



234 N. Central Avenue
Suite 6400
Phoenix, AZ 85004-2187
Phone: 602-506-2930
Fax: 602-506-4692
www.maricopa.gov/parks

MEMORANDUM

Date: April 12, 2011
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.C.", is written over a horizontal line.

Listed below are issues that the department has been involved with since the March 8, 2011 Director's Summary.

Budget

General Fund (100) - Agency 300: On the expenditure side, the General Fund is currently reporting expenditures 13.7% or \$71,007 under the year to date (YTD) budget. There are no revenues collected within the General Fund.

Enhancement Fund (241) – Agency 305: The Enhancement Fund is currently reporting revenue at 17.6% or \$445,431 over the YTD budget. The Enhancement Fund is currently 4.5% or \$117,049 under the YTD operating budget for expenditures.

Lake Fund (240) – Agency 302: The Lake Fund is currently reporting revenues at 7.6% or \$90,484 over the YTD budget. The Lake Fund is reporting operating expenditures under budget at 3.7% or \$48,532

Spur Cross (225) – Agency 306: Spur Cross is currently reporting revenues at 12.8% or \$16,205 over the YTD budget. Spur Cross is reporting operating expenditures under budget at 14.1% or \$32,235.

Superintendent Reports

Cave Creek Regional Park – The Park offered 25 interpretive programs with a total of 552 participants, including 214 repeat attendees.

The Full Moon Clay Mine Hike was the #1 rated program in March with 170 participants. Some of the other programs offered included Friend of the Devil Western Film Showing; School Group: Bugs; Meet Smokey the Bear; and Venomous Creatures and the Clay Mine Mysteries Hike. Four fitness series hikes were offered with an average of 16 participants per hike including; Four Ride with the Ranger (guided horseback rides), Reptile Feeding and Ancient Ones.

The Park introduced 2 new programs to visitors this month. The 1st Annual Scavenger Hunt had 12 participants who turned into desert sleuths to find interesting items on their adventure. Training for Archery 101 for park staff to become certified instructors was provided by Arizona Game and Fish Department (AZGFD). They also supplied the necessary equipment for the Park to be able to offer the program. Participants will experience a safe, fun, and well-balanced introduction to recreational and international style target archery. The first program was offered on March 19th with 9 visitors in attendance.

Cave Creek Trail Rides had a busy month with 1,578 horseback riders enjoying the history of the park, trails and views of the Sonoran Desert.

The administrative staff at the Nature Center has been busy training staff and host on the point-of-sale system. Additional trees and plants were placed around the Nature Center and the park host built 2 new souvenir displays and 1 critter display case.

The Wildflower season is starting in the park with Brittle Bush, Chuparsoa, Mexican Gold Poppy, Desert Blue Bells, Hedgehog, and Ocotillo blooming.

Desert Outdoor Center – The Center, in partnership with the Coast Guard Auxiliary and AZGFD, hosted the on the water portion of the Paddle-on-Pleasant kayaking instruction that began in January. After two delays due to weather, a beautiful sunny day helped the program go off without a hitch. There were 7 participants who enjoyed hands-on instruction from Terry Gerber & Natalie Harper.

There were a total of 58 participants for the Canoe Safety training held for the Boy Scouts of America (BSA) Venturing Colorado River trip on May 13-14, 2011.

Natalie Harper manned a booth at the University of Scouting event held at the Heard Scout Pueblo in Phoenix. There were 180 participants at the training event and Natalie distributed flyers for our summer camp program.

Interviews for Lake Pleasant Camp were held at the BSA Service Center. There were 5 counselors-in-training (age 14-15) hired and 15 counselors (16 and over) applied for camp positions, most of them are returning from last summer.

Estrella Mountain Regional Park – There were 26 interpretive programs attracting 930 participants. The highlight program was Marshall Trimble, state historian, who delighted 88 participants with stories and songs about Arizona History. The arena was full for the "Day of the Spanish Horse".

The park hosted the annual Tres Rios Nature and Earth Festival attracting 2,000 people on Saturday and 1,500 people on Sunday. The festival attendees enjoyed going over to the river to fish, kayak or canoe under the guidance of the AZGFD. This festival is a cooperative effort among the cities of Goodyear and Avondale, AZGFD, sponsors (including SRP) and vendors. Park staff was responsible for the "Kidz Zone" where participants had hands on experience learning about nature through games and craft activities.

Park attendance for the month of March showed an 11% increase over the same month in 2010, bringing the park to a 4% increase for year-to-date over the same period in 2010.

Lake Pleasant Regional Park – Ten hikers joined author Christine Maxa for her guided hike and discussion of the desert and wildflowers followed by a book signing.

The Lake Pleasant Adventure Day vendor/club/organization RSVPs are being submitted and the event should have over 40 booths available for the public. Participants who already registered include boat guides, RC airplanes, sailboat clubs, scuba shops, MCSO dive team, Peoria Fire Department, World Wildlife Zoo, AZ Outdoor Fun and Turf Soaring School.

The business plan with a timeline of events has been submitted for the Great American Backyard Campout on June 25th.

Planning for the Easter Egg Hunt is underway. This year we hope to offer more than the egg hunt and are currently looking for volunteers to dress as clowns.

