



# Maricopa County PARKS & RECREATION DEPARTMENT

## MEMORANDUM

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**Date:** November 8, 2017  
**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 2017**.

### From the Office of the Director

- **Customer Service Standards:** The department has created a new customer service standard operating procedure (SOP). This SOP will help ensure a quality customer experience while providing staff with the tools to consistently delivering exceptional service.
- **North Lake Pleasant Recreation Area:** The Department applied for the Rivers Trails Conservation Areas program grant through the National Park Service which was awarded last month. Through the NPS grant program, the planning team will be guided by a NPS facilitator who will assist the department in the planning process as well as public outreach for this project. With the assistance of NPS, various stake holders will be brought into future planning and development efforts for this project area. The Department will now proceed fully with the planning of the North Lake Pleasant Recreation Area.
- **Buckeye Hills:** We have issued an amended Special Use Permit that will allow Arizona State Rifle and Pistol Association (ASRPA) to manage and coordinate the temporary public use of the Joe Foss Shooting range for two weekends in November and two weekends in December. Staff will continue to work diligently with the ASRPA in the negotiation of a Use Management Agreement.

### **Board of Supervisors Agenda Items:**

Date/Status	Tracking Number	Summary
9/20/17 Approved	C-30-18-005-M-00	<b>Applications for Joe Foss Shooting Complex, Hassayampa River Preserve and Paddlefest Trade Names and Trademarks for MCPRD:</b> Authorize Parks Director to submit applications to the Arizona Secretary of State's Office and authorize future renewals.
9/20/17 Approved	C-30-18-007-D-00	<b>Donation for Fence Repairs at San Tan Park:</b> Accept restricted monetary donation of \$1,624.35 from Michele Rhode for fence repairs.
9/20/17 Approved	C-30-18-006-D-00	<b>Donations for Parks Memorial Benches:</b> Accept restricted monetary donations from Jessica Jones \$900/San Tan Park; Darwin Klockers \$900/Cave Creek Park; Elaine Shapiro \$900/Usery Park; Wendy Romanchuk \$900/White Tank Park; Michelle McDougall \$1,800/Spur Cross Ranch Conservation Area; and Jerry Wilson \$900/Lake Pleasant Park for memorial benches to be placed within the designated Regional Park.
9/20/17 Approved	C-30-18-004-M-00	<b>CMCA with Sea 2 Sea Scuba, LLC:</b> Approve a new CMCA with Sea 2 Sea Scuba to manage and operate a commercial scuba diving concession.

Board of Supervisors Agenda Items continued:

