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## MEMORANDUM

**Date:** July 2, 2013  
**To:** Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission  
**From:** R.J. Cardin, Director  
**Re:** Director's Summary of Current Events

Listed below are activities the department has been involved with since the April 2, 2013, Director's Summary Report.

### **From the Office of the Director**

**Lake Pleasant Commercial Development:** CHM (Consultant for Lake Pleasant Development Agreement) has starting their due diligence and conducted interviews with Red Rock LLC, Bureau of Reclamation, City of Peoria, Maricopa Water District (MWD) and Scorpion Bay Marina. We are working with CHM on the development of a Pre-Development Agreement (PDA). The design of the PDA will outline and address key milestones and tasks between the parties over the period of 180 days. It will also refine the program elements to better define the project; 1) To understand the market and financial viability of the project and make changes that might improve the viability of the project; 2) To develop investment cost estimates for the project, including upfront infrastructure costs; 3) To define the framework of the project's financing structure; 4) To develop a Public Engagement Planning Framework and; 5) To achieve other requirements of the parties that were outlined in the County-issued Intent to Negotiate (ITN). Once completed the results of the PDA work will provide Parks and Red Rock LLC a sound footing for moving forward (or possibly not) with a development agreement.

### **Administration**

May came too quickly and has already come and gone. The hot weather is taking hold and that means our mountain parks are slowing down and Lake Pleasant is hopping. Most of our focus is on year end close as we try to get as much done prior to June 30<sup>th</sup>. Listed below is a snapshot of Administration's activities for May 2013:

#### ***Budget Status (through May close):***

- **General Fund (100) – Agency 300:**
  - There are no revenues collected within the General Fund
  - Expenditures are under budget by \$55,634 or 5.9% under the year to date (YTD) budget
- **Enhancement Fund (241) – Agency 305:**
  - Enhancement Fund reported revenues 14% or \$506,961 over the YTD budget
  - Enhancement Fund reported expenditures 5.95% or \$214,505 under the YTD operating budget for expenditures
- **Lake Fund (240) – Agency 302:**
  - Lake Fund reported revenues 9% or \$157,819 over the YTD budget
  - Lake Fund reported operating expenditures under budget at 1% or \$24,809
- **Spur Cross (225) – Agency 306:**
  - Spur Cross reported revenues at 1% under the YTD budget or \$2,963
  - Spur Cross reported operating expenditures under budget at 11.5% or \$26,775

**Central Reservations:**

- Leading up to Memorial Day, phones were very busy as campers tried to get their last minute reservations for Lake Pleasant. The campground was completed reserved almost three weeks prior to the holiday.

**Contracts:**

- **Concessionaire Audits:** Experis Finance has been hired (through the Office of Procurement Services, Request for Proposal) to audit Concessionaire Agreements. There will be four audits conducted by 12/31/13. Adobe Mountain's 500 Club Golf Course and Scorpion Bay Marina are the first two being conducted.
- **Commercial Management Concessions Agreement (CMCA):** New CMCA's that are on the June/July agendas are for scuba diving (2), food concessions (2), and boat tour/water taxi (1). The Academy of Scuba was approved by the Board of Supervisors on June 19<sup>th</sup>. This concessionaire is providing 21 instructors that will perform scuba certifications at Lake Pleasant.
- **Estrella Mountain Regional Park:** The department will be releasing an Invitation to Negotiate on July 18, 2013 to solicit proposals for the upgrade, management, operation, maintenance and expansion of the existing Sportsfield Complex at Estrella. A mandatory pre-proposal conference will be held August 1, 2013, at 9:00 am at Estrella Mountain Regional Park Nature Center.
- **New Concessionaire Opportunity:** We have been approached by the City of Phoenix and Colliers International for the possibility of developing a Theme Park at Adobe Dam Regional Park. This will increase visitation and provide a source of revenue for the park, Maricopa County Flood Control District (FC) and City of Phoenix. A meeting was held with the Colliers' team and FCD engineers to review the implications as well as the procedures for developing on flood plain lands. Colliers will be providing a concept drawing for the FCD engineers for further feasibility review.

