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## MEMORANDUM

**Date:** January 10, 2012

**To:** Parks and Recreation Department Commissioners

**From:** R.J. Cardin, Director

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R.J.C.", positioned to the right of the "From:" line.

**Re:** Director's Summary of Current Events

Listed below are issues that the department has been involved with since the October 11, 2011 Director's Summary.

### **Budget**

**General Fund (100) – Agency 300** - On the expenditure side, the General Fund is currently reporting expenditures 14% or \$64,006 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 43% or \$419,431 over the YTD budget. The Enhancement Fund is currently 7% or \$99,692 under the YTD operating budget for expenditures.

**Lake Fund (240) – Agency 302** – The Lake Fund is currently reporting revenues at -1% or \$10,100 under the YTD budget. The Lake Fund is reporting operating expenditures under budget at 3% or \$24,022.

**Spur Cross (225) – Agency 306** - Spur Cross is currently reporting revenues at -24% or \$11,481 under the YTD budget. Spur Cross is reporting operating expenditures under budget at 10% or \$11,249.

### **Superintendent Reports**

**Estrella Mountain Regional Park** – The Park hosted 7 interpretive programs in December, including a campfire caroling program with a local musician attended by 45 participants. Mark Paulat, Estrella's new Interpretive Ranger jumped right in on his first day with programs on venomous creatures and spiders.

Plans are underway for a Centennial Celebration to be held on February 14 which will include awarding of prizes and shirts for the "100 Mile Hike Program", a ground breaking for the "Centennial Trail", exhibits and other activities.

The Junior High School Athletic Association held their state championship cross country meet at Estrella with 405 runners from across the state descending upon the park along with family and friends cheering their support.

The Park hosted the Western Pacific College Championship cross country meet sponsored by Grand Canyon University with 70 athletes participating in the event.

The West Valley Christian Home School Association filled the classroom for Ranger Amy's program on critters which provided some hands on lessons to the delight of the students.

The Phoenix Faerie Festival celebrated its third year at Estrella with 40 vendors displaying their wares and promoting the mystical and magical faerie world. Children spent the day enjoying face painting, walking through a giant maze and riding on giant wooden rocking horses.

Sierra Linda High School Life Skills class, 10 students plus adult chaperones, have been volunteering every Monday to patrol and pick up trash along river and other trails.

**Lake Pleasant Regional Park** – The Park hosted 28 programs. Volunteers came out in force for the Beautify the Park Clean Up Day.

**McDowell Mountain Regional Park** – The Park offered 18 programs during the month of November, one outreach in Fountain Hills and the interpretive ranger helped fill the gap at Estrella Mountain Regional Park until the new Interpretive Ranger is assigned.

In December, Ranger Amy continued to assist with Estrella by hosting 17 programs before the holidays. The combined attendance for the interpretive programs and those yet to be offered by the end of the calendar year total approximately 250 attendees.

With the season in full swing, many special events are being offered to Park visitors. Some highlights of the month were 24 Hours of Fury; Morgan Horse Trials; Javelina Jundred 100m Run; Equestrian Endurance Ride; Dawn to Dusk Mountain Bike Run; and the McDowell Frenzy Foot Race. Combined these events brought over 1,600 competitors into the park and nearly as many spectators. Every one of the events increased their participation over 2010. The Javelina Jundred increased their starting field to 400, an increase of 60% over 2010 and is now the 3<sup>rd</sup> largest ultra marathon in the United States.

On December 10<sup>th</sup> the park hosted the first “Hike with the Honchos” with County Manager David Smith. Attendees declared the event a success and agreed more hikes should be scheduled in the upcoming months.

Arizona Gravity Riders and park staff worked together in November to modify and refurbish the Pump Track, which re-opened on November 12<sup>th</sup>.

**San Tan Mountain Regional Park** – During the month of November, San Tan offered 19 interpretive programs to the delight of 350 program participants. The highlights of the month included our Full Moon Hike; Intro to Archery and Horse Talk with Doc.

The San Tan Interpretive Park Ranger conducted an outreach at Edu-Prize Elementary School for over 70 youths on the beauty of the Sonoran Desert and highlighted several of our wildlife display animals to further connect them with nature.