Date/Status	Tracking Number	Summary																										
10/25/17 Approved	C-30-18-008-D-00	<b>Donated Vehicle for Parks:</b> Accept the donation of a 2006 John Deere Gator HPX 4x4 for Parks at Hassayampa River Preserve. Donation provided by The Friends of Hassayampa.																										
10/25/17 Approved	C-30-11-036-3-00 C-30-13-025-M-00 C-30-14-024-M-00 C-30-13-020-M-00 C-30-14-023-M-00 C-30-14-031-M-01 C-30-12-029-03-00 C-30-15-006-M-00 C-30-16-017-M-01 C-30-13-020-M-01 C-30-11-013-03-04 C-30-14-029-M-01 C-30-13-028-M-01 C-30-14-022-M-01 C-30-13-029-M-01 C-30-13-006-03-01 C-30-14-038-M-01 C-30-13-026-M-01 C-30-14-020-M-01 C-30-14-011-M-01 C-30-15-003-M-01 C-30-11-007-03-03 C-30-16-004-M-01 C-30-16-019-M-01 C-30-11-027-03-04	<p><b>Approve the terminations of 25 Commercial Management Concessions Agreements:</b> Terminations were based upon the nonperformance in operating the concession activities and failure to provide proof of insurance. Terminations are per Termination for Cause and Sub-section "Unsatisfactory performance on the part of the Concessionaire or failure to comply with the provisions of this Agreement." Terminations are effective December 31, 2017.</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>360 Adventures</td> <td>Elmar Diving</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Academy of Scuba</td> <td>Frenchy's Caribbean Dogs</td> </tr> <tr> <td>All Wet Scuba</td> <td>Good Times Mobile Food</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Angie's Dawg Haus</td> <td>Kona Ice West Valley</td> </tr> <tr> <td>AZ Backcountry Excursions</td> <td>Monster Snow Ball</td> </tr> <tr> <td>AZ Party Zone</td> <td>Pleasant Cruise</td> </tr> <tr> <td>I-Yad Adventures</td> <td>Roosters Kountry Kitchen</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Bike Paradise</td> <td>Southwest Kayaks</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Brrr-ista, LLC</td> <td>Sport Chalet</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Captain Clint Sailing, LLC</td> <td>TLC Vending</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Cave Creek Adv Bootcamp</td> <td>Venture Yogi</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Chris the Food Dude</td> <td>Windwalker Expeditions</td> </tr> <tr> <td>DK Maui Dreams</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	360 Adventures	Elmar Diving	Academy of Scuba	Frenchy's Caribbean Dogs	All Wet Scuba	Good Times Mobile Food	Angie's Dawg Haus	Kona Ice West Valley	AZ Backcountry Excursions	Monster Snow Ball	AZ Party Zone	Pleasant Cruise	I-Yad Adventures	Roosters Kountry Kitchen	Bike Paradise	Southwest Kayaks	Brrr-ista, LLC	Sport Chalet	Captain Clint Sailing, LLC	TLC Vending	Cave Creek Adv Bootcamp	Venture Yogi	Chris the Food Dude	Windwalker Expeditions	DK Maui Dreams	
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10/25/17 Approved	C-30-13-001-3-01	<b>Amendment to IGA with Arizona State Parks:</b> Approve and execute Amendment One to the Intergovernmental Agreement, Master Trail Agreement, between Arizona State Parks and Maricopa County, through Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Department. Amendment One will authorize the extension the term for an additional five (5) year period beginning October 30, 2017 and ending October 29, 2022, and make other administrative changes.																										
10/25/17 Approved	C-30-18-009-M-00	<b>Cooperative Agreement with White Tank Mountains Conservancy:</b> Approve a Non-Funded Cooperative Agreement between the White Tank Mountains Conservancy (WTMC) and Maricopa County (County). This agreement between the County and the WTMC will delineate authorities and responsibilities to accomplish common goals and objectives for safeguarding natural and cultural resources while creating opportunities for education, recreation, volunteerism, and ecological services in and around the White Tank Mountain Regional Park. There are no fees payable from either party to the other party for services and responsibilities as outlined in the agreement. The term of the agreement is ten (10) years with a renewal option of five (5) years.																										

**Administration**

The purpose of the Administrative Division is to provide strategic direction, leadership, administrative and financial support to the Director and employees of the department so they can produce the results necessary to achieve the departmental mission and vision. The following information is provided as a high level overview of the activities of the Administrative Division:

**Contracts:**

- **Adobe:** Special Use Permits Issued.
  - Victory Lane:
    - December 9, Annual Santa Run
  - Arizona Karting Association:
    - November 11-12, Flat Track End of Season
  - Phoenix Kart Racing Association:
    - September 2017 – May 2018, Super Moto Racing
- **McDowell Mountains:** The Department has received one response (Southwest Wildlife Conservation Center (SWCC)) to the published Request for Expression of Interest to identify potential government or non-profit private partnership opportunities for the development, permitting, construction, operation, management and maintenance of a native wildlife rescue conservation and nature center at McDowell Mountain Regional Park. A letter of good faith to enter into contract negotiations with SWCC is under consideration.
- **Paradise Valley:** Staff was approached by Casey at the Bat (our current Concessionaire), for a possible assignment of their current Use Management Agreement (UMA). The Concessionaire has received multiple offers, therefore, we have drafted an Invitation to Negotiate (ITN) to promote, manage, operate, maintain and improve the existing sports complex, or provide an alternate recreation facility at Paradise Valley Urban Park. The existing UMA terminates in July 2018 with a five year renewal option. The ITN suggests that the respondent work directly with the Concessionaire for an assignment of the UMA. Incorporated into this ITN is an option for the undeveloped land located north and adjacent to the existing Casey at the Bat facility. There is also an opportunity to add an additional .2999 acres by removing our existing well storage and relocating the associated electrical to the actual well site, just south of the well storage tanks.

