



Maricopa County Parks & Recreation Department

MEMORANDUM

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Date: January 15, 2020
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 **November and December 2019**.

- Prickly Pedal Race:** The Prickly Pedal event has been rescheduled from January 2020 to November 21, 2020, due to low enrollment numbers. This will give MT&PF (Maricopa Trail and Park Foundation) time to restructure the event to be geared more toward multi-use opportunities and for the common mountain bike rider/hiker/equestrian (e.g. families, beginner to intermediate users, locals, etc.).
- Volunteer Recruitment:** Maricopa County Board of Supervisors approved Policy A2612, *Authorized Volunteer Time* in September 2019. This policy provides County employees an opportunity to voluntarily serve at an alternate worksite on approved activities that support the County's strategic goals. With the employee supervisor's approval, all County employees are authorized to participate in one volunteer event in-lieu of their normal workday per year. Numerous volunteer projects have already been completed in the parks by dozens of County employees thanks to this excellent program.
- Parks, Trails, and Open Space Master Plan - Vision 2030:** On December 4, 2019, Operations staff attended the annual Operations meeting at the Desert Outdoor Center. The agenda included a presentation and exercise for staff to comment on the revision of the 2009 Parks and Recreation Strategic Master Plan. The revision, *Parks Vision 2030*, is a 10-year look ahead with five years of objectives to provide a conceptual framework or blueprint to strategically position the Department as the recognized leader in delivering regional parks and recreation services, opportunities, experiences, and benefits, and successfully guide the Department toward the desired future destination. This critical staff engagement piece allowed staff to participate in a SWOT analysis to create a list of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats they feel the department faces in the coming years. This information has been condensed, refined and is being utilized as a template to engage the Executive Planning Team currently working on the project. Dr. Bob Branch and Tom Rhodes are representing the Commission on the Executive Team. In the coming months, the department will also receive feedback from our stakeholder groups and then take the information out for public meetings.

Board of Supervisors Agenda Items:

Date/Status	Tracking Number	Summary
11/20/2019	C-06-20-235-7-00	Reappointment to the Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission: Approved the reappointment of Dr. Megha Budruk, representing the Member-At-Large position, through December 31, 2021.
11/20/2019 Approved	C-06-20-241-7-00	Donation Report for October 2019: Cash value of \$164.60.
11/20/2019 Approved	C-78-20-004-3-00	Ratify and Accept Equestrian Trail Dedication and Access Easement and First Amendment for the Maricopa Trail in Anthem, Approve and Accept the Second Amendment to the Easement: Ratify and accept the original easement, and the first and second amendments to the easement for the alignment of the Maricopa Trail through Anthem.
12/11/2019 Approved	C-06-20-283-7-00	Donation Report for November 2019: Cash value of \$412.60.

12/11/2019 Approved	C-30-13-018-M-01 C-30-18-001-M-01 C-30-17-028-M-01	Termination of Commercial Management Concession Agreements: Approve the termination of the CMCAs due to nonperformance with <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jacobs Well, LLC • Gordos Chucheria's • Commercial Divers International, Inc.
1/8/2020 Approved	C-06-20-330-7-00	Reappointment to the Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission: Approved the reappointment of Dr. Robert Branch, representing the District 4 position, through December 31, 2021.

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:

Budget/Financial Report: (Through December 2019)

Fund Code	Name	Appropriation Unit		Expenditures			Revenue		
		Code	Name	Appropriation	Detail Budget	Variance	Appropriation	Detail Budget	Variance
100	General	NRNP	Non Recurring Non Project						
100	General	OPER	Operating	\$880,161	\$366,210	\$513,951			
100	General	PKRR	Parks Restrooms Upgrades	\$37,564	\$7,845	\$29,719			
225	Spur Cross Ranch Conservation	NRNP	Non Recurring Non Project	\$250,000		\$250,000			
225	Spur Cross Ranch Conservation	OPER	Operating	\$294,955	\$78,683	\$216,272	\$294,955	\$114,751	\$180,204
230	Parks and Recreation Grants	OPER	Operating	\$2,200	-\$5,541	\$7,741	\$22,000	\$148	\$21,852
239	Parks Souvenir	OPER	Operating	\$396,183	\$224,809	\$171,374	\$396,183	\$139,186	\$256,997
240	Lake Pleasant Recreation Services	NRNP	Non Recurring Non Project	\$715,000	\$2,600	\$712,400			\$0
240	Lake Pleasant Recreation Services	OPER	Operating	\$3,284,085	\$1,535,621	\$1,748,464	\$3,284,085	\$1,687,939	\$1,596,146
241	Parks Enhancement	NRNP	Non Recurring Non Project	\$1,454,670	\$323,891	\$1,130,779			
241	Parks Enhancement	OPER	Operating	\$5,852,602	\$2,951,612	\$2,900,990	\$5,852,602	\$2,869,634	\$2,982,968
243	Parks Donations	OPER	Operating	\$25,404	\$12,401	\$13,003	\$25,404	\$24,789	\$615
243	Parks Donations	WMD3	Daisy Mountain And Trails	\$160,000		\$160,000			

