



Maricopa County

Parks & Recreation Department

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MEMORANDUM

Date: May 16, 2019
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 **March - April 2019**.

From the Office of the Director

- Vulture Mountains Recreation Area Update:** The Recreation and Public Purposes Act Lease was received from the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) on March 4, 2019. On March 27, the Maricopa County Board of Supervisors and representatives from BLM signed the Recreation and Public Purposes Act (R&PP) lease agreement for 1,046 acres located on the Vulture Mountains Recreation Area. This lease agreement provides the Parks Department approval to begin development of park facilities on this defined acreage. Park staff met with the BLM to begin operations planning discussions for the cooperatively-managed area.
- McDowell Master Plan Update:** The Parks Advisory Commission recommended approval of the McDowell Master Plan Update to the Board of Supervisors at their March meeting; the plan was approved by the Board of Supervisors on April 24, 2019. The plan replaces the outdated 1967 master plan with a more relevant plan for park visitors, neighbors, park resources and will establish the priority of park improvements for the next 10 years.

Board of Supervisors Agenda Items:

Date/Status	Tracking Number	Summary
3/13/2019 Approved	C-30-19-013-M-00	Contract with Scorpion Bay Holding, LLC for Design, Construction, Use and Maintenance of a Dock and Boathouses: Execution of a contract with Scorpion Bay Holding, LLC for the construction and maintenance of a government dock, for the exclusive use of the County and its governmental invitees within Scorpion Bay Marina.
3/13/2019 Approved	C-30-19-014-M-00	Collection Agreement with Arizona Game and Fish Commission for Government Dock and Budget Adjustment: Execution of a Collection Agreement between the County and AZGFD for their share of the design and construction of a government dock at Scorpion Bay Marina.
3/13/2019 Approved	C-30-19-012-D-00	Donations: Accept donations for seven memorial benches to be placed in Utery Mountain, McDowell Mountain and White Tank Mountain Regional Parks.
03/27/2019 Approved	C-30-12-025-M-00	Recreation and Public Purpose Lease with the U.S. Dept. of the Interior Bureau of Land Management for Vulture Mountain Recreation Area: Execution of a R&PP Lease between the BLM and Maricopa County for three parcels of land (a total of 1,046 acres) on which the County plans to develop recreational facilities for the Vulture Mountain Recreation Area.

Date/Status	Tracking Number	Summary
3/27/2019 Approved	C-78-19-012-3-00	Grant of a Power Easement for SRP at McDowell Mountain Regional Park: This easement will provide electrical service for McDowell in accordance with the Park Land Disposal Policy and Procedure (Policy A2610, Section II, C.2).
3/27/2019 Approved	C-06-19-364-7-00	Donation Report for February 2019: Cash value of \$176.91.
4/24/2019 Approved	C-30-19-016-M-00	McDowell Master Plan Update 2019-2039
4/24/2019 Approved	C-30-19-015-D-00	Donations: Accept donations for eight memorial benches to be placed in Usery Mountain and White Tank Mountain Regional Parks. Accept \$5,000 donation to be used at Hassayampa River Preserve.
4/24/2019 Approved	C-06-19-428-7-00	Donation Report for March 2019: Cash value of \$1,692.35.
4/24/2019 Approved	C-30-19-011-M-01	Consultant Agreement (Competition Impracticable MCI-351) with EPS Design Group: Execution of a Consultant Agreement for \$660,085 to provide 100% design documents for the Vulture Mountains Recreation Area.

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 through February 2019:

April			YTD	YTD
Fund Name	Fund	Type	Actual	Budget
General Fund	100	Expenditures	\$683,528.16	\$724,091.00
		Budget to Actual Amount		\$40,563
		Budget to Actual Percentage		5.60%
Spur Cross Ranch Conservation Fund	225	Revenue	\$256,177.61	\$252,208.00
		Budget to Actual Amount		-\$3,969.61
		Budget to Actual Percentage		-1.57%
	225	Expenditures	\$240,467.56	\$217,759.00
		Budget to Actual Amount		-\$22,708.56
		Budget to Actual Percentage		-10.43%
Lake Fund	240	Revenue	\$2,404,130.06	\$2,298,239.00
		Budget to Actual Amount		-\$105,891.06
		Budget to Actual Percentage		-4.61%
	240	Expenditures	\$2,214,153.46	\$2,385,675.00
		Budget to Actual Amount		\$171,521.54
		Budget to Actual Percentage		7.19%
Enhancement Fund	241	Revenue	\$5,606,647.60	\$4,867,100.00
		Budget to Actual Amount		-\$739,547.60
		Budget to Actual Percentage		-15.19%
	241	Expenditures	\$4,484,529.29	\$4,891,788.00
		Budget to Actual Amount		\$407,258.71
		Budget to Actual Percentage		8.33%