**Financial/Budget Status (through September close):**

Fund	Fund Name		Budget YTD	Actual YTD	Variance YTD	Variance %
100	General	Expenditures	\$418,760	\$402,730	\$16,030	3.83%
Fund	Fund Name		Budget YTD	Actual YTD	Variance YTD	Variance %
225	Spur Cross Ranch Cons	Revenues	\$113,062	\$113,668	\$606	0.54%
225	Spur Cross Ranch Cons	Expenditures	\$124,828	\$124,212	\$616	0.49%
Fund	Fund Name		Budget YTD	Actual YTD	Variance YTD	Variance %
239	Parks Souvenir	Revenues	\$61,236	\$64,308	\$3,072	5.02%
239	Parks Souvenir	Expenditures	\$176,320	\$194,264	-\$17,944	-10.18%
Fund	Fund Name		Budget YTD	Actual YTD	Variance YTD	Variance %
240	Lake Pleasant Rec Svcs	Revenues	\$1,311,414	\$1,475,440	\$164,026	12.51%
240	Lake Pleasant Rec Svcs	Expenditures	\$1,278,916	\$1,136,222	\$142,694	11.16%
Fund	Fund Name		Budget YTD	Actual YTD	Variance YTD	Variance %
241	Parks Enhancement	Revenues	\$2,009,698	\$2,201,040	\$191,342	9.52%
241	Parks Enhancement	Expenditures	\$2,479,402	\$2,356,790	\$122,612	4.95%
Fund	Fund Name		Budget YTD	Actual YTD	Variance YTD	Variance %
243	Parks Donations	Revenues	\$16,638	\$19,896	\$3,258	19.58%
243	Parks Donations	Expenditures	\$14,340	\$10,392	\$3,948	27.53%

**Human Resources:**

- Open positions and recruitments:
  - Park Education Supervisor, Desert Outdoor Center – Interviews pending
  - Navigational Aide Technician, Lake – interviews on 11/2/17
  - Electrician, Trades – Interviews pending
  - Contact Station Assistant, Lake – Interviews pending
  - Contact Station Assistant, Temporary, Estrella – interviews pending
  - Park Maintenance, Lake Pleasant – Interviews pending
  - Contact Station Assistant, Usery – Request to review temporary to full time status.
- Welcome to New Employees:
  - Stephanie Motzer, Lake Pleasant, Contact Station Assistant (started 9/25/17)
- Departing Employees:
  - Amy Rouse, Contact Station Assistant, Lake
  - Alicia Irino, Temporary Contact Station Assistant, Lake

**Volunteer Program:**

- FY18 Year-to-date volunteer hours:

	Jul-17	Aug-17	Sep-17
<b>Total Dept. Hours</b>	3291	4772	4910
<b>Financial Savings</b>	\$79,445	\$112,428	\$115,680
<b>FY18 Hours</b>	3291	8063	12973
<b>FY18 Savings</b>	\$77,536	\$189,964	\$305,644
<b># of Volunteers-current month</b>	79	112	406
<b>FY17 Month Total Hours</b>	2945	3146	5113
<b>FY17 Year YTD Hours</b>	3739.25	6687.75	11255.7
<b>FY17 Financial Savings</b>	\$69,384	\$143,504	\$263,966
<b>Current Value-\$24.14</b>			
<b>Previous Value-\$23.56</b>			

**Planning and Development Division**

**Vulture Mountain Recreation Area Update**

- Staff is continuing 60% design work with EPS on park amenities as MCDOT continues design with EPS on 60% plans for Vulture Mine Rd as well as interior County park roadway design. Department staff has updated the Plan of Development with construction and travel route information requested by the BLM. The Department is continuing coordination with the BLM on the NEPA (National Environmental Policy Act) process.

