



Usery Mountain Recreation Area

Master Plan

Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Department - 1993

MASTER PLAN
for
USERY MOUNTAIN
RECREATION AREA

Prepared for
MARICOPA COUNTY PARKS & RECREATION DEPARTMENT
PHOENIX, ARIZONA

by
Brooks, Hersey & Associates, Inc.

and
The WLB Group

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INTRODUCTION

Usery Mountain Recreation Area (UMRA) is recognized as providing some of the finest outdoor recreational facilities in a Sonoran desert environment. This recreation area bridges the gap between the "urban" day-use park and the state and federal forest areas. To continue in its fine tradition, and to meet the needs of the ever-growing population, a revision to the Area's current master plan has been completed. This revision sets forth a plan to accommodate the expected growth of visitors, while ensuring the existing desert environment will remain enjoyable for all.

The Usery Mountain Recreation Area Master Plan was formulated by incorporating extensive study of the UMRA and its surrounding area with input from various public groups and agencies, park users and the general public. By following this plan, UMRA will continue as an integral part of the Maricopa County Park System.

MASTER PLANNING PROCESS

The Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Department (MCP&RD) in January, 1991 contracted with Brooks, Hersey and Associates (BHA) and The WLB Group (WLB) to prepare an update to the Master Plan for Usery Mountain Recreation Area (UMRA).

After review of the previous Master Plan, the following steps were determined to be the most effective in formulating a revised Master Plan:

- * Study the area surrounding UMRA including regional and community park facilities available and potential

population growth within this area.

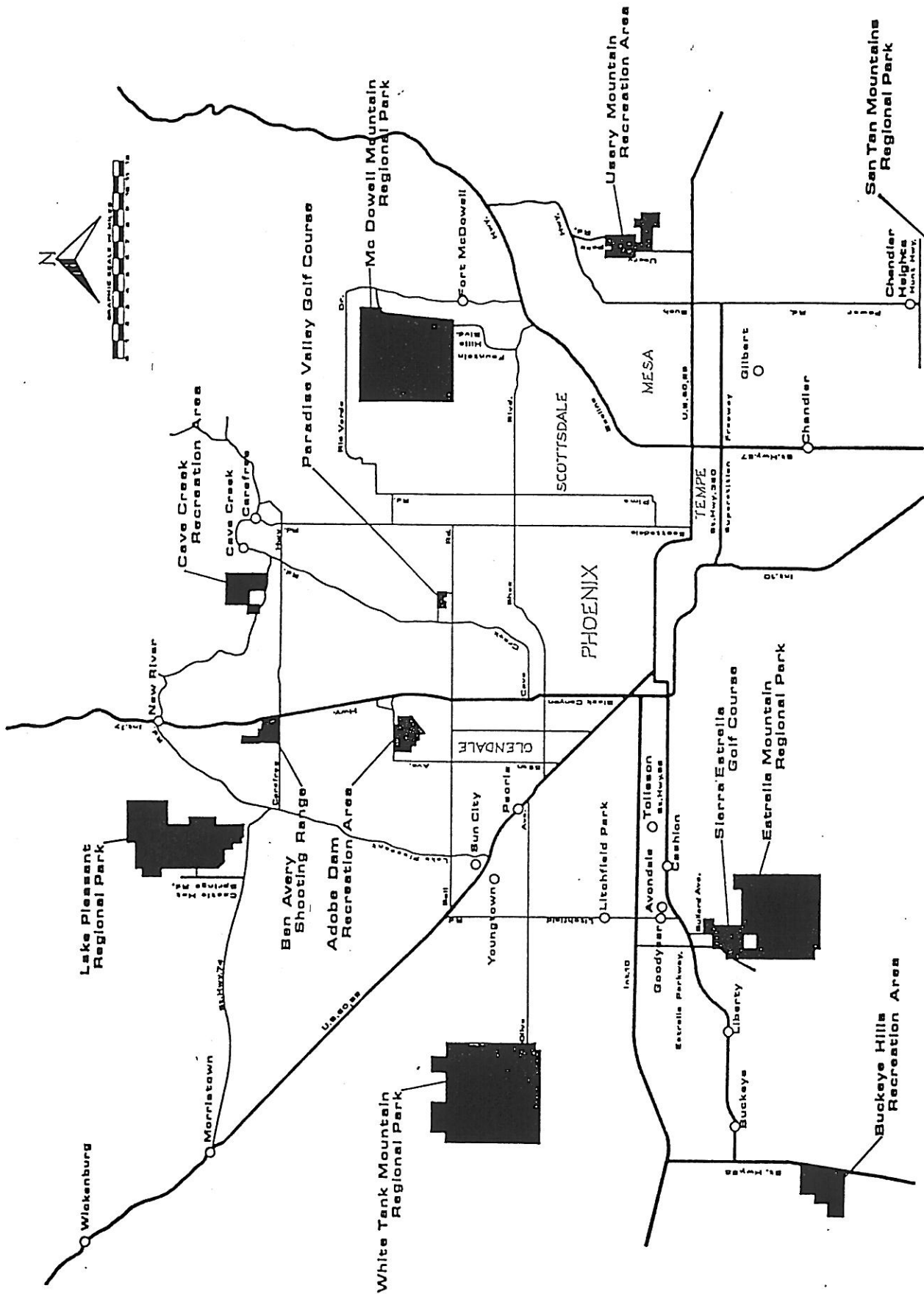
- * Examine UMRA's existing characteristics and features which affect current uses, as well as how the UMRA will be enjoyed in the future.
- * Seek input on the Master Plan from concerned citizens, patrons of UMRA and public officials as to how future development can best serve the recreating public.
- * Draft a Master Plan from all the information gathered, recommending future activities, facilities and locations for improvements in UMRA; evaluate the relationship of these to each other and to the existing/surrounding area facilities.
- * Formulate/prioritize a listing of capital expenditures as well as determine improvement costs for the recommended facilities.

COMMUNITY ANALYSIS

Usery Mountain Recreation Area (UMRA) is located in East Maricopa County, northeast of Mesa. It is bordered by the Tonto National Forest, on the north and on the east by the Pinal/Maricopa County line. The 3,600 acre recreation area is part of the Maricopa County Park System (*Fig. 1*) which not only serves the East Valley, but also accommodates many state and out of state visitors on a year-round basis.

Regional Recreational Opportunities

As stated, Usery Mountain Recreation Area is located near the southeast corner of the Tonto National Forest. The Tonto National Forest provides a wide variety of recreational uses, with some of the more



MARICOPA COUNTY PARKS and RECREATION SYSTEM MAP

Fig. 1

popular activities involving the Lower Salt River.

The Lower Salt River Recreation Area is located north of UMRA and provides year-round water oriented recreation. The river attracts a large number of day use patrons, especially during the summer for tubing, swimming and picnicking. There are nine U.S. Forest Service administered areas where various facilities are available. In addition, there are a limited number of available overnight camping spots in some of these areas during the winter and early spring months when camping attendance is at its peak.

Beyond the Lower Salt River is the chain of reservoirs: Saguaro, Canyon, Apache, and Roosevelt which are very popular with the recreating public. Also, the Tonto National Forest, the nearby Superstition National Wilderness Area and the Goldfield and Mazatzal Mountains offer excellent hiking, horseback riding and primitive camping in a spectacular setting. These areas provide many excellent opportunities to those who enjoy the back country experience.

Community Recreational Opportunities

The communities surrounding Usery Mountain Recreation Area offer different recreational opportunities than the above mentioned regional activities. The most notable are Spook Hill Park and Prospector Park.

Spook Hill Park is located southeast of UMRA in Mesa. This Master Planned Park is planned to cover 970 acres at completion. Currently in place is a baseball/softball complex and parking. Additional master planned features include the following:

- * Recreation & Cultural Center
- * Tennis & Racquetball Center
- * Senior Center
- * Sports Fields
- * Picnic Areas
- * Nature Center
- * Urban Lake
- * Equestrian Center
- * Amphitheater
- * Archery Center
- * Aquatic Center
- * Golf Course

When developed, these features should provide excellent urban recreational facilities for the surrounding community in the foreseeable future.

Another park planned for the area near UMRA is Prospector Park in Pinal County. It consists of approximately 265 acres. Thirty acres are planned for active recreation such as a soccer field, tennis, racquetball, volleyball and basketball courts, and a swimming pool complex. The remaining passive recreation areas planned include group camping, picnic grounds, rodeo grounds and an equestrian area. Prospector Park is also planned to be connected with UMRA by way of an equestrian trail. Prospector Park has currently completed the first phase of development and is scheduled to continue as funding is made available.

Service Area Population

The service area around Usery Mountain Recreation Area has been and continues to experience rapid growth.

The historic and projected population of Maricopa County is 1,509,262 residents in 1980 to 3,252,400 residents in 2000, a 115% increase. (Source: Valley National Bank of Arizona, 1987.) Within a ten mile radius of

UMRA, the projected growth at buildout for currently planned developments, is expected to accommodate over 100,000 additional residents. These figures indicate a need for continually expanding recreational facilities, part of which UMRA is best suited to provide.

Summary and Conclusions

The recreation areas discussed provide a varied recreational experience. The Tonto National Forest not only provides the surrounding community with a water oriented experience in its reservoirs and rivers during the summer, but also provides vast areas of undeveloped wilderness for hiking, camping and backpacking on a year-round basis.

The "urban park" experience is served by community parks in the area, including Mesa's Spook Hill Park and Apache Junction's Prospector Park in Pinal County. These will provide ball fields, swimming pools, sport courts and other facilities for active recreation. In addition, they provide facilities for more passive activity such as picnicking, playgrounds and walking paths in a typical grassy urban park setting.

An important goal of the Usery Mountain Recreation Area is to provide a bridge between the urban parks and the National Forest. By providing campgrounds with RV hookups, group and individual picnic areas, and well marked and maintained hiking trails easily accessible to parking areas and restrooms, all in a well preserved desert environment, UMRA should continue to provide an enjoyable, accessible and meaningful natural outdoor experience. The park is aimed at those who are less able or willing to experience the more physically demanding desert areas in the Tonto National Forest, such as the Superstition Mountain

Wilderness Area, but who would still like to experience the true Sonoran desert not found in urban parks.

Based on all available data, it is the contention of this report that UMRA should continue in its present path to provide its unique recreational opportunities while expanding needed facilities to continue meeting the needs of its ever growing service population.

