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MEMORANDUM

Date: July 10, 2012
To: Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission
From: R.J. Cardin, Director *RJC*
Re: Director's Summary of Current Events

Listed below are issues the department has been involved with since the May 8, 2012 Director's Summary.

From the Office of the Director Board of Supervisors Agenda Items:

- **Settlement Agreement Between Maricopa County and BCCOP** – A settlement was reached for repairs to the 500 Club which were incurred prior to the expiration of the management agreement with BCCOP.
- **Easement Request from APS for White Tank RV Host Sites** – This easement grants APS access to build and maintain electricity at the White Tank RV Host Sites

Budget

(a/o May 31, 2012)

General Fund (100) – Agency 300 – On the expenditure side, the General Fund is currently reporting expenditures 7.58% or \$75,919.56 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 12.08% or \$417,266.71 over the YTD budget. Enhancement Fund is currently 1.38% or \$45,929.31 under the YTD operating budget for expenditures.

Lake Fund (240) – Agency 302 – The Lake Fund is currently reporting revenues at 3.63% or \$63,531.78 over the YTD budget. The Lake Fund is reporting operating expenditures under budget at 2.45% or \$41,569.90.

Superintendent Reports

Cave Creek Regional Park – In May the Park hosted 13 interpretive programs for 206 participants with 61 repeat attendees, including 1 outreach program with 125 participants. Some of the programs included Fitness Hike; Full Moon Hike; Ride with Ranger; Edibles; History of Spanish Caballero; Stargazing; Reptiles; Archery 101; Reptile Feeding; and Venomous.

During the month of June there were 6 interpretive programs offered with a total of 224 participants in attendance. Programs offered were Moonlight Hike; Desert Survival; Reptile Feeding; Venomous Creatures; Bug Theater; and Scorpion Hunt

Park Staff have been covering shifts at Lake Pleasant Regional Park and the Desert Outdoor Center by helping with fee collection and conducting classes for the Summer Boy Scout Camp.

Spur Cross Ranch Conservation Area - The Ranch hosted 16 interpretive programs in May with a total of 121 participants. Programs offered included Cacti of Spur Cross Walk; Rocks and Streams Walk; Moonlight Hike; Edible Plants of Spur Cross; Take Your Walk to the Desert; Rock Art of Spur Cross; Sonoran Desert 101; and Sunset Walk.

During the month of June the Ranch hosted 12 interpretive programs with a total of 47 participants. Programs offered included Take your Walk to the Desert; Healthy Hiking; Moonlight Hike; Rocks and Streams Walk; Ruins of Spur Cross; Scorpion Hunt; and Sunset Walk

Desert Outdoor Center – The Center has been busy with our many programs and summer visitors including our Annual Summer Scout camp. During the month of June, the Center passed the 20,000 visitor mark. Two teacher surveys were also completed with positive feedback on both the program content and the possibility of a fee increase.

Lake Pleasant Regional Park – During the month of May the Lake hosted its 8th Annual Adventure Day drawing a record crowd of about 500 people to this year's event. People were able to participate in scuba diving, paddling kayaks, flying remote control planes, casting for fish, and other fun outdoor activities. The Family Fishing Fun Program has taken off with a bang with 79 participants at the first event in May. Hikes are still popular even as the temperature rises, they are made shorter and extra water is brought along.

In June the Lake offered "Free Fishing Day" programs to the public during which the park lent out fishing poles and gear. Many first timers took advantage of the program with over 78 in attendance at one program. Lake visitors who attend the Wet n' Wild programs also have the chance to win a 4-pack of tickets to the water park. The "Hike and Splash" is one of the most popular programs this time of year and a perfect match for this partnership. The archery program remains a well attended along with the full moon paddles. Lake Pleasant is once again staging the "Stay Safe Life Vest Loaner" program, where life vests are loaned to people swimming in the lake.

Fireworks lit the sky above the Lake water on July 3rd, however with a mid-week holiday the Lake was not as busy as when the fireworks occur over a weekend. The final numbers have not been calculated at the time of report preparation.

Estrella Mountain Regional Park – There were 11 interpretive programs and hikes aimed toward youth and families which brought in 68+ attendees. A local Yoga instructor provided a pre-hike warm up for a Sunrise Hike. The Park Ranger spent a week at the Desert Outdoor Center at Lake Pleasant helping with the Aquatics Camp for the Boy Scouts of America.

Two baby Desert Tortoises were recently adopted and a contest was held to provide names for them. The winning entries were "Solar" (Sun) and "Luna" (Moon).

