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MEMORANDUM

Date: January 30, 2009
To: Parks and Recreation Department Commissioners
From: R.J. Cardin, Director
Re: **Director's Summary of Current Events**

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

Listed below are issues that the department has been involved with since the January 13, 2009 Director's Summary.

Budget

We have recently been informed that our budget submission will be due on February 12, 2009. We have not at the time of this distribution, received our budget targets.

Superintendent Report

Spur Cross Ranch Conservation Area (SCRCA): There were 26 interpretive hikes offered by staff and docents with over 250 participants.

The Christmas bird count was done in cooperation with the Audubon Society; 32 different species were located on Spur Cross, a new record.

Usery Mountain Regional Park: There were 54 interpretive programs performed in January with a total of 2,173 participants and 481 of them repeat attendees. Stargazing (250), Animal Hide & Seek (248), and Full Moon Hike with the Liberty Wildlife Owl Release (206) were program hits this month.

The Liberty Wildlife Owl Release was truly a magical evening. Two rehabilitated barn owls were released together into the sanctuary of Usery Park in front of 206 awed visitors who afterwards quietly hiked with park rangers and volunteers by the light of the full moon.

Total revenue in January increased by 44% up by \$27,546 from January 08; this includes the extra revenue week. Family camping revenue has increased by almost \$10,000 this January. Annual pass sales have dramatically increased with a total of 234 passes sold in January 09.

McDowell Mountain Regional Park: The second of three equestrian endurance rides was held in January. The event ran very smoothly with 29 horses & riders. Numerous complimentary comments were received from riders who appreciated the ride organizer and the park.

The Interpretive Ranger scheduled 25 programs for January, 12 had taken place so far with nearly 300 participants.

Through the first 6 months of the fiscal year, McDowell Mountain Regional Park attendance was up 3% over the same time period in the last fiscal year.

Cacti that had been taken from the Rio Verde easement of the power line have been transplanted back to that area and planted around the power poles and open areas.

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Director's Summary

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Working with volunteers from the McDowell Park Association and funded by the same group, the area south of the Visitor Center will be converted to a plaza which can host interpretive events, be rented out to groups, and provide an area that park visitors can sit and have lunch and rest.

San Tan Mountain Regional Park: The New Year started off with a bang for San Tan. The park saw a 98% increase in revenue (month's revenue exceeded \$20,000 for the first time) and an increase of 77% in attendance from this time last year.

In January, the park offered 10 programs attracting 324 event attendees. The highlighted program of the month was our Horses 101 program which attracted 74 participants, 3 horses and a pony.

The Trails Crew completed a short trail leading from the staging area to the main trailhead. It has been well received by the users and will help alleviate the number of unauthorized trails in the area.

Estrella Mountain Regional Park: With collaboration between the park and the Sonoran Audubon Society our bird watching hikes along the Gila River have been well received. A new program, "Kids are for the Birds" encouraged children to become bird watchers.

The program highlight of the month was the appearance of the Cowboy Mounted Shooters at the Rodeo arena, a crowd of 500 gathered.

With the opening of the Nature Center Souvenir sales are increasing steadily. Ramada reservations are now on the rise as well as annual pass sales.

Cave Creek Regional Park: A total of 470 people took guided horse rides from the Trail rides concession in December, attracting an additional 160 family groups to the park.

January 2009 park program attendance increased over 100% from January of 2008. This will be the highest attendance for January "in park" programs since the year 2000 (tracking appears to have begun then).

The Park has been working with local merchants to produce a 'welcome' packet for Campers that includes a one-page newsletter of upcoming programs and local merchants' coupons.

Adobe Dam Regional Park will host a "Fun Run" 5/10K running event on February 21.

The Nature Center grand opening celebration is tentatively scheduled for the first week of March.

White Tank Mountain Regional Park: There were 100 people that attended the moonlight hike on January 9 on the Waddell trail. Hike attendance is strong with an average of 20 people per program on 10 hikes. Seven outreach programs to schools and communities have educated about 300 people.

The White Tank Supervisor and Ranger initiated a program that was focused on promoting self guided hikes with the public and with local schools. The program was intended to create awareness of several hiking options in the park where the public could hike on their own and discover the desert while reading interpretive panels. So far several school groups and many families have taken advantage of the program.

On January 17, 900 people attended the Mountain Bike Association of Arizona Bike Race (riders and spectators combined). The participants rode the Competitive Track in the reverse direction for variety and increased challenge. Many competitors practiced on the track for 2-3 weeks in advance so the park saw an increase in recreation for those weeks and during the event.

Lake Pleasant Regional Park: A new employee has been hired for the land maintenance position and interviews for the Maintenance Supervisor are scheduled for February 6th.

The Public meeting for the Agua Fria Conservation Area is scheduled for February 4.

Desert Outdoor Center (DOC): Staff attended the Bridal Expo on January 10-11, 2009. There were over 4,500 future brides attending this year. The department handed out 414 coupons and 12 brides-to-be booked a tour of the facility at the bridal show and received a 10% off total reservation fee coupon. Success of the Bridal Show will continue to be tracked and measured by returned coupons, phone calls, and booked tours. Emails and marketing postcards were sent to all the brides that gave us their email at our booth.

A new brick patio between the multi-purpose room and amphitheater was completed January 23, 2009.

Contract Updates

Adobe Dam: Fort Adobe Paintball Complex: Operational; all required permits received and completed.

Maricopa Adventure Island: Demolition of old facility continues; permitting of new facility continues; some of the new water features are on the grounds waiting final permitting for construction. Target date for completion remains May 2009.

The department continues to put forth Requests for Proposals for new concession opportunities in the parks. Proposals for a long-term manager for the General Joe Foss Shooting Complex at Buckeye Hills are due February 19, 2009. We are also pursuing new horseback riding concessions throughout the park system and the possibility of a Recreation Vehicle concession. These will also be released in February.

Marketing Updates

A grand opening was hosted at Buckeye Hills Regional Park on January 16 for the General Joe Foss Shooting Complex and Ensign John C. Butler Rifle Range. The event was emceed by Supervisor Mary Rose Wilcox and featured speeches from Supervisor Andy Kunasek, Maricopa County's Parks and Recreation Department, the Buckeye Hills Shooting Club, Arizona Game and Fish Department and representatives from the Foss and Butler families. Approximately 110 people attended the event. The event was covered by the Arizona Republic, West Valley View, Maricopa Magazine and is currently being aired on most local Channel 11 stations as well as Cox Channel 9.