**Finance Program:**

- With both the Accounting and Procurement Specialists new to Parks this year, training is underway for the multiple items that need to be completed to close one fiscal year and open another.
- With multiple changes to our FY14 budget and funds, considerable work is being done to update accounting strings for interdepartmental charges, purchase card default accounting strings, office supply accounts, and updating forms and requisition logs, etc.
- Paperless revenue reporting is now being utilized by all parks.
- Paperless invoicing/accounts payable testing is now underway. Electronic folders have been set up for each park and we are testing this system for any flaws or difficulty paying bills using electronic copies of invoices, packing slips, etc.
- Final payments are being made to vendors for final FY13 invoices.

**Human Resources:**

Farewells:

- Farewell to Rick Poel, Navigational Aide at Lake Pleasant, who retired on May 30<sup>th</sup>.
- Farewell to John Willis, Trades Specialist at Trades/7 Crew, who retired on June 6<sup>th</sup>.
- Farewell to Chris Coover, Maricopa Trail Manager, who is retiring July 5<sup>th</sup>.

Open positions and recruitments:

- The Project Manager position is open and under recruitment. The certification list was received with 34 applicants forwarded to Parks for possible interviews.
- The Navigational Aide position interviews were held. A candidate was selected and scheduled to begin July 8th.
- The following positions are currently vacant:
  - Temporary Contact Station Assistant - Lake Pleasant (2 positions)
  - Park Office Assistant – Estrella
  - Trails Technician (Trails)
  - Navigational Aide (Lake Pleasant)
  - Trades Specialist (Trades/7 Crew)
  - Project Manager (Planning and Development)

**Information Technology:**

- Testing of mobile computer equipment has started. We received one demo unit from Panasonic using Verizon services to test mobile capabilities at Lake Pleasant during Memorial Day weekend. The unit was used to complete entry station transactions to help with line speeds as well as mobile fee enforcement in the park.
- A new system for vehicle reservations was rolled out at headquarters (HQ). This new system uses Outlook as opposed to the Excel spreadsheet that required considerable maintenance to keep updated.
- The last of the new computers have been configured and imaged. All HQ units have been installed and the Trails/7 Crew computers were completed in June.
- An-going issue with slow Epson receipt printers (at Lake Pleasant and White Tank) has been resolved.

**Souvenir Fund:**

- May was all about getting ready for FY14. The Souvenir Fund Open House was held, allowing park staff to see samples of potential new products, taste some food that we currently carry or are considering carrying, and vote on items that they wanted to add for FY14. Several great ideas were forwarded to our Souvenir Fund Coordinator and many new products have been incorporated for FY14.
- Extensive work has been done to update pricing and products on the order forms and preparing for FY14.

**Volunteer Program:**

- The Adopt-A-Trail press release was distributed on 5/9/13 and was followed by an article in the *Arizona Republic* on Sunday 5/12/13. As soon as word got out about the need for volunteers to help maintain the trails, phone calls and emails from many eager citizens wanting to help out came pouring in. There are now two segments officially adopted (segment 10 and 16) with Segment 13 and 14 anticipated to be adopted over the course of the summer with the amount of interest expressed.
- Seimens, a corporation out of Tempe, has contacted the Department regarding Adopt-a-Trail and other possible trail maintenance projects for their employees to get involved in. They are very interested in a sub-segment (Canyon) of Segment 14 as well as the possibility of helping at McDowell, Usery, and White Tank this fall.
- We have started to fingerprint potential Hosts/Volunteers at the parks rather than requiring them to drive into downtown Phoenix. If this new system works, it will save almost three hours of travel/fingerprint time for each host and volunteer (anticipated time savings is 600 hours yearly).
- Year-to-Date Volunteer Hours:

Total Department Hours – May 2013	3,592
*Financial Savings – May 2013	\$79,516
YTD Total Hours – FY13	90,757
*YTD Savings – FY13	\$2,009,356
Total Hours – May 2012	1,879
*Financial Savings – FY12 thru May 2012	\$1,584,919
* 2012 Value - \$22.14 per hr 2011 Value - \$21.96 per hr	

