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MEMORANDUM

Date: July 1, 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 May 12, 2009 Director's Summary.

Superintendent Report

Spur Cross Ranch Conservation Area (SCRCA): The Ranger designed and supervised an expansion of our oasis moist soil management area as an Eagle Scout project. Arizona walnuts, Arizona ash, wild grapes and arrowweed were all beneficiaries of this action.

The Solar Oasis pond was stocked (again) with top minnows from Arizona Game and Fish Department.

Spur Cross received a donated memorial bench which was installed near the solar oasis.

Park Staff wrapped up their final malta Star thistle control effort this month. Significant progress in containing this pest is being realized. Ranger Kevin Smith is representing Spur Cross involved with a multi agency group dedicated to noxious weed abatement in the desert foothills area.

Animal Planet aired Sonoran Nights this month which had a segment on coyotes that was filmed at Spur Cross.

Park staff has been involved with the documentation and investigation of a human caused fire in the Jewel of the Creek (Land Trust) property.

Usery Mountain Regional Park: 58 interpretive programs were performed in the May and June with a total of 1667 participants with 385 repeat attendees. The "Big Stings" this June were the Super Scorpion Searches both hikes hitting in with 124 and 100 black-light hikers! The Full Moon Hike once again was popular with 217 adventurous night owls exploring on self-guided and ranger-guided moon walks.

The Brown-bag series and all kid programs despite the increase of temperature are seeing great participation. Full Moon Hike was very popular with 316 adventurous night walkers and Saguaro Blossoms for Moms on Mother's Day was a hit.

A new partnership has been developed with Inner Vision Yoga for yoga classes and workshops in the park under a special use permit.

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Ranger and supervisor are working with five Eagle Scouts, two Cub Scout groups and a mountain biking group on service projects in the park. Two new large kiosks, one at Wind Cave Trailhead, other at Trail staging Area have been completed. Two horse shoe pits have also been constructed to national standards at Group Picnic Ramada C and D.

Annual pass sales have dramatically increased all year with a total of 42 passes sold this June 09 to bring Usery to a total of 1180 passes YTD.

McDowell Mountain Regional Park: The second Mountain Bike by the Moon Light was held on June 13th with 93 riders enjoying the cooler night air.

The area surrounding the Visitor Center is being upgraded. Shade structures have been added, a split rail fence, gutters along the south end of the building installed and a considerable number of trenches dug to lay out conduit for electrical service, sound and water to various areas within the some to be plaza.

A new trail, which will likely be named the Sonoran Trail, will connect McDowell Mountain Park and the Fountain Hills Preserve. The trail has been laid out, reviewed, moved and had a Cultural Resource Survey done on the new route. A final written report from the archaeologist and review by the State Historic Preservation Office are needed before vegetation removal and the actual trail building can begin. The trail is scheduled to be ready for use and open to the public by early fall.

A rough trail leading from the Pemberton Trail to the south end of 150th Street received some work to bring it up to Department standards. It is also awaiting an iron ranger before being formally opened. A trail entering the park from the western boundary, to be named the Rock Knob Trail has been surveyed for cultural resources and is also awaiting an iron ranger but now open to park visitors approaching from the west.

The trail supervisor has marked approximately 10 – 15% of the water bars, installed on McDowell trails for removal. Approximately 80% have been removed from the tread of the trail. Those water bars, thus far about 60 bars have been removed and will in other areas of the park. Work continues on those water bars that are embedded in the trail, work includes smoothing the area and installing dips to move water off the trail.

San Tan Mountain Regional Park: During the fiscal month of June, San Tan saw a 19% increase in revenue from June 2008. The total revenue for the year increased by 34% (\$24,705) from the previous year, for a total of \$96,744. Visitor attendance grew by 29% for the year, with over 50,000 visitors for the year.

The park offered 5 programs in June to the delight of 117 park visitors. Geocaching at Sunset and Hiking with the Stars were the main program highlights of the month.

Additional trail identification decals have been installed along the trails at San Tan to assist with trail location. The decals will help visitors determine their trail location and aid in the prevention of users getting lost.

Estrella Mountain Regional Park: The Sonoran Desert Tortoise adoption has finally been completed with two male tortoises that enjoy their new home. They were officially introduced to the public on May 30th during their homecoming event. A naming contest took place and the winners were announced on Saturday June 27th.