SITE ANALYSIS

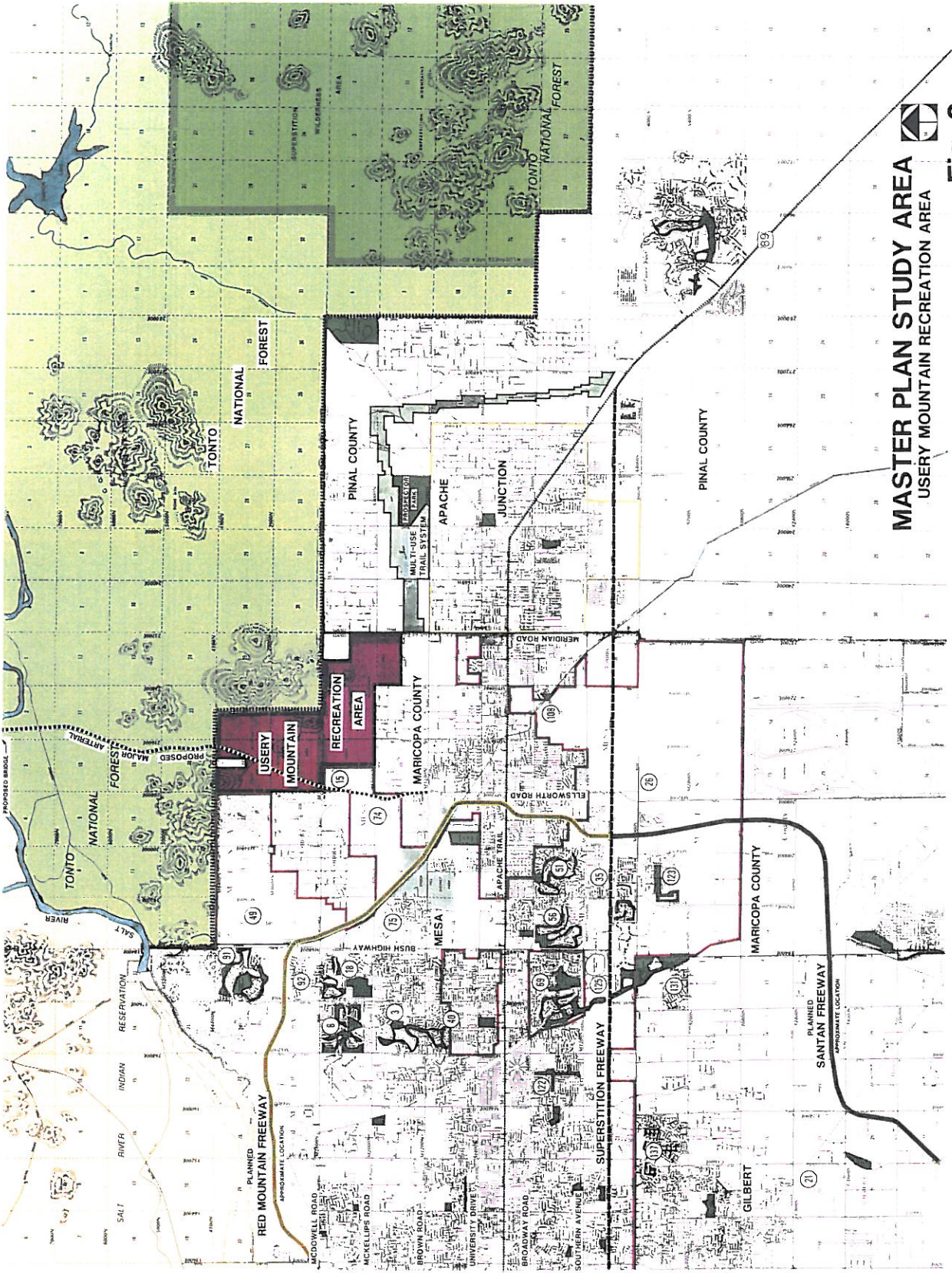
Terrain

UMRA's northern portion is situated between the Usery Mountains to the northwest and Pass Mountain, the western-most peak of the Goldfield Mountains, to the east (*fig. 2*). Although the crest of Pass Mountain is not within the park, its southwest slopes dominate much of the park landscape. The southeast slopes of the Usery Mountains make up the park's northwest corner. Small granite hills rise sharply from the Pass Mountain alluvial fan. These hills and Pass Mountain serve as focal points for many park activities. The park is bisected by several washes, some up to 20 feet deep, which generally drain toward the south to the Pass Mountain Diversion Channel, which forms the south boundary of the UMRA.

UMRA is bounded by the Tonto National Forest on the north and northeast sides and partially developed low-density housing on the southeastern, south and west sides.

History and Archeology

Usery Mountain Recreational Area and the surrounding region have a rich history. Usery Mountain itself was named after King Usery, a pioneer stockman and purported



MASTER PLAN STUDY AREA
USERY MOUNTAIN RECREATION AREA



Fig. 2

horse thief/stage coach robber. Additionally, Usery Pass was part of the "Heber-Reno Driveway", a sheep herding trail which has been in use since the 1890's. Flocks were seasonally driven back and forth between the Coconino Plateau and the Salt River and Casa Grande Valleys. Sheep drives are still taking place in the area today.

Mining is also prominent in UMRA's history. The Goldfield Mountains were mined extensively for low-grade gold ores. Open-pit mining was also attempted in the area, as well as the production of tungsten.

Evidence of an earlier period can also be seen. There have been several archeological studies within the park and surrounding area. Most of the archeological sites found are believed to have been Hohokam Indian food gathering and preparation encampments. Because of the significance of these sites, design and construction of park facilities will be conducted mindful of the possibility of discovering and preserving artifacts or sites.

Natural Environment

The vegetation of UMRA is typical of the Sonoran region. Plant growth on the upper hillsides is limited to grasses, stunted trees, shrubs and smaller cacti. The lower alluvial plain contains larger trees (mesquite, ironwood and palo verde), shrubs (brittlebush, bursage, ocotillo), cacti (saguaro, barrel, cholla, staghorn and others) as well as native grasses and wildflowers.

Natural wildlife, representative of the region, includes a wide variety of year-round and seasonal species. Included are javalina, muledeer, coyote, rabbits, various rodents, tortoise, gila monsters, miscellaneous snakes and lizards, and a wide variety of raptors and other birds.

Existing Facilities

Usery Mountain Recreation Area currently contains a number of excellent and heavily used amenities. The area's campgrounds are generally filled to capacity during the winter months. Presently, there are 73 camping sites available with picnic tables, grills, R.V. electric and water hook-ups. A sanitary R.V. dump station and three comfort stations with showers are also available.

A group campground is located adjacent to the existing campground. It contains two picnic ramadas, a comfort station and approximately 2.1 acres of open space for camping.

Directly across Usery Park Road from the campgrounds, and a short distance away, is the archery range. It is heavily used by archery clubs and bow hunters, especially prior to and during bow hunting seasons. The facility contains a variety of ranges including: animal/hunter, hunter/field, broadhead, target archery and practice ranges. The area also holds the range headquarters, a comfort station and storage facilities.

Further along Usery Park Road southeasterly, is the recently constructed group picnic area, located in a spectacular setting at the base of Pass Mountain. The new group picnic area contains four ramadas with adjoining multi-use slabs, fire pits, group size grills, a playground and a comfort station. This 'reservation only' facility provides excellent accommodations for company picnics, school and church group activities, and large family outings.

Located yet further along Usery Park Road and around Wind Cave Drive are numerous picnic areas with several comfort

stations. These are some of the most heavily utilized areas in the park, as they are located near the trail head of the popular Wind Cave Trail and the Pass Mountain Trail. These areas also make up the north end of the area known as the "Picnic Loop".

The "Picnic Loop" follows the path of Usery Park Road as it winds south around the craggy outcrops known as Merkle Hills. Picnic sites in this area offer an excellent view of the Superstition Mountains. At the southeast corner of the "Picnic Loop" is the "Horse Staging Area". This area not only provides a base for the many horse enthusiasts who enjoy the park's trails but also contains group picnic facilities. The area contains four ramadas with multi-use slabs, a water tap and an extensive, unpaved parking area. There are four additional ramadas, a comfort station and a paved parking area already designed and planned for construction in the near future.

As the road continues around Merkle Hills, Usery Park Road becomes Blevins Drive. Additional picnic areas, and the trailhead to Merkle Trail are located in this section. Blevins Drive continues to the north until it rejoins Usery Park Road.

A portion of the Rio Salado Sportsman's Club Rifle and Pistol Range is located in the northwest corner of the UMRA. The range provides excellent facilities for pistol and rifle devotees, and includes ranges for competitions and educational seminars.

Utilities Analysis

Usery Mountain Recreation Area is currently serviced by Salt River Project (SRP) for electrical power. The area is served by 7.5/12.5 KVA in underground conduits from Usery Pass Road. Since any anticipated

growth within the UMRA is well within power capacity parameters of the current supply lines, no additional capacity should be required.

US West Communications currently provides phone service to the UMRA. With the exception of pay phones, all internal phone service within the UMRA is handled by Maricopa County's Telecommunications Department. Additional pay phones should be considered in conjunction with any improvements and could be incorporated at low cost.

Water service to the park is provided by the Arizona Water Company (AWC). Although the AWC currently meets UMRA needs by way of a 6" water main from Meridian Road, the quality and available volume may not be suitable for future improvements. The MCP&RD has had an 8" water supply line designed to bring water from the City of Mesa's water distribution system along Range Rider Trail and deliver it to the UMRA main entrance at Usery Pass Road. Before any major additions to the Park are constructed, water requirements of these areas should be evaluated, along with costs and connection to the Mesa water distribution system.

RECREATIONAL NEEDS ANALYSIS

Demographic Research

Public input was part of the Master Plan process. This input was gathered through questionnaires and from comments by citizens at public meetings.

The first public workshop concerning Usery Mountain Recreation Area was held on May 23, 1991 at Red Mountain High School. After brief introductions and an explanation

of completed plans for the Phase 7 Improvements, questionnaires concerning the Master Plan were distributed and the floor was opened for discussion.