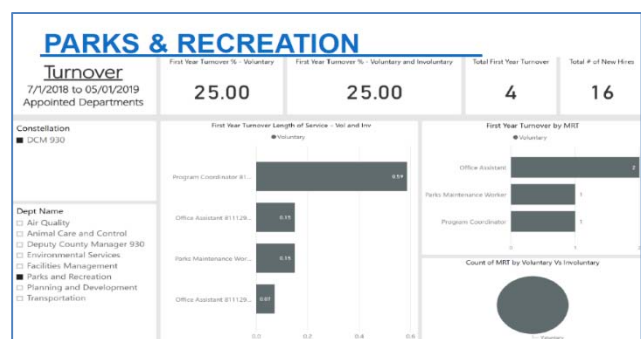
GREEN Positive variance, no concern
 RED Negative/under budget - watch

Contracts:

- **Adobe:**
 Special Use Permits Issued:
 - April 4- 7; Arizona Model Pilots Association – Fly In Event
 - May 26; Six Flags Hurricane Harbor Phoenix – Fireworks Memorial Day
 - July 3, 4; Six Flags Hurricane Harbor Phoenix – Fireworks Independence Day
- **Buckeye:** In comparison to the first four months of 2018, Arizona State Rifle and Pistol Association (managers of the General Joe Foss Shooting Range) reported an increase in attendance of 35% over the same time period for 2018 (2018 = 1,817 and 2019 = 2,453).
- **Lake Pleasant:** The solicitation for the Public Private Partnership for the Lake Pleasant Commercial Property at Highway 74 (previously presented in September 2018), is tentatively scheduled for release by July 2, 2019. A few recommended changes to the original presentation include:
 - o Invitation to Negotiate (in lieu of Letter of Expression of Interest)
 - o A \$50,000.00 bid bond to be included with each respondent's proposal.
- **Cave Creek:** For the second year in a row, the horseback riding concessionaire (Cave Creek Trail Rides) had another outstanding season (November through April) with over 7,000 participants.

Human Resources:

- **Welcome New Employees:**
 - o Gary Morical, Park Maintenance, Estrella – 3/25/19
 - o Lana Blackham, Contact Station Assistant/Temp, Estrella – 3/26/19
 - o Kelly Leanna, Contact Station Assistant, Lake – 5/6/19
 - o Ossana Wolff, Park Supervisor, McDowell – 5/6/19
 - o Casey Hogstrom, Trades Specialist – 5/6/19
- **Promotions/Transfers:**
 - o Grady Hudson, Contact Station Assistant to Office Assistant Specialize @ Lake Pleasant – 3/11/19
 - o Laura Horton, Contact Station Assistant/Lake to Office Assistant Specialize/McDowell – 4/8/19
 - o Adam Kanya, Park Maintenance Worker to Navigational Aide/Technician @ Lake – 4/22/19
 - o Jake Carpenter, Park Maintenance Worker transferred from the Lake to McDowell – 5/20/19
- **Departing Employees:**
 - o Kim Richard, Human Resource Specialist, HQ
 - o LaNella Gaines, Volunteer Coordinator, HQ
 - o John Grutzmacher, Park Maintenance Worker, McDowell
- **Open positions and recruitments:**
 - o Contact Station Assistant, Lake Pleasant – Pending
 - o Park Maintenance Worker (2), Lake – 1 offer extended, reposted for 2nd position.
 - o Volunteer Coordinator, HQ – Scheduling interviews
 - o HR Specialist, HQ – On hold
 - o Procurement Specialist, HQ – this is a new position for FY20, applications under review



Volunteer Program:

- FY19 Year-to-Date Volunteer Hours:

TOTAL Volunteer Hours, by month	July	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March	April	YTD Total	% Change
FY19 - All Hours	2754	2824	2968	4373	9230	10390	10847	13141	12575.25	7832.35	76934.6	-46.4%
FY18 - All Hours	3506	4936	49115	6682	11841	12353	13804	12148	13250	8708	143578	
Financial Impact of Volunteers, by Month	July	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March	April	YTD Total	% Change
FY19 Financial Impact	\$67,996	\$69,725	\$73,280	\$107,969	\$227,889	\$256,529	\$267,812	\$324,451	\$310,483	\$193,381	\$1,899,515	-45%
FY18 Financial Impact	\$84,635	\$119,155	\$1,185,636	\$161,303	\$285,842	\$298,201	\$333,229	\$293,253	\$319,855	\$210,211	\$3,465,973	