Contract Administration:

- **Use Management Agreements (UMA)** - earlier this year, a new template was reviewed by various County Departments and finalized. After working with a future concessionaire in drafting the actual use of the agreement, staff from Parks, legal and Real Estate recognized numerous changes to the template were necessary to better protect the County's interest. The previous template has been updated with the changes.
- **Lake Pleasant** - Maricopa Water District audit resulted in \$25,696.53 of additional revenue for Lake Pleasant.
- **McDowell, Southwest Wildlife Conservation Center (SWCC)** – Staff has been negotiating an UMA with SWCC (respondent to the Letter of Interest (LOI) for the new native wildlife rescue conservation and nature center). Staff utilized the restructured UMA template and merged their LOI response into the template. The drafted UMA has been sent to SWCC for their review and comment.
- **Adobe – Phoenix Kart Racing Association / Adobe Mountain Speedway** – staff is merging the changes from the new UMA template into the draft agreement between the County and Phoenix Kart Racing Association (PKRA).
- **Special Use Permits Issued** -
 - Sahuaro Railroad Preservation Society/ Maricopa Live Steamers 13th Annual Operations Meet January 17-19, 2020.
 - Sahuaro Railroad Preservation Society/ Maricopa Live Steamers 13th Annual Spring Meet March 22-23, 2020

Human Resources:

- **Welcome New Employees:**
 - Sandra Royal, Contact Station Assistant, Lake Pleasant – 10/7/2019
 - Salvador Ruvalcaba, Park Maintenance Worker, Lake Pleasant – 11/4/2019

Volunteer Hours:

TOTAL Volunteer Hours, by month	July	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March	April	May	June	YTD Total
FY20 - All Hours	1133	1862	3392	5967	8286	8404	8	0	0	0	0	0	6387
FY19 - All Hours	2824	2968	4373	9230	10390	10847	13141	12575	7832	0	0	0	5792
FY18 - All Hours	3506	4936	4915	6682	11841	12353	13804	12148	13250	8708	3813	3422	13357
FY20 - Core Volunteers	943	1691	1811	5231	7654	7774	0	0	0	0	0	0	4445
FY19 - Core Volunteers	2625	2763	2827	4277	9172	10286	10601	13098	12384	7024	0	0	8215
FY20 - Service Volunteer Hours	190	171	1581	737	632	629	8	0	0	0	0	0	1942
FY19 - Service Volunteer Hours	129	61	141	96	59	104	246	43	221	808	0	0	331
Financial Impact of Volunteers, by Month	July	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March	April	May	June	YTD Total
FY20 Financial Impact	\$28,813	\$47,344	\$86,261	\$151,748	\$210,714	\$213,708	\$203	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$738,792
FY19 Financial Impact	\$0	\$69,725	\$73,280	\$107,969	\$227,889	\$256,529	\$267,812	\$324,451	\$310,483	\$193,381	\$0	\$0	\$1,831,519
FY18 Financial Impact	\$84,635	\$119,155	\$118,648	\$161,303	\$285,842	\$298,201	\$333,229	\$293,253	\$319,855	\$210,211	\$92,046	\$82,607	\$2,398,985

Planning and Development Division

Project Management

- The Parks Department Project Manager has met with PSOMAS Engineering and Consultants to review design and retrofits to current septic systems for improved and reliable waste water systems in the parks.
- The Parks Department dedicated the White Tank Regional Park Willow project and the dish-wash station sink project in November 2019. Department staff worked closely together with contractors to design and build the sites.
- The Vulture Mountain Recreation Area project plans are under review at the Army Core of Engineers for the alternative design analysis for Waters of the USA impacts. EPS Group, MCDOT, and their environmental consultant created the alternative design for the individual permit for the project. Staff also expects 100% project design documents in the next couple of weeks for final comments on park amenity design.
- The Parks Project Manager is working on host site construction at Lake Pleasant this month. The updated sites will include larger canopies, improved shade orientation, and improved site alignments for RV's.