Although the discussion was somewhat focused on the then recent efforts of the Rio Salado Sportsman's Club to construct a shotgun range and its possible relocation, many good suggestions were received pertaining to the future of UMRA. Nearby residents voiced their concerns about what areas should contain active recreation facilities. Sportsman's Club members expressed concerns about the future of their facilities.

At the end of this meeting and for several weeks afterward, completed questionnaires were received and evaluated. From these, the following points were evident:

- * A large number of respondents (approximately 86%) want to keep the park a "natural" recreational area with activities including camping, picnicking, hiking, equestrian and mountain biking.
- * Many respondents (78%) also indicated that UMRA should not include urban type park facilities, i.e. ball fields, golf courses, swimming pools and grassy areas.
- * Most respondents (91%) felt the existing archery/shooting sports facilities should be retained and/or expanded.
- * Interest was also expressed (52%) in providing additional education/informational type facilities such as botanical gardens and education/interpretive centers.

Although questionnaire respondents consisted mainly of Rio Salado Sportsman's

Club members and concerned local residents, a viable cross section of opinions was addressed.

An additional picture of the UMRA's future role was gained after discussions with concerned governmental agencies. Meetings were held with local government agencies to determine what new facilities were planned and the impact of new UMRA facilities on regional recreational. Agencies consulted included the cities of Mesa and Apache Junction Parks/Planning Departments, Tonto National Forest, and Usery Park staff. Personnel in these agencies suggested facilities for UMRA for which they saw a demand. Some of these suggestions were:

- * Additional campground sites
- * Day camp for scouting, school and church groups
- * Model airplane flight area
- * Polo/multipurpose field
- * Connection to the Apache Junction Multi-Use Trail System
- * Bike paths which connect with the M.A.G. Regional Bicycle Plan

The Usery Mountain Recreation Area Staff also provided valuable suggestions regarding facilities they felt were desired by Park patrons including:

- * Additional family camp sites (due to turning away paying customers and over-use of the existing facilities)
- * Additional picnic facilities
- * A 3-D archery shooting range

MASTER PLAN

Master Plan Creation

Demographic research and meetings with private citizens and public officials have provided much of the information needed to develop a list of facilities that fit the needs and desires of Usery Mountain Recreation Area users.

With the facilities list established, additional site visits were conducted to investigate potential locations for these facilities. Purpose was to analyze compatibility between existing and proposed facilities, and surrounding areas adjacent to the UMRA. This was done considering both the surrounding area's present degree of development and its ultimate buildout.

Among the criteria used to analyze various sites are the following:

1. Select sites in the least vegetated and flattest terrain for facilities that require only moderate site clearing.
2. Provide access and facilities with minimal disruption to trailheads and hilly terrain, which are some of the park's important attractions.
3. Where possible, provide a site perimeter buffer zone to minimize outside impact on the park, and park activities on outside adjacent developments.
4. Locate the most active facilities centrally within the park as feasible and locate the most passive near the populated perimeter.
5. Locate facilities to minimize staff requirements for security and control.

6. Locate facilities, where possible, to provide handicapped access to the desert experience.

Physical Site Plan Analysis

Existing development within the UMRA is about 5% of the total area (171 acres developed of 3,644 acres). If completed according to the Master Plan, an additional 6% of development would occur over the next 10 to 20 years.

The Physical Site Plan (*Fig. 3*) graphically depicts the basis for the Master Plan. There are nine basic activity areas planned within the park. They are:

1. Environmental Activity Area
2. Rifle and Pistol Range
3. Archery Range
4. Family Campground
5. Park Headquarters
6. Group Campgrounds
7. Desert Habitat Educational Center
8. Picnic Loops
9. Future Use Area

Looking at the site analysis maps, one can readily see the major physical limitations. They are: Usery Pass and Microwave Tower Roads which both pass through the park, Maricopa County Flood Control Structures located along the South edge of the park, and the Rio Salado Sportsman's Club. These areas must be buffered from the park to maximize a quality experience within the park.

Usery Park Road is the main access corridor within the park. Since all activity areas branch from this roadway, it's obvious that extending the roadway would provide necessary access to the entire park, including the southeast section of the park. It contains

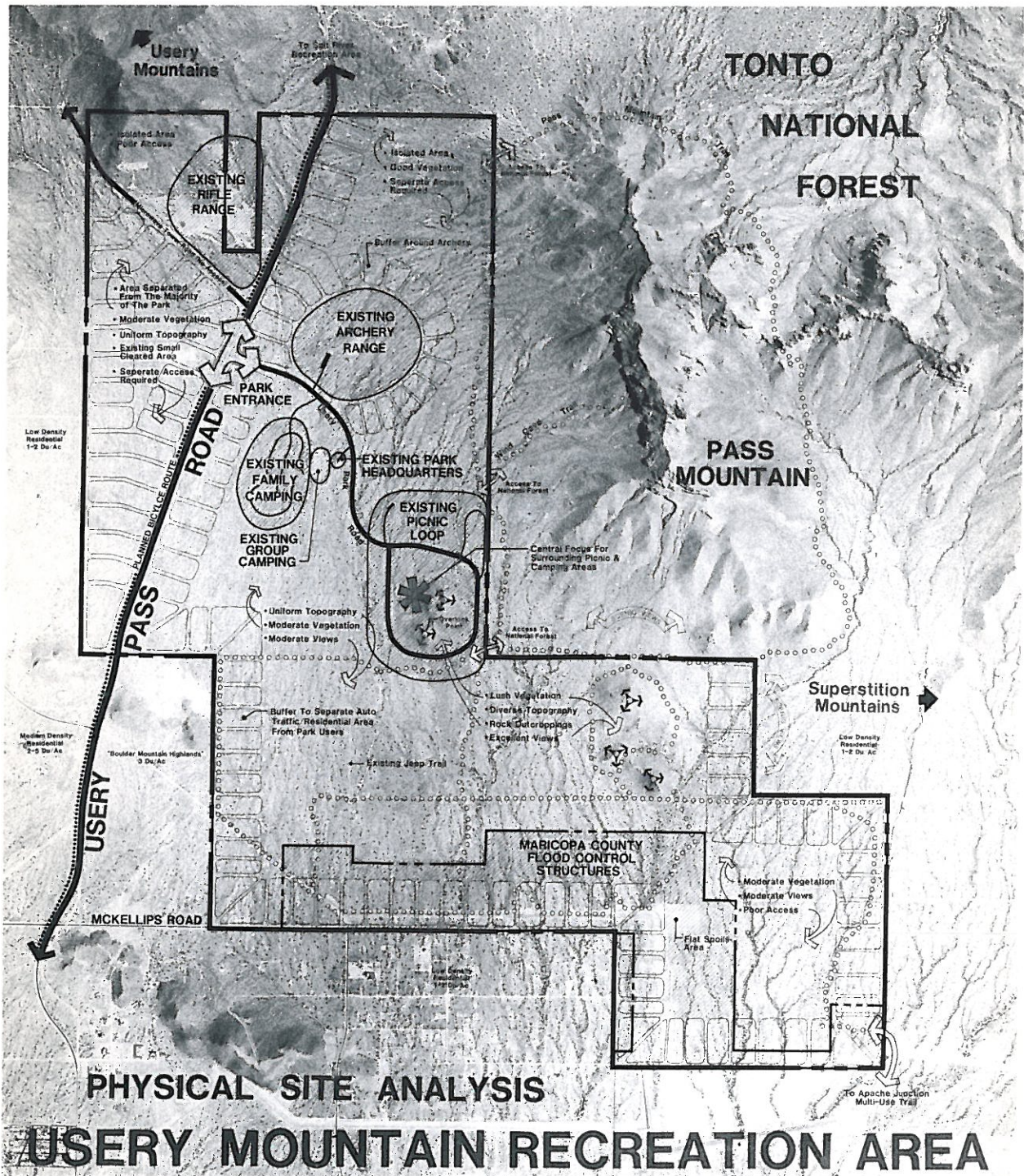


Fig. 3

lush vegetation, diverse topography, rock outcrops and excellent views. This area has two beautiful hills along the border of the Tonto National Forest that cannot be readily reached by many visitors. Usery Pass Road is planned to be extended to pass near this area, completing the access corridor through the park. An appropriate use would be as a family picnic area. The roadway would end with a small loop at the southeast corner of the park, planned as a future use area. It presently serves as a physical and visual buffer between the park and the surrounding community.

The existing Bow Hunters Course and Archery Range should remain at its present location since it is the only projected use in the northeast corner of the park. This allows for a limited buffer area on all sides of the course and for future expansion to the north.

The existing Family Campground is located near Usery Park Road and is close to the main park entrance. The flat terrain where it is located provides for excellent vehicle access and low visual impact to the park site, and is far enough from Usery Pass Road to be buffered from traffic and noise. Because of these features and the high priority placed on additional facilities by adjacent government agencies, questionnaire respondents and staff alike, additional camping sites should be expanded near this area. An ideal location is immediately south of the existing Family Campground. It is also the most cost effective location since utilities are already provided to this area. It would be desirable to maintain about 1,000 feet of buffer zone along the park's border to restrict the view of park site development from properties adjacent to the park.