The Estrella Nature Center was the sight for another gorgeous wedding and the Park staff received high praise from the happy couple.

The Park is happy to welcome back the Summer Ball League after missing last season. Park staff continues to improve the sprinklers and other aspects of maintenance and repair issues to attract leagues to enjoy our facilities. The maintenance staff has also been busy cleaning up after monsoons by removing dust, repairing trees and facilities.

On June 16th nearly 70 volunteers came out to help the Three Rivers Historical Society clear invasive Salt Cedar for the Centennial Trail project. Volunteers are participating every weekend in this endeavor, despite

the high temperatures. The Centennial Trail Project at Estrella Park made the West Valley News Paper's front page!

The Park Supervisor is in contact with local residents who are interested in constructing a bike area that includes a pump track, jump line track and kids/strider track. Plans are currently being drawn up for consideration with the park and the department.

San Tan Mountain Regional Park – The Park offered 8 programs to the delight of 365 park program attendees. The program highlights of the month included All About Monsoons; Full Moon Hike; Scorpion Scavenger Hunt; Ultimate Desert Survival Challenge; and Desert Edibles.

The park received a new all-terrain Kubota club car, which will be a tremendous asset for park staff to be more efficient and effectively respond to park needs on the trails, i.e. emergencies, trail maintenance

San Tan hosted a special scholarship ceremony in collaboration with Pan de Vida, Combs School District, and the Coolidge School District, to recognize two outstanding youth in the community for their academic and service achievements. The awards were generated by Pan de Vida, a local organization providing services to meet the basic needs of the community while promoting self sufficiency.

Usery Mountain Regional Park – The Park offered 23 interpretive programs and 17 yoga classes in June totaling 1,110 participants with 660 repeat attendees. This month being no exception, the Scorpion Hunt; Animal Flashlight Walk; and Full Moon Hike are the popular crowd-pleasers. Even with the June temperatures, the Brown-bag lectures continue to bring back the regulars and new visitors.

We are happy to announce the Park's baby tortoises have been named by park staff and volunteers. All visitors attending last month's Baby Tortoise Shower were invited to participate in a baby naming contest and many creative names were tossed into the ranger's hat. The lucky babies were named Pebbles and Bamm-Bamm.

During Story Time kids listened to the ranger read interactive stories about desert life for critters. Geology professor AJ Lombard rocked a program to 20 kids called These Rocks Rock. The evening programs like the Scorpion Hunt are clear winners for families wanting outside activities during the warm season.

Mesa Convention and Visitors Bureau visited the Nature Center and park with a group of travel writers. The group participated in an early morning yoga class with Inner Vision Yoga, guided hike with our interpretive ranger, and a kayak trip down the Salt River.

Park staff is working with the Sunshine Memorial Foundation to enhance the Wind Cave Trailhead. The Foundation has purchased a memorial bench in honor of Shannon Larson, a young woman who passed away from heat stroke in the park in September 2007. Along with a memorial bench the Foundation wishes to be involved in increasing hiker awareness for desert travel on foot. This involvement would include new landscaping and information signage about hiker preparedness at the Wind Cave Trailhead.

White Tank Mountain Regional Park – The Park hosted 11 programs during May with 1,444 visitors and participated in 5 outreaches. Yoga is now offered twice a week in our nature center classroom and we're working with the White Tank Library to schedule programs so moms can attend yoga while their children participate in Library programs. Stargazing for Everyone was a hit with over 250 participants and the Friends of White Tank Park are exploring possible fund raising opportunities during these events next year. With the cooler weather Memorial Day weekend, we averaged over 200 vehicle entries a day, making for a busier than usual holiday.

An article was published on May 9th in the Surprise section of the Arizona Republic on hiking in White Tank Park before the summer heat really sizzles.

The Park's well pump failed on Memorial Day weekend, causing us to haul water for 5 days until it could be repaired. It was suggested that the float be raised in the storage up to 8' so that if there is failure in the future, water will still be available. The entire water system needs to be overhauled and updated for more efficiency, energy savings and reliability.

During the month of June the Park hosted 9 programs and 10 outreaches which were attended by 735 visitors. For the fiscal year 2011-2012 the Park had 12,488 visitors participate in our Ranger led programs, which is a 3% increase over last year.

Construction continues all around the Park including completing the electrical trench for Maricopa Trail Host sites; the campground electrical pedestals are waiting to be installed; and our volunteers Derrick and Danielle repaired and improved interpretive signs on Black Rock short loop as an intern project.