Trades Crew

- Department electricians installed the new bollard walkway lighting at the Desert Discovery Center at Lake Pleasant. The completely new ADA compliant walkway is now lighted from the Discovery Center deck to the new nature theme playground.
- The Trades Crew completed major repairs to the septic system at the White Tank Entry Station. Staff replaced major sections of the sewer line from the septic tank to the ET bed.
- Trades staff assisted with projects at Utery Mountain and White Tank Mountain Regional Parks, and the Maricopa Trail Trailhead at Sun Valley Parkway.
- Trades staff installed two new E-One septic pumps at Lake Pleasant Bajada Loop. The redundant system has a back-up pump to ensure system reliability and clean and safe restrooms.

Trails Crew

- The Trails Division completed trail repairs at many parks including the Spur Cross Trail at Spur Cross Conservation Area. Heavy rains this fall and early winter damaged trails and eroded trail sections.

Maricopa Trail, Sun Circle, and Trail Facilities:

- The following trail segments are currently in progress – 1, 7, 8, 11, 16, 18 27, 33, 77 and 78.
- Agreement preparation/negotiations:
 - Bureau of Land Management – BLM has approved the use of the route and signage on the proposed route between Estrella Mountain Park and Buckeye Hills Park. Signs to be installed in February – March.
 - City of Phoenix – Draft for Segment 1 and Segment 7 was sent to Phoenix Transportation and Parks Departments, now it being forwarded through the County's Real Estate Department after the County Attorney's review.
 - Avondale – Met and reached agreement on the Sun Circle Trail re-route. Rights will be obtained via Permit.
 - Flood Control District – Received permit for trailhead on Sun Valley Parkway (Segment 11) December 2019.
 - MCDOT – Received permit for driveway construction for trailhead on Sun Valley Parkway October 2019 and at signature stage for MOU to build trails inside their right of way.
 - Bureau of Reclamation/SRP – Segment 27 Trailhead – Met on site and waiting for expense form from BOR; Starting Cultural Resource Survey for trailhead and connecting trail.

- ADOT – Submitted permit applications for Segment 8 under the new SR202 and for Segment 33 under SR85 near Buckeye Hills Park.
- Maintenance
 - Segment 16 and 18 – Major storm damage inside Spur Cross and on the Maricopa Trail is in the process of repair.
 - Segment 13, 14, 15, and 16 - Parks maintained three miles of Segment 15 and 16 in November and December 2019.
- Trailheads
 - Segment 11 – Sun Valley Parkway – Received MCDOT and FCD permit.
 - Segment 27 – Bush Highway – Trailhead design completed by MCDOT; BOR license preliminarily approved. Waiting for environmental clearance.
 - Installed six REI kiosks in December 2019 at Spur Cross, McDowell Mountain, San Tan, Queen Creek Horseshoe Park, Estrella and Lake Pleasant. They were purchased by the Maricopa Trail + Parks Foundation.
- Sign Installation, Inventory, and Mapping
 - All segments have been completed except Segment 7 (South Mountain Park) and Segment 25.
- Route Determination – Developing alternate routes for Segment 77 (Vulture Mountain to Lake Pleasant) and Segment 76 (White Tank to Vulture Mountain).

Parks Operations Report

Buckeye Hills Regional Park

- The APS subcontractor re-seeded the access roads used in the park for the construction of the newly-installed power line.
- Joe Foss Shooting range continues to report consistent and growing attendance.

Cave Creek Regional Park

- In November, the park hosted 12 interpretive programs with 103 participants attending.
- On November 6th, 31 trees were planted for the County's 13K Volunteer Program. We had four County employees from other department's assist, five Cave Creek staff members and seven hosts joined to help complete the project.
- Cave Creek Mountain Bike Race was held on November 9th, with 289 riders participating.
- The park hosted 14 interpretive programs in December with 147 participants in attendance. The highlighted program for the month was *Clay Mine Adventure* with 49 visitors in attendance.

Desert Outdoor Center (DOC)

- 22 schools visited the DOC in November and December with over 2,000 student visitors.
- Ranger John offered a new program called *Night Shift* which focused on night adaptations. The new metal animal silhouettes installed along the trail worked great for the eye-shine flashlight hike.
- Non-programming weekend visitors included five weddings, a 60th anniversary party, Notre Dame Kairos retreat and the Maricopa Community Colleges Leadership conference.
- The Park Education Supervisor attended the National Association for Interpretation (NAI) National Conference in Denver. The conference yielded many interpretive ideas that staff hopes to implement in our department, including a partnership with Arizona Game and Fish Department for a couple new programs & activities.