\$24.69 FY19 Volunteer Hourly Rate
\$24.14 FY18 Volunteer Hourly Rate

Planning and Development Division

Project Management

- Estrella Park renovations are substantially complete. All ramadas have water, lighting, electric receptacles, and grill stations for the public to reserve and enjoy. Landscaping and irrigations lines are near completion, and the Super Playground Rd, designed and constructed by MCDOT, is complete as well.

Natural Resource Management

- Natural Resource Plan: the Natural Resource Specialist (NRS) has been developing the Natural Resource Plan outline, timeline and pulling together a steering committee. The kick-off planning team meeting has been held and she continues to meeting with park supervisors and park rangers to gather input on the issues they are seeing at the parks. Staff has been providing their perspective on the challenges and issues related to the nature of the parks and prioritizing the most important issues.
- Citizen Science Projects: Staff has also been working with CAZCA to create a Desert Invaders brochure and will be providing a Desert Defenders Citizen Science (DDCC) training program to help educate volunteers involved in identifying and using their own cell phone with a GIS app to map invasive species within our parks. The first training will be at White Tank Mountain Regional Park on June 1.
- The NRS is also working with two volunteer interns that will begin mapping invasive species at our parks post DDCC training and assist with other projects such as data entry to help move the program forward. The volunteer intern is a recent graduate from ASU and is looking to gain experience in the field of natural resources and planning. She will be involved in invasive species mapping, reviewing and identifying the wildlife species from the animal cams and entering that data into the Biological Resources database. The second intern is working through Northern Arizona University and McDowell Sonoran Institute and will be receiving class credit for her volunteer work at Parks.
- Natural and biological resources: The NRS continues working on the recently created biological resource database to house flora and fauna data collected to date. In addition, a master list being created to house a listing of all wildlife and plant species within Maricopa County; this database will include other important information as to habitats, inventories, and other pertinent material.

Park and Open Space Planning

- On March 25, the Park and Open Space Planner attended the North Valley Collaborative group meeting at the Tonto National Forest office in Cave Creek. The collaborative project is hosted by the Tonto National Forest and facilitated by the Southwest Decision Resource Group. The goal of the group is to improve communication and planning, and share expertise of agency experts responsible for resource management in the north valley.
- On April 2, the Park and Open Space Planner and Natural Resource Specialist attended the ASU Career Fair for the Planning and Development majors to discuss career path strategies, listen to students and their career aspirations, and pitch parks and recreation, open space, and natural resource planning career possibilities.

Trades Crew

- The Trades Crew was instrumental in assisting with the Estrella Mountain Regional Park opening for Easter. The crew assisted with the assembly and placement of over 50 new concrete picnic tables in the week leading up to Easter. Not only did the tables need to be unloaded from semi-trucks, the tables needed to be

bolted together, picked up by the forklift and placed on a trailer, then delivered and placed in the individual ramadas.

- The Trades Crew welder assisted with the completion of the welded wire on the new Tortoise habitat at McDowell Mountain Regional Park, continued work on the Willow campsites at White Tank Mountain Regional Park, and continued the retrofit of old light fixtures to LED light fixtures in the park system.
- The Trades Crew has been repairing the north lake water tank road. The steep access road leading to the 100,000 gallon water reservoir had been badly eroded from run off during storms over the past few months.

Trails Crew

- The Trails Crew finished up work on the goat camp trail at White Tank Mountain Regional Park. The trail leads to one of the more remote areas of the park and was in need of major maintenance, erosion repair, and brush removal. The crew worked with the ACE Trail Crew and completed the bottom and mid sections of the trail over several weeks this Spring.
- The Trails Crew is continuing trail maintenance at McDowell Mountain and White Tank Mountain Regional Parks. Due to the abundant precipitation this past winter, removal of brush encroaching on the trails continues to be a priority along with erosion repair.