As UMRA expands, a Park Headquarters

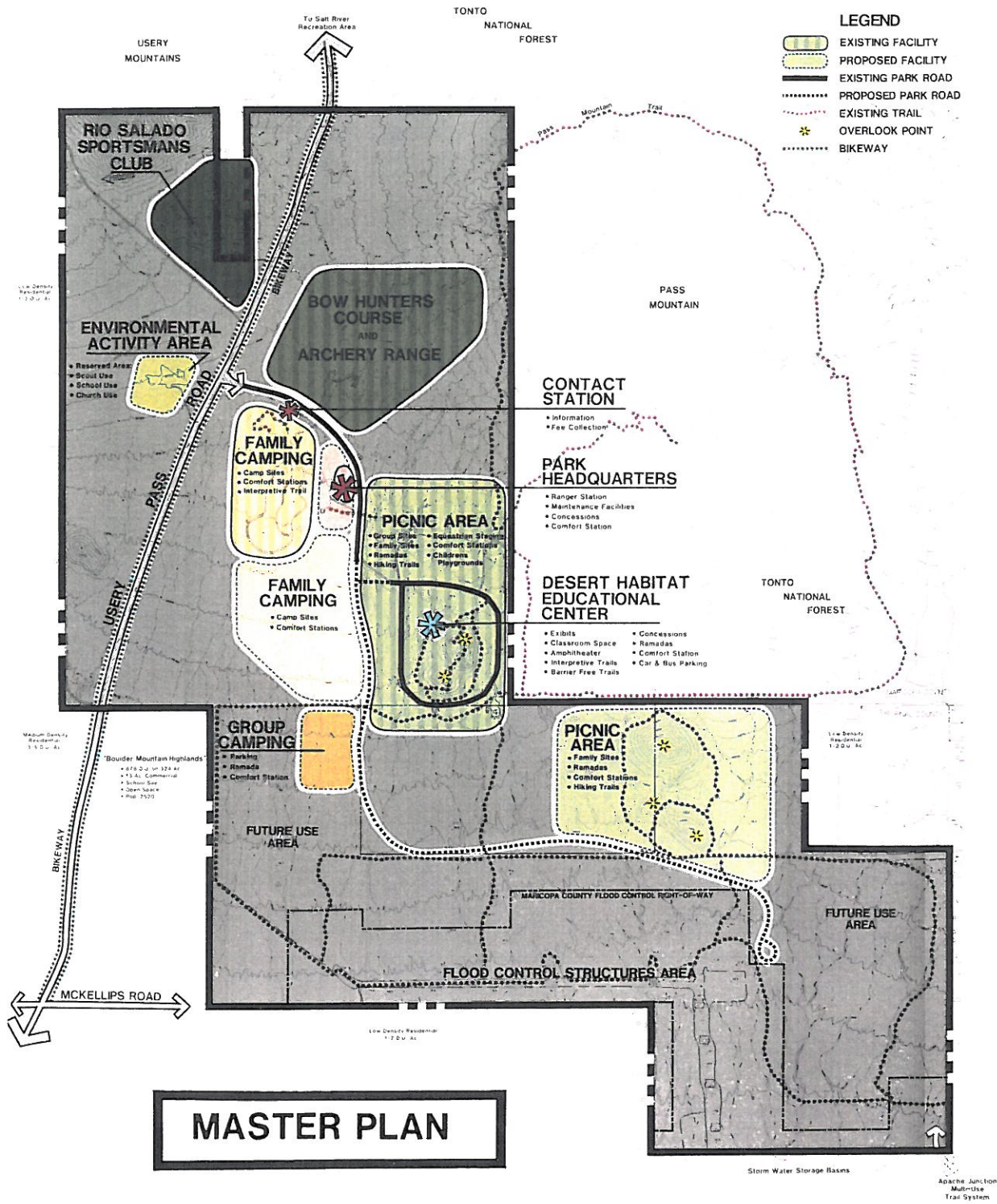
becomes a necessity rather than a luxury. The headquarters should be located in the activity center of the park closest to the more developed areas.

The existing Group Campground located southeast of the Park Maintenance Compound currently conflicts with the Family Campground. It should be moved to allow for construction of the centralized Park Headquarters (*Fig. 3*). An excellent place to relocate the Group Campground is immediately south of the buffer zone for the proposed expansion area of the Family Campground. This will provide an isolated area away from most of the park and the park's border.

During development of the Master Plan, many people requested a botanical garden or nature area where individuals and groups could learn about the Sonoran Desert. In order to achieve maximum benefit from this type of facility, an Educational Center should be located in an area rich in plant diversity, which is usually associated with desert washes. Areas with undulating topography are also more protected and allow for plant and animal diversity. The area best suited for a Desert Habitat Educational Center is located near the Merkle Hills, which is surrounded by the 'Picnic Loop'. Vegetation, views and access are perfect for this use.

As seen in the Master Plan (*Fig. 4*), development should occur along Usery Park Road and close to the border of the Tonto National Forest. Private development is encroaching on all sides of UMRA and should be buffered as much as possible from the park's activities.

The park property located to the West of Usery Pass Road does not have much room



MASTER PLAN

USERY MOUNTAIN RECREATION AREA
 MARICOPA COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT



Fig 4

for development of passive recreation activities. The location of the Rio Salado Sportsman's Club, north of Microwave Tower Road, should remain separate from the majority of the park. However, there is a section of land south of Microwave Tower Road that could be used for a much needed and requested Environmental Activity Area (EAA). The EAA, as planned, would be used by reservation only and, as such, would be set aside for environmental educational activities. This is ideal since the area is rich in plant and animal diversity and provides excellent vistas of the valley below. Most importantly, the separate access provides the desired seclusion and control for group activities and learning opportunities.

PROPOSED FUTURE PARK FACILITIES

Environmental Activity Area

The Environmental Activity Area (*Fig. 5*) would utilize a previously cleared area to minimize additional excavation required. It would be a 'reservation only' area, thus not requiring an additional contact station or staff. Activities visualized for this area include Boy/Girl Scout day or overnight camps, church/school group activities and environmental educational seminars. Proposed items to be constructed in this area include two ramada groups, a comfort station, two large communal fire rings, hiking trails, communal sink troughs, paved parking, and an unpaved activity area which can be used for overflow parking.

Adjacent to this area would be some small semi-primitive camping sites. These sites would have tent clearings, small fire rings, picnic tables and be interconnected by a trail network. This would allow users not only to have their own individual camp sites but also

a group area for communal gatherings.

Rifle and Pistol Range

The Rio Salado Sportsman's Club Rifle and Pistol Range should continue to serve the shooting public in the East Valley. By maintaining this facility, off-site desert shooting is reduced, which will help preserve and protect the desert environment. To enhance this facility, a comfort station is presently being constructed. Consideration should be given to enhancing the signage and fencing around the range, which will be increasingly necessary as the UMRA and the surrounding area develops. The MCP&RD and Rio Salado Sportsman's Club should continue their cooperation in maintaining and developing these facilities.

Entrance Road/Signage

Since it provides the area's first impression, the Usery Mountain Recreation Area entrance off Usery Pass Road (FH-207) should welcome visitors and passers-by into the area and present its scenic desert beauty. An attractive divided entranceway with a median, and both sides of the roadway bermed and planted with native plant material, would be desirable. An entrance sign, built using native rock and raised, bronze-colored lettering, should accentuate the natural desert. Down-lighting, to illustrate the sign and area, should be provided if the area is to be opened in the evenings.

Signage should also be placed at either end of Usery Pass Road as it crosses the park boundary announcing arrival into the UMRA. Natural materials should also be used at these locations.

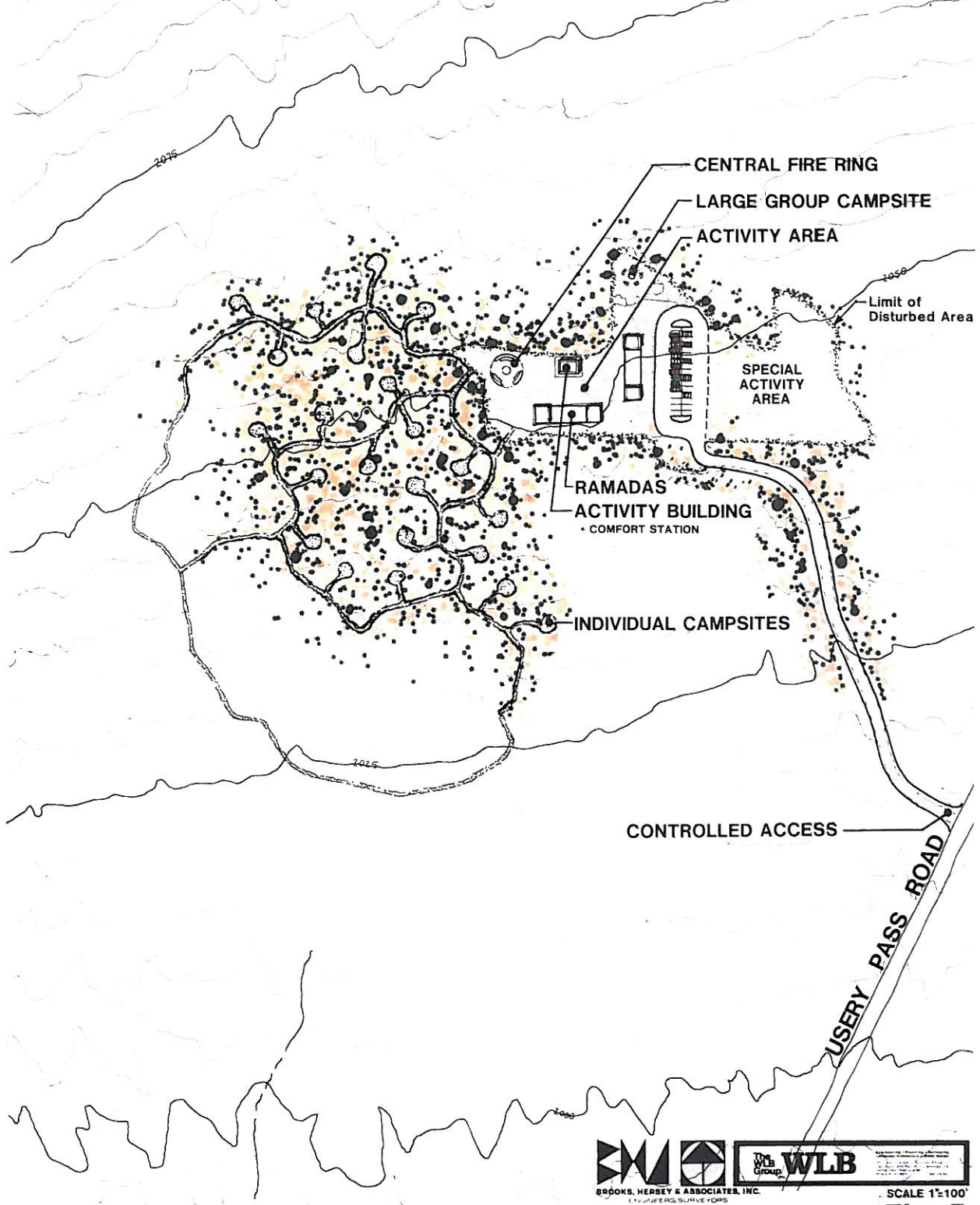
As the park grows, interior signage should be erected to direct users to the various

USERY MOUNTAIN RECREATION AREA

MASTER PLAN UPDATE

ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIVITY AREA

CONCEPT PLAN



Brooks, Hersey & Associates, Inc.
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS

WLB
WILSON BROS. GROUP

SCALE 1"=100'

Fig. 5

facilities, such as phones, park headquarters, comfort stations and first-aid assistance. In areas near the popular trail heads, "No Parking" signs should be installed along the roadside to keep drivers from parking on shoulders and damaging flora as the parking areas fill.