The first Safe Boating Celebration meeting will be held on April 21st. Activities and event location will be discussed and/or decided. This year we have already discussed moving it from the make-ready to several locations throughout the park. The boat ramps offer better exposure and avoids inconveniencing boaters trying to get on the water.

McDowell Mountain Regional Park – The Park offered 40 scheduled ranger programs that attracted 545 participants. Those figures represent a 75% increase in the number of programs and a 104% increase in the

number of attendees. March programs included Tortoise Talks, as the Park resident tortoises came out of hibernation and the Fireside Chat featuring Bob Mason, a local author and historian of the Verde Valley.

There were two special events in March. The first was the return of the 'Mountain to Fountain' in which 800 runners traveled from McDowell Mountain Regional Park (MMRP) to Fountain Park in Fountain Hills. The last Sunday of March the Park welcomed a new event "Fat Tire 40". This mountain bike race was an endurance ride of 39+ miles and was put on by the mountain bike team Swiss America.

In the first three months of the calendar year, souvenir sales increased 35%, annual pass sales increased 20%, entry fees increased 8% and primitive camping increased 10% over the same time period of 2010.

March is typically one of the busiest months of the year and the 2011 was no exception. Park visitation was up for March and for the first nine months of the fiscal year Park visitation increased 9% over the same time period of 2010.

San Tan Mountain Regional Park – The Park offered 19 interpretive programs and activities during March. Bringing in 1,378 park visitors. Highlights of the month included the Lucky Charms Scavenger Hunt; Full Moon Hike; Movie Madness Days; and Talk with the Animals.

The Park visited Edu-Prize School in Queen Creek for an outreach presentation with over 200 students in attendance. Children learned about the role wildlife plays within the desert ecosystem and had an opportunity to see a few of these critters up close and personal. The presentation was a huge success as the teachers and students enjoyed the interactive program. Over the recent weeks we have seen a number of the school children with their parents at the Park to pay their little buddies a visit and to explore.

The San Tan Interpretive Ranger was invited to participate in a special outdoor event at Skyline Elementary School, with an emphasis on the great outdoors and getting children interested in reading. The ranger read a wildlife based book and spoke to over 150 excited students about the programs offered at the Park.

The AZGFD provided archery equipment to the Park for a new archery program and led staff and volunteers in a practice walk-through for an international style target archery program. The park will offer the first archery program during the month of April.

Spur Cross Ranch Conservation Area – The Conservation Area offered 24 interpretive programs and activities during March with 213 park guests in attendance.

Park staff and the archeology society combined talents to pull off a very successful Arizona archeology day celebration at the Conservation Area. Visitors were able to take guided hikes, listen to lectures, observe primitive skills demonstrations, etc.

An Eagle Scout project added a beautiful pigmented mortar with local area stone perimeter to the solar oasis along with shade structures for the Parks' young walnut trees.

The Park Supervisor testified in Superior Court against the trespass case involving a surveyor who drove off road around the main gate. Despite 3 witnesses and hours of testimony, the judge found Mr. Jones not guilty. Mr. Jones stated he did not know he was impacting park property with his off road driving.

Usery Mountain Regional Park – The Park offered 73 interpretive programs in March with a total of 2,219 participants, with 1,005 repeat attendees. Stargazing, Outdoor Animal Games and Looking for Lizards were spring break crowd-pleasers along with the spectacular Super Moon on the Full Moon Hike.

The All About Roadrunners, All About Hummingbirds and Brown-bag lecture series were popular with visitors this month.

Vulture Mountain – Staff are working towards mechanisms to finalize the selection of a Preferred Alternative for the Master Plan. An on-line survey is being drafted and maps refined. The comment period will be 30

days once it goes live to the MCPRD website. We are shooting for the end of May to have a final public meeting and present the Preferred Alternative.

Staff also met with the Library District to explore options of another joint Nature Center/Library facility as part of the Vulture planning.

White Tank Mountain Regional Park – Revenue sales continue to do well in our new Nature Center/gift shop totaling \$16,159.75 for March.

The Park offered 24 programs with over 1,663 visitors in attendance. One public favorite is the campfire and hayride which over 400 people attended. The Park has a new volunteer who is a writer and story teller. Her stories are 7-8 minutes long and are inspired by the White Tank Mountains and Arizona. This volunteer set up at the hayride, the nature center and is now on the regular schedule being enjoyed by all ages.

The Aravaipa Desert Runner Series running race was held on March 12th and was the championship race of the series. Everything went smoothly and we received many compliments about the trails, the scenery and the Park. This event has already been scheduled for next year.

Also on March 12th, The Maricopa Trails and Parks Foundation organized a horse back trail ride. They invited everyone involved with a Parks Friends Group and had a total of 9 participants. The one-hour ride travelled north by the windmill, touched on the Maricopa Trail and then headed back on the Mule Deer trail. Afterwards, there was a tour of the Nature Center and a productive discussion about helping Parks.

Contract Updates

Estrella Mountain Regional Park - The Board of Supervisors approved the naming of the equestrian complex at Estrella as "Corral West Adventures at Estrella Mountain Park".

Coming and Going in Human Resources

Nothing to report at this time.