**Project Management**

- The Department Project Manager has completed several CIP projects. Usery Windcave restroom, White Tank Waterfall trail improvements, and Lake Pleasant restroom renovations are being finalized. The Hassayampa restroom project is well into the State of AZ and Maricopa County permit staging. County electrical comments are currently being addressed.
- Facilities Maintenance Division has been assisting with projects at the park sites as well. Currently, electrical improvement designs are underway at Estrella and Lake Pleasant Bajada Loop and the Desert Outdoor Center roof renovation has been awarded and will be completed over the next two months.

### **Park and Open Space Planning**

- Staff has begun the McDowell Mountain Regional Park Master Plan process with an internal meeting this past week and are creating a timeline to detail the process. Work continues on the Trails Management Manual. The draft has been sent out for peer review by other agencies and then to the public groups for final comments.

### **Trades Crew**

- Trades Crew staff has been busy repairing water leaks at Cave Creek Regional Park. Staff have also been repairing erosion damage on the Coldwater Road at Estrella Mountain Regional Park, replaced the potable water booster pump at Usery Mountain Regional Park and assisted with the CAP water line repair to the 500 Club Golf Course on 51<sup>st</sup> Ave north of Pinnacle Peak. In addition, Trades Staff have been working on the repairs to the back porch of the Hassayampa Visitor's Center and repairing electrical issues at the Lake Pleasant campground.

### **Trails Crew**

- The Trails Crew has been working on repairing storm damage on trails at Estrella Park. This past month, the Trails crew assisted the Lake Pleasant crew with attaching floats on the floating bridge parts for removal in Pipeline Canyon. The Trails Crew worked to improve drainage and repair eroded areas of the trail tread at the Upper Waterfall Trail at White Tank Regional Park. At the Hassayampa River Preserve, the crew has started installing new signs to improve the visitor experience.

### **Maricopa Trail and Trail Facilities:**

- Description: The following trail segments are currently in progress – 6, 9, 11, 12, 18, 20, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33 and 35.
- The following portions of the Maricopa Trail are in review by 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.
  - Segment 33 – Rainbow Valley – Bureau of Land Management (BLM) land to Estrella Community.
- Agreement preparation/negotiations:
  - Arizona Game & Fish – Segment 9 access across the Gila River.
  - Bureau of Land Management – Submitted plans of proposed route between Estrella Mountain Park and Buckeye Hills Park. MCPR is a participating agency and will be part of the team designating trails.
  - Goodyear – Sign maintenance and Rainbow Valley route.
  - Queen Creek – Re-route of trail to existing trail systems.
  - Gilbert - Re-route of trail to existing trail systems.
  - Chandler - Re-route of trail to existing trail systems.
  - Sun Corridor Trail connecting Pinal County to the Maricopa Trail via the Spook Hill Flood Retarding Structure.
- Construction
  - Segment 22 – McDowell Sonoran Preserve to the Bronco Trailhead – restarted construction on 10/9/17 and the remaining portion of the trail to be constructed is 41% complete. The bridge needs to be constructed and additional maintenance is required on the portion completed last fiscal year.
- Trailheads
  - Segment 35 – Northern Avenue – Proposed location will allow users access due to weekend closures of the gate to the Case/New Holland Proving Grounds. This requires Maricopa Water District approval.
  - Segment 11 – Sun Valley Parkway - Proposed location will allow users access due to the Maricopa Water District cutting off access on Greenway Road.

