



Maricopa County

PARKS & RECREATION DEPARTMENT

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MEMORANDUM

Date: November 12, 2015
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 October 2015.

From the Office of the Director

- The Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Department is currently working with American Eagle on a complete redesign of the department's existing website. While the existing site is very informative, it is hard to navigate, does not support mobile devices, and has a stoic appearance. Several key features offered through the new site include:
 - Ease of navigation with a single drop navigational structure and quick links section
 - Single click options for key features such as reservations, park programs, maps, etc.
 - Designed with tablets and mobile devices in mind
 - Customized features such as park specific maps, social media widgets, and a park alert system
 - Visually appealing photos that showcase the park system
 - Nature-based theme and color palette
 - Ability to add updated photos and park program ads on the "featured photo" section of the main page
 - Content scheduling

The department recently completed and signed-off on the design phase of the project and the vendor is in the process of building the site. However, before the vendor could begin the custom build, staff had to migrate 488 pages of content and more than 1,000 photos and documents. The anticipated completion and launch date for the site is slated for January 2016, barring any unforeseen problems

- ADOT is proposing new exits off of the Loop 303 to east and westbound Olive Avenue. Olive Avenue is a highly-used arterial road from the White Tank Mountains surrounding neighborhoods to the Phoenix metropolitan area. These newly proposed exits will not only serve the residents of the area, but will also serve visitors to White Tank Park. Currently, park visitors have to utilize exits that do not provide a direct driving route to the park. In spite of signs that have been installed by the county, many visitors get lost in the neighborhood prior to arriving at the park. ADOT asked for written comments from the park supervisor on several options for the exits. A letter speaking to the preferred option and comments about the benefits this improvement would provide to park visitors was sent to ADOT.

Administration

Budget Status (through October 2015 close): The following information is through October, 2015 close. Due to a deposit error, only three weeks of revenue was reported in October.

- Enhancement Fund (241) – Agency 305:
 - Enhancement Fund reported revenues 5% or \$59,769 under the YTD budget of \$1,254,571.
 - Enhancement Fund reported expenditures of 11% or \$176,528 under the YTD operating budget of \$1,558,143.
- Lake Fund (240) – Agency 302:
 - Lake Fund reported revenues of 9% or \$87,712 under the YTD budget of \$929,618.
 - Lake Fund reported operating expenditures at 16% or \$146,827 under the YTD budget of \$888,777.
- Spur Cross (225) – Agency 306:
 - Spur Cross reported revenues at 3% or \$2,242 under the YTD budget of \$77,564.
 - Spur Cross reported operating expenditures at .5% or \$465 under the YTD budget of \$89,131.

Finance Program:

- Formal FY17 Budget preparation is underway. System access was provided on October 26, 2015.
- White Tank asset inventory was completed in October.
- Procurement Services requires all P-card holders (purchase card) to watch a video and take an assessment test starting in October. As of this report, six cardholders have passed with about 10 more left to take the test.

Contracts:

- **Estrella Mountain Regional Park:** The Use Management Agreement for Estrella Youth Sports (EYS) has been finalized and is ready for signature by EYS and the Board of Supervisors. The agreement will provide for the upgrade and expansion of our existing baseball fields and includes a contingency for future phases (additional amenities and future multipurpose fields) dependent on market and financial feasibility and the outcome of the Park Master Plan that is currently underway.

Human Resources:

- **New Hires :**
 - Welcome Tyler Prenovost, Park Maintenance Supervisor at Lake Pleasant.
- **Farewells:**
 - None
- **Open positions and recruitments:**
 - Planning and Development Division Manager – Selection pending
 - Electrician – Selection pending
 - Trades Specialist – Interviews underway
 - Contact Station Assistant – Selection pending

Information Technology:

- The RFP (Request for Proposals) for the Work Order/Maintenance System was released and closed on November 5, 2015.
- Computer replacements for the POS computers from 2010 have begun to arrive. Lake Pleasant is the first park to receive their new units.

Souvenir Fund:

- Past revenue success in the Souvenir Fund has allowed the creations of 3 temporary positions (one each) at Usery, Lake Pleasant, and White Tank. The positions are for revenue collection and customer information at the Entry Stations, Nature Centers, or out in the park. The goal is to have these positions supplement current staff, allowing extended hours of operation and collection of additional revenues that we miss.
- Inventory for retail items continues to be added. The new system is proving to be accurate and helpful for future tracking of stock on hand, etc.

