



# Maricopa County

## PARKS & RECREATION DEPARTMENT

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### MEMORANDUM

**Date:** October 15, 2015  
**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 from July through September 2015.

#### From the Office of the Director

- **Scorpion Bay Marina:** The Board of Supervisors approved the assignment of the Use Management Agreement for Scorpion Bay Marina from Lake Pleasant Marina Partners LLC to Scorpion Bay Holdings, LLC, wholly owned by Desert Troon Companies of Scottsdale. We are excited to welcome the new owners and the capital dollars that will be invested to improve and expand the existing marina.
- **Legacy Sports Complex at Adobe Dam:** The final draft Use Management Agreement was provided to Legacy in late September. Special thanks to our Trades Crew who did an excellent job working with the project engineers in completing the Well Water Use and Management Program report. This report defined the process of importing non-potable irrigation well water from the Parks' well site to a proposed lake to be constructed by Legacy Sports. This report was vital to finalize the Use Management Agreement.
- **Prickly Pedal Mountain Bike Race on the Maricopa Trail:** The race website and registration page are now live. Event sponsorship efforts have been extremely productive and the Maricopa Trail and Park Foundation are working hard to produce a first rate inaugural event. Please visit the website for additional information.



[www.pricklypedal.com](http://www.pricklypedal.com)

#### Administration

##### **Budget Status (through September 2015 close):**

- Enhancement Fund (241) – Agency 305:
  - Enhancement Fund reported revenues 6% or \$46,416 over the YTD budget of \$841,697.
  - Enhancement Fund reported expenditures 11% or \$129,190 under the YTD operating budget of \$1,179,828 for expenditures.
- Lake Fund (240) – Agency 302:
  - Lake Fund reported revenues 7% or \$52,771 under the YTD budget of \$716,516.
  - Lake Fund reported operating expenditures 16% or \$108,749 under the YTD budget of \$655,883
- Spur Cross (225) – Agency 306:
  - Spur Cross reported revenues at 1% or \$723 under the YTD budget of \$57,070.
  - Spur Cross reported operating expenditures .5% or \$367 under the YTD budget of \$67,298.

## **Administration continued**

### ***Finance Program:***

- Annual asset and capital inventory was completed for the DOC and Usery.
- Purchase card (P-Card)/procurement processing information was presented to the Trades and Trails group in August.
- Re-calenderization of FY16 Staging Revised Budget was completed in July. This is an annual occurrence when the Department is able to go into the budget that was submitted in February and make any needed adjustments to align the budget more closely with the known actuals of the Department in July (vs. January when most of the budget is developed).
- Finance staff continues to attend a variety of CGI implementation meetings. The new CGI system will replace the County's current financial, budget, procurement, and strategic planning systems. Work has begun on Parks specific needs for the new system with a list of revenue and expenditure accounting codes submitted in late September.
- With the new POS system in place, work was needed to reestablish the correct procedures and processes to reconcile revenue, provide refunds, etc. from the old system.
- Parks was notified in September by the Office of Management and Budget that we have been selected to complete Zero Based Budgeting (ZBB) for FY17. This system requires the Department to start with a \$0 budget and build upwards, demonstrating our needs for staffing, supplies, capital improvements, etc. This new process pushes our budgeting timeframes forward by two months.

### ***Contracts:***

- **Lake Pleasant Regional Park:** Staff is currently working with the City of Peoria in analyzing the findings for the Draft Lake Pleasant Resort Development Summary Report prepared by Capital Hotel Management (CHM). This report provided observations and findings for the market, investment, and financial analyses of a resort development at Lake Pleasant Regional Park.
- **Estrella Mountain Regional Park (EMRP):** The Use Management Agreement for Estrella Youth Sports (EYS) has been executed by EYS and is currently scheduled for approval by the Board of Supervisors at their November 7<sup>th</sup> meeting. This agreement will provide for the upgrade and expansion of our existing baseball fields with additional future phases. Additional amenities and future multipurpose fields are contingent upon market and financial feasibility and the final approval of the EMRP Master Plan Update.
- **Adobe Dam Regional Park:**
  - The preliminary plans for the expansion of the new Club House at The 500 Club Golf Course had been sent to the Flood Control District (FCD) for review in November 2014. The 500 Club worked with FCD on a preliminary Federal 408 Permit Application which would meet the criteria for the Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE). FCD submitted the preliminary plan to ACOE for approval on July 30; we are still waiting for ACOE comments.
  - Sahuaro Railroad Preservation Society and Maricopa Live Steamers requested to replace their gravel driveway with asphalt in March, 2015. This request was also sent by FCD to ACOE on July 30, 2015. We are still waiting for ACOE comments.