Maricopa Trail, Sun Circle and Trailhead Facilities:

- The following trail segments are currently in progress – 11, 12, 18, 27, 29, 32, 33, 35, 77, and 78.
- Agreement preparation/negotiations:
 - Estrella Community – Segment 33, new route. Re-wrote Agreement and sent to Community 2/28/19.
 - Bureau of Land Management – Waiting for the Travel Management Plan completion on the proposed route between Estrella Mountain Park and Buckeye Hills Park. The federal government has put this on hold.
 - City of Phoenix – Requested putting three separate IGA's into one agreement. Phoenix is researching.
 - Maricopa Water District (MWD) – Trailhead on Segment 35 at Northern Avenue. Approved by MWD in October 2018, waiting on MCDOT and developer NW of site.
 - Avondale – Met and reached agreement on the Sun Circle Trail re-route.
 - Flood Control District – Submitted plans for trailhead on Sun Valley Parkway (Segment 11) 4/23/19.
- Maintenance
 - Segment 18 – Short re-routes and erosion repair March 2019.
 - Segment 16 – Tread and erosion repair April 2019.
 - Segment 20 and 22 – American Conservation Experience (Eight days) tread repair, rock bar repair and brushing. Funding by MT+PF grant from State Parks March 2019.
- Trailheads
 - Segment 35 – Northern Avenue – waiting for MCDOT & developer.
 - Segment 11 – Sun Valley Parkway – Submitted plans to FCD 4/23/19.
- Sign Installation, Inventory and Mapping
 - Completed the following Segments: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 29 and 30.
- Route Determination – Developing alternate routes for Segment 77 Vulture Mountain to Lake Pleasant and Segment 76 White Tank to Vulture Mountain.

Parks Operations Report

Cave Creek

- In March, the park hosted 23 interpretive programs with 434 participants. The highlighted programs for the month: *Stargazing* with 80 attendees.
- In April, the park hosted 16 interpretive programs with 207 attendees. The highlighted program for the month: *Clay Mine Adventure* with 41 attendees.

Desert Outdoor Center (DOC)

- In March and April, the Center hosted 35 schools from across the Valley who brought over 2,900 visitors attending 175 interpretive programs. Some of the more popular programs selected these months were *Wind Blade Challenge*, *Dino Detectives*, *Mind Boggle* and *Air Aware*, our newest program about air pollution and

monitoring. The Center also hosted a weekend retreat, a wedding and our bi-annual Stargazing event that was attended by over 250 people.

- On April 24, the interpretive rangers from all parks took a trip to the AZ State Park Kartchner Caverns. They were able to spend time getting to know each other better and took this opportunity to ask questions and share ideas with the seasoned state park ranger that led our tour. This trip marks the start of quarterly interpretive ranger meetings that will develop consistency across our programs and improve the department's interpretive standards.

Estrella Mountain Regional Park

- Estrella's wildflowers were amazing in the first half of March. Many people came to the park to enjoy the green desert and pockets of blooming wildflowers. Overall, March was an amazing month for the park's beauty, programming, and attendance.
- On March 2 and 3, the park's staff participated in the *Tres Rios Nature Festival*. This festival hosts thousands of locals and visitors to the Tres Rios and Gila River area. The weather was great, and many people came to the Estrella Park booth to learn about the park and see the animals on display. The park's interpretive ranger was a guest speaker and had huge audiences both days. Host volunteers working at the park's entrance booth and the Nature Center commented on the number of visitors coming directly after attending the Tres Rios Festival.
- Programs for March with 30 programs for 625 participants. *Rattlesnake Solutions* had 82 people attend this early-evening program. It was amazing to see the collection of snakes that the guest instructor, Bryan Hughes, brought to the program. He also presented information on rattlesnake safety. Many of the guests remarked they have more confidence about being on the trail in the warmer months because of this presentation.
- Schools brought in 130 students for outreach; Homeschool Happenings had 20-30 participants for each program, and weekend programming was more in demand than ever.
- The park put on a celebration on March 9 for the participants in the *100 Miles in 100 Days Challenge*. The Challenge Celebration event brings all of the park's familiar hikers back together. The participants enjoyed desserts, drinks, and fellowship. Many said how thankful they are to have this program so they can meet other hikers and outdoor enthusiasts. Several people have asked how they could begin the process to become hike volunteers for the park.
- On March 30, Extreme Love Ministries (ELM) put on a fundraising running event to raise awareness and prevent human trafficking. The participants had high praises about the beauty of the park and enjoyed the spring day.
- On March 23, there was a large wedding in the Navy Area. The participants praised the new ramadas and the work by park staff in trimming the trees, grooming and preparing for the wedding.
- To prohibit shooting and OHV activities, park staff added yet more markers and signs along the north park property boundary and continued to partner with MCSO who is doing additional enforcement in the areas. One deputy reported writing four (4) tickets per day. The volume of shooting has dropped considerably.
- Spectacular cactus flowers quickly started blooming around the end of March as this year's season for stunning wildflowers went to seed. Hedgehog, pincushions, buckhorn cholla, and saguaros all gave impressive displays throughout the month.
- April programming attendance was 517 people; this is about 100 more attendees than April 2018 with offering the same number of programs each year. Programming is increasing as the park continues to improve its facilities and appearance. On April 6, the park hosted a "Stargazing for Everyone" event at the Super Ramada in the park. The total attendance was 140 people, an increase over last year's event. With 11 telescopes and a beautiful new turf area to show off.
- Consistent attendance continues with the Homeschool Happenings program, which drew 25-50 people per program this April. Also, outreaches were requested at a higher rate, possibly due to the end of the school year drawing near its conclusion. The Sun City Sportsman's club hosted the interpretive ranger for the fifth time in two years. With an attendance of 100 or more, this outreach has become very valuable as it promotes the County's Westside parks and encourages the hiking clubs to visit White Tank and Estrella.
- Easter 2019 was a warm late April day, but park visitors and their families thoroughly enjoyed the day while experiencing all the new facilities the park has to offer. The public offered many compliments about the new facilities from the new ramadas, 1-mile concrete looping path, the trees, grilling stations, tables, and the parking lots.