Volunteer Program:

- There were two new adoptions in the parks for the Adopt-A-Trail program. A Girl Scout troop adopted the Boat House Cove, and McDowell Mountain Cycles adopted the Sport Loop at McDowell.
- The Conservation Alliance assisted in a re-vegetation project at the future site of the Usery Tortoise Habitat. Along with tools and plants, they assisted in recruiting corporate volunteers to help with the project. Thirty volunteers helped to plant about 40 plants and trees around the future habitat site as well as around the new viewing area and water feature.
- Year-to-Date Volunteer Hours:

	Jul-15	Aug-15	Sep-15	Oct-15
Total Dept. Hours	3,739	2,948	4,568	6,828
Financial Savings	\$86,264	\$68,022	\$105,383	\$157,510
YTD Hours	3,739	6,688	11,256	18,083
YTD Savings	\$86,264	\$154,286	\$259,669	\$417,179
Prev. Year Month Total Hours	2,708	3,304	3,083	6,102
Prev. Year YTD Hours	2,708	6,012	9,094	15,196
Prev. Year Financial Savings	\$61,065	\$74,494	\$69,516	\$137,596
Number of Volunteers-current month	78	71	414	361

Planning and Development (Engineering) Highlights as of November 5, 2015

- **Estrella Master Plan:** Staff held a meeting with the Citizens of Estrella Mountain Park (CEMP), the park's Friends group, on 10-21-15 to review draft master plan recommendations. Staff noted their comments and will make any edits as feasible. The next public open house is scheduled for January 23, 2016. Staff has commenced writing draft chapters of the plan.
- **Vulture Mountain Update:** Staff is working with MCDOT engineers on roadway designs. Progress is moving slowly on both the Environmental Assessment (EA) as well as the land lease application due to unforeseen procedures internal to the Bureau of Land Management (BLM).
- **System Wide:**
 - The refurbishment of all (~75) restrooms (RRs), for all the parks began in January 2014. The project is expected to take four years and cost ~\$4 million. With the help of three "Job Order Contract" (JOC) contractors, staff is working to standardize interior and exterior finishes and hardware improvements throughout the park system.
 Current Status: 7 RR's (all) are complete at Cave Creek; 1 RR is complete at Estrella and work has begun on two additional RR's; 7 RR's (all) are complete at McDowell; 3 RR's have been completed at Usery and work has begun on another; 10 RR's (all of the "older" ones) are complete at White Tank; and 5 RR's have been completed at Lake Pleasant and work has begun on 4 more.
 - The San Tan well project was successful and water was hit on March 23rd. The Arizona Department of Water Resources (ADWR) drinking water permit is still in process. The well is operational and supplying water to the restrooms.

- **Maricopa Trail and Trail Facilities:**

- The following trail segments are currently being worked on: 9, 11, 12, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 33, 35 and 78.
- The following property rights were acquired this period:
 - Segment 35 Bullard Wash Outfall Channel to Estrella Parkway from FCD
- The following portion of the Maricopa Trail has begun an Environmental Assessment:
 - Segment 22 – Tonto National Forest – Bronco Trailhead to Scottsdale City Limits – 14.4 miles
 - Maricopa Trail Manager completed the layout and mapping of the route on 11/2/2015 for the archeologist and biologist surveys
- The following portions of the Maricopa Trail are in process for purchase from the Arizona State Land Department:
 - Segment 35 – North and south of I-10 on the Tuthill Road alignment
 - Segment 12 – North of SR303 on Lake Pleasant Road.
 - Segment 11 – East of SR303 on Happy Valley Parkway.
- Construction preparation: the Scottsdale McDowell Sonoran Preserve, on the Central Arizona Project – south of Lake Pleasant Park, El Rio, Tres Rios and Verrado.
- Agreement preparation/negotiations:
 - City of Phoenix – Segment 9
 - City of Goodyear – Segment 35
 - City of Scottsdale – Segments 23, 24 25 and 26.
 - Verrado – Segment 35
 - U.S. Bureau of Reclamation – Segment 27 – Received 10/6/2015
 - City of Buckeye – Segment 35
- Installing additional signage
- Performing maintenance in preparation for the Prickly Pedal Race in January 2016 – tree trimming and trail grooming – Segments 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19 and 45.

- **Trades Crew:** The Trades Crew had a busy month starting and completing several projects.

