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## MEMORANDUM

Date: February 26, 2010  
To: Parks and Recreation Department Commissioners  
From: R.J. Cardin, Director   
Re: **Director's Summary of Current Events**

Listed below are issues that the department has been involved with since the February, 2010 Director's Summary.

### **Budget**

**General Fund (100) – Agency 300:** On the expenditure side, the General Fund (Fund 100, Agency 300) is currently reporting expenditures 12% or \$48,651 under the year to date (YTD) budget through January.

There are no revenues collected within the General Fund.

**Enhancement Fund (241) – Agency 305:** Enhancement Fund (Fund 241, Agency 305) is currently reporting revenue at 7% or \$112,865 over the YTD budget through January.

Enhancement Fund is currently 1.2% or \$21,653 under the YTD budget for expenditures through January.

**Lake Fund (240) – Agency 302:** Lake Fund (Fund 240, Agency 302) is currently reporting revenues at 11.8% or \$95,094 over the YTD budget through January.

Lake Fund is reporting expenditures under budget at 1% or \$10,660 through January.

### **Superintendent Report**

**Spur Cross Ranch Conservation Area (SCRCA):** The interpretive ranger coordinated the delivery of 19 public programs and one private hike.

The park supervisor coordinated a video shoot with Supervisor Andy Kunasek at Spur Cross regarding the Regional Trail system.

The Disney Channel videotaped a local elementary school class that was involved with environmental awareness at the park.

**Usery Mountain Regional Park:** There were 78 interpretive programs offered with 1575 participants, 490 of which were repeat attendees. Three programs were canceled due to the rain. The *Full Moon Hike* was very full with a 367 bright hikers.

A bus tour from Canada cruised into Usery Park with three motor coaches filled with 167 Canadian senior tourists. The interpretive ranger and 2 volunteers stepped on the busses for a slow

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motor tour of Usery Park followed with a gathering in the Nature Center, bird forum on the patio and short hike on the Desert Hawk Trail. Shopping, pictures and fun was had by all.

The "Just for Kids" programming is in full swing for the season. *Story Time*, *Toddler Cruise* and *Little Desert Explorers*, all led by volunteer retired teachers, are consistently well-attended and requested programs the families love.

Brown-bag talks are continuing to be very popular in the Nature Center and surrounding grounds. Each month the ranger offers a new topic along, with a few of the stand-bys for park visitors. The big draws last month were *All About Hiking Arizona* and *All About Bird Songs*.

Sunset Magazine is doing an article on Yoga in Usery Mountain Regional Park in the May issue. The magazine sent out a writer and a photographer to work on the article.

Sales in the Nature Center have been very good, placing Usery as the second highest center for souvenir sales in the system (behind Lake Pleasant). Staff is offering impromptu building tours and handing out information about the park, programs and the park system.

Revenue is up from last year; attendance and annual pass sales are down. The President's Day holiday weekend was very busy with capacity in the campground and overflow. Camping has had consistent overflow since the end of January.

**McDowell Mountain Regional Park:** The first weekend in January got the special events going with the 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Team RPM Criterium road race. Although it rained most of the day, 195 racers competed.

The 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Pemberton 50K hosted the largest number of competitors in its history with 250 registered runners. A bright beautiful day greeted the runners and many personal best times were recorded for this 31 mile race.

On the last day of the month, the Desert Classic Duathlon returned and this is the first year it was not a qualifier for the world championships. However, last year's record turnout will be in jeopardy if registration continues on its current pace. The race had approximately 450 athletes running, cycling and then running again, all within McDowell Mountain Regional Park.

The interpretive ranger offered 20 interpretive programs which included core programs, fitness, stargazing, and snake feeding.

Pivot Bicycles that are built in Arizona had a demo day at the park to highlight their 2010 line of mountain bikes.

**San Tan Mountain Regional Park:** During the month of February, San Tan saw a 24% increase in revenue from the previous year.

The park offered 14 programs in February to the excitement of 493 intrigued visitors. The Full Moon Hike, photo scavenger hunt and indoor movie "Cloudy with a Chance of Meatballs" were the main program highlights attracting large crowds at each activity.

Continuing with our effort to connect youth with nature, local school Copper Basin Elementary, brought 135 sixth and seventh grade students to the park on a field trip. The students learned about a number of topics such as the diverse flora and fauna of the desert, how to build responsibly concerning open spaces and watershed through a variety of interactive games.

Similar to Usery Park, San Tan is now offering yoga classes. The program has started slowly, but expects to build steam as people become more aware of the unique experience and opportunity.

The San Tan Park Supervisor is serving on a Youth Awareness Committee. The committee was established to help build a solid foundation and supporting framework for the San Tan Valley area to provide various opportunities for youth to explore in areas such as arts, education, recreation, etc. The group is dedicated to helping youth become contributing members of the community and help break down barriers or obstacles that may limit their potential to develop and grow.