- The Estrella supervisor and staff worked hard with Itinio and Parks Headquarters staff to complete the mapping, numbering, signing, and entry of ramada rentals into the Point of Sale System (POS) by April 1. Things went well with the public reserving their ramada online through the POS or the Call Center for 25 ramadas.

Hassayampa River Preserve

- Record-setting attendance in March for Hassayampa River Preserve! The busy season was in full swing in March with visitation picking up significantly over the somewhat slow February. Although continued rain (.5") and cooler temperatures early in the month were factors, March's visitation was over double that of February, with the Preserve seeing 2,847 visitors for the month. This month also saw the highest-known daily visitation for the Preserve (not counting days with school group attendance) of 189 people. The river continued to run high to the delight of visitors, making a few trail segments inaccessible for most of the month.
- The interpretive ranger, volunteers, and guest presenters provided 22 programs and outreaches on-site for 357 visitors. Highlights included the new *Dutch Oven Cooking Demonstration* and a *Discovery Station* hosted by representatives from the Arizona State Forestry Champion Tree program. Preserve staff and volunteers also participated in a second wildlife viewing event with the Town of Wickenburg. All Vulture's Eve highlighted the spring migration of turkey vultures through the Wickenburg area. Despite a cold and windy afternoon, 225 people stopped by the pedestrian bridge in downtown Wickenburg to see the hundreds of turkey vultures soaring overhead and roosting in nearby trees.
- In addition to public programs, the interpretive ranger, several interpretive rangers from the Desert Outdoor Center, and volunteers led field trips for several school groups. The Preserve also hosted Arizona Project WET, who provided two STEM-based school field trips for approximately 175 students.
- Preserve staff and HQ staff/management met with US Fish and Wildlife Service and Arizona Game and Fish Department biologists to discuss best resource management practices for the Preserve, especially about protecting habitat of several endangered bird species known to nest at the Preserve. The interpretive ranger and volunteers also installed 25 Lucy's Warbler nest boxes around the Preserve as a conservation and citizen science monitoring project. Friends of Hassayampa, through the Tucson Audubon Society, purchased the nest boxes.
- The Preserve's dedicated volunteers were recognized at the annual Volunteer Appreciation lunch held in the garden outside the Visitor Center and surrounded by singing birds and blooming flowers. Staff thanks them all for their service and truly appreciates all they do to make the Preserve a beautiful and welcoming place. The Friends of Hassayampa (FOH) also held their annual meeting and potluck at the end of the month, followed by the Interpretive Ranger leading a nature walk and tour of the projects that were supported by FOH, including the Lucy's Warbler nest box project.
- Spring bird migration is picking up with several migrant and seasonally resident birds seen at the Preserve in recent weeks. With the warmer weather, tortoises and numerous lizards have also been seen basking in the sun. The end of the month saw the re-opening of all the trails as well as the season's first rattlesnake sighting.
- April remained busy but saw the beginning of the summer season slowdown. The Preserve welcomed 1,743 visitors for the month. The interpretive ranger, volunteers, and guest presenters provided 18 programs for 226 visitors. Program highlights included several bird walks and *Birds 'N' Brunch*, taking advantage of the many migratory birds moving through the area and the return of many of the summer resident birds. Park staff and volunteers educated passing visitors with Earth Day and Arbor Day Discovery stations. Also, the interpretive ranger and volunteers provided seven outreach programs to school groups and other organized groups. Visitors this month enjoyed the interpretive garden in front of the Visitor Center which was in full bloom and teeming with birds, lizards, insects, and the occasional snake.
- Park staff was interviewed by Cox Communications to be featured on their *Doing Good* online magazine format show that highlights good things happening in the community. The Preserve's Earth Day programming was also featured in the Arizona Republic.
- Park staff and members of the leadership team continued to work on resource management planning for the Preserve, including a meeting with the AZ Department of Forestry and Fire Management (DFFM) to discuss fire management planning and future fuels reduction projects.
- The final phase of construction of the host volunteer RV pads began at the end of the month.