Archery Range

The Archery Range should continue as one of the premier archery facilities in the Valley. To this end, it is proposed that the Archery Range be expanded towards the north and include a 3-D shooting area. Trails for archers would be expanded to this area to provide access from current facilities. Also, if needed, an access road could be provided. Hiking trails would continue to be diverted from this area, fences should be installed, and signs erected around the entire area to warn hikers of potential dangers.

Comfort Stations

Among the capital improvements which UMRA will need to undertake is replacement of existing comfort stations. These comfort stations, located in the existing campground and picnic loop area, were converted from drop toilets to flush toilets with running water during the early eighties. Their continual use has caused these facilities to require an increasing amount of maintenance. It is therefore recommended that, as new facilities are constructed in the park, new comfort stations designed to the MCP&RD Standards also be erected on the site of the old comfort stations to utilize the existing infrastructure (water piping, septic systems). The exception is Comfort Station No. 6, which contains a newly installed water pumping station. Additionally, as many of these comfort stations as possible should be replaced at a time without inconveniencing the park patrons, since it would reduce the capital cost

per station.

Family Campground

Current Family Campground facilities do not meet present public demands, especially during winter months. This high demand promotes degradation of the current facilities and discourages local use because of the sometimes long waiting periods to obtain a campsite. A minimum of 75 additional camp spaces and three more comfort/shower stations should be provided in one or two phases when capital improvement funds are available.

In concert with previously mentioned recommendations and requests, these additional spaces will provide much needed revenue to help offset overall park operational costs.

The new Family Campground spaces should be constructed in the gently sloping area south of the existing campground which is close to existing utilities (*Fig. 6*). They should be built in two distinct loops to allow one or both loops to be closed off when not in demand or when there is a need to recover from use. The campsites should fit into the terrain to minimize grading and reduce damage to existing vegetation.

The following handicap-accessible amenities should be included with each site:

- * Utility pedestal
- * BBQ grill
- * Cleared area covered with decomposed granite
- * Fire ring
- * Picnic table

Sewer hookups connected to small sewage handling facilities should be installed instead of the sanitary dump stations. Waste from R.V.'s are not compatible with septic tanks

USERY MOUNTAIN RECREATION AREA

MASTER PLAN UPDATE

FAMILY CAMPING

CONCEPT PLAN

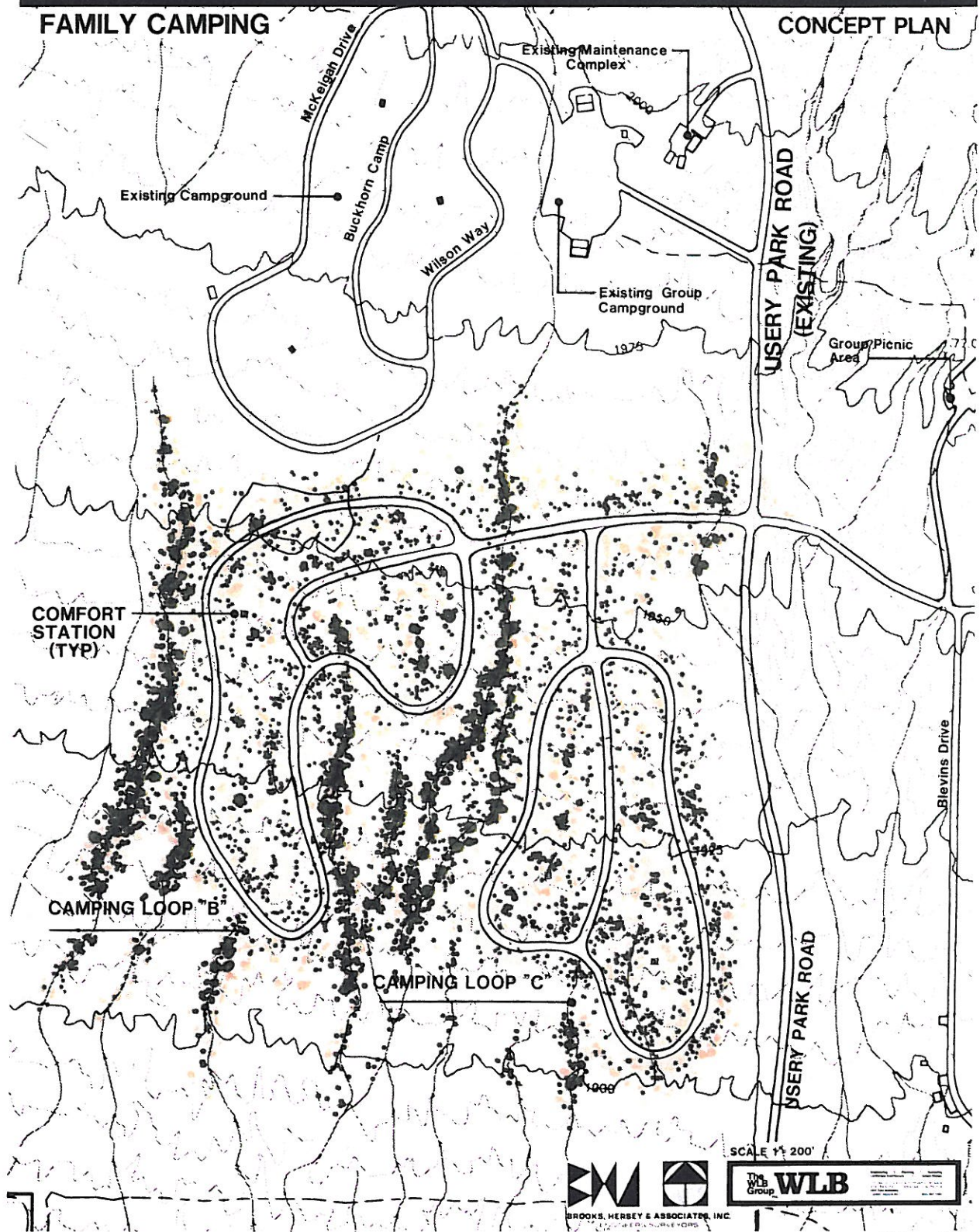


Fig. 6

because of the chemicals used in recreational vehicle disposal systems.

Park Headquarters

As the use and enjoyment of the Usery Mountain Recreation Area increases, the need for a central Park Headquarters is magnified. Proposed to be located on the site of the current group campground area, this centralized information/control center should become the focal point of the park (*Fig. 7*). By utilizing this site, the Park Headquarters will provide central and easy access from the campgrounds, picnic areas and maintenance compound, and will require very little clearing of vegetation and grading.

The Park Headquarters and its surrounding appurtenances should be constructed of materials similar to the existing park structures. The main building should house rangers' offices including an information counter, large wall maps of the park and surrounding areas, and a first aid station with emergency telephones. A separate building would house restrooms, showers and possibly a coin operated laundry for the family campground. The site surrounding the headquarters would include parking areas, ramadas and picnic facilities.

In addition, a small seasonal general store could provide needed services and may be economically feasible as demand from the winter visitor population increases.

Group Campground

An ideal location for the group camping area is south of the Family Campgrounds and west of the 'Picnic Loop'. The low density vegetation and gentle slopes require minimal disruption to the natural environment and will keep construction costs low. A well vegetated buffer zone between the proposed group

campground and family campgrounds will minimize noise and disruption between the two areas. As with the existing facility, the Group Campground should be handicapped accessible and contain comfort stations, ramadas with multi-purpose slabs, large communal fire rings and group BBQ grills. The cleared area should be covered with decomposed granite. Saguaros, palo verdes, ironwoods and other trees interspersed on the site should be allowed to remain within the large cleared area to break up the openness and add natural shade and visual relief.

Wind Cave Trail and Pass Mountain Trail

The Wind Cave Trail and the Pass Mountain Trail are two of the most popular trails in the Park. Between the hikers, equestrians (allowed on Pass Mountain Trail only) and picnickers, facilities near these trails have become strained and need to be expanded. Since the trails served by these facilities lie predominantly within their jurisdiction, the Tonto National Forest should cooperate with the MCP&RD with this expansion. New facilities are planned to include added parking, ramadas, and a comfort station.

Desert Habitat Educational Center

The Desert Habitat Educational Center should also be considered for construction in the later phases of development. It is planned to be located near the Merkle Hills which is surrounded by the 'Picnic Loop' (*Fig. 8*). Early stages would consist of a nature observation area, a handicapped accessible botanical trail and a desert pond habitat, which would greatly increase wildlife activity in the area. This facility would contain shade structures, picnic tables, outdoor self-explanatory educational signs, comfort stations and drinking fountains.