**Estrella Mountain Regional Park:** Estrella hosted "Camp Digalus" – a Boy Scout Camporee. Even a little rain did not deter the hundreds of scouts who pitched their tents in the turf area for a weekend of activities.

A new event this month was a kite festival which brought out 25 participants. Prior to the event was a kite making workshop which drew 9 young kite enthusiasts. There were over 800 participants in 27 park programs.

Maintenance staff has been busy working on irrigation system in the ball fields which is requiring digging up all of the distribution areas (it looks like the gophers have now invaded the ball fields).

**White Tank Mountain Regional Park:** There were 22 interpretive ranger programs scheduled for the month of February, with 6 outreach programs and 16 in-park programs scheduled, with a projected 1,026 participants.

On January 30 and 31, MBAA held their mountain bike race at the competitive track. This year the organization anticipated 100 participants for the two day event. The actual participant count for the event was 348.

The New Library and Nature Center is taking shape.

**Lake Pleasant Regional Park:** Boating Safety classes for staff were completed with the first class on February 10 and the last class on February 24. Eight staff members will be certified in boating safety.

Star gazing night saw 170 visitors enjoying the evening at the Lake Pleasant Nature Center Amphitheater.

Arizona Game and Fish Department (AZGFD) held a two day fishing program for kids at Scorpion Bay Marina.

The Lake Pleasant Bald Eagle Nest Watchers are back on the job as of February 5. We are happy to report that we have one healthy baby in the nest! The parents are taking turns with the feeding duties.

The AZ Game and Fish Adobe Wildlife Poker Run for Wildlife went well with over 300 participants. Lake Pleasant staff helped at the last card pickup, which was at the nature center.

A new park program on geology was offered this month and was met with a great response from the public. The first program had 22 participants and the second had 47.

For the reporting month of February, Lake Pleasant conducted 37 programs with a total participation count of 1143.

**Desert Outdoor Center:** After a successful marketing campaign by all DOC staff (including flyers distributed to schools, libraries, community centers and Pleasant Harbor Marina, emails to teachers, Friends of the Desert Outdoor Center, and other interested parties, event entries into community calendars on websites and in newspapers, etc.) our first Creature Feature on February 4 brought 55 people to the DOC. The theme was Desert Bugs which included a Ranger presentation with a microscope activity followed by the movie, "It's a Bugs Life".

The Department has been approved/renewed for their annual Arizona Game and Fish (AZGFD) and United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) permits. We currently hold two AZGFD permits: Wildlife Holding and Education and Scientific Collecting. Through the USFWS, we have a Migratory Bird Special Purpose – Possession for Education/ Salvage permit.

A DOC interpretive ranger along with the Boy Scouts of America (BSA) Camp Director, are meeting again with an AZGFD representative and associates to finalize a partnership between Ben Avery Shooting Facility, Boy Scouts of America, and Maricopa County in order to add shooting sports merit badges to Lake Pleasant Summer Camp (LPC). Logistics will be discussed to determine cost, equipment, instructors, scheduling, etc. The BSA Grand Canyon Council Shooting Sports Director has agreed to assist in creating the shooting sports program for LPC and will most likely serve as the Shooting Sports Director for our camp this summer.

**Cave Creek Regional Park:** Even with some substantial rain this month, program attendance was increased by 26% over last year, an average increase of 2 people per program.

Our most popular programs being Coyote searching sunset hikes in the forms of "Howlin' at The Moon" during the full moon and "Howlin' with Love" on Valentine's Day weekend. The New Years Fitness Series has been popular with 16-22 fitness seekers in attendance each week. The program will run through March to reach their final goal of hiking the 6 mile Go John Trail.

The Way The West Was Settled, which offers visitors an education about the Old West through attending 3 separate programs throughout the day, was rained out. However, History of the Cowboy was moved indoors and still drew 20 participants, despite the rain.

The interpretive ranger taught the Desert Awareness class at the Maricopa County Safety Fair this month and informed 44 county employees of what critters they could run into out in the field and how to stay safe around them.

### **Contract Updates**

**Estrella Mountain Regional Park:** Discussions with City of Goodyear were held regarding zoning, permitting and Special Use Permit processes/responsibilities. The RV Park proposals are due on February 25.

**Paradise Valley:** Review process continues for golf course management, operation and maintenance.

**All Parks:** The department withdrew the RFP for RV Pumping Concession (2 proposals received) and will pursue the same service under a Special Use Permit process.

A Pre-Proposal Conference was held February 18 for a Zip Line Concession. Proposals are due March 18.

### **Coming and Going in Human Resources**

The Park Maintenance Worker position at Lake Pleasant is currently waiting for fingerprint/ background check results before beginning assigned duties.

Interviews were held for the Events Coordinator at Lake Pleasant on February 23, 2010 and the hiring process is underway.

Interviews for the Intern position are being scheduled.