Lake Pleasant

- Lake Pleasant offered 43 interpretive programs during March and April to 1,181 program attendees. Highlights for the months included the *Wild Burro Hike*, *Cray Fish Exploring*, *Fishing 101*, *History of Lake Pleasant*, and the *Sunset and Full Moon* hikes/paddles.
- In March, the park, in collaboration with Aravaipa Running, hosted the *15th Annual Dam Good Run* to the delight of 423 event participants. This race offers visitors a unique experience for the only day of the year in which you can walk or run across the dam and take in amazing views from the various trails encompassed on the race route.
- The park hosted its *10th Annual Paddlefest* event in April and welcomed over 1,000 participants and approximately 500 spectators to experience all things non-motorized watercraft. A complete array of activities were available for visitors to partake in to include a fishing tournament, build a boat challenge, music/concerts, tutorials, and so much more. Special thanks to the Lake Pleasant Interpretive Rangers for their efforts to plan and implement a great event. Great job!
- Unfortunately, after four (4) attempts, the bald eagles were unsuccessful in creating offspring this season. Papa eagle is still a little new to the parenting gig and hopefully learned some valuable lessons about helping mama eagle better next season. Pesky ravens consumed two (2) of the eggs, a gray fox devoured one (1) egg, and the last egg was likely left in the sun too long without papa eagle doing his job and cracked by momma eagle shifting her weight in the middle of the night. We are hoping these life lessons will lead to a successful 2020 nesting season. Despite the misfortune, the bald eagle camera was a huge success in showing the struggles in nature and even offered new observations of behaviors never witnessed before by the raptor management team at Arizona Game and Fish Department. Due to the multiple clutch attempts and the late time of the breeding season to render another clutch, the bald eagle closure of the Agua Fria arm has been lifted early for the season.
- An Eagle Scout completed a trail improvement project at the Agua Fria Conservation Area on the Bald Eagle and Agua Fria Trails. The Scouts helped trim back excessive vegetation growth, erosion control, and repair damaged sections of trail.
- Staff continue to work with the various agencies (e.g. Bureau of Reclamation, Central Arizona Project, Maricopa Water District, etc.) at Lake Pleasant to develop a uniform and universal spill response plan; capturing the needs of the various entities and ensuring clear and proper protocols/responses are adhered to in relation to hazardous waste spills.
- The Lake Pleasant Discovery Center playground build is growing with anticipation. The playground equipment has been delivered and mostly installed with a few more items needed to check off the to-do list. Children (and adults, too) are going to love sliding down the bald eagle and Gila monster slides, climbing the cottonwood tree climber, swinging under an eagle nest and spinning around a red-tailed hawk. Sidewalks leading to the playground area were added, as well as renovations to the section running to the downstairs patio, Roadrunner Trail and Amphitheater to meet today's ADA standards.
- Special thanks to Cave Creek, McDowell and White Tank parks for their assistance with staff coverage while the park has been short-handed due to staff vacancies.

McDowell

- During March, there were 17 interpretive programs with 215 people in attendance. The two (2) most popular programs were the *Birds of Prey* program with 41 people in attendance and *Reptiles of AZ* with 38 people in attendance.
- Ranger Amy participated in the Fountain Hills Dark Sky Festival; she provided park information and answered questions; 571 people were in attendance.
- Six (6) special events took place during March:
 - *Hike for the Homeless* had approximately 425 people participated, plus nearly 150 spectators were in attendance.
 - *Mountain to Fountain* took place with nearly 700 people participated in this 15K endurance run.
 - The *Cactus Cup* event occurred; one competition took place each day including the *Fat Tire 40*, which took place on Saturday. 647 people participated in this 3-day event.
 - *Snakebite 30K* occurred with 66 runners participating.
 - Winnebago Club Rally, a new event in 2019, occurred in the Four Peaks Trailhead with club members camping over the three (3) days. Members attended educational and instructional seminars conducted by various companies who manufacture components for the Winnebago. 108 people participated.