**Planning and Development (Engineering) Highlights**

- **White Tank - Water Supply System Upgrade Project:** This project will update and improve the potable well and booster pump station that services both the park and the library. The site was originally constructed in 1985. Much of the equipment and controls have been repaired repeatedly over the years and have surpassed their life expectancy. A pre-bid meeting was held June 25, 2013. Eight contractors attended. Bids are due July 17, 2013.
- **White Tank - RV Dump Station Project:** This project will construct a new waste disposal (dump) station for camper and recreational vehicle (RV) use. The project includes a paved two-way pull-through area and septic system (evapotranspiration (ET) bed) construction. The project is currently waiting on a permit from the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ).

- **White Tank - Installation of Individual Electrical Hookups at the Campground:** In April 2012, Parks awarded a contract to install electrical service to 38 individual campsites. Due to numerous problems and lack of progress, the contract was terminated by the Board of Supervisors (BOS) in January 2013. The BOS directed Parks to pursue the contractor's performance bond. Parks has met with representatives of the bonding company and is also pursuing completion of the project through the possible use of another contractor.
- **White Tank:** The 7-Crew is working on leveling camp sites and installing individual water hookups at the campground.
- **Lake Pleasant:** There are 17 restrooms and 24 septic systems at Lake Pleasant. Much of the system is approximately 20 years old. After dealing with several issues (necessitating restroom closures) at multiple locations, it was determined that a comprehensive maintenance plan was needed. Nearly \$100,000 has been spent to pump, clean, and replace filters for the majority of the Lake restrooms. Additional projects to be completed in-house by the 7-Crew have been identified for the near future.
- **Cave Creek:** The 7-Crew is continuing to replace the water line. The crew has also recently repaired several water leaks not related to the water line replacement.
- **System Wide:** Parks is working with the Facilities Management Department (FMD) and their consultant to perform assessments for all park restrooms. The assessments include site inspections with reports indicating overall condition and maintenance needs (on "above-ground" items only with septic issues not included). ADA compliance deficiencies have also been identified. Assessments have been completed for the seven restrooms at Cave Creek and seven of the seventeen restrooms at Lake Pleasant.
- **Trails Crew:** The Trails Crew has been working at Cave Creek, primarily on the Clay Mine and Overton trails.
- **Maricopa Trail Manager,** Chris Coover, is retiring July 5, 2013. After 10 years of shepherding this legacy project, Chris has completed 233 miles of the Maricopa Trail. Chris has done a great job and his departure will leave big shoes to fill. The Maricopa Trail will remain a priority project as we say goodbye to Chris and wish him happy trails!

## **Superintendent Reports**

### ***Cave Creek Regional Park***

- In May, the park hosted 21 interpretive programs with 217 participants attending, which included 51 repeat attendees. Two docent lead programs were offered with 11 attendees. Stargazing for Everyone was the highlight with 152 people in attendance. The Munch-time Matinee Movie had 40 children from a local YMCA Day Camp enjoying and relaxing in the Nature Center while watching the movie.
- In June, the park hosted 16 interpretive programs with 95 participants attending which included 26 repeat attendees. 30 park guests have participated in the "Survival Series Programs" and we estimate another 15-20 for the final program in the series.
- A 60" inch flat screen TV monitor has been installed at the Nature Center. Visitors will enjoy viewing park photos as well as educational videos.
- The maintenance staff is in the process of completing fire prevention around all of the park facilities.
- A new volunteer is being trained to work in the Nature Center and Entry Station. She will be working 4 hours a week to help cover shifts.
- A new kiosk has been installed at the Go John and Overton trailhead and an informational board has been installed at the Nature Center.