### ***Human Resources:***

- **New Hires or Transfers:**
  - Welcome to Patricia Telin, Park Office Assistant Specialized at White Tank (August)
  - Welcome Charles Brenden as the new Trades Specialist Supervisor (September)
- **Farewells:**
  - Bob Skaggs, Trades Specialist, retired in August 2015.
  - Danny Manies, Electrician, left Parks to pursue a position with Facilities Management.
  - Michele Kogl, Planning and Development Division Manager, left Parks to pursue a position with MCDOT.
  - David Carrillo, Park Maintenance, retired in September, 2015.
  - Jessica Scalzitti, Contact Station Assistant at Lake Pleasant, left Parks for a different employment opportunity.

- **Open positions and recruitments:**
  - Park Maintenance Supervisor (Lake) – Position accepted, starting 10/12/15.
  - Planning and Development Division Manager – interviews underway.
  - Electrician – interviews underway.
  - Trades Specialist – pending recruitment.
  - Souvenir Coordinator – pending update to position by Compensation.

**Information Technology:**

- On August 19, 2015, the new POS system (Itinio) went live. The first few days we a bit rough with some credit card and annual pass issues.
- The new touch screen POS unit arrived and is currently being tested at Lake Pleasant. It appears these units are well suited for the entry station windows and will be purchased to replace the current non-touch screen units.
- Work has begun to replace approximately 35 POS computer units at the parks. This project is planned and budgeted in FY16. The new computers will replace the existing POS units purchased in 2010.
- Telecomm billing is now being Journal Vouchered (JV'd) to each park/department. Until this point, all charges were recorded against Administration. The telecomm billing covers the phone, internet, cellphones, data and voice work orders.

**Souvenir Fund:**

- The new POS system has required a great deal of time checking barcodes for accuracy. With the significant changes to the product line in an effort to clear out older merchandise, there are many items that need to be placed on clearance and much clean up to do at the individual parks.
- New products for FY16 have started to arrive. The custom shirts “Advice from the Sonoran Desert” and “Advice from a Sunset” have been met with mixed reviews by park staff. The new name drop shirts and hoodies have so far received positive comments.
- After review of the financial data for the Souvenir Fund over the last several years, it has been determined that the best use of the additional revenue is to begin to hire temporary staff at several parks. The existing Coordinator position will be reduced to one day/week to provide administration oversight while two or three new part time positions will be created to assist with revenue collection at the parks. The paperwork for the Coordinator and one of the new positions – for White Tank – have been forwarded to Compensation and may be posted as soon as November if everything continues to move forward.

**Volunteer Program:**

- All parks are filled with hosts for the season. Some hosts have even begun returning to the parks. The Maricopa Trail is still in need of a part time host and recruitment continues for community volunteers.
- The heat keeps most groups and episodic volunteers out of the parks during the summer. However, there were several new groups signed up to help starting in September and October.
- September 26<sup>th</sup> was National Public Lands Day. This is celebrated with an annual shoreline clean-up at the Lake and open to all volunteers. 246 volunteers came out to serve by land and water; some came with kayaks and scuba equipment to reach those hard to get to areas both on and in the water. They helped by picking up several large items and 60 bags of trash.
- Year-to-Date Volunteer Hours:

	Jul-15	Aug-15	Sep-15
Total Dept. Hours	3739.25	2948.5	4567.95
Financial Savings	\$86,264	\$68,022	\$105,383
YTD Hours	3739.25	6687.75	11255.7
YTD Savings	\$86,264	\$154,286	\$259,669
Prev. Year Month Total Hours	2708	3303.5	3082.75
Prev. Year YTD Hours	2708.00	6011.5	9094.25
Prev. Year Financial Savings	\$61,065	\$74,494	\$69,516.01
Number of Volunteers-current month	78	71	414