- Cave Creek- The crew was able to complete the water line and septic line extensions. The host sites have all the concrete patios poured. Grading is complete and the Cave Creek maintenance staff has placed the DG at all the new campsites. The Group/Overflow camp ground is open for business. The picnic tables and fire rings will be installed when received.
We have replaced all the failed water heaters. The heaters needed new stands to elevate them from the floor. We fabricated the stands. The hard piping had to be rerouted for operation. The work turned out very well.
During the water heater upgrade, we discovered that the temperature mixing valves were inoperative. We have ordered them and will replace them when received.
We are starting to replace the failed water line at the Ramada area. The shut off valve at the main water line is also leaking, a replacement is needed.
- San Tan- We fabricated and installed a security gate at the Goldmine Trailhead. The pressure water pump to the Nature Center was leaking very badly. We disassembled the pump and cleaned up all components and installed a new bearing seal kit.
- DOC- The alarm system is complete and has passed inspection. We have had to do some repairs on the HVAC system and the water heater.
- White Tank-repaired the road going into the Track parking lot with screened material. This road is in a wash and the repairs will not be permanent until we are able to install water control culverts.
- The crew enjoyed the day 10/7/2015 at the All-Hands meeting. We had training on stormwater control. We were able to socialize with many of the park personnel and discuss needs of the parks and celebrate the victories we have shared.
- McDowell- repaired the contact station electrical system.
- Estrella- replaced the transformer at the camp host site. Replaced all the damaged receptacles in the pedestals. The system is at max draw and the wiring will have to be upgraded to handle the load.

- **Trails Crew:** The Trails Crew worked with the Arizona Conservation Corps Crew (AZCC) in September and October on approximately 5 miles of heavy maintenance and general clean up on trails at San Tan and Estrella Parks. The Trails crew also cut approximately 1 mile of reroutes on Toothaker and Butterfield at Estrella to bring trails up to Maricopa County trail standards. The AZCC crew will be continuing work at Estrella, Lake Pleasant and will finish the year at Spur Cross.

Park Operations Report

Cave Creek Regional Park:

- In October, the park hosted 112 interpretive programs with 107 participants attending, which included 31 repeat attendees. Venomous Creatures was one of the highlighted programs with 46 attendees. Two docent lead program was offered with 24 participants attending, which included 6 repeat attendees.
- The park hosted the 4th Annual Cave Creek Thriller/Thrasher Run with 363 participants competing in runs from 6 am – midnight. Eight runs were scheduled for the day, which included 50K, 30K, 24K, 11K, and 5K courses. The runners utilized the Maricopa Trail from Lake Pleasant to Cave Creek Park and all the trails within the park.
- The 3rd Annual Halloween Howl was a howling success with 177 park visitors enjoying various wildlife displays, participating in the costume and coyote howling contests. Later that evening, 160 participants joined us for Stargazing.
- Halloween saw 83 park visitors enjoying their trick or treat night with the Haunted Mine Hike to the Clay Mine.

Estrella Mountain Regional Park:

- In October, Estrella Park provided 24 interpretive programs with 457 people in attendance. A new program called the *Passport Estrella Challenge* has been extremely well received. Participants come every Saturday for 13 weeks to progressively hike every trail in the park. This popular program has 62 members so far and grows each week.
- The Halloween party at Estrella Park was held on October 24th. The event had 139 participants who enjoyed an evening of surprises and nature-based ghoulish games.
- A running event sponsored by Arizona Trail Race was held at the park's Competitive Track on October 4th. The event went well with 350 desert trail runners.
- On October 18th, Race Timers had a run on the Competitive Track. The group squeezed in a good morning of running between the rain showers that have swept the valley.
- The Parks' department staff and the City of Goodyear continue to work together on the possibility of installing reverse osmosis and water purification wetlands at Estrella Park.
- October rains have increased the turf's grass growth. HMI, a county vendor, currently mows the area but Estrella Park is soon to receive mowers that pull behind the UTV machines to aid in lowering mowing costs.
- The irrigation system continues to have down time. A county-approved vendor will be providing new irrigation system training for the staff.
- Due to recent rains and significant leaf growth, tree trimming has been increased in the month of October. Planted trees along the park road and on the turf area need regular attention, especially after good rains.
- Estrella attendance is picking up with gradually-decreasing seasonal temperatures and fall rains. Annual pass sales have increased as well.

Lake Pleasant Regional Park:

- Lake Pleasant provided 14 interpretive programs during the month of October to the pleasure of 190 program attendees. The highlights of the month included the *Easy Paddle Tour of the Southern Bays*, *Hike-N-Splash*, and *Fun with a Bow* (Archery 101).
- A large volunteer youth group (ranging in age from 14 to 18 years of age) of approximately 100 volunteers came out from Mesa for *Make a Difference Day*, and performed trash cleanup along the shoreline throughout the park. The impact of their efforts was tremendous and left the shorelines extremely clean.
- Renovations have been completed to the Roadrunner Campground Lakeside restroom facility.