26 programs were presented, with "Kids are for the Birds" being featured on Fox news. Participants made their own binoculars and went in search of birds throughout the Navy area.

The Avondale Library donated some historical items that included a 1964 article from the Arizona Days and Ways Magazine about Ranger "Big Jim" Jenkins. It's interesting to note that one of his concerns is not different than those today – vandalism. Also included in this donation of historical memorabilia was "Big Jim's" Ranger Badge and a hat made especially for Casey Abbott who was a pioneer in the Establishment of Estrella Mountain Regional Park. Casey Abbott Drive which surrounds the Turf Area honors his contribution to the Park System.

White Tank Mountain Regional Park: May- Twenty Interpretive Ranger programs have been conducted for the month of May with 1347 participants.

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June- Ten Interpretive Ranger programs have been conducted with 522 participants in attendance, which include 27 repeat visitors. The snake feeding program conducted on June 19th was a great success with 45 visitors in attendance.

Season passes have increased from \$66,432.00 to \$76,179.00 and the Souvenir sales have increased from \$39,196.00 to \$44,038 in 2009.

The Wind Mill Pond project is currently in the design stages with the departments engineer staff and out-side contractors. Grant funding of approximately \$42,000 has been awarded for the project and staff will seek additional funding from a potential donor.

Lake Pleasant Regional Park: On Saturday June 6th the Tribal Spirit Triathlon was held. There were 400 participants and about 150 spectators all having fun.

Memorial Day weekend saw near record breaking attendance.

Desert Outdoor Center (DOC): Revenues for May and June at DOC exceeded previous years.

The road into the DOC from the front gate to the parking lot was sealed by MCDOT during the week of June 22, 2009.

Lake Pleasant Aquatics Camp 2009 - Staff week was held on June 1-4 for 22 scout staff. The 2009 camping season officially started June 8. The Trail to Eagle Program and two more weeks of Aquatics Camp will be held in July.

Park Supervisor has been meeting with the City of Phoenix Parks and Recreation Department, State Parks, Arizona Game and Fish Department and University of Arizona Coop-Extension to develop "Nature Walk," a program that will bring youth and adults into urban parks then County and State parks on a walk with nature. The program will be adopted by Be Outdoors Arizona and afford a multitude of other agencies and organizations an opportunity to coordinate and share programming ideas and efforts.

Cave Creek Regional Park: An Eagle Scout is finishing a trail project connecting the existing Overton Trail to the Nature Center amphitheatre. The new trail will help preserve the desert by discouraging spider trails between the Overton and the new building.

Indoor programs on desert creatures, such as "I Have Been Bit", which included a snake release, were most popular with visitors this month, attracting 34 and 39 people on 5/16 and 5/23, respectively.

The tortoise enclosure in back of the new nature center is complete. A dedication and tortoise 'release' into the new enclosure will be scheduled in July.

Cave Creek begins its movie series on Thursday, July 2nd and hope to attract visitors into the park who are looking to get out of the heat. The series will incorporate some natural history into the programs, which are aimed at children and families.

Vulture Mountain: A Draft MOU has been reviewed by the County Attorney and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is having their solicitor review the agreement. The department met with BLM and Wickenburg Chamber of Commerce in June and will be working on a summit for September to include members of the community along with a multitude of agency stakeholders.

Contract Updates

Lake Pleasant/Marina: Final Certificate of Occupancy was issued by the County Planning and Development Department.

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Requests for Proposals (RFP): A Recreation Rental Vehicle Concession proposal is being released July 9, 2009; this is a re-issue of the previous RFP.

Coming and Going in Human Resources

The Park Maintenance Supervisor position at Lake Pleasant was filled effective May 18, 2009.

A Park Maintenance Worker from Lake Pleasant retired effective May 31, 2009 and a Trail Planner from the Trails Crew was reassigned to fill that position effective June 1, 2009.

Interviews for two vacant Temporary Contact Station Assistants at Lake Pleasant were held on June 22nd and June 23rd. Two candidates were hired.

Interviews for the vacant Administrator position at Headquarters were held on June 10th and June 24th. Second interviews were conducted on Thursday, July 2, 2009.