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MEMORANDUM

Date: November 7, 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 during September and October 2013.

From the Office of the Director

Director Cardin met with representatives from the Arizona Game and Fish Department to express concerns presented by some park visitors and local residents related to hunting in McDowell Park. Game and Fish staff has recently drafted proposed changes to hunting Unit's 25M and 26M. The proposed changes reflect an expansion of the existing Unit 25M (no firearms hunting), for the larger metropolitan Phoenix area to encompass the expected urban build-out in the next 5-10 years. The proposed 5-year rule review changes being considered still need to be approved by the Game and Fish Commission and would not become effective until either September 2015 or January 2016 in accordance with their rule making process. The proposed change to Unit 25M (inner Unit), if adopted, would result in the elimination of firearms hunting in the McDowell Mountain Park, but archery would still be allowed. Parks will continue to follow the progress of these changes as they are brought before the Game and Fish Commission for consideration.

Administration

September and October has come and gone. The cooler weather means the host and volunteers are arriving and our customer volume is steadily increasing. There is much work going on in the Administrative Division. The following is a listing of the highlights for October 2013:

Budget Status (through September close):

- **Enhancement Fund (241) – Agency 305:**
 - Enhancement Fund reported revenue 14% or \$78,752 over the YTD budget.
 - Enhancement Fund reported expenditures 5% or \$46,956 over the YTD operating budget for expenditures.
- **Lake Fund (240) – Agency 302:**
 - Lake Fund reported revenues 0% or \$517 under YTD budget
 - Lake Fund reported operating expenditures under budget at 10% or \$61,150
- **Spur Cross (225) – Agency 306:**
 - Spur Cross reported revenues at 0% over the YTD budget or \$39
 - Spur Cross reported operating expenditures over budget at 12% or \$7,596

Central Reservations:

- The Department has instituted a new phone tree system when calling the main reservation line (602-506-2930) as of October 18, 2013. The new system will allow callers to select their park for reservations, cancellations, annual passes, etc., with Administration listed as option #9. The main phone line is manned five days/week and the parks are open seven days/week, so the new system allows improved customer service and more access to a live person than the previous system.
- The Federal Government shut-down was very lucrative for Parks. The campgrounds saw additional business while the national parks and forests were closed.

Contracts:

- **Concessionaire Audits:** Adobe Dam's 500 Club resulted in an audit payment of \$4,111 to Parks. The Estrella Mountain's Tres Rios Golf Course is being finalized, with no audit payment due. We are currently reviewing Experis' preliminary draft of the Lake Pleasant's Scorpion Bay Marina-Lake Pleasant Marina Partners audit results.
- **Lake Pleasant Commercial Development:** We have been working diligently with CHM (our Consultant) and Red Rock on the development of a Pre-Development Agreement (PDA). It is anticipated to have this agreement to the Board of Supervisors by the end of the year.
- **Lake Pleasant Desert Outdoor Center:** The solar system installed by SOLID for the heating & air conditioning system has never been operable and we are in the process of terminating SOLID's agreement with the County. APS paid SOLID for the equipment and correspondence via email indicated APS will not take claim to the equipment.
- **Commercial Management Concessions Agreement (CMCA):** There are nine CMCA's up for renewal. We have determined that three CMCA's will not be renewed due to lack of activity; one will not be renewed due to not meeting our performance standards; five will be renewed without exception. We are also terminating one CMCA before the term expires due to lack of activity.
We are currently in negotiations for a new CMCA with Aravaipa Running. Aravaipa Running has been doing Special Use Permits over the last several years and has already booked seven events for 2014. They are expanding their business to include additional services for participants, such as equipment rentals and to provide set-up and removal of camping equipment (tents/cots).
- **Estrella Mountain Regional Park:** The Invitation to Negotiate was released on July 18, 2013, to solicit proposals for the upgrade, management, operation, maintenance and expansion of the existing Sportsfield Complex at Estrella. One response was received. The evaluation committee requested additional information (i.e. timelines, proformas) by November 3, 2013, and it is currently under reevaluation.
- **Adobe Dam Regional Park:** A letter of agreement with The 500 Club, dated January 24, 1990, has been submitted to the Board of Supervisors for ratification. The original agreement was dated November 1988; however, the facility did not become operable until one year later. For this reason, the parties agreed, by letter dated January 24, 1990, that the calendar year would be the contract/lease year and therefore the lease term would begin on January 1, 1990. We are currently working on their 25 year renewal option. We have received correspondence of a "Proposed Sale of Wet N Wild to CLP Partners, LP". We are currently working with the attorneys on both sides in negotiations of the assignment terms.
Adobe Dam Regional Park's Special Use Permits processed for November and December include:
 - November 1-3; Maricopa Live Steamers Annual Fall Meet
 - November 2; Arizona Model Railroading Society will be conducting their 2013 Fall Model Railroading Adventures featuring the Everything Railroad Swap Meet. They will also have their Train Model Building open for public viewing on Saturday, November 2 and Sunday, November 3, 2013.
 - November 16; Arizona Karting Association is have their *Kickin-It 2* event (A game of kick ball between some of the nation's best sprint car and drivers including a kart race exhibition). Proceeds support Jeff Gordon's Children's Foundation, Kick It to Cure Pediatric Cancer event.
 - December 7; Victory Lane - The Arizona Knowledge, Empowerment and Advocacy Group will be hosting their Arizona Santa Run. This will be a 5k Run for Victory Lanes New Adaptive Field (Miracle League of Victory Lane).
 - December 27 – 30; Arizona Karting Association will be hosting their Annual Holiday Classic