USERY MOUNTAIN RECREATION AREA

MASTER PLAN UPDATE

HEADQUARTERS / PICNIC SITES

CONCEPT PLAN

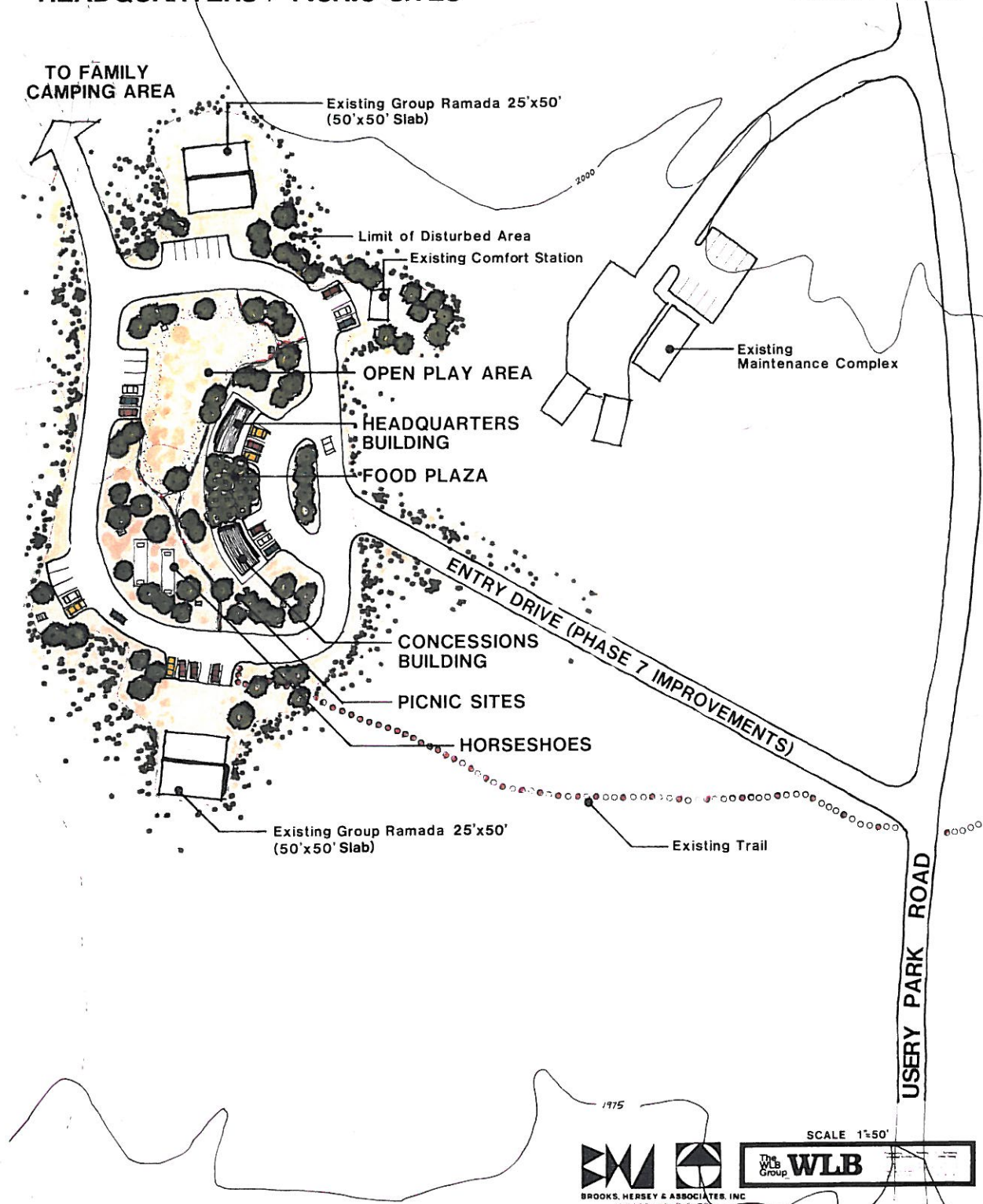


Fig. 7

USERY MOUNTAIN RECREATION AREA

MASTER PLAN UPDATE

EDUCATIONAL CENTER

CONCEPT PLAN

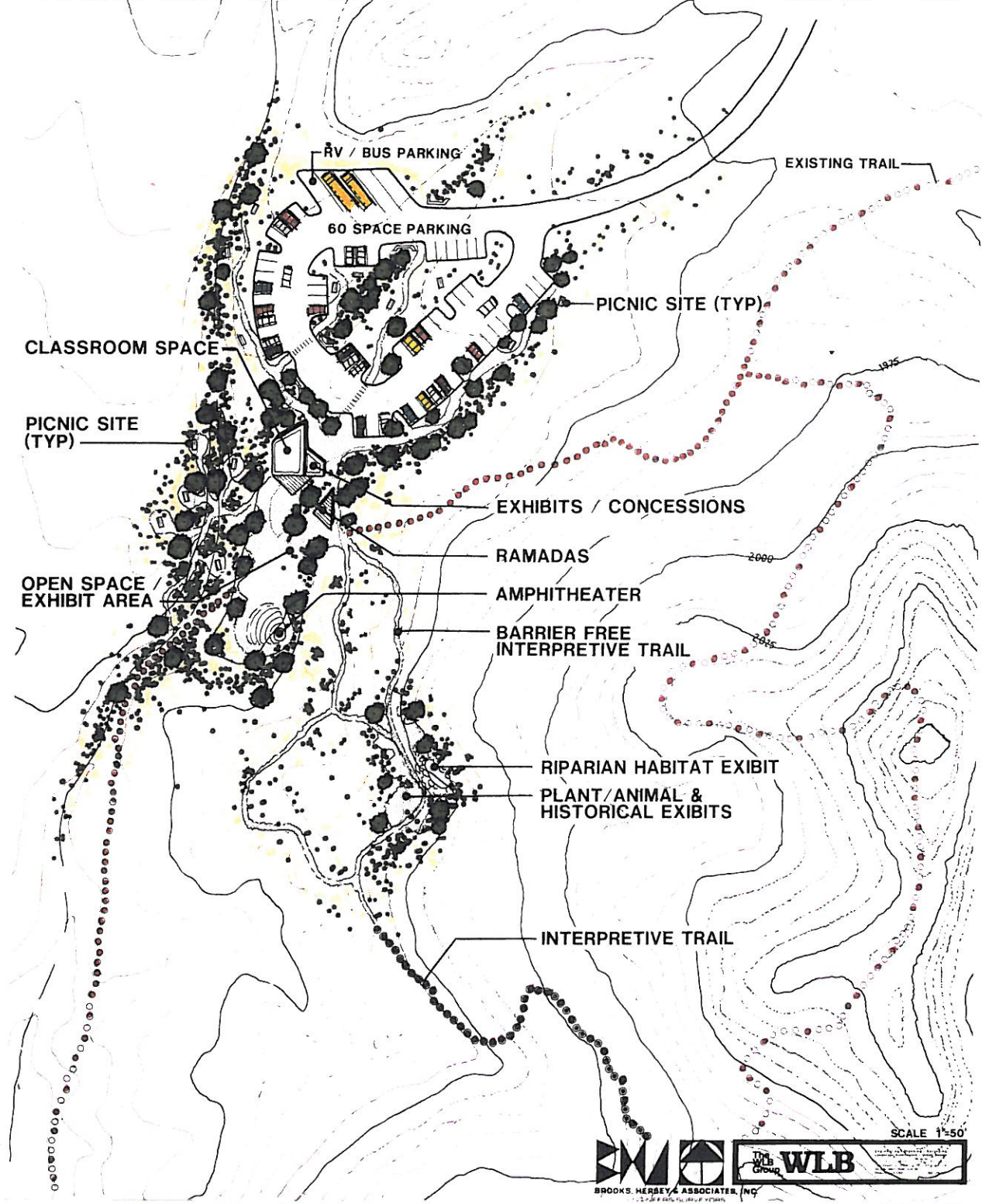


Fig. 8

Later phases are envisioned to include a multi-purpose building that would provide classrooms and historical and educational exhibits. The building should be surrounded by picnic grottos and parking. Exhibits showing solar energy uses, demonstrations of xeriscaping practices and Sonoran desert habitat would also be desirable.

Picnic Loops

Picnic Loops have been planned for the east and west sides of the Cat Peak Hills located in the south central portion of the UMRA (*Fig. 9*). Facilities in these areas will be similar to those in the existing 'Picnic Loop' which contain picnic tables, ramadas, comfort stations and water taps. Roads and picnic sites should not conflict with the Pass Mountain, Blevins and Superstition Loop Trails, to preserve their integrity, and should provide trail heads and rest stops with water available for hikers, equestrians and mountain bikers. An accessible trail should be provided through the Cat Peak Hills to link the two 'Picnic Loops' and allow all to enjoy this beautiful area.

Future Use Area

The large area located in the southeastern section of UMRA is referred to as the Future Use Area. It contains the Pass Mountain Diversion and Outlet of the Buckhorn Mesa Watershed Project constructed by the Flood Control District of Maricopa County. Within this area is a large flat field constructed of material excavated from the flood control project, which has been graded and reseeded.

Although specific recommendations have not been made for facilities in this area, a number of suggested uses have been reviewed. Among these are: model aircraft and kite flying, staging area for equestrian or mountain bike events, BMX area, or a polo

field. Additionally, the area could be leased to a concessionaire for a skateboard park or other use to meet future recreation demand.

PHASING AND CONSTRUCTION COST ESTIMATES

Improvement Priorities

Determination of priorities for the construction phasing of the various facilities is an important part of the overall Master Plan. Several considerations must be made before determining a phasing plan. Among the prime considerations are the demand for new facilities, as well as financial costs for both development and maintenance. Also, income producing sources to help offset these costs.

Demand consists of several factors which include: location of current similar facilities, use or overuse of existing facilities, local public opinion, and projected growth in the number of potential users. Among the financial considerations are development costs, maintenance and staffing costs, availability of funds and private sector participation.

With the present economic recovery moving slowly and the scarcity of capital improvement funds, completion of the planned improvements may take 10 to 15 years or more.

After in-depth consideration of the above factors, it is recommended that the proposed facilities be considered for construction in the following order:

1. Entrance Road/Signage; first loop of family campground sites and access road; and the replacement of three old comfort stations.