### ***The Desert Outdoor Center (DOC):***

- Lake Pleasant Aquatics and Nature Camp occurred during the four weeks in June and this period exceeded last year's by 12%. A total of 27 different merit badge programs were offered to the 180 Boy Scouts who attended camp. Most popular badges were small boat sailing, cooking, water sports, kayaking, motor boating, archery and rifle shooting.
- The perimeter of DOC was inspected and signs were posted at critical areas where trespassing was an issue. Signs advise hikers that a permit is required to enter property.

***Estrella Mountain Regional Park:***

- Ramada picnic reservations were good the first half of May, but dropped off considerably by the end of June.
- Hiking and Nature Center visitation have been steady in the mornings and evenings. Mid-day hiking is quite slow.
- The managers for the horse operations had a few rides in early May. They met with the Parks Department leadership to provide a summary of the season and a look into the future for next year. Their first year was a learning experience and they are looking forward to word-of-mouth and the positive visitor experiences this season to help grow the business in the future.
- In May and June, there were a total of 27 park programs with 170 attendees. The Interpretive Ranger also conducted two outreach events for 248 attendees.
- The Wet n Wild promotion is currently being offered and as a result drawing interest in summer programs. The Full Moon Hike drew 85 people as part of the Wet n Wild promotion. Another featured program in June was a guest appearance from children's author, Conrad Storad. It was a big hit (28 attendees) and he is scheduled to return next month as well.
- The Interpretive Ranger spent one week working at the Desert Outdoor Center to assist with the Boy Scout Day Camp.
- Partnering with park staff, scout and church groups have continued to complete painting and clean-up projects through the months of May and June. The groups have logged over 200 hours of work benefiting the park.
- The Centennial Trail Committee Chair used the month of May to work on fundraising for the trail. In June, through the Three Rivers Historical Society, the committee applied for a grant with the Tohono O'odham Indian Nation. If awarded, the grant monies will be used to obtain trail materials and interpretive elements.
- Two juvenile Red-tailed Hawks were rescued in the park by alert staff. Fallen Feathers Rescue and Rehabilitation picked up the young hawks at the park and delivered them to Adobe Mountain Rescue for rehabilitation. The plan is for the hawks to be re-released in the park as a public program in the near future.
- Aging cement picnic tables in the park are being repaired or removed. New recycled plastic picnic tables are being assembled and will be placed on the parks 64-acre grass area soon.
- Many old and dead trees have been removed from the park's turf area.

***Lake Pleasant Regional Park***

- Lake Pleasant offered over 20 interpretive programs during the month of May and June. Highlights of the month included Archery 101, the Pleasant Paddlers Full Moon Paddle (with 70 participants), Scorpion Hunt, and the Free Fishing Clinic with the Ranger.
- Our annual Adventure Day event was a huge success, despite the warmer weather. Over 400 participants arrived at the park event to participate and explore various recreation opportunities to include fishing, scuba diving, archery, boat tours, kayaking and stand-up paddle boarding. Special thanks to the Estrella Interpretive Park Ranger and Usery Park Supervisor for their assistance at the event.
- Memorial Day was another busy weekend for the park bringing in roughly \$65,000 in gate fees and sales (does not include camping reservations) and approximately 30,000 people. Special thanks to the wonderful team of Lake Pleasant, the Department's Administrator, and Volunteer Coordinator for their tremendous efforts.
- Arizona Wakeboard Association (AWA) started their series of four wakeboarding events at Lake Pleasant within the Two Cow Cove area. The event is a delight for spectators to see and is a unique draw to the park.
- The Arizona Game & Fish Department (AZGFD) teamed up with other enforcement agencies and Lake Pleasant to conduct two Quagga Mussel blitzes for educating the public on the importance of pulling the plug and cleaning boats properly to prevent the spread of the invasive Quagga Mussels.
- Initial restroom assessments were completed through Facilities Management at Lake Pleasant for the 10 Lane (including 10 Lane East), Roadrunner Campgrounds, Bobcat and Ringtail Day-Use Areas. The assessments will provide a comprehensive overview of the restroom facilities and identify areas of needs/improvements (to include items such as ADA standards, repair needs, air hand dryers, etc.).