- Bike MS took place; cyclists had a choice of six different routes, ranging from 36 miles to 104 miles. New this year, a mountain bike portion was added on the Pemberton Trail. Other routes took participants from McDowell Park and throughout the east valley. A total of 265 people participated.
- McDowell Park hosted the *100 Miles in 100 Days* celebration with a shirt giveaway presentation plus appetizers and sweet treats, 15 people joined the party.
- The east side parks decided to combine the Park Host celebration for McDowell, San Tan and Usery Parks this year. Park hosts were treated to a BBQ lunch cooked by the staff at McDowell Mountain Regional Park. This was a great opportunity for hosts from different parks to meet each other. Staff provided kudos and tokens of appreciation to each of the 45 hosts.
- The campground continued to be at capacity during March, and also, the overflow camp area was also at capacity several times with 12+ camping units. The tent camping area continually remained full during March.
- During April, 15 interpretive programs were held at the park with 286 people in attendance. The most popular programs were *Lunch with the Locals – Reptile Feeding* with 32 in attendance and *Meet a Desert Tortoise* with 17 people in attendance.
- *Stargazing for Everyone* took place with 90 people in attendance
- The park hosted an *Earth Day* celebration in April. The event had 21 people in attendance, removing invasive plants and trimming trees at the Nursery Tank. A total of fifteen 55-gallon trash bags of invasive species were removed!

San Tan

- San Tan hosted 27 programs in March with 971 participants. Highlights for the month include 60 attendees for the *100 Miles in 100 Days Challenge Celebration*, a program high of 36 participants in the *Sunset Yoga* class and 67 enthusiasts for a morning *Critter Feeding*. Winter rains provided a robust wildflower season, producing blooms not seen in the park for several years. These conditions helped to attract 40-50 participants to each of three Wildflower Hikes that took place throughout the month. The big attraction in March was the *Sunset and Full Moonrise Hike*, bringing in a potentially record-setting 364 participants.
- San Tan hosted 19 programs in April with 334 participants. Included in this was the park's first collaboration with Rattlesnake Solutions, an educational organization and relocation service that has presented at several other County Parks recently. Ninety participants learned about rattlesnake behavior, biology, and myths and had the opportunity to see five caged rattlesnake species up close.
- San Tan continued its partnership with the San Tan Valley Master Gardeners with a class on Arizona watersheds. The Gardeners provided the bulk of the educational materials and the park supplemented with take-home workbooks provided by the Maricopa County Environmental Services Stormwater Quality Program.
- Aravaipa Running hosted its annual overnight Sinister Night Run. New this year, Aravaipa added an overnight bike ride – the Sinister Night Ride – the night before the foot race. The two events totaled 480 participants and volunteers.

Spur Cross

- In March, the park hosted 19 interpretive programs with 595 participants in attendance. The highlighted program for the month: *Archeology Expo* with 431 attendees.
- In April, the park hosted 17 interpretive programs with 139 participants in attendance. The highlighted program for the month: *Full Moon Hike* with 29 attendees.

Usery

- Usery Park offered 27 interpretive programs in March totaling 1,525 participants and 18 interpretive programs in April totaling 679 participants.
- The park hosted the *100 Miles in 100 Days* celebration in March. 79 participants completed the challenge from Usery Park, and 77 of those finishers attended the celebration to talk about their experience during the 100 days and to pick up their official t-shirt for completing the challenge.
- *Stargazing for Everyone* program was held in March, and 250 participants joined us for an evening under the stars.
- The *Supermoon Full Moon* hike was offered in March with 155 people participating, and 125 attended our *Full Moon* hike in April.

- The Park Ranger Brennan helped out at the 2019 AZ Game & Fish Outdoor Expo at the Ben Avery Shooting Facility. Maricopa County Parks and Recreation set up a booth at the event and provided information on county parks. Over 52,000 people were in attendance at this year's Expo.
- The Utery State FITA Field Championship was held at the archery range in March with over 100 of the best archers from around the state participating in this competition.
- The Buckhorn Campground was 100% full during March and 98% full during April.
- In April, Ranger Brennan's *All about Butterflies* program drew 70 participants and his *Night Safari Walk* had 111 people in attendance.
- The Department received an email complaint regarding what an individual thought he heard; that the area designated to shoot broadheads at the Utery Archery Range was going to close. The park supervisor responded by explaining there was a meeting with several members about the condition of the area and that it needed repairs. The area was not closed and is not closing. The park is working with staff and archery users to address any concerns.

