitat for several threatened bird species including the SW Willow Flycatcher and the Western Yellow-billed Cuckoo, both of which were confirmed to have successful nests with fledging young this month.
- The interpretive ranger provided six programs to 75 people during the month of July. Highlighted programs include early morning bird walks, *Nature Rangers* family program, and *Monsoon Mayhem*, which featured hands-on activities and experiments to learn basic weather concepts and safety associated with monsoon season. Participants to the program also had the opportunity to view the river running at a higher level courtesy of recent monsoon storms.
- Researchers from AZGFD also conducted some fieldwork at the Preserve, using the Preserve as a pilot for a GIS modeling project for mapping riparian areas throughout the state.
- Monsoons have also made themselves known around the Preserve in other ways in July. Preserve staff, volunteers, and the department's Trails Crew have been busy checking and repairing trails and picking up fallen plant debris after monsoon storms. With increased river flow, Preserve staff pulled the footbridges along the river trails and temporarily closed sections of the river trails. Several trees have fallen in recent windstorms as well including a section of tree that happened to have a beehive in it. A local beekeeper was called who came out to inspect the remnants of the hive and disperse the old honeycomb so the bees would find a new home.
- The Trails Crew did some additional work on the Palm Lake Trail, watering and rolling the surface to improve trail durability and increase access for wheelchairs and strollers on this popular trail.

White Tank Mountain Regional Park

- In May, White Tank Park offered 20 public programs with 840 attending. Nighttime programs were most popular with the temperatures heating up; the evening *Scorpion Search* attracted 206 excited hikers exploring for scorpions with their black lights. White Tank hosted the *Stargazing for Everyone* program in May, which filled the Group Campground with 186 visitors and *Rattlesnake Solutions* also offered a program on rattlesnake education this month with 53 in attendance.
- The park is fortunate to host several year-round community volunteers who are passionate about bringing new interpretative programming to the White Tank agenda. A new lecture-style presentation on the *Formation of the White Tank Mountains* was revealed in May by park volunteer Bill Parker. We are looking forward to offering this educational piece along with his other lectures to park visitors each month.
- Park visitation slowed down with the weather heating up which allowed park staff to spend more time focusing on special projects. Maintenance staff concentrated on vegetation abatement along roadways and in parking areas to ensure a safe experience for visitors. A new memorial bench was installed along the Ford Canyon Trail and enjoyed shortly after installation by the donating family.
- In July, White Tank Park offered 11 interpretive programs with 452 attending. 182 adventurous hikers joined the night *Scorpion Search*, one of the summer's most anticipated events. The White Tank team decided to cancel the July 27th *Moonlight Hike* due to the high temperatures forecasted during this time. Temperatures were still well above 100 degrees after sunset and many park guests expressed on Facebook posts that they were "bummed" the event was cancelled, but also thanked the staff for their safety concerns.
- July was a very hot and dry month at White Tank. Many parts of the valley received considerable rainfall, but White Tank was mostly missed by the rain; the falls at the popular Waterfall Trail has yet to run this summer. The park's javelina herd has been spotted more frequently than usual as they hang out in the lower parts of the park where they have access to the wildlife watering holes. An adult javelina was even spotted taking a nap in the shade directly outside of the library windows!
- With the start of the new fiscal year, office staff has been busy submitting orders for new souvenir items for the Nature Center. With the park's high visitation and increased traffic due to the library partnership, the White Tank Nature Center has an almost constant flow of guests resulting in a unique opportunity to sell more merchandise than any other Nature Center in the park system.

- As the park was closing on July 30th, two separate incidents of vehicle break-ins were reported to volunteer staff working in the entry booth. One of the park users caught the thief in the act as he was coming off the trail and was able to get a license plate number to report to the Sheriff's office.