



Maricopa County Parks & Recreation Department

MEMORANDUM

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Date: September 16, 2021
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 **August 2021**.

Spur Cross Water Rights:

- The Town of Cave Creek and the County entered into IGA Amendment Two for the County to submit an Arizona Department of Water Resources (ADWR) Application for the Sever and Transfer of water rights within Spur Cross. The meeting with ADWR has been scheduled for September 20 to submit the application.

Board of Supervisors Agenda Items:

Date/ Status	Tracking Number	Summary
7/14/2021 Approved	C-30-22-041-X-00	Recreational Trail License Agreement with Arizona Game and Fish Commission for Maricopa Trail Segment 33: for Maricopa County to operate, utilize, and maintain a recreational trail across a portion of the AZGFD Commission owned or controlled land, known as Robbins Butte. No property interest in the use of the Trail is conveyed to the County. The term of this agreement shall be for ten years with one ten-year renewal at the option of the Commission.
8/4/2021 Approved	C-30-22-042-X-00	Donations: Accept the restricted monetary donation of \$1,050 from the Stoll Family (Orie Spegal) and from Mary Elizabeth Waldron for memorial benches to be placed within Uesry Mountain Regional Park; a \$1,125 donation from Delrose Egwu for a memorial bench to be placed within White Tank Mountain Regional Park; and a \$1,000 donation from the Sierra Club (Arizona-Saguaro Group Chapter) to the Parks Natural Resource Desert Defender Program.
8/4/2021 Approved	C-06-22-756-X-00	Donations: Accept the monthly donation report for June 2021 for the cash value of \$806.36.
8/4/2021 Approved	C-30-15-004-M-07	Amendment to Monopole Use Management Agreement with Crown Castle: Approval of additional modifications
8/4/2021 Approved	C-95-22-049-X-00	American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Expenditure Approval: Approve the following uses of ARPA funding – Parks Conservation Crew (\$800,000).
8/18/2021 Approved	C-30-15-004-M-08	Amendment to Monopole Use Management Agreement with Crown Castle: Approval of additional modifications to the communications tower at Lake Pleasant Regional Park.
8/18/2021 Approved	C-30-11-026-03-03	ADWR Application to Sever and Transfer Water Rights for Spur Cross Ranch Conservation Area: Approve and execute for Maricopa County the Arizona Department of Water Resources Application to Sever and Transfer a portion of Certificate of Water Right No. 402 within the Spur Cross Ranch Conservation Area.
8/18/2021 Approved	C-30-22-045-X-00	Transfer of Equipment from Parks to Maricopa County Transportation and from Maricopa County Transportation to Parks: the permanent transfer of ownership of trailer #240 from Parks to MCDOT and the permanent transfer of trailer #367 from MCDOT to Parks.
8/18/2021 Approved	C-64-22-301-X-00	Bid and Award for Roadway Widening Project on Vulture Mountain Area Roads: Approve the solicitation of bids for MCDOT's project to widen Vulture

		Mine Road and construct park roads that will provide motor vehicle access to the proposed Vulture Mountain Recreational Area and includes grading, paving, two bridges, drainage facilities, utility infrastructure, guardrail, intermittent curb construction, traffic signing, and pavement markings. (Joint project with MCDOT)
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Administration

Budget:

- Budget forecast data is due in October. FY22 budget reporting will begin after submission.

Contract Administration:

- **Estrella Mountain Regional Park Tres Rios Assignment:** The Letter of Expression of Interest (LOI) for an expansion of the golf course to include an 18-hole Junior National golf course (non-profit) was issued on September 1, 2021. The pre-proposal conference is scheduled for September 16, 2021, at the Tres Rios Golf Course clubhouse.