White Tank Mountain Regional Park

- Record-setting attendance recorded in March! Warmer temperatures, Spring Training, spring break, and this year's beautiful and abundant display of wildflowers all combined to make March the busiest month ever recorded for the park. Attendance was a whopping 58,215 people, an increase of 11,521 from March of 2018! The White Tank Family Campground was at capacity the entire month with campers spilling into the overflow camping lot at the Competitive Track most weekends. Warmer temperatures also brought an increase in snake activity. In one day, White Tank had a record seven separate rattlesnake sightings on trails throughout the park and near the Nature Center.
- In March, White Tank Park offered 21 interpretive programs for 779 visitors attending. At this time of the year, one of the park's Canadian volunteers, Keith Akenhead, leads Willow Springs interpretive hikes that are a great addition to the program lineup. Keith provides visitors with a beautiful 7-mile round trip hike up Mesquite/Willow trails combined with the storytelling of the area that helps hikers envision what the Willow Springs farm used to consist of historically. The interpretive ranger's "Find the Ranger" on Waterfall Trail is also a huge success as he stations himself trailside and is an informal resource for visitors. In March, he talked with 120 people during each 2-hour open house style program on the Waterfall Trail.
- Two (2) large special events were hosted at White Tank in March; both events had record-breaking participant numbers. Aravaipa Running hosted their Mesquite Canyon trail runs at the park on March 9 with 470 runners and was a smoothly run event. The Mountain Bike Association of Arizona (MBAA) hosted their event on March 23 that attracted 653 riders and was also a safe and successful event. As events like MBAA grow in size and bring in a large influx of campers who stay in the competitive track parking lot for the event, it is becoming necessary to ask the special use permit holder to purchase the Group Campground as overflow parking to accommodate the high amount of vehicles that come into the area for the event. This year was the first year this procedure was tested and it worked beautifully with not one car parking illegally along the narrow edge of the main park road.
- In April, White Tank Park offered 18 interpretive programs with 766 attending. *Cactus Walks* with volunteer Cindy Smith were successful each week as park visitors were able to experience the transition from wildflower season to cacti blooming season. Sixty-eight excited Scorpion Searchers joined the interpretive ranger in his first warm weather scorpion hike of the summer. White Tank also hosted a very-well attended *Stargazing for Everyone* on April 27. It was a beautiful, warm, and clear night with 368 aspiring astronomers joining.
- One of the park concessionaires, Ninja Mountain Biking, hosted a mountain biking skills clinic at the park the weekend of April 13. This brought in several new campers and cyclists to the park who had no idea it was even here! Race Timers also hosted their last trail running race of the Cactus Cup Series at White Tank on April 20. Numbers have yet to be reported, but the race seemed to be smaller this year due to the warmer temperature on race day.
- Easter was so late in April this year that it seemed much slower than in the past. That being said, every ramada was reserved for the day, and as usual for Easter Sunday, park users enjoyed picnicking at the many individual tables throughout the park that are often not used the rest of the year. Overall, park attendance for the day was 2,228 people, almost 800 more than the previous Sunday.
- Even with educational handouts, trash bag handouts, and a preemptive email highlighting the park rules to ramada reservation holders, Easter trash in the park was disappointingly consistent with every Easter.

Friends of White Tank Park hosted an After Easter Cleanup the Monday after Easter. Friend's members, White Tank Mountain Conservancy volunteers, and REI Distribution Center employees made up the majority of the 26 volunteers who spent their morning cleaning dried eggs off of tables and picking up the micro-trash typical of Easter - confetti and water balloon bits. The park is extremely thankful for their help in restoring park facilities to clean and trash free!

- An Eagle Scout project was completed by Surprise Troop 921's Trevor Quinn the last weekend of April. Trevor worked with the interpretive ranger to install a drip irrigation system in the gardens outside of the Nature Center. Several years ago, a volunteer group installed a Monarch Wayfair Station and Butterfly Garden in the area east of the tortoise habitat. This area has not been without its challenges due to the harsh conditions of a southwest-facing location and lack of consistent moisture that a proper watering system can provide. Staff members are excited to see Trevor's hard work pay off in the coming years as the plants begin to succeed with the new watering system now in place.