Estrella Mountain Regional Park

- 36 interpretive programs were held in November and December with attendance of 254 people.
- The County's new Volunteer 13K program began in December and Estrella had 12 county employees who spent the morning vigorously bagging 44 bags of trash in a problematic area along the park's north boundary area.
- Race Timers had November and December running events with 100 and 152 runners respectively.
- AERC had a December endurance equestrian race event with 65 riders.
- X-Terra had a December running race on the Competitive Track for 200 people.
- Hiking increased in November and December, particularly with the onset of this year's 100 Mile Challenge.

Lake Pleasant Regional Park

- Park attendance increased over 1% during the period and is up 6.7% in FY20 compared to FY19.
- The park offered 40 programs with 620 program participants during November and December. Highlights included *Casting Clinic for Kids*, *Archery 101* and *Holiday Campfire Sing-a-long*.
- A grand opening was held in December for the new government dock at Scorpion Bay; a collaborative effort among the marina, MCSO, AZGFD and Parks.
- Interviews are currently being held for a vacant FT Contact Assistant Position.
- Park staff continues to work with various agencies (e.g. CAP (Central Arizona Project), MWD (Maricopa Water District), Reclamation (Bureau of Reclamation), etc...) involved at Lake Pleasant to develop a spill plan for the area and conducted in-person review meetings during the month of December with the intention to have a final draft available for approval in March.
- Cox Communications volunteered with approximately 40 volunteers in December to perform a cleanup project at the lake and picked up trash along the shoreline.
- A special project was established in collaboration with Reclamation, USGS (United States Geological Survey), CAZCA (Central Arizona Conservation Alliance) and McDowell Sonoran Conservancy to create seeding plots in a severely disturbed area on the north end of Lake Pleasant. The group will also work together to identify various rehabilitation strategies to identify how these practices respond in a natural setting.

McDowell Mountain Regional Park

- The park hosted nine ranger programs with 675 people in attendance, including three days at the Fountain Hills Art Fair.
- Three (3) SUP events were held in November:
 - *Lead Follow or Get out of the Way* (equestrian) – 84 riders.
 - *12 Hours of Fury* (mountain bike) – 254 riders.
 - *Pivot Cycles Campout* (customer campout event) – 100 participants.
- Construction started on the new host site at the Group camping area.
- MBAA hosted a trail work day at McDowell with approximately 20 volunteers.
- Two (2) SUP events were held in December:
 - *McDowell Mountain Frenzy Run* and *Frenzy Hill Mountain Bike Ride* (new in 2019) had a total of 767 participants.
 - *Dawn to Dusk Mountain Bike Ride* had a total of 731 participants.
- Fountain Hills Bikes and Pivot Cycles hosted a bike demo at the Competitive Track.
- One County Volunteer 13K event took place at the park with participants from Air Quality. Trail work was completed on the Nursery Tank Trail.

San Tan Regional Park

- In November, San Tan hosted 18 programs with 366 participants.
- The Moonlight Hike brought in 135 participants.
- Twenty-eight people enjoyed a guided *Afternoon Turkey Hike* two days after Thanksgiving.
- Five Eagle Scouts teamed up to build two concrete parking slabs on which to park our Kubota and future tractor and installed a 6-ft chain-link gated fence in the maintenance yard.
- In December, San Tan hosted 19 programs with 310 participants.
- The first *Archery 101* classes of the season brought in 27 participants total for all three sessions (max 10 each).
- The park partnered with the educators at the County's Air Quality Department to present their outreach program "Be Air Aware" to San Tan's homeschool students and parents.
- The *Equine Trail Sports* annual skills test event at San Tan brought in 30 horse/rider participants and volunteers.

Spur Cross Conservation Area

- In November, the park hosted 12 interpretive programs with 380 participants attending. The highlighted program for the month was *Desert Discovery Days* with 236 visitors in attendance.
- The interpretive ranger and a volunteer trails crew continue to repair and add fencing around mine shafts.
- During December, the park hosted 10 interpretive programs with 146 participants attending. The highlighted program for the month was the *Moonlight Hike* with 26 visitors in attendance.
- The interpretive ranger and a volunteer trails crew replaced four crossing bridges after the storms.

Usery Mountain Regional Park

- The park offered 23 interpretive programs in November totaling 912 participants.

