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MEMORANDUM

Date: August 3, 2009
To: Parks and Recreation Department Commissioners
From: R.J. Cardin, Director
Re: **Director's Summary of Current Events**

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "R.J. Cardin".

Listed below are issues that the department has been involved with since the July 14, 2009 Director's Summary.

Superintendent Report

Spur Cross Ranch Conservation Area (SCRCA): Spur Cross was honored to have Dr. Pierre DeViche conduct a special program for park visitors about the different dragonflies that are located in the park.

Staff continued work on the oasis wetland by planting several new endemics, in addition to building 100' of fence to exclude javelinas from wallowing in the area.

Usery Mountain Regional Park: There were 21 interpretive programs conducted, with a total of 383 participants. Animal Hike & Seek Flashlight Walk always draws adventurous night owls and July was no different with 62 in the summer heat. The new concept of the Self-Guided Full Moon Hike pulled in 95 evening walkers.

Creature Feature Movie Series is a small, fun crowd! Due to excellent marketing and outstanding buy-in from media, the families coming are truly newcomers to Usery Park. In the Nature Center, staff is developing lasting relationships with a small private school, a home schooled family and a few other kids.

The new programming idea for increased attendance in summer was to combine our popular Brown-bags series with evening walks. The park is definitely seeing an increased attendance to both the evening brown-bags and nature walks.

McDowell Mountain Regional Park: With the heat, the most successful programs have been evening programs. The new mix of programs includes Sunset Hikes, park history and Full Moon Hikes. Using the hole-camera a new program called "Snake Surveys" has raised questions.

The Spur Trail connecting the south end of 150th Street with the park is complete and open to park visitors. The trail connecting the communities of Rio Verde and Tonto Verde with the park is also complete but is awaiting the installation of an iron ranger and trail signage. Park maintenance staff will construct a short fence preventing hikers and bikers from riding down the easement along the eastern boundary of the park.

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The park purchased 7 Mesquite trees from Sunrise Tree Farm with donated funds to place in the plaza area and in front of the plaza (eventually blocking street view of the plaza). Those new box trees are doing very well.

A new bench has been installed at the intersection of the Windmill Trail and the Coachwhip trail. Paid for by a visiting couple from New Mexico, this bench simply says, "For the joy of it!" and will be a spot to stop and rest with a spectacular view of the Superstitions and Four Peaks.

San Tan Mountain Regional Park: In July, San Tan's revenue increased by 16% from July 2008, while visitor attendance decreased by 9% from the previous year. However, program attendance increased by 380%, with four additional programs added in July 2009.

The park offered 10 programs during the fiscal month of July to the pleasure of 276 program participants. The highlights of the month were our Scorpion Scavenger Hunt and 4th of July Hike. This was the first year we offered a Fourth of July hike, and were surprised to have 52 attendees join us on a hike in very humid and hot weather to see fireworks lighting up the sky over Goldmine Mountain.

Estrella Mountain Regional Park: The naming contest for the desert tortoises ended with Ellsworth & Emery as the winners. They were named after the Kolb brothers who were pioneer photographers in Northern Arizona and were known for their spectacular shots of the Grand Canyon.

The Creature Feature series met with limited success, with 19 present for our second movie - the program has brought in several new visitors to the park.

White Tank Mountain Regional Park: There were 10 interpretive programs performed in July with a total of 274 participants with 16 repeat attendees. White Tank staff conducted the first in a series of planned programs with Cabela's on July 11; 25 participants were in attendance for the Scorpion Hunt held at Black Rock Trail.

Three Eagle Scout projects were completed this month an animal watering trough was installed at area 2, metal posts were installed to replace the wood post at our water faucets and trail maintenance at Goat Camp.

Lake Pleasant Regional Park: The 4th of July Weekend was strong with attendance and revenue. Despite the fact that there were no fireworks for this year, which is a huge draw for camping, boating and general attendance.

Cabela's and Lake Pleasant partnered July 24th and 25th for kayak and canoeing classes. The Interpretive Ranger led the class at the Desert Outdoor Center. This is among some early programs in a new partnership between Cabela's and the Department. This first program filled up fast and there are a number of people on the waiting list, who are waiting for additional programs. Since the watercraft being used was temporarily loaned by the Boy Scouts, Lake Pleasant and Cabela's will need to look into a joint venture of acquiring watercraft for this successful program and will be looking at program rates to address equipment needs and staff time.

The Pleasant Paddlers Program is still a big hit with kayakers. It is in its sixth year, this program is for people who have their own paddle craft or people who rent their paddle craft from the new Scorpion Bay Marina. The Interpretive Ranger guides these fun tours. This past month tours included the Agua Fria Eagle Watch Paddle, the fun Moonlight Paddle, the Island Hop Breakfast Paddle, and the Honeymoon Bay and Reptile Room Paddle.

Cabela's and Lake Pleasant partnered again on July 31st and August 1st for a Family Fishing Program. Friday evening featured a talk by Lake Pleasant fishing guide Jerry Tate, gear demos by Cabela's staff, and a casting clinic by the Interpretive Ranger. Saturday morning fishing was a load of fun for everyone.

The Lake Pleasant Visitor Center has seen a fantastic increase in visitors and sales this year. The visitor count is up over 5000 visitors and sales are up over \$23,000!

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The North End of Lake Pleasant up Castle Hot Spring road is receiving staff attention. In preparation of partnerships with land owners along the property lines of the park, the staff has been working on education, property identification and signage issues.

Desert Outdoor Center (DOC): Aquatics Camp this year ended on July 16, 2009. Here's the breakdown (A&N = Aquatics & Nature Merit Badge classes, of which there are five 4-day sessions; TTE = Trail to Eagle, of which there is one 7-day & night session):

YEAR	Total Scouts	A&N	TTE	Staff
2006	229	190	39	42
2007	227	180	47	41
2008	262	201	61	38
2009	278	255	23	42

This is a 6% overall increase from last year, and a 27% increase in the number of A&N attendees! There was a 62% decrease in the TTE attendance, perhaps due to the increase in the camp fee (from \$285 to \$315 – as set by BSA) in these economic times.

Grand Canyon Council Camp Strategic Planning Process: A session to establish and define the vision for the Grand Canyon Council (GCC) camps, define the Mission that the camps will serve in meeting that Vision, and setting forth some specific objectives for the overall council program and each camp was held in May 2009. Since the DOC is officially a Scout camp we are at the table to determine how best to provide camping and training services to the youth and adult volunteer population that visits the DOC. With guidance from GCC a task force to develop the DOC portion of the plan will convene in August 2009 and be headed by a DOC Interpretive Ranger.

The County's Office of Communications completed shooting a promotional video that will be put on the DOC's website for marketing. It will be about a 3-minute "You Tube" production. We are expecting to receive the final production in mid-August, and to use it in a promotional campaign reaching out to schools that have not made a visit to the DOC.

Contract Updates

Adobe Dam Regional Park: Wet'n'Wild – Phoenix is now open to the public.

Coming and Going in Human Resources

Two Temporary Contact Station Assistant positions at Lake Pleasant were filled effective July 13th, 2009.

The Administrator position has been filled effective August 10th, 2009.

The last day for the Event Coordinator at Lake Pleasant was August 1st, 2009.