



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

MEMORANDUM

Date: January 11, 2010
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 November 9, 2010 Director's Summary.

Budget

General Fund (100) – Agency 300 – On the expenditure side, the General Fund (Fund100, Agency 300) is currently reporting expenditures 28% or \$78,790 under the year to date (YTD) budget. There are no revenues collected within the General Fund.

Enhancement Fund (241) – Agency 305 – The Enhancement Fund (Fund 241, Agency 305) is currently reporting revenue at 31% or \$262,123 over the YTD budget. Enhancement Fund is currently 6% or \$92,708 under the YTD operating budget for expenditures.

Lake Fund (240) – Agency 302 – The Lake Fund (Fund 240, Agency 302) is currently reporting revenue at 23% or \$150,161 over the YTD budget. Lake Fund is reporting operating expenditures under budget at 515% or \$40,464.

Spur Cross (225) – Agency 306 – Spur Cross (Fund 225, Agency 306) is currently reporting revenues at – 1% or \$745 under the YTD budget. Spur Cross is reporting operating expenditures under budget at 17% or \$22,807.

Superintendent Reports

Spur Cross Ranch Conservation Area: Park staff and the Town of Cave Creek coordinated another successful open space fund raising event that included more than 175 ride participants.

Park attendance increased by approximately 500 people per week boosted by the 42 guided hikes and the Holidays. Construction on the new shade structure has been completed.

Cave Creek Regional Park: The Park offered 16 interpretive programs in December with a total of 265 participants. Some of the programs offered included: But it's a "Dry Heat" Hike; Tiny Tumbleweed Trekking; Reptile Rendezvous; Horses, Gold & Critters-Oh My!; Reptile Feeding; Clay Mine Mysteries; Hiking with Goats; Luminary Walk; and a Movie in the Park – 'ELF'.

The Park's interpretive ranger has been certified in Bow Instructor training by the Arizona Game and Fish Department. Two safe areas in the park have been identified for the Archery program - the Group Campground and the Horse Staging area. Once reservations in the Group Campground increase, the Horse Staging area will be designated for Archery programs.

Usery Mountain Regional Park: The Park hosted 74 interpretive programs in November with a total of 1,420 participants, 50 of which were repeat attendees.

January 11, 2011

Director's Summary

Page 2 of 4

In December the Park held 68 programs with a total of 1,080 participants, with 340 repeats. The most popular program for all ages is the All About Brown-Bag lecture series.

The Usery campground has been busier this November and December than in recent years. During their visit campers are taking advantage of our Nature Center, interpretive ranger programs and yoga.

Usery Park has been highlighted in many publications including on the front cover of *Canadian Traveller* magazine; *The East Valley Tribune* featured an article on the Desert Mistletoe Hike; *The Arizona Republic* featured an article on the Desert Edibles Hike; and *The New Times* listed the Pass Mountain Trail as the best difficult hike in the Valley.

McDowell Mountain Regional Park: The Park hosted the final 2 of 10 special events which began the last weekend of September. This very busy fall season brought more than 2,900 park visitors to run, bike, horseback ride and crawl through mud. Eight special events are already scheduled for the spring of 2011.

A public meeting was held to allow citizens to comment on the possible sale of a small parcel of land to NewPath Inc. The land could provide an underground easement between their cell tower and the SRP power poles. Comments were received and the issue will be taken up by the Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Commission in early 2011.

San Tan Mountain Regional Park: The Park offered 21 interpretive programs and activities during November and December. There were 1,181 park visitors who enjoyed the Goldmine Bat Cave Hike; Desert CSI; Man of the Mountain History; and Photo Scavenger Hikes.

In December, the Park hosted the third annual Santa-N-Wonderland event, attracting 860 awe-inspired guests. Santa arrived on a spirited horse carriage full of lights and bells. Guests were treated to the lighting of the Winter Windmill, stories told by an elf, reindeer games and pictures with the jolly man himself.

Park volunteers and staff repaired sections of the Littleleaf and San Tan Trail that were damaged during recent rainstorms.

An Eagle Scout constructed a barrier parking perimeter around the south section of the parking lot loop using railroad ties. The barriers will stop vehicles from pulling too far into the desert, minimizing erosion near the trailhead wash and helping identify the parking areas around the visitor center.

Estrella Mountain Regional Park: The Park hosted the extremely popular Phoenix Fairie Festival in November with over 2,000 participants on Saturday. Unfortunately, rain canceled the day's events that were scheduled for Sunday.

During November there were 33 programs offered with 524 participants. The biggest hit was the ancient survival skills workshop with 70 park visitors.