## **Planning and Development (Engineering) Highlights as of October 9, 2015**

- **Estrella Master Plan:** Staff performed its third and final youth outreach event for this project on August 16; staff met with the youth group of Mt. Pleasant Baptist Church in Buckeye and received smart and thoughtful feedback from the youth group. Staff held Stakeholder Meeting #3 on September 28 to review draft alternatives and to receive their feedback. Staff will meet with the park's "Friends" group on October 21 to receive their feedback on alternatives. Once all feedback is received, the alternatives will be further refined prior to public presentation.
- **Vulture Mountain Update:** Staff is continuing to coordinate with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the Department of Transportation (MCDOT) on refining the roadway design for the day-use, camping and off-highway vehicle (OHV) areas.
- **System Wide:**
  - The refurbishment of all (~75) restrooms (RRs), for all the parks began in January 2014. The project is expected to take four years and cost ~\$4 million. With the help of two "Job Order Contract" (JOC) contractors, staff is working to standardize interior and exterior finishes and hardware improvements throughout the park system.  
The JOC contracts expired June 30, 2015. The procurement contract was sent out for bid; the original two contractors, along with one new additional JOC contractor, have been approved.  
Current Status: 7 RR's (all) are complete at Cave Creek; 1 RR is complete at Estrella; 7 RR's (all) are complete at McDowell; 2 RR's have been completed at Usery; 10 RR's (all of the "older" ones) are complete at White Tank; and 5 RR have been completed at Lake Pleasant. Work has begun on one restroom at Lake Pleasant and one restroom at Usery.
- **Maricopa Trail and Trail Facilities:**
  - The following trail segments are currently being worked on: 9, 11, 12, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 33, 35 and 78.
  - The following portions of the Maricopa Trail are in final agreement stages for perpetual easements on FCD property:
    - MCFCD - Segment 35 White Tank 3 Dam – 2.1 miles – Received 9/21/2015
    - Maricopa Water District – Segment 12 – Lake Pleasant to ½ mile south (under SR74 bridge) – 0.5 miles – Received 9/22/2015
  - The following portions of the Maricopa Trail are in process for purchase from the Arizona State Land Department:
    - Segment 35 – North and south of I-10 on the Tuthill Road alignment
    - Segment 12 – North of SR303 on Lake Pleasant Road.
    - Segment 11 – East of SR303 on Happy Valley Parkway.
  - The following portion has begun an Environmental Assessment:
    - Segment 22 – Tonto National Forest – Bronco Trailhead to Scottsdale City Limits – 14.4 miles. Maricopa Trail Manager has been designing, marking and GPSing the final alignment for the archeologist and biologist surveys.
  - Construction preparation: the Scottsdale McDowell Sonoran Preserve, on the Central Arizona Project – south of Lake Pleasant Park, El Rio, Tres Rios, Verrado and the Fort McDowell Indian Community.
  - Agreement preparation/negotiations:
    - City of Phoenix – Segment 9
    - City of Goodyear – Segment 35
    - City of Scottsdale – Segments 23, 24 25 and 26.
    - Verrado – Segment 35
    - U.S. Bureau of Reclamation – Segment 27 – Received 10/6/2015
    - City of Buckeye – Segment 35
  - Installing additional signage
  - Performing maintenance in preparation for the Prickly Pedal Race in January 2016 – tree trimming and trail grooming – Segments 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19 and 45.

- **Trades Crew:** During the last three months, the crew has replaced the pumps for the Four Lane RRs. The work on the alarm replacement at the DOC is expected to be completed the week of October 12<sup>th</sup>. Painting and relining of the water tank at the DOC has been completed along with the water line extension for the overflow/group campground at Cave Creek. Trades will begin pouring the host site pads at Cave Creek next week. Staff received training by the County's Risk Management Department for utility vehicle and utility trailer safety.
- **Trails Crew:** The Trails crew worked with Arizona Conservation Corps Crew (AZCC) in August and September on approximately 7 miles of heavy maintenance and general cleanup of trails in White Tank and Utery Parks. The crew also worked with the Town of Cave Creek to complete construction of the Connector Trail on the east side of Cave Creek Park to the Desert Foot Hills Land Trust. The AZCC crew will continue to work at San Tan, Estrella, Lake Pleasant and Spur Cross Parks.