Finance Program:

- This was a busy month for Finance. With the new Accounting Specialist starting, there was lots of training and working to catch up those items that waited while we were down 33% of the program staff. She is catching on quickly and ended October being able to pay our bills using our electronic system.
- Staff worked with OPS (Office of Procurement Services) on various purchasing contract issues.
- OMB (Office of Management and Budget) set new standards for our budget forecast. They are time consuming as we learn to adjust to the new system.
- The County's copier contract is changing effective Jan 1, 2014, therefore work has begun to determine what type of machines our existing copier fleet will be replaced with.

Human Resources:

New Hires or Transfers:

- Welcome to Jenna Hammond, Contact Station Assistant (Lake Pleasant), who started on September 30, 2013.
- Welcome to Kara Currie-Gonzalez, Accounting Specialist (Headquarters), who started on October 14, 2013.
- Welcome to Jessica Bland, Interpretive Ranger (White Tank), who started on October 28, 2013.

Farewells:

- Farewell to Kyle Hillyer, Park Maintenance (Lake Pleasant), who left us to move to New Mexico. Kyle's last day of work was October 30, 2013.

Open positions and recruitments:

- Interpretive Ranger (San Tan) – Interviews conducted on 9/25 and 9/26 and a candidate was selected. We are waiting for results from the background check with an anticipated start date of 11/11/13.
- Contact Station Assistant (Lake Pleasant – 1 position): Applications were received and interviews will be conducted shortly.
- Maricopa Trail Manager: Applications were received and interviews are scheduled starting October 29, 2013.
- The following positions are currently vacant and under review:
 - Temporary Contact Station Assistant - Lake Pleasant (2 positions)
 - Trails Technician (Trails)
 - Trades Specialist (Trades/7 Crew)

Information Technology:

- The pre-proposal meeting for the ITN for Wi-Fi in the park campgrounds took place on October 3, 2013. Due to requests from vendors, the proposal due date was moved to November, 1, 2013.
- *Faxination* is set up for inbound and outbound faxing capabilities for Estrella, White Tank and McDowell parks.
- Parks was notified on October 24, 2013, that the office location for Spur Cross at the Town of Cave Creek's Administrative building would need to be moved by October 31, 2013. Parks is working with OET (Office of Enterprise Technology) to arrange a site visit and find out what is required to reestablish a work location in their building.

Souvenir Fund:

- Due to the inability to obtain consistent supply from Kalil, the Souvenir Fund will be exclusively selling Pepsi products off the County's beverage contract starting November 1, 2013. Existing Kalil stock will be sold but once depleted, Pepsi products will be the standard for all Parks.
- Holiday seasonal merchandise has been distributed to the parks. Several new products, such as Sonoran Desert items, include tree ornaments and kid items, were ordered this year. So far, these items are selling well.
- Work was done at the end of the month to revamp the product ordering process. Due to concerns by the parks, the order form was simplified and all orders will be placed individually for each park, eliminating the need to sort large orders into individual orders. This should help speed the order process up considerably.

Volunteer Program:

- *National Public Lands Day* was a huge success with over 300 community volunteers in attendance on 9/28/13. The volunteers came out to Lake Pleasant and assisted with trash removal in various areas of the lake such as Castle Creek, Desert Tortoise Road, 10-Lane Boat Ramp, 4-Lane Boat Ramp, and numerous shoreline locations (to include assistance on and under water from kayakers and scuba divers).
- The first Trail Maintenance day for the Maricopa Trail was a great success. A group of 20 volunteers came out on Saturday, 9/28 to assist in the upkeep of a portion of Segment 14 near Lake Pleasant. The volunteers assisted in several projects from repairing trail drainage to clearing rocks.