- The maintenance team from Lake Pleasant spent a good portion of a day assisting Cave Creek with laying decomposed granite around their newly established Group Campground.
- The park is pleased to introduce our new Park Maintenance Supervisor, Tyler Prenovost. We are very excited for the wonderful things he will be able to bring to Team Lake Pleasant.

McDowell Mountain Regional Park

- The park's interpretive ranger offered 16 programs in with 172 participants. Of those who attended, 38 also attended other programs in the park.
- The event season began with two events being held on the second weekend of the month. On Saturday, October 10th, the park hosted the Arizona State Mountain Bike Cross Country Championships with both collegiate categories and age group races. On Sunday, the third race of the season for high school mountain bike clubs was held in the park and nearly 250 high school students participated.
- With the end of the monsoon season, the park paid some focus on its trail system and pump track. GROAZ which stands for Gravity Riders of Arizona came out and did some pre-season work on the pump track. Park staff and hosts did trail work on the Pemberton and the Scenic Trails, taking care of some erosion issues that developed during the monsoons.
- During the final weekend of October, the Mountain Bike Association of Arizona came out and worked on the new Shallmo Wash Trail and Escondido Trail, getting them ready for both trail running and mountain bike races scheduled for November.

San Tan Mountain Regional Park:

- During the month of October, San Tan provided 30 interpretive programs with 992 program participants. The highlight program for the month was the Scorpion Scavenger Hunt which attracted 140 participants alone.
- The second *Zombie Apocalypse Survival* afforded us the opportunity to utilize a growing culture of zombie enthusiasts and teach them about true desert survival. The program was attended by over 150 participants who enjoyed a half mile survival hike, stimulating games and a zombie walk contest!
- This year's *Haunted HOWL-o-ween Bash* was a huge success! Continuing with the growing tradition, San Tan entertained over 300 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.
- Two Eagle Scout projects completed spider trail closures during the month. The Eagle Scout projects contributed 150 volunteer hours in October.

Spur Cross Ranch Conservation Area:

- The Park hosted nine interpretive programs in October with 134 participants attending. The Park also offered seven docent led programs with 84 visitors in attendance.
- The highlighted programs for the month: *Moonlight Hike* with a total of 27 participants attending and *Rock Art of Spur Cross* with 26 attendees.

Usery Mountain Regional Park:

- The park provided 15 ranger-led programs with a total of 948 program participants. The highlight of the month was our *8th Annual Goofy Ghost Walk* on October 17th, which saw 180 participants – many of them wearing their homemade bedsheets costumes for the occasion.
- Our first "Wag 'n' Walk Dog Adoption Hike" of the season had 37 participants. We are excited about our continued partnership with the County's Animal Care and Control Department in providing this monthly program on the first Saturday of the month from October through April.

White Tank Mountain Regional Park:

- In October, White Tank provided 18 interpretive programs and three outreaches with 1,067 attendees.
- The *Sonoran Spook-tacular Howl-o-ween Fest* was very popular with a record-setting 470 attending. Great efforts and many hours from staff and volunteers went into building the "Lucky Lode" bat mine and other animal stations where kids could learn about the various "spooky" creatures that are found in the park. Halloween treats and refreshments were handed out to all who attended.

- On October 21st, the Central AZ Conservation Alliance returned to do additional work on the Butterfly Garden. Staff and volunteers replaced dead plants, added new plants and planted new seeds.
- The deputies with Mountain Rescue conducted two training days in October to gain more familiarity with the rugged trails and terrain of White Tank Park. They took the opportunity to provide information and education about the training and rescues to interested park visitors.
- Several Arizona High School Bicycling League teams provided much-needed trail maintenance on the Competitive Track in October. The students fulfilled their required volunteer hours and did a great job improving the quality of the track before their race in November.
- Park staff met with the City of Buckeye on October 26th to review and discuss the possibility of a trail connector from the new Skyline Regional Park to White Tank Park's trail system.

Vulture Mountain Regional Park:

- Park staff met with The Nature Conservancy staff in October to revisit the plans for the Hassayampa Preserve operations and associated agreements. The group will meet again in November.
- The R&PP Environmental Assessment for the proposed developed areas in the Vulture Mountains Recreation Area continues to proceed.
- Park staff has been conducting site visits to the proposed development areas for the project to walk and draft out more detailed placement for day-use facilities and campgrounds.
- Parks staff continues to work with the Maricopa County Department of Transportation staff on the Vulture Mountains future road alignment for proposed facilities in the recreation area.