## **Park Operations Report**

### ***Cave Creek Regional Park:***

- The park hosted 19 interpretive programs with 249 participants attending, which included 23 repeat attendees. *The Clay Mine Adventure* was one of the highlighted programs with 25 attendees. *Feeding Frenzy* was also a highlighted program with 60 attendees.
- On August 4<sup>th</sup>, four sibling great-horned owls were released at the Go-John Trailhead by the Arizona Department of Transportation and Liberty Wildlife.

### ***Desert Outdoor Center:***

- There is a demand for outdoor education in and around the Town of Wickenburg. This was confirmed after an overwhelming number of residents attended a desert survival program at Sophie's Flat (Bureau of Land Management) on April 19, 2015. In response to the success of that program, two local 501 (c) 3 non-profit organizations started a committee titled *Wickenburg Area Outdoor Education (WAOE)*. The purpose of this committee is to:
  1. Develop a database of natural science programs that meet Arizona Department of Education's academic science standards
  2. Map programs to Wickenburg area venues where the programs can be held
  3. Identify educators and natural science experts that can lead the programs
  4. Work with educators and natural science experts to develop new outdoor programs for students and the public

Since the first WAOE meeting on 5/27/15, the committee has met at 5 different venues. Each venue is a site to coordinate future outdoor education programs. They include M CPRD Desert Outdoor Center, Boyd's Ranch, Hassayampa River Preserve, Rose Garden Trail, and the Morristown Elementary Nature Trail. Other discussion topics at these meetings include creating educational outcome matrices, identifying experts to lead science programs, and grant funding resources.

Interpretive Ranger Adam continues to attend all meetings delivering program ideas.

### ***Estrella Mountain Regional Park:***

- In July, Estrella provided 13 programs with a total of 143 guests. A new program was offered called *Your Inner Snake*. Participants were invited to meet snakes, make snake-y crafts and imagine the world from the perspective of a snake. Guests had the opportunity to make blue-filtered snake masks to help them see the world in snake-like way. The Interpretive Ranger also had an outreach event at the City of Goodyear Library with 90 people in attendance. Due to its success, we are collaborating on a program series for next year. This will consist of a two-part programming involving a lecture component at the library on a weekday evening followed by an outdoor hiking component at Estrella Park that same weekend. The first two topics slated to start in January are archeology with a petrolyph hike and astronomy with a stargazing hike.

- In August, Estrella Park provided 18 public programs and hikes with 169 people in attendance. The Interpretive Ranger participated in the Phoenix Zoo's *Prowl-n-Play* event which consisted of a booth set up with activities and park promotional materials. The kids learned about animal tracking and created a poster with ideas about how to protect nature. Parents learned about the opportunities offered at Maricopa County Parks. This event had over 2,700 guests.
- In September, Estrella Park had 19 public programs with 140 in attendance. The Full Moon Hike, Nocturnal Animals Night Hike and the birding programs were especially well attended.
- On August 15<sup>th</sup>, a running event held by "Race Timers" took place at the Estrella Competitive Track. Despite the heat, 75 runners participated in the challenging desert running course.
- On September 12<sup>th</sup>, a cross country running event was held by Canyon Athletic on the park's turf area with 250 Jr. High student runners participating in the event. A second cross country running event took place on the same day at the park's Competitive Track with 150 High School runners.
- An Eagle Scout installed new signage on the Gila Trail and is creating interpretive materials for a self-guided hike along the barrier-free trail.
- The Estrella Park turf sprinkler system continues to have valve breaks resulting in down time. Department staff met in September to discuss the recommendations from sprinkler experts with the City of Goodyear's parks department. A plan of action was decided upon.
- In an attempt to reduce hiker trespass, ATV and OHV issues, park staff has been repairing fences and conducting spider trail maintenance in several areas in the park and its boundaries. Park staff, hosts and volunteers have been cleaning, weeding and trimming trees in outside areas around the park.