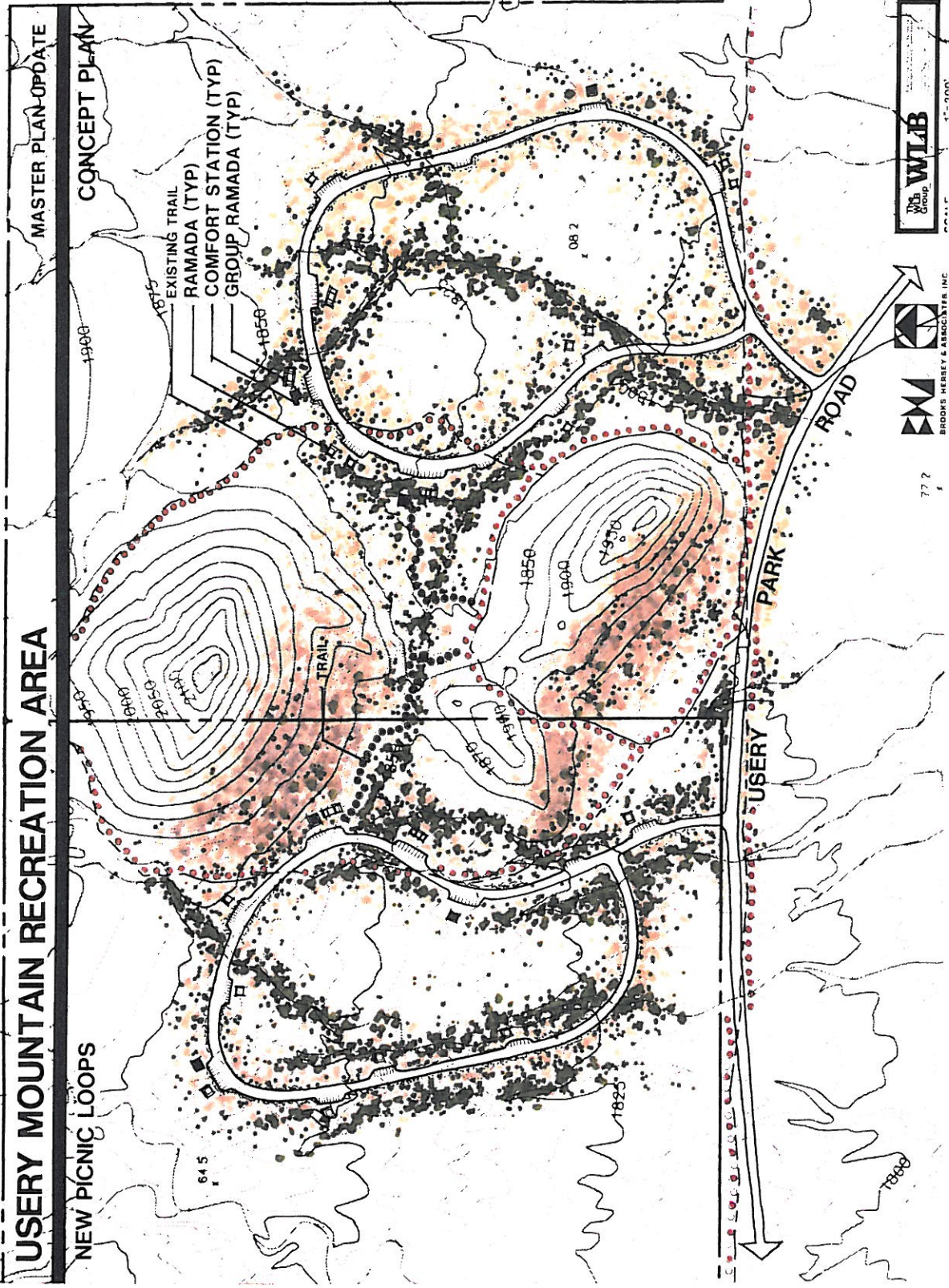


Fig. 9

2. Second loop of family campground sites and replacement of three comfort stations.
3. Environmental Activity Center
4. Group Campground
5. Picnic Loops
6. Park Headquarters
7. Desert Habitat Educational Center

available, the greatest demands of the UMRA users should be met.

Construction Cost Estimates

As part of the planning process, present day cost estimates were completed for each element to complete build out. These estimates do not include design costs or utility hook-up fees.

If the above projects are constructed in the order noted, and as funding becomes

CONSTRUCTION COST ESTIMATE

FAMILY CAMPGROUND

| ITEM | DESCRIPTION | QUANTITY | UNIT | UNIT COST | TOTAL |
|------|---|----------|------|-----------|------------------|
| 1 | CAMPING SITES W/ UTILITIES | 75 | EA | \$3,000 | \$225,000 |
| 2 | COMFORT STATIONS | 4 | EA | \$55,000 | \$220,000 |
| 3 | ASPHALT ROADWAY, 24' WIDE | 6,300 | LF | \$50.00 | \$315,000 |
| 4 | DRAINAGE STRUCTURES | 8 | EA | \$5,000 | \$40,000 |
| 5 | MISC. ITEMS (DUMPSTER, ENCLOSURE, ETC.) | 1 | LS | \$30,000 | \$30,000 |
| | | | | | <u>\$830,000</u> |

GROUP CAMPGROUND

| ITEM | DESCRIPTION | QUANTITY | UNIT | UNIT COST | TOTAL |
|------|---|----------|------|-----------|------------------|
| 1 | DOUBLE RAMADA TYPE "B" | 1 | EA | \$55,000 | \$55,000 |
| 2 | SINGLE RAMADA TYPE "E" | 1 | EA | \$40,000 | \$40,000 |
| 3 | COMFORT STATIONS | 1 | EA | \$55,000 | \$55,000 |
| 4 | ASPHALT ROADWAY, 24' WIDE | 500 | LF | \$50.00 | \$25,000 |
| 5 | DRAINAGE STRUCTURES | 2 | EA | \$5,000 | \$10,000 |
| 6 | MISC. ITEMS (DUMPSTER, ENCLOSURE, ETC.) | 1 | LS | \$16,000 | \$16,000 |
| | | | | | <u>\$201,000</u> |

ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIVITY AREA

| ITEM | DESCRIPTION | QUANTITY | UNIT | UNIT COST | TOTAL |
|------|--|----------|------|-----------|------------------|
| 1 | DOUBLE RAMADA TYPE "B" | 2 | EA | \$55,000 | \$110,000 |
| 2 | COMMUNAL FIRE RINGS | 2 | EA | \$2,000 | \$4,000 |
| 3 | COMFORT STATIONS | 1 | EA | \$60,000 | \$60,000 |
| 4 | ASPHALT ROADWAY, 24' WIDE | 910 | LF | \$50.00 | \$45,500 |
| 5 | DRAINAGE STRUCTURES | 2 | EA | \$5,000 | \$10,000 |
| 6 | ASPHALT PARKING AREAS | 2,430 | SY | \$10.00 | \$24,300 |
| 7 | SINGLE CURB, MAG 222 TYPE "A" H=6" | 725 | LF | \$7.00 | \$5,075 |
| 8 | PRIMITIVE CAMPSITES | 22 | EA | \$2,000 | \$44,000 |
| 9 | MISC. ITEMS (DUMPSTER, ENCLOSURE, ETC) | 1 | LS | \$15,000 | \$15,000 |
| | | | | | <u>\$317,875</u> |

CONSTRUCTION COST ESTIMATE (continued)

COMFORT STATION REPLACEMENTS

| ITEM | DESCRIPTION | QUANTITY | UNIT | UNIT COST | TOTAL |
|------|----------------------|----------|------|-----------|-----------|
| 1 | REPLACE OLD WITH NEW | 6 | EA | \$60,000 | \$360,000 |

PICNIC LOOPS

| ITEM | DESCRIPTION | QUANTITY | UNIT | UNIT COST | TOTAL |
|------|--|----------|------|-----------|--------------------|
| 1 | DOUBLE RAMADA TYPE "B" | 7 | EA | \$55,000 | \$385,000 |
| 2 | SINGLE RAMADA TYPE "B" | 15 | EA | \$17,000 | \$255,000 |
| 3 | COMFORT STATIONS | 6 | EA | \$55,000 | \$330,000 |
| 4 | ASPHALT ROADWAY, 24' WIDE | 4,925 | LF | \$50.00 | \$246,250 |
| 5 | DRAINAGE STRUCTURES | 8 | EA | \$5,000 | \$40,000 |
| 6 | ASPHALT PARKING AREAS | 9,900 | SY | \$10.00 | \$99,000 |
| 7 | SINGLE CURB, MAG 222 TYPE "A" H=6" | 3,785 | LF | \$7.00 | \$26,495 |
| 8 | UTILITIES (WATER/ELECTRIC) | 4,925 | LF | \$10.00 | \$49,250 |
| 9 | MISC. ITEMS (DUMPSTER, ENCLOSURE, ETC) | 1 | LS | \$30,000 | \$30,000 |
| | | | | | <u>\$1,460,995</u> |

PARK HEADQUARTERS

| ITEM | DESCRIPTION | QUANTITY | UNIT | UNIT COST | TOTAL |
|------|--|----------|------|-----------|------------------|
| 1 | PARK HEADQUARTERS BLDG. | 1 | LS | \$125,000 | \$125,000 |
| 2 | MULTIPLE USE BLDG. | 1 | LS | \$80,000 | \$80,000 |
| 3 | ASPHALT PARKING AREAS | 4,500 | SY | \$10.00 | \$45,000 |
| 4 | SINGLE CURB, MAG 222 TYPE "A" H=6" | 900 | LF | \$7.00 | \$6,300 |
| 5 | MISC. ITEMS (DUMPSTER, ENCLOSURE, ETC) | 1 | LS | \$16,000 | \$16,000 |
| | | | | | <u>\$272,300</u> |

DESERT HABITAT EDUCATIONAL CENTER

| ITEM | DESCRIPTION | QUANTITY | UNIT | UNIT COST | TOTAL |
|------|--|----------|------|-----------|------------------|
| 1 | DOUBLE RAMADA TYPE "B" | 1 | EA | \$55,000 | \$55,000 |
| 2 | CLASSROOM/EXHIBIT BLDG. | 1 | LS | \$17,000 | \$17,000 |
| 3 | PICNIC SITES | 14 | EA | \$1,200 | \$16,800 |
| 4 | AMPHITHEATER | 1 | LS | \$55,000 | \$55,000 |
| 5 | ASPHALT ROADWAY, 24' WIDE | 1,000 | LF | \$50.00 | \$50,000 |
| 6 | DRAINAGE STRUCTURES | 3 | EA | \$5,000 | \$15,000 |
| 7 | ASPHALT PARKING AREAS | 3,700 | SY | \$10.00 | \$37,000 |
| 8 | SINGLE CURB, MAG 222 TYPE "A" H=6" | 1,650 | LF | \$7.00 | \$11,550 |
| 9 | UTILITIES (WATER/ELECTRIC) | 1,300 | LF | \$10.00 | \$13,000 |
| 10 | MISC. ITEMS (DUMPSTER, ENCLOSURE, ETC) | 1 | LS | \$20,000 | \$20,000 |
| | | | | | <u>\$290,350</u> |

MASTER PLAN USAGE

The Master Plan has been conceived as a flexible document. There are tracts of land which are designated as "Future Use Areas" and may be utilized to meet the long range future demands of UMRA users. The plan should be periodically reviewed to assure that it continues to meet the needs of Usery Mountain Recreational Area users. This Master Plan reflects current recreational needs and trends, which may require changes in the future as recreational activities change.