***Lake Pleasant continued:***

- The Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Director, Parks Operation Manager, Contracts Administrator and Lake Pleasant Park Supervisor met with a consulting firm to provide and gather information for the resort project planned for Lake Pleasant.
- A major preventative maintenance and repair project was completed during the months of May and June to pump each septic tank within the park and install proper filter systems for those units in need. A number of the septic systems were in rough condition due to the high volume of usage and improper disposal of items not intended for septic tanks (i.e. trash bags, bottles, plastic lids, clothing, etc.).
- The Maricopa County Sheriff's Office provided their chain gang to provide manual labor to clear vegetation from our Evapotranspiration (ET) bed at the 10 Lane Boat Ramp. It was a huge help and saved the park time and resources.
- An Eagle Scout completed a signage repair project at Lake Pleasant. The Scout sanded and repainted over 20 wood signs from a previous Scout project. The signs were directional signs located along North Park and South Park Road highlighting various points of interest to include the campgrounds and Visitor Center. In addition, the Scout refurbished the large Visitor Center sign back to its original glory.
- The Visitor Center roof was repaired after high winds and other environmental conditions damaged some of the roof tiles and led to the potential for leaks and other related issues. The roof was covered under warranty.
- Rick Poel, a Navigational Aide for Lake Pleasant, retired after 15 years. Rick spent his entire time at Lake Pleasant and even completed work on the dam while working for the Bureau of Reclamation prior to starting with Maricopa County. He will truly be missed, but we wish him the best in all of his future endeavors and retirement goals.

***McDowell Mountain Regional Park***

- The Interpretive Ranger offered 25 programs during the month of May with 355 park visitors enjoying her programs.
- 18 programs were offered in June with 282 park visitors in attendance, 126 of those participants were repeat attendees.
- In early May, the Mountain Bike Association of Arizona conducted a race involving mountain bike teams of four individuals. Each team member rode one lap and the fastest total team time won. This first time event had 280 participants.
- The Summer Night Ride series of mountain bike rides began in May with two rides scheduled each month. 167 riders participated in these night rides. It seems that the increasing heat causes many mountain bikers to resort to riding after dark. The June night rides attracted 242 riders.
- Park staff inspected 14 miles of the Pemberton Trail and trimmed back any vegetation that might scrape or scratch a rider passing by in the dark.
- Due to the seasonally dry days of June, the maintenance staff spent many hours watering trees planted in the recent year that are still trying to get established.
- New kiosk signs were installed at the Trailhead Staging Area and North Trailhead, in addition an informational bulletin board was installed at the visitor center.

***San Tan Mountain Regional Park:***

- The park provided 19 interpretive programs with 900 program participants. The highlight program for the month was Full Moon Hike which attracted 150 participants.
- In June, the park provided 15 interpretive programs with 750 program participants. The highlight program for the month was Full Moon Hike which attracted 170 participants.
- The Aravaipa Running group held the very first annual run, San Tan Sinister, on Saturday, May 4<sup>th</sup>, as part of the Desert Runner Insomniac Series. The event brought in over 150 participants who had the option to run a 9k, 27k, or 54k starting at 7pm and continuing throughout the night until 7am the next morning. Our very own volunteer maintenance worker entered into the 54k and completed the race in less than 9 hours!
- Two Eagle Scout projects were completed with a combined total of 150 volunteer hours. The projects included the closure of spider trails and general clean-up.

**San Tan Mountain Regional Park continued:**

- The Friends of San Tan are funding two major projects this summer, the nature center classroom upgrade and Grey Fox taxidermy. With our ever increasing attendance, we are seeing a need to better utilize our classroom space and every inch it has to offer. With new paint, brand new tables, white board, state of the art critter displays and educational displays, we hope to better serve our park visitors as an educational resource.