In December there were 46 programs with 743 participants. The most popular programs were Stargazing for Everyone; Bald Eagle Appreciation Day; Dark Sky Telescope; a Hike to Grandpa Cactus and a Junior Ranger program.

White Tank Mountain Regional Park: The Park had 16,625 visitors in December for an increase of 24% from last December and an annual increase of 13% compared to last year.

Park revenues were strong with gift shop sales in the souvenir fund totaling \$6,851.45. There has been an increased interest in volunteering with over 3,500 volunteer hours this month.

The Park hosted 21 programs this month with 959 attendees. Almost 200 participants took part in the popular luminary walk at the Black Rock Loop followed by a toasty camp fire, hot chocolate, marshmallows and cookies.

MCSO Desert Search Unit Posse held training practice consisting of compassing, radio and GPS at The Laramide Lookout.

With the help of many volunteers, the Waterfall Trail has been patched and is ready for another season. Volunteers have also been cleaning and weeding picnic sites, the Horse Staging area and Petroglyph Point.

Trees have been removed from Hohokam Hideaway restrooms, Dry Wash Draw restrooms and the Group area due to roots in the septic system. The host site #2 had a septic back up, but is now functioning properly again. The above ground water valve at Bajada Crossing restroom has been repaired.

The iron ranger was installed at the trailhead behind the amphitheater at the Nature Center to encourage entry fee payment for use of the park

Lake Pleasant Regional Park: The November 27th Introduction to Horses program had 13 participants and we are planning future offerings of this program.

The Stand Up Paddle Board program held on November 27th proved that Arizonans are interested in learning this new sport. There were 17 visitors from various locations in the valley who attended the demonstrations.

The Turkey Trot Hike had 7 attendees looking to burn off some calories after Thanksgiving.

Spring event planning is currently underway and many local businesses have committed to the Lake Pleasant Adventure Day to be held in April. This year, attendees will have several opportunities to learn about the exciting adventures Arizona has to offer.

A joint planning meeting was held on December 8th with Scorpion Bay and Dillon's to come up with events for 2011. The meeting was successful with each party bringing creative ideas to the table. We are discussing approximately 10 different events for 2011.

A great partnership was created between the City of Phoenix Daring Adventures and Lake Pleasant during a December meeting event and program ideas for early Spring were discussed.

Lake Pleasant staff manned a booth at the Sun City West Sportsman's Outdoor Expo and several hundred people stopped by for information. The Interpretive Ranger also gave a presentation on "Bald Eagle Management."

Lake Pleasant's partnership with Game & Fish Adobe Mountain Wildlife Center is in full swing. At the first program of the season 'Critters of the Night' there were 150 people in attendance who observed an owl release over the lake. On December 4 we had 120 people show up at the "Birds of Arizona" presentation. The next presentation will be "Mammals of Arizona" which always draws a big crowd.

The Nature Center program "Finding Gold!" was held twice in December and approximately 20 people attended each session.

Attendance for the Pleasant Paddlers Program is doing very well. There were 65 participants on the lake for our full moon paddle and just before the eagle closure was put in place, 19 paddlers joined us for the "Agua Fria Eagle Watch". We already have over 20 people signed up for the upcoming "Island Hop Breakfast Paddle."

With the cooler weather of November and December hiking is now in full swing and we've had over 100 participants in our hiking programs.

Desert Outdoor Center: Despite a cloudy night, there were 90 park visitors that showed up for the Holiday Stargazing event on December 18th. We polled the visitors as they arrived asking how they heard about the event and the percentages were divided evenly between flyers, website, and word of mouth. A local girl scout troop volunteered to sing Christmas carols as guests arrived and while they were eating. Also, the President of the Friends of the Desert Outdoor Center dressed as Santa Claus, which was a big hit with the kids.

The Cabela's kayaking class "Get Wet" on-water beginner kayaking has come to a close for the season. This year we had great success and look forward to renewing the partnership between the DOC, Lake and Cabela's.

Vulture Mountain: A Stakeholder meeting was held on December 7th at the Hassayampa River Preserve with 22 attendees. We reviewed the Data Inventory, the Recreation Activity Objective Evaluation and presented the Draft Alternatives for the Plan. Some additional data needs were noted, otherwise the alternatives were approved to go forward to the public.

A Public meeting was held on Dec. 11th at the Wickenburg High School Media Center to present the same information to the general public, Supervisor Wilson attended as well as about 15 members of the public.

Coming and Going in Human Resources

The Park Maintenance Worker position at Lake Pleasant has been filled with a promotion from within effective 12/27/10.

Interviews for the Contact Station Assistant at Lake Pleasant are currently being scheduled.