The goal is to allow for planned development of adequate facilities with reasonable capital and maintenance costs, and to encourage the use and enjoyment of the park with minimal intrusion into its natural beauty.

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APPENDIX

Public Participation

Public meetings were held on May 23, 1991 and December 3, 1991.

Included in the following are pages 1 and 2 of a questionnaire that was distributed at the May public hearing, for completion and return in self addressed, stamped envelopes.

A total of 107 completed questionnaires were received and summarized with results relating to the specific questions. These summarized results are included in numbered pages 1 and 2.

Along with results of the questionnaires, recommendations from interviewed local governmental agencies and Maricopa County Parks & Recreation Department Staff provided the basis for formulation of the Master Plan.

Also included are minutes of the May and December meetings. Each meeting was video taped for a permanent record of proceedings.

USERY MOUNTAIN RECREATION AREA
MASTER PLAN
QUESTIONNAIRE

Name: _____ Address: _____

(Return to: Brooks, Hersey and Associates, Inc., 5246 S. 40th St., Phoenix AZ 85040 by June 7, 1991)

1. How often do your family members visit Usery Mountain Recreation Area? (circle one)
- | | | |
|-----------|--------------|-------------|
| a. Daily | c. Monthly | e. Annually |
| b. Weekly | d. Quarterly | f. Never |

2. What groups do you or your family belong to that would be interested in having some input to the future uses of Usery Mountain Recreational Area?

3. What issues and concerns are most important to you in regard to the future uses of Usery Mountain Recreational Area?

4. Which activities or features do/would you or your family like to see available in Usery Mountain Recreation Area?

| ACTIVITIES/FEATURES | YES | NO | NO OPINION |
|--------------------------------------|-----|----|------------|
| *a. Camping | | | |
| *b. Playground Equipment | | | |
| *c. Picnicking | | | |
| *d. Nature Trails | | | |
| *e. Native Desert Areas | | | |
| *f. Hiking Trails | | | |
| g. Handicapped Access Trails | | | |
| *h. Horseback Trail Riding | | | |
| *i. Mountain Bicycling | | | |
| j. Botanical Gardens | | | |
| k. Green Grass/Lush Trees | | | |
| l. Interpretive/Education Center | | | |
| m. Water Features: Ponds/Swimming | | | |
| *n. Archery Range | | | |
| *o. Rifle/Pistol Target Shooting | | | |
| p. Trap/Sheet Shooting | | | |
| q. Equestrian Events/Rodeo Arena | | | |
| r. Roadway Bicycling/Veladrome | | | |
| s. Golf Course | | | |
| t. Sports Facilities/Ball Fields | | | |
| u. Activity Center: Games/Exercises | | | |
| v. Concessions/General Store/Laundry | | | |
| w. Horse Rental Stables | | | |
| x. Motorcross Cycling Course | | | |
| y. Other | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |

*Existing facilities in Usery Mountain Recreation Area

USERY MOUNTAIN RECREATION AREA
MASTER PLAN
QUESTIONNAIRE
RESULTS

Name: _____ Address: _____

(Return to: Brooks, Hersey and Associates, Inc., 5246 S. 40th St., Phoenix AZ 85040 by June 7, 1991)

RECEIVED 107 QUESTIONNAIRES

1. How often do your family members visit Usery Mountain Recreation Area? (circle one)
- | | | |
|----------------|------------------|-----------------|
| a. Daily -10% | c. Monthly -12% | e. Annually -4% |
| b. Weekly -64% | d. Quarterly -7% | f. Never -1% |
- Not Marked -2%

2. What groups do you or your family belong to that would be interested in having some input to the future uses of Usery Mountain Recreational Area?

Rio Salado Sportsman Club - 43 members responded
East Valley Apache Archers- 9 members responded
Spook Hill Homeowners Assoc- 7 members responded
Sierra Club - 5 members responded
28 Other Organizations - 3 or fewer members responded

3. What issues and concerns are most important to you in regard to the future uses of Usery Mountain Recreational Area?

4. Which activities or features do/would you or your family like to see available in Usery Mountain Recreation Area?

| ACTIVITIES/FEATURES | YES | NO | NO OPINION |
|--------------------------------------|-----|-----|------------|
| *a. Camping | 78% | 14% | 8% |
| *b. Playground Equipment | 60% | 20% | 20% |
| *c. Picnicking | 94% | 2% | 4% |
| *d. Nature Trails | 97% | 3% | 0% |
| *e. Native Desert Areas | 95% | 4% | 1% |
| *f. Hiking Trails | 96% | 4% | 0% |
| g. Handicapped Access Trails | 75% | 7% | 18% |
| *h. Horseback Trail Riding | 74% | 17% | 9% |
| *i. Mountain Bicycling | 62% | 28% | 11% |
| j. Botanical Gardens | 53% | 30% | 16% |
| k. Green Grass/Lush Trees | 23% | 76% | 1% |
| l. Interpretive/Education Center | 50% | 38% | 12% |
| m. Water Features: Ponds/Swimming | 15% | 81% | 4% |
| *n. Archery Range | 91% | 6% | 3% |
| *o. Rifle/Pistol Target Shooting | 82% | 16% | 2% |
| p. Trap/Sheet Shooting | 76% | 21% | 3% |
| q. Equestrian Events/Rodeo Arena | 25% | 64% | 11% |
| r. Roadway Bicycling/Veladrome | 27% | 63% | 10% |
| s. Golf Course | 7% | 93% | 0% |
| t. Sports Facilities/Ball Fields | 12% | 84% | 4% |
| u. Activity Center: Games/Exercises | 14% | 79% | 7% |
| v. Concessions/General Store/Laundry | 19% | 75% | 7% |
| w. Horse Rental Stables | 32% | 59% | 9% |
| x. Motorcross Cycling Course | 11% | 84% | 5% |
| y. Other | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |

*Existing facilities in Usery Mountain Recreation Area

RECEIVED JUN 24 1991



Engineering • Planning
Surveying • Urban Design
Landscape Architecture

Mr. Jerry Wensloff
Project Manager
Brooks, Hersey & Associates
5246 South 40th Street
Phoenix, Arizona 85040

Re: User Mountain Recreation Area Master Plan
WLB No. 290012-2

Subject: Public Meeting Minutes
Date: May 23, 1991
Place: Red Mountain High School

The following items were of special interest.

1. Some people would like to know if an Environmental Impact Statement concerning lead shot should be implemented.
2. Visual sensitivity of roads and natural desert areas are important to local residents.
3. Local residents are interested in the "development" of the park, i.e.:
 - A. passive uses
 - B. multi-use access plans
 - C. hiking, equestrian, bicycle trails
 - D. picnic facilities
 - E. educational facilities
 - F. shotgun range
 - F. hours of park operation
4. The Pass Mountain Trail should be studied where it passes in close proximity to the proposed shotgun range.
5. The Archery Club would like 3-D shooting privileges in natural ravines. These only require space and not man-made development.

Note: There is a need to show a series of slides of proposed developments in the next meeting. This would help educate the public as to what the best uses within the park would be. It seems that the general public does not fully understand what the planning team is thinking about when park development is mentioned.



Engineering • Planning
Surveying • Urban Design
Landscape Architecture

December 10, 1991

Mr. Jerry Wensloff
Project Manager
Brooks, Hersey and Associates
5246 S. 40th Street
Phoenix, Arizona 85040

Re: Usery Mountains Recreation
Area Master Plan
WLB No. 290012-2

Subject: Meeting Minutes
Date: December 3, 1991
Time: 7:30 -10:00 PM
Place: Red Mountain High School, Auditorium
Room 405, 2601 West Brown Road
Attendees: Attached sign-in sheets

Brooks Hersey and the WLB Group presented the latest version of the Usery Mountain Recreation Area Concept Master Plan in the second public meeting. This is the first time the public was shown representative graphic material of proposed park development.

After a brief introduction and update of the on-going master planning process by Bob Landis (WLB), and the concept design presentation by Audie Hennington (WLB), the floor was opened up to public comments.

The following items were discussed:

1. FUTURE USE AREAS

Individuals would like to know if the title "Future Use Area" as designated on the plans, means future development, and if there are any written or specified types of future uses.

2. TRAIL AND NEW ROAD CONFLICTS

Some trail users believe that the proposed extension of the main park road will segment the existing multi-use trails as hikers, bicycle riders, and equestrian users would be forced to cross automobile traffic.

3. ARCHERY RANGE

Ken Schmidt, President of the East Valley Apache Archery Club, requested that the existing archery facilities be allowed to expand. He mentioned that a 10' x 12' metal target storage shed needs to be constructed, the existing fenced area could be moved 200 yards to the southeast, and an existing jeep trail could be used to move heavy archery targets used in 3-D shooting events. Peter Knotek (M.C.P.D.) mentioned that the Parks Department is looking into enlarging the existing archery area, but that developing private interests in a public park is not something that the Parks Department wants to pursue.

4. ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIVITY AREA

Residents in the immediate vicinity do not want any camping areas located in close proximity to their homes. They mentioned that day-use picnic areas would be more desirable. Some people also question the rationale of locating an activity area on the west side of Usery Pass Road. Don Thompson noted that the area could be revegetated and turned into an educational botanical area.

5. MICROWAVE TOWER ROAD

A resident voiced his displeasure that the Microwave Tower Road is no longer open to the public. It's his opinion that the roadway allowed park visitors to drive up the hill and park to enjoy a vista of the greater Mesa area. Peter Knotek (M.C.P.D.) noted that the roadway is not a County road and is not built to County safety standards. The County does not foresee continued open public use of this roadway.

6. HEADQUARTERS AREA

There was a general comment that any concessions in the headquarters area should not include things such as a proposed laundromat, but additional services would be appreciated.

7. FAMILY PICNIC AREAS

A majority of the people at the meeting accepted the general location of the proposed picnic loop drives. Ken Baker - Sierra Club and non-member hikers thought that the proposed roads near the two peaks at the south eastern side of the park were undesirable. They felt that the multi-use trails would be segmented and the natural beauty of the area would be degraded from this type of development.

December 10, 1991

Meeting Minutes

Page Four

8. GENERAL

William Peiffer, Chairman - Spook Hill Homeowner's Association, stated that he appreciated the way that the study team and Parks Department staff were listening to comments and trying to incorporate various ideas into the Master Plan. In general, he supported the plan as presented.

B:LETTERS\290012\12-5.MM