**Spur Cross Ranch Conservation Area:**

- The Park hosted 6 interpretive programs in May with 92 participants attending along with four docent lead programs with 34 participants. Program highlights included *Rock Art of Spur Cross* with 27 visitors in attendance with the Interpretive Ranger leading a 2-hour hike which park guests could view Petroglyph sites found in Spur Cross created hundreds of years ago by the Hohokam tribe. *Stargazing for Everyone* had 90 visitors in attendance. Guests were able to enjoy an evening at Spur Cross watching a slide show presentation by professional stargazer Tony LaConte.
- In June, the Park hosted 7 interpretive programs with 192 participants attending. Program highlights for the month were *Life along the Creek*; this new program is a moderate 1.5- mile hike lead by the Interpretive Ranger. The hike takes visitors through the Jewel of the Creek and along the lower section of the Dragonfly Trail where they can discuss and enjoy the plants and animals living in the riparian area along Cave Creek.
- The Interpretive Ranger replaced and installed new carsonite signs & stickers on the Dragonfly and Jewel of the Creek trails.
- The new Spur Cross Trailhead kiosk has been installed and it looks awesome.
- An Eagle Scout project was completed at the main entry gate, three trashcans and some posts were painted.

**Usery Mountain Regional Park:**

- The park offered 22 interpretive ranger programs in May and June totaling 1,385 participants and 1 docent lead program totaling 112 participants. Highlights in May were the *All About Scorpions* brown bag lecture with 144 participants, followed by a night walk, *Scorpion Hunt*, with 215 park visitors armed with blacklights. June's highlight includes the *Supermoon Full Moon Hike* with 154 visitors which showcased the closest full moon to the earth we will see this year. The *Archery 101* class had 107 participants in May and June.
- Arizona Disabled Sports held the archery portion of their 2013 Desert Challenge Games on the upper practice range at Usery. 23 participants competed in the end of the season archery competition. Five local archers qualified for and will be attending the National Junior Disability Championships held in Michigan the first week of July.
- The Usery Mountain Archers are currently hosting a Thursday night Archery league from May through August. The league is held every Thursday night at 7pm and is open to all ages. To date, the league is averaging 20 adults and 5 youth per week.
- Digger, the park's gopher snake at 5½ foot long, was treated to a new home courtesy of an annual pass holder's donation. Louis Prochnicki, a local resident of Mesa, recently donated a 200 gallon aquarium to the park. The glass aquarium is 6 feet long and sits on top of a 3 foot high custom built wood base. Together, the unit weighs about 400 pounds and is valued at around \$800. Digger's previous enclosure was only 4 feet long, so Digger is enjoying the much needed extra space!
- The Park Supervisor hired 3 new summer host couples to assist with the entry station, nature center, campgrounds, and night programs at the park. The new hosts will be a big help by providing customer service to our guests in the evenings and on weekends.

**White Tank Mountain Regional Park:**

- The ranger and volunteers at White Tank Park had 26 programs with 678 attendees. An Eagle Scout also completed his project of constructing front steps at the south end of the Nature Center.
- Three new trailhead kiosks were installed at Black Rock Loop Trail, Waterfall Trail, and the Competitive Track; enhancing the park. The pond is looking nice with lily pads growing in. The bulrush abatement worked well. An annual report of the windmill and pond was completed and sent to U.S. Wildlife Service.
- On April 15<sup>th</sup>, we closed the campground to finish improvements for next year. The construction continues to level sites and dig for added water lines to each site.

**White Tank Mountain Regional Park continued:**

- Hands-On volunteers came out for the third time on May 18<sup>th</sup> and worked hard hauling dirt a quarter mile with wheelbarrows to do some improvements on the Black Rock Long Loop. They are scheduled to take a break for the summer and to return in September.
- The Cazier Memorial bench was installed on the Wildlife Trail.
- The maintenance staff is taking an aggressive review to update the Materials Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) and chemical list.
- Park staff is removing all invasive tumbleweed from around the Nature Center. The maintenance crew completed bulrush abatement at the wildlife pond, refilled with water, and serviced the aerator. Buffelgrass was removed from the Youth Campground.
- The parking lots throughout the park have all been repainted.
- Two cacti fell in front of the Nature Center this spring. We are seeing the same trend of falling cacti in the park as well.