## **Parks Operations Report**

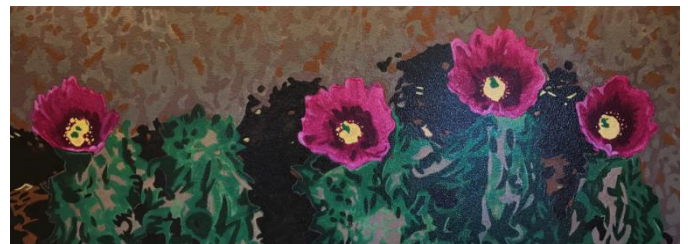
**Resource Management Plan Guideline Manual:** No additional comments were received from the Parks Commission on the draft manual. Internal staff submitted some additional comments. Staff will move forward with finalizing the manual.

### **Cave Creek**

- In September, the park hosted five interpretive programs with 77 participants attending. The park hosted seven interpretive programs with 700 participants in October.
- The Annual Halloween Howl was a howling success with wildlife viewing - various games, a costume and coyote howling contests and of course Trick-or-Treating.
- The Old Clay Mine became haunted; participants hiked a moderate 1.8 miles and then were escorted into the mine by our rather scary interpretive ranger. While in the mine our visitors ran into the spirits of prospectors and miners.
- The Park hosted two annual events in October: 382 runners participated in the *Annual Cave Creek Thriller and Thrasher Run*. The various courses included 5K, 10K, 24K, and 50K. The *Annual Stargazing* program brought in over 200 visitors.

### **Desert Outdoor Center**

- In September and October our attendance numbers went up with the new school year starting. The DOC had almost 1,700 students and adults visiting on field trips.
- The stargazing event in September had 258 visitors, up 90 people from the stargazing event this past March.
- In September, Interpretive Ranger Amber completed four murals to brighten up the dormitories for overnight groups. The theme was blooming desert plants including Saguaro cacti, Hedgehog cacti, Ocotillo, and Brittle Bush blossoms.



### **Estrella Mountain Regional Park**

- With cooler temperatures, Estrella has seen an increase in park activity.
- In September, the park provided 17 interpretive programs with 200 people in attendance. The notable program was an outreach to the Sun City West Sportsman's group, which had 95 people in attendance for a presentation about scorpions. The always-popular snake feeding had a good showing of 33 people. Fitness hikes have a regular core group of 8-10 participants even with the heat still being a factor this month.
- Park staff and hosts continue to improve the irrigation system around the super playground and turf area.
- Ramada #9 received part of its facelift in September with crack caulking and table painting improving the overall look of the area. A metal fascia wrap will be coming soon.
- Electrical work and upgrades continue as the new SES electrical cabinet was installed near Ramada #2.

- School fall break and cooler temperatures have encouraged park visitors to come out of hiding to hike and picnic again after a long summer.
- In October, the park provided 21 interpretive programs with 488 people in attendance. The Halloween event on 10/21/2017 brought in a *ghouly* large crowd of 250 people, this is a similar turn out as the previous year's event. The monthly *Birds of Estrella* program had 15 people which is double from the summer months. The *Homeschool Happenings* program is off to a good start with many participants asking to share the program information with their homeschool organizations.
- The interpretive ranger and two volunteers completed Basic Archery Instructor certification on October 25<sup>th</sup>. Many visitors have expressed interest in the archery program and are eager for archery classes to begin. Community volunteers continue to play a vital role in helping the new interpretive ranger to run successful programs; they dedicate their time and resources to ensure that the park has a variety of programs offered.
- On October 8<sup>th</sup>, AZ Trail Race had a foot race at the Competitive Track. Nearly 300 runners enjoyed a morning in the desert.
- On October 14<sup>th</sup>, Race Timers had a foot race with 150 runners at the Competitive Track.
- On October 28<sup>th</sup>, SWS Sports had 25 people participate in a run/bike event on the Coldwater Trail network.
- On October 28<sup>th</sup>, Phoenix Front Runners held a *Spooky Howling Night* event on the park roads. Scary stations were set up along the route for the run/walkers (about 100) to enjoy a Halloween-like evening.
- The ball field parking lots were given a face lift with the help of Facilities Management. Crack sealing, slurry seal, new parking stall striping and new area signage all helped to give the area a much needed improvement. The measures will also help keep weeds out of the parking lot cracks and assist to lower maintenance work.