The San Tan Interpretive Ranger and San Tan Park Supervisor, along with several park volunteers, led a field trip for Ben Franklin Elementary School for 85 nature seeking students. The youth were led on an interpretive hike, conducted a scavenger hunt and got to meet some of our critters inside the visitor center.

A group of local Boy Scout packs, roughly 150 boy scouts (of various levels), participated in a day camp at San Tan where Scouts helped plant wildflower seeds, build bird houses, learn about archery, desert survival and so much more.

A local service group of about 150 volunteers came out to assist with a large service project to benefit the park. The group picked up trash along the road, cleaned trails, trimmed vegetation, and tried to rehabilitate damaged sections of land from off-trail usage.

In December, despite the chilly, rainy weather, folks were not deterred from visiting San Tan. The Park provided 8 interpretive programs to the delight of 111 program participants. The highlights of the month included Archery, Full Moon Hike and Archaeology Hike.

The 4<sup>th</sup> annual San Tan Wonderland event attracted approximately 1,000 people. Event-goers were treated to fun activities such as a great horned owl release from Liberty Wildlife, reindeer games, arts and crafts, a choral performance from the San Tan Community Performing Arts, wagon rides, pony rides, a self-guided luminary hike and pictures with Santa.

The Park Interpretive Ranger and Park Supervisor joined a biologist from the Arizona Game & Fish in a quest to survey several areas in the park with known roosts for various bat species. A new roost has been identified and will continue to be monitored moving forward. Two of the most common bat species observed at San Tan include the Canyon Bat (a.k.a. Western Pipistrelle) and California Leaf-Nosed Bat.

**Usery Mountain Regional Park** – The Park hosted 72 interpretive programs, yoga classes, and outreaches in November totaling 1,080 participants, with 510 repeat attendees. Attendance keeps growing for the Kids vs. Wild program fashioned after outdoor reality shows. The Bird Lady entertained 154 Rockhounds at a pancake breakfast.

The Parks popular home school program has 30 total participants, attending morning and afternoon classes with the Arizona Science Center instructor and later with the park's interpretive ranger for an outdoor experience showcasing animal genetics. Classes will be offered each month through April, excluding December.

Aravaipa Running, a special use permit holder held their second annual Desert Trail Runner Series race November 19th. The event was successful with 200 runners utilizing Group Camp A & B and park trails.

The Park hosted 78 interpretive programs, yoga classes, and outreaches in December totaling 1,063 participants, with 587 repeat attendees. The Flashlight Night Hikes and Full Moon Hike are always evening crowd-pleasers.

In addition to scheduled bird programs, the Bird Lady entertained 85 campers and park visitors with bird feeders at her host site with an open house feel. The Brown Bag series continues to intrigue visitors with the Tarantula Brown-bag in November and the Butterflies Brown-bag in December.

The popular progressive fitness hike series has been exercising an average of 30 fast hikers every Saturday through a 6-hike series progressing from Blevins Trail up to the final hike around Pass Mountain. The park supervisor has had a number of emails from participants praising the volunteers responsible for the program.

**White Tank Mountain Regional Park** – The Park hosted 18 programs, with 4 of them being outreaches, for a total of 1,199 visitors, an increase of 7% over last year.

The Luminary Hike was popular despite the colder weather with over 250 people enjoying the fire and candlelight walk.

**Contract Update**  
Nothing to report.

### **Coming and Goings in Human Resources**

We are happy to welcome Dan Wilson our new Volunteer Coordinator and Paul Schlenker our new Trades Specialist with the Construction Crew.

Congratulations to Mark Paulat who accepted the Interpretive Ranger position at Estrella!

Congratulations to Pete Hanigan who retired on December 24, 2011 after many years of dedicated service to Parks!

Interviews were held on December 7, 2011, for the vacant Trails Technician positions with the Trails Crew. Two candidates were chosen and both will start working on January 9, 2012.

Initial interviews for the vacant Park Planner position with Engineering were held on December 15, 2011. Second interviews are scheduled for January 11, 2012.

Two employees retired; one had 10 years of service and the other had 23 years of service.