#### **Lake Pleasant Regional Park:**

- Lake Pleasant provided 15 interpretive programs during the months of August and September to the excitement of 290 program attendees. The highlights of the months included the *Full Moon Hike on Wild Burro Trail*, *Full Moon Kayaking*, *Know and Know* and the *Go Scorpion Hunt*.
- In September, the park hosted a Stargazing event on the evening of the total super moon eclipse. The activity attracted over 400 visitors to witness this rare occurring event which is not scheduled to occur again until 2033.
- The park also teamed up with the Desert Outdoor Center to put on five beginner kayaking or canoe classes to teach 109 participants how to learn proper techniques to operating the watercrafts, while experiencing nature from a new perspective.
- 15 Eagle Scouts brought supplies and ambition out to the Lake to paint the fire lane curbing at the 10 Lane Boat Ramp. The area looks amazing and the group was very dedicated to completing the work in a very professional and clean manner.
- The Lake Pleasant Park Supervisor attended the annual APRA Conference in Oro Valley. The conference provided a lot of really good ideas and material to bring back to the park.
- Renovations to the Discovery Center have been completed. The interpretive exhibits are still being worked on and are tentatively scheduled for completion in March 2016.

#### **McDowell Mountain Regional Park**

- Our *Summer Night Ride* series enjoyed its 13<sup>th</sup> year with nine rides held throughout the summer and 1,212 mountain bikers participating. The last ride of the summer set a one-night record of 218 participants riding under the moonlight.
- The park hosted the annual *Javelina Jangover* with 370 runners. This race is still viewed by most as practice for the 100 mile *Javelina Jundred* which takes place later in the fall.
- In our ongoing effort to link people with nature, 37 interpretive programs were conducted with approximately 250 attendees over the summer months.
- The park staff, with some assistance from the Trades Crew, finished the concrete slab work on a Bike Care Center and Bike Wash. The care center was made possible by the donation of eight primary tools to repair bicycles. The center has an air pump and a stand on which your bike is held while repairs can be made.
- All the roads and most trails in the park get extensive trimming in the summer. Less use and warm weather allow the vegetation to become problematic if not trimmed seasonally.

**San Tan Mountain Regional Park:**

- During the summer, San Tan provided 76 interpretive programs with 2,166 program participants. In July, the highlighted programs were the *Scorpion Scavenger Hunt* which attracted 200 participants alone. In August, the highlighted program for the month was the *Perseids Meteor Shower* which attracted over 175 participants! Roughly 100 people attended the candlelit service and enjoyed a beautiful ceremony put together by the Martens family.
- We have had two Eagle Scout projects and two conservation projects completed in the last three months. The Eagle Scout projects consisted of repairing and enhancing our two outdoor wildlife exhibits and an unauthorized trail closure. The conservation projects consisted of cleaning, raking and picking up trash along our trail system, as well as cleaning up dump sites along the roadways leading to the park. All four projects brought in well over 450 volunteer hours.
- Several projects are under way to help prepare us for the upcoming busy season. Projects including striping the parking lots, sealing the Nature Center floors, trail maintenance, fence repairs, painting trashcans, staining wood features, painting grills and repairing bathrooms. Our part-time maintenance staff, along with volunteers, has been working hard to complete all of the necessary work in order to enhance our park visitors' experience.
- The Arizona Conservation Corps has been working with a trails technician to help restore and repair many of our trails that were damaged over the years by storms, erosion and unauthorized use. With our monsoons coming to an end, we are beginning to assess the further trail damage within the park. Some landslide damage to the Dynamite Trail was noticed which has been repaired. The rest of the trails will be assessed and minor trail repairs will be completed by staff and volunteers. Our park visitors have taken notice of the repairs and are very grateful and appreciative of all the hard work.
- In August, the Park Supervisor, along with a Ranger Jenny, participated in a special training hosted by AZGFD. The goal was to work with other biologists, attend lectures, perform hands-on assessments and help coordinate Desert Tortoise translocation efforts. The value of this training not only helped to facilitate educational efforts in the protection of this genus, but also allowed for every one of our department's desert tortoises to be health assessed by veterinarians. All of our tortoises received a clean bill of health and staff can begin preparing them for hibernation.