- 203 participants participated in the Park Ranger's *Veteran's Day Full Moon Hike*.
- Ranger Brennan offered four outreach programs during the month of November, totaling 160 people in attendance.
- Two-Wheel Jones hosted the *Showdown Mountain Bike Race* on Saturday, November 2; an 8-hour mountain bike race through our beautiful Sonoran desert. 228 riders participated and attempted to complete as many laps as they could in the 8-hour time period.
- Aravaipa Running hosted the *Pass Mountain Trail Run and Punisher Trail* run as part of the Desert Runner Trail Race Series, with 580 runners participating in the all day running event.
- The *Ham & Turkey 3D Archery Shoot* was held at the park's archery range, hosted by the Utery Mountain Archers, brought 47 archers from around the valley to participate.
- Two new shade structures were installed at the Host Sites at the Trailhead Staging area.
- 22 interpretive programs were offered in December with 669 participants.
- 61 people participated in our *Full Moon Hike*; 125 people participated in the Park Ranger's *All about Scorpions and Flashlight Walk*.
- Several Projects were completed in December:
 - Campground Electrical Upgrades.
 - Each campsite received decomposed granite in order to provide a new, fresh look to each site.
 - Archery Range upgrades (electrical, paint and decomposed granite added throughout).
- Interviews were conducted for the vacant Contact Station Assistant position. 30 applications were received with 15 invited to interview.

Vulture Mountains Recreation Area and Hassayampa River Preserve (HRP)

- HRP attendance was 2,469 people in November and December. November reflected a 14% increase over 2018 while December had a 15% decrease due to the inclement weather.
- Rainfall totals of 3.3" were recorded for November and December, mainly from 4 different storms. The river trails were closed periodically due to river flooding.
- 27 interpretive programs including outreaches for a total of 325 people. The interpretive ranger also led a monthly bird program at White Tank.
- The inaugural *Thanksgiving Luminary Walk* was well-attended by 165 people. Interpretive rangers and volunteers from other parks assisted.
- A film crew from AZGFD (Arizona Game and Fish Department) filmed footage at HRP to use in an upcoming PBS documentary.
- The production team from *Rosie on the House*, an Arizona DIY home improvement and contract referral resource, interviewed the park supervisor as part of a radio broadcast for the Henry Wickenburg's 200th birthday celebration.
- HRP and DOC staff manned a Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Department's (MCPRD) booth/table and assisted with a Dutch oven cooking demonstration at the Wickenburg Conservation Foundation's 20th anniversary celebration at Sophie's Flat.
- HRP and management staff met with The Nature Conservancy (TNC) in December to discuss progress on the transfer of the remainder of the Preserve to MCPRD.
- The park supervisor attended a Desert Pupfish and Gila Topminnow monitoring training conducted by AZGFD.
- Recent wildlife sightings include a badger, foxes, ringtails, skunks, bobcat, and javelina.
- HRP participated in the 120th annual Audubon Christmas Bird Count (CBC). The Audubon CBC is the longest-running citizen science bird count in the world. HRP has been participating in the count for over 30 years. This year, 58 different bird species were counted during the day.
- Two new host RV sites have been completed and new park hosts have moved in.
- The County's new Volunteer 13K program began in December and HRP had four county employees who spent the morning raking trails and pulling invasive weed species along the trails.
- Planning continued with the Vulture facilities designs throughout November and December.

White Tank Mountain Regional Park

- 42 interpretive programs for a total of 1,542 park visitors was held in November and December.
- The *Winter Luminary Walk* was the highlighted event for 861 park visitors featuring luminaries along the Black Rock Short Loop Trail. Cookies and hot cocoa were donated by Friends of White Tank. The event included caroling, the bone box and various insect displays.
- The Arizona Interscholastic Cycling League held a two-day mountain bike race in November for 828 youth cyclists.

- The first *Warrior Mountain Bike Festival* was held in November at the Comp Track. This festival was hosted by a non-profit organization with the goal of connecting veteran and active duty military personnel with mountain biking.
- West Valley Trail Alliance hosted another mountain bike night ride in November for over 25 riders.
- The Saguaro 7K Trail Run held in December had 85 runners participating.
- The completed Willow Campground Grand Opening was held on November 16th with a public Open House on November 17th. Free camping was offered to active duty Luke Air Force members. Camping reservations have been opened online; staff has received much positive feedback regarding this new area.
- The County's new Volunteer 13K program began in December. White Tank offered two projects; the first being a Waterfall Trail project in coordination with the Sun City Hikers in which 20 county employees and 15 hiking club members helped park staff with trail improvements. The second 13K Project had nine county employees painting park gates and campground cleanup.
- Rainfall accumulations at the Ford Canyon gauge totaled 1.73" for December. The waterfall was running for Christmas which was an exciting attraction for many visiting family members.