Human Resources

- **Welcome/Promotions/Transfers:**
 - Jake Carpenter promoted from Park Maintenance Worker to Water Specialist, 08/09/2021
 - Grady Hudson promoted from Office Assistant Specialized to Park Supervisor, McDowell, 08/09/2021
 - Duane Marko transferred to Parks, Electrician, 08/09/2021
 - Shelley Cathey, Contact Station Assistant, Lake Pleasant, 08/10/2021
 - Rudy Bowen, Lake Pleasant Park Supervisor, Lake Pleasant, 08/16/2021
- **Farewells**
 - Ken Vonderscher, Park Planning and Development Division Manager, 08/05/2021
 - Amanda Rothermal, Interpretive Ranger, Estrella, 08/07/2021
 - Matthew Dalton, Electrician, 08/11/2021
- **Vacancies**
 - Electrician - Offer extended and accepted, starting 09/20
 - Contact Station Assistant (3) – Reposted 09/02/2021, one offer accepted, background check in process; two positions still vacant
 - Park Maintenance Worker, San Tan, PCN 79967 – posted 9/8/21
 - Park Maintenance Worker, McDowell, PCN 17169 – posted 9/8/21
 - ON HOLD:
 - Contact Station Assistant (Temp), Cave Creek, PCN 76865
 - Contact Station Assistant, San Tan, 68857
 - Office Assistant Specialized, Estrella, PCN 18975
 - Office Assistant Specialized, Lake Pleasant, 68898
 - Interpretive Ranger, DOC, PCN 61616
 - Park Maintenance Worker, White Tank, PCN 17167
 - Park Maintenance Worker, DOC, PCN 1429
 - Parks Maintenance Worker, Usery, PCN 1416
 - Trails Specialist, PCN 33874
 - Interpretive Ranger, Estrella, PCN 1471
 - Trails Project Manager, PCN 80008
 - Park Planning and Development Division Manager, PCN 1456

Volunteer Hours (FY22 through August 2021):

TOTAL Volunteer Hours, by month													
	July	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March	April	May	June	YTD Total
FY22 - All Hours	3268	3346	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6,614
FY21 - All Hours	2,800	2,738	2,699	8,598	11,094	11,790	13,369	12,121	13,745	7,826	3,962	4,428	5,538
FY20 - All Hours	1,900	1,955	3,884	7,020	10,497	12,463	12,711	12,213	13,177	7,229	3,933	2,768	3,855
FY19 - All Hours	2,754	2,824	2,968	4,373	9,230	10,390	10,847	13,141	12,575	7,832	0	0	5,578
Volunteers, by Month													
	July	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March	April	May	June	YTD Total
FY22 Financial Impact	\$88,890	\$91,011	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$179,901
FY21 Financial Impact	\$71,204	\$69,627	\$68,636	\$218,647	\$282,120	\$299,820	\$339,974	\$308,237	\$349,535	\$199,015	\$100,754	\$112,604	\$140,831
FY20 Financial Impact	\$48,329	\$49,703	\$98,758	\$178,512	\$266,947	\$316,943	\$323,231	\$310,569	\$335,088	\$183,844	\$100,018	\$70,398	\$98,032
FY19 Financial Impact	\$67,996	\$69,725	\$73,280	\$107,969	\$227,889	\$256,529	\$267,812	\$324,451	\$310,483	\$193,381	\$0	\$0	\$137,721

Special Days of Service event listings:	Date	Attendance	Hours
Lake Pleasant - Clean-Up	7/6/2021	12	48
Cave Creek - Native Seed Garden	7/30/2021	1	2
Cave Creek - Native Seed Garden	7/31/2021	1	2
Cave Creek - Native Seed Garden	8/27/2021	2	6

Planning and Development Division

Project Management

- The Project Manager has completed the Usery Dump Station Upgrades project. This involved replacing the septic tank and sewer lines that go into the tank and inlet catchments. A new 10-foot band of asphalt was installed around the perimeter to allow larger RVs to drive through easier.
- The Adobe CAP Pump Replacement project has started. This is scheduled to be completed in September. This project involves replacing both pumps, check valves, electrical gear, and components. When completed it will ensure that The 500 Club golf course will have a dependable supply of irrigation water.