**Spur Cross Ranch Conservation Area:**

- The Park hosted 21 interpretive programs over the summer with 408 participants attending.
- The highlighted programs include: *Fruit of the Desert Walk*, three walks were conducted with a total of 77 participants attending. The *Full Moon Hike* had 49 visitors participating and the *Flashlight and Backlight Tour* had 29 participants.

**Usery Mountain Regional Park:**

- Usery Mountain Regional Park offered 39 interpretive ranger programs with 1,867 participants and 2-docent lead programs totaling 73 participants. *The Full Moon Hike & Lunar Eclipse* set a new program record of attendance at the park with 424 visitors participating in the program.
- The Usery Mountain Archers completed their Thursday night archery league in August. 267 total archers participated in the 3-month program of which 40 were youth shooters.
- Park maintenance staff installed a new pond-less water feature behind the nature center designed specifically for birds. This recirculating water feature provides a shallow flowing water area which allows the birds to bath in and drink. It also provides a water source for all critters in the park.
- The Park Supervisor attended the Arizona Parks and Recreation Association (APRA) Conference and the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) Conference. The NRPA Conference fees were paid with a \$500 scholarship awarded to the supervisor last year.

**White Tank Mountain Regional Park:**

- In July, White Tank provided 17 programs with 709 attending. The Library's summer reading program has provided a successful marketing boost which now includes all of the park's interpretive programs. The programs are advertised on the Library's summer reading website. If a participating reader attended a park program, they received points towards the reading program. The *Super Scorpion Search* and *Bug Theater* brought in 115 visitors alone!
- In August, White Tank provided 14 programs and one outreach with 284 attending. In September, White Tank provided 15 programs with 535 attending.
- *Stargazing for Everyone* was another success with 210 people attending. Because of parking issues in the past, the event was moved to the Group Campground and everyone liked the new location.
- Another exciting archeology find has occurred at White Tank; an arrowhead was found off the Goat Camp Trail. Experts have identified this point as being late Archaic (pre-Hohokam), mostly likely of the San Pedro period of the Cochise Culture around 1500BC to 300AD.
- Several new volunteers at the park have earth science backgrounds and are helping us to organize data on the park's natural and cultural resources. One volunteer is also making observations at the wildlife pond as he helps the maintenance staff to do routine pond maintenance. The interpretive ranger is planning a program based on this data on the endangered pupfish and Gila minnow in the future.
- An Arizona Game and Fish officer met with park staff to review the latest hunting regulations that apply to the park.
- There has been more mountain lion activity lately and we are in discussions with AZGFD about doing a lion study in the White Tank Mountains.
- Volunteers and park staff have been working over the summer months on the Desert Tortoise Enclosure. They have dug trenches and installed water lines for drip irrigation in preparation for the planting of native flora this fall. They also installed the plastic drums for the tortoise's den. Next steps are adding sifted dirt and installing interpretive signage. The sign design is being prepared and will be sent to the sign company soon.
- The Arizona Conservation Corps has been working on rehabilitating trails this month, including Goat Camp, Mesquite Canyon, Ford Canyon and Mule Deer Trails.
- Headquarters staff assisted with new gift shop displays and a reset of the sales floor in August creating better flow for the visitors.
- Several water lines have been repaired at area 3. Heavy winds and rain in September blew several trees down on park roads, including one blocking the competitive track trail. All have been cleared. Work continues on fence lines, trail repair/improvement, minor water leaks, pond upkeep and general preventive park maintenance.
- The White Tank Conservancy continues to make progress and held a regional meeting at the Library this month.

**Vulture Mountain Regional Park:**

- The Recreation and Public Purposes (R&PP) Environmental Assessment for the proposed developed areas in the Vulture Mountains Recreation Area continues to proceed.
- Park staff has been conducting site visits to the proposed development areas for the project to walk and draft out more detailed placement for day-use facilities and campgrounds.