- The department is working with the Desert Botanical Garden's Conservation Alliance on several park projects. The Conservation Alliance will provide supplies and water for large groups who will come out to volunteer. The first event was 10/26/13 at Usery. There were a total of 50 volunteers who came out from SRP, APS, and Hands On Greater Phoenix. The group painted ramadas and picnic tables to blend better into the desert background. They worked for 4 hours and completed all picnic areas at the Trailhead staging area at Usery.
- Volunteer Hours for August and September, 2013:

	August	September
Total Dept. Hours	2775	2965
Financial Savings*	\$61,439	\$65,645
YTD Hours	6050	9015
YTD Financial Savings	\$133,953	\$199,598
Prev. Year Month Total Hours	2121	2483
Prev. Year YTD Hours	4581	7064
Prev. Year Financial Savings*	\$100,599	\$155,129
*Value = \$22.14 per hour		

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 contract was approved by the Board of Supervisors and the Notice to Proceed was issued October 21st.
- **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 is under advertisement and bids are due to the Office of Procurement Services on November 6th.
- **White Tank - Installation of Individual Electrical Hookups at the Campground:** The contractor completed their work on October 30th. Staff will complete testing and energize the system the first week in November.
- **White Tank Master Plan:** The second of two public meetings was held September 7th. A total of 36 comments were received. Staff is making a presentation to the City of Surprise Council on November 5th and to Maricopa County Parks Commission on November 12th.
- **Vulture Mountain Update:** Staff is in the process of finalizing the Hassayampa River Preserve Action Plan with The Nature Conservancy (TNC), which will set the timeline for transfer of the Preserve Property to Parks.
- **System Wide:** Condition assessments have been completed for restrooms at Cave Creek and Lake Pleasant. Due to recent storm damage, a restroom at McDowell Park has been selected on which to begin improvements. Staff is using a Parks "Job Order Contractor" (JOC) and work is planned to begin in December.
 Plans have been finalized to install five new playgrounds; one each at Cave Creek, Estrella, McDowell, White Tank, and Usery Parks. Demolition work is scheduled to begin November 4th.
 Staff has assisted with termite inspections and treatments at Cave Creek, Estrella, Usery and Lake Pleasant Parks.
 Staff is working with a JOC to repair a water line leak in 51st Avenue (which feeds the 500 Club Golf Course at Adobe Park). Construction is expected to start November 15th.
- **Trades Crew:** The Trades Crew completed the water line installation at Cave Creek in mid-October. The Crew is installing individual water hookups at the White Tank campground and should be completed by November 8th.
- **Trails Crew:** A public meeting for the Lake Pleasant Trails Plan was held September 12th. Only one comment was received. Staff is making a presentation to the MC Parks Commission on November 12th.

Superintendent Reports

Cave Creek Regional Park

- In September, the park hosted 12 interpretive programs with 216 participants attending, which included 47 repeat attendees. Three docent lead programs were offered with 29 attendees. The program highlights included *Desert Denizen's*, *Feeding Frenzy*, *Nocturnal Nature Night Hike*, *Clay Mine*, *Archery 101a* and *Open Shoot*, *Bird Walk*. In October, 12 interpretive programs were provided with 352 participants attending, which included 12 repeat attendees. One docent lead program was offered with 16 attendees.
- On October 9th, the park hosted the 5th Annual Cave Creek Thriller Run with 168 participants attending.
- On October 26th, the park hosted our 21st anniversary with an Open House, Halloween style! The highlighted activities for the evening consisted of speakers and guests from the Sonoran Audubon Society, special guests with their critters and handlers. ASU students set up displays of various bugs and presented their Bug Theater program. Also in attendance was Wild At Heart with displays of their feathered friends. Maricopa County Environmental Department set up a display with Storm Water information and Star Gazing was conducted at our ramadas. At the end of the evening, the ranger conducted a "Coyote Howling" and costume contest! The event was very successful and enjoyed by all 300 attendees.

The Desert Outdoor Center (DOC):

- DOC is actively contacting customers regarding proposed fee increase; very preliminary sample suggests that for half-day schools doubling the rate (\$5 to \$10) will be minor compared to increases they have experienced in last two years for bus/transportation cost.