Trades Crew

- Complete rework of the Lake Pleasant Group ET bed drainage system and ditches. Due to the recent storms, the new ET beds at Lake Pleasant were flooded with water. The Trades Crew completely rebuilt the drainage system around the ET beds, ramadas, and restrooms.
- Replaced both pumps and the controller board on the Lake Pleasant Pallet Loop septic lift station. Staff also custom-made a new hole cover that will allow the system to vent correctly, extending the life of the pumps and system in general.
- Built and installed the windmill, solar, and pumps at White Tanks Park pond.
- The Trades Crew has completed 50% of the preventative maintenance (PM) on the Lake Pleasant Roadrunner campground pedestals. These pedestals are scheduled to be replaced next summer, however with the new season upon us, the crew started PMs to provide our park guests with safe, proper working electrical power in the interim.
- Began fabrication of the White Tanks pond wildlife blinds for visitor viewing.
- Adobe Dam fence repair completed after an auto accident.

Maricopa Trail, Sun Circle, and Trailhead Facilities:

- Agreement preparation/negotiations:
 - City of Phoenix – IGA for Segment 7 in review by City of Phoenix.
 - CAP – License application for Segment 76 submitted 12/15/2020.
 - WAPA (Western Area Power Administration) license applications (four) for Segment 76 approved 7/20/21. Pending submittal to Board of Supervisors.
 - MCFCD (Flood Control District) – Permits submitted for Segments 1, 27, and 35.
- Maintenance
 - Segment 22 – Sears Fire burned the north eight miles of the trail and rains have caused severe erosion. Completed major repairs on 8/9/21. New storms have caused additional damage; route will be re-assessed.
 - Groomed tread and brushed the following segments this period: 22.

- Route Determination
 - Segment 77 Vulture Mountain to Lake Pleasant – Submitted route to BLM 1/25/21. Refined new trail routes in January and April. Site visits completed April 2021. BLM representative missed the scheduled meeting in September; the meeting will be rescheduled.
 - Segment 76 White Tank to Vulture Mountain - Submitted route to BLM 1/25/21. Refined route April 2021. Site visits completed May 2021. BLM representative missed the scheduled meeting in September; the meeting will be rescheduled.
 - Vulture Mountain Recreation Area – Surveying alignment for plant removal/relocation.

Natural Resources

- The Natural Resource Specialist has been collaborating with the Central Arizona Butterfly Association and Arizona Master Naturalist Association to develop a butterfly monitoring program for the parks. The program will launch this October and includes a training workshop and monitoring butterflies at several parks; with plans to expand to more parks next year. One goal of this program will be having the park rangers incorporate the butterfly program into their scheduled programs. The program will occur biannually and on the same weekend for the spring and fall seasons. It will include a Maricopa County Park Beginners and Advanced Series brochure to help with butterfly identification. The data collected will be used to help monitor biodiversity and the health of the park systems and a citizen science project
- Work continues to improve the native seed garden biodiversity at Cave Creek Regional Park, planting more native seeds representing 15+ conservative and pollinator species. This includes two milkweed species and a third that is being grown at a nursery. Many of the conservative and pollinator species will be planted next month. This fall, the garden will host a garden preview site visit for staff and partners.

Parks Operations Report

Cave Creek Regional Park

- Staff is preparing to open the summer closure campsites by Sept 2; they are in the process of deep cleaning the restrooms, painting bathroom doors, and removing weeds from the sites.
- The staff has revised the memorial bench map locations and will be installing six benches this season. Once the bench locations are complete, Cave Creek Park will not be accepting any additional donations for memorial benches.

Estrella Mountain Regional Park

- The Office Assistant is helping at Lake Pleasant as the Lake is short-staffed in the entry station.
- Trees have put on a great deal of growth with all the rain and trimming is an ongoing activity. Also, due to the rains, weeding is a non-stop issue.