Estrella Mountain Regional Park:

- Due to cooler weather, more visitors were in the park hiking and stopping in the Nature Center. In addition, reservations increased in the ramada and group camping areas. Eagle Scout candidates started calling again inquiring about service projects during the cool season.
- Estrella Park hosted the *Gladiator Rock N Run Mud and Obstacle Run*. 1,300 participants came to the park to enjoy a variety of challenges including trail running and mud pits.
- The Society of Creative Anachronisms (SCA) camped with 100 participants. Participants dressed in ancient attire for all festivities and battle re-enactments.
- In September and October, 28 interpretive programs were offered and 85 visitors were in attendance. At this time of year, bird walks led by the ranger and members of the Sonoran Audubon Society are consistently among the most popular programs at Estrella. During the winter months, there will be two of these programs offered each month. The Tres Rios Nature Festival at the end of October was a good opportunity for outreach and program promotion.
- The outdoor desert tortoise enclosure has been receiving enhancements. A section of sod was planted and native seeds were recently planted in anticipation of next spring. Park hosts built a smaller secure enclosure within the pen that will safely house the two juvenile tortoises when the weather permits.

Lake Pleasant Regional Park

- Lake Pleasant offered 19 combined interpretive programs during the months of September and October with roughly 302 program participants. Highlights of the month included the continued success of *Archery 101*, *Reptiles of Lake Pleasant*, and the *Pleasant Paddlers* program (sunset/full moon paddle).
- While the Federal Parks were shut down, the park saw a tremendous increase in users taking the opportunity to venture out to Lake Pleasant for either their first time or in a long while. With the increased traffic in the campgrounds and day-use areas, park staff used the occasion to educate the public about quagga mussel. Public contact and distribution of handouts were utilized in an effort to help minimize any potential impacts to federal lakes that are currently "free" of mussels and may be impacted when the closure was lifted.
- The Central Arizona Project (CAP) has begun pumping water back into the Lake. We are currently sitting about 53.7% full and at an elevation of approximately 1656 ft, resulting in roughly a half-inch of water added to the overall level each day.
- Lake Pleasant was awarded a Clean Vessel Act (CVA) grant through the Arizona Game & Fish Department. The grant will provide funding for the park to acquire two new floating restrooms, replacing the old restroom and servicing a new location within the park.

- The park held the final public session for the Lake Pleasant Trails Plan. Pending any items to be addressed in the final steps of the process, the park hopes to have construction begin as soon as January 2014. The plan will add roughly 20 miles of recreation trails to the park.
- Several members of the Parks Department and the Lake Pleasant Park Supervisor met with the Bureau of Reclamation and Bureau of Land Management to discuss/review the North Lake Pleasant Plan and identify remaining issues to be addressed and developed a schedule for completing tasks.

McDowell Mountain Regional Park

- The first special event of the fall took place with the 12-Hour *Javelina Jangover* run with 306 participants.
- Interpretive ranger programs in September were strong in spite of the heat. 18 ranger lead programs had 119 participants and 39 were park visitors who had attended previous programs in this park. October had 20 programs with 182 participants with 44 repeat attendees.
- The park hosted the first and second event of the newly created Arizona Cycling High School League. The mountain bike races brought in 290 participants from 28 high schools from around the state competing in this new high school sport with their first experience at McDowell.
- In October, the park hosted a first-time event titled the "Ragnar Trail Relay" which consisted of 214 teams of eight competing for 22 hours on a 7.8 mile course. With the success of the event, this will become a repeat event.
- The last weekend of October saw the return of the *Javelina Jundred* for the 11th year. The race has grown over the years to become the 3rd largest 100-mile run in the United States. With nearly 500 competitors and 90 degree weather on Saturday, medical staff and volunteers were kept busy tending to the fallen.
- The first of two fall volunteer trail work days were held on the National "Make a Difference Day". Volunteers worked on cleaning up loose rock and erosion damage from summer monsoon storms that had hit the Competitive Track. Nearly 40 hours of trail work were completed Saturday morning.

San Tan Mountain Regional Park:

- This year's *Haunted HOWL-o-ween Bash* was a huge success! Continuing with the growing tradition, San Tan entertained over 1,992 people with a family fun night of events including our trick or treat trail, spooktacular trail, haunted house, creepy critter coral, costume contest face painting, snacks, fun photos and a special visit from Liberty Wildlife.
- In September, San Tan provided 11 interpretive programs with 428 program participants. In October, 9 interpretive programs were provided with 240 program participants. The highlight program for both months was the *Full Moon Hike* which attracted 95 and 94 participants, respectively.
- The park hosted its annual *Nathan Martens Arizona Memorial Ceremony* to honor the fallen Arizona soldiers from the Iraq and Afghanistan wars. Roughly 110 people attended the candlelit service and enjoyed a beautiful ceremony put together by the Martens' family.
- The park hosted the very first Trail Maintenance Tribute in honor of the National "Make a Difference Day." This event was coordinated by our volunteer coordinator in conjunction with Hands on Greater Phoenix. Together, we were able to perform some much needed trail maintenance with a great group of volunteers.
- A local scout has completed a spider trail closure on the East end of Goldmine for an Eagle Scout project. With the help of 37 scouts and volunteers, they made sure the trail would no longer be visible from the road. Two other Eagle Scout projects were completed that included buffelgrass removal and the re-vegetation of the Interpretive Trail with a combined total of 70 volunteer hours.

Spur Cross Ranch Conservation Area:

- In September, the park hosted 7 interpretive programs with 103 participants attending. The program highlights included *Rock Art of Spur Cross, Fitness Walk, Full Moon Hike, Dragonfly Trail Hike, Ruins of Spur Cross, and Sonoran Desert 101*. In October, 20 interpretive programs were hosted with 164 participants attending. Ten docent lead programs were offered with 66 attendees. The program highlights included *Rock Art of Spur Cross, Sunset Hike Fitness Hikes, Full Moon Hike, Life on the Creek, and Ruins of Spur Cross, Desert Wash 101*.
- The department's volunteer coordinator and the Spur Cross interpretive ranger coordinated with Southwest Conservation Corps to complete needed trail work within the Park. In a 40-hour workweek, SCC completed improvements for 2 miles of trail.

Usery Mountain Regional Park:

- 10 interpretive ranger programs were offered in September with 1,093 participants and 3 docent lead programs totaling 95 participants. In October, the park offered 14 interpretive ranger programs with 1,129 participants and 1 docent lead program totaling 13 participants.
- 159 ghosts joined our ghost ranger on our annual Goofy Ghost Walk! Families came to the park dressed as ghosts and participated in a quarter-mile hike, a costume contest, and some fun games. The ghosts were treated to snacks and funny ghost stories around a bonfire.
- Do you know the different kinds of bats that live in Arizona? What makes bats such fascinating creatures? Ranger B answered these questions and shared some amazing facts about bats to 132 guests in his one hour "All About Bats" brown bag presentation. Participants brought in their favorite snacks and enjoyed an evening education lecture in the nature center.
- The park participated in this year's National "Make a Difference Day". The volunteer coordinator, along with the Conservation Alliance, organized a volunteer group of about 40 people to paint ramadas and tables in the park. It took the group about 4 hours to complete the project with the tables and ramadas looking great!
- The 2013 ASAA FITA (Arizona State Archery Association) Field State Championship was held at the Usery Mountain Regional Park Archery Range. Over fifty archers competed in the two day contest with many challenging shots over rugged terrain.

White Tank Mountain Regional Park:

- In September and October, the park supervisor and volunteers successfully provided 19 programs with 730 people attending. *Stargazing for Everyone* was held on a beautiful night with 280 people participating for a look at Saturn, Andromeda, star clusters and other wonders through telescopes.
- The new interpretive ranger, Jessica Bland, started on October 30th. Her experience, ranging from field archaeology to many years with the National Park Service, will greatly benefit not only White Tank Park, but the entire department.
- Several trail projects were completed in September. Heavy rains this summer had damaged trails this year and many trails need some work. A squad of about 12 people from Luke AFB came out on September 13th and re-dug trenches along the Waterfall Trail to redirect water runoff. They enjoyed it so much that they want to adopt Waterfall Trail as part of the Adopt-a-Trail program. *Hands On Volunteers* were out once again for the fall to continue their project of improving the Black Rock Long Loop. Many loads of dirt were hauled out of the trail to improve the areas that are worn and damaged from runoff. They will be back again every month this fall.
- In the Family Campground, Malone Electric completed the electric installation after 18 months of setbacks including copper theft! Water service has also been added to each site. Several sites have been leveled to make them more RV friendly, making for great accommodations for future campers.
- The Group Campground also suffered from an unfortunate copper theft incident. However, due to quick response of electricians and park staff, the public was little affected by the damage.
- Heavier than normal rains in the park this summer flooded the roads at the washes. No incidents occurred, but the waterfall has been running and the white tanks are full. As a result of the rain, we have had more visitors and increased revenue this September.