Hassayampa River Preserve

- Visitation has varied due to weather (extreme heat, rain).
- Periodic river flooding due to monsoon rains has resulted in fence repairs typical of this time of year.
- Troubleshooting and planning were completed for upcoming repairs needed before the busy season.
- A non-native tortoise was found wandering along the trail and was taken to the Phoenix Herpetological Society.
- The productive monsoon season has led to an explosion of vegetation growth, including several species not officially recorded at the Preserve. The Interpretive Ranger and park hosts have been identifying and inventorying these new plants as part of the Department's EcoBlitz program.

Lake Pleasant Regional Park

- Parks welcome the Lake's new Supervisor, Rudy Bowen. Rudy comes from the National Forest Service with over 15 years of experience with similarly busy resources. He has been diligently training on Lake operations and Maricopa County's processes.
- Ranger Casey continues to train with Ranger Terry. Since the busy lake season has slowed down somewhat, the rangers have reinstated programming while continuing their park patrols.
- A few park hosts have been training to learn the contact station operations and the point-of-sale system at the main entry to support the team at that location.
- Due to the high amount of summer monsoonal precipitation the Lake received, the maintenance crew has been very busy mitigating increased erosion in many areas around the southern end of the lake and trying to control

the abundant amount of weeds. The navigation aide team has been cruising the lake in all directions making certain that buoys are moved and placed on surfacing boating hazards with the daily drop in water levels.

McDowell Mountain Regional Park

- New Park Supervisor Grady Hudson officially transferred to McDowell on Aug 9th but will continue to assist at Lake Pleasant during the busy summer months. In addition, Park Supervisor Natalie Harper will continue to help at McDowell until returning to the Desert Outdoor Center in October.
- With all the monsoon rains, our maintenance crew of one has been working hard to keep our campsites, trailheads, and general public areas from being overgrown with weeds, which has been a difficult task as we navigate the legal use of herbicides. After monsoon season has passed, we also expect there to be much trail repair needed.
- The second *Summer Night Ride* occurred in August with 65 participants.

San Tan Mountain Regional Park

- San Tan received approximately 3.35" of rain this month.
- Park staff and a volunteer continued trail cleanup from monsoon storms.
- Three local schools with mountain bike programs have started practicing weekly on park trails with approximately 80 students and adult coaches.

Spur Cross Ranch Conservation Area

- Staff and volunteers are continuing to work on the parking lot project. 170 parking spaces have been installed; we will continue to install about 20 more spaces and signs to complete the project.

Usery Mountain Regional Park

- Buckhorn Campground Dump Station Project/Renovation was complete on Monday, August 30, and is officially back open after several weeks of closure.
- For nearly nine months, Usery Park has had continual issues regarding illegal trail use/spider trails; numerous volunteer and staff hours were spent closing these redundant trails only to find them reopened shortly after being closed. Volunteers finally identified the main culprit behind these acts. They received several pictures and video evidence of a person clearing them. MCSO worked closely with park staff and volunteers to eventually catch this person and he has been charged with several park violations. Hopefully, these unauthorized trails can finally be closed without interference.
- Two new host couples were hired for this upcoming season and will be working at the Nature Center and Entry Station.
- Maintenance staff started work in the campground, repairing several campsites from rain damage, broken tree limbs, and weeds.
- Monsoon storms have kept maintenance staff very busy with clearing roadways (several washes overran) on multiple occasions, several downed trees and/or large tree limbs throughout the park, along with the weed management around park facilities.

White Tank Mountain Regional Park

- The newly renovated pond has a new windmill fully set up and functional.
- There was no significant damage to park trails, facilities, resources, or roads with the recent rains.
- Following the second vehicle crash into the contact station, a temporary entry station was set in place. In addition, temporary lighting was installed to ensure safety at night. Demolition of the damaged building is scheduled to begin on 9/7.
- The Aravaipa night run/ride on August 13-14 called for extra staffing at the entry station to handle the influx of cars entering due to only one lane available for vehicles to enter the park. However, park volunteers and hosts worked flawlessly to execute fast and efficient entry, so participants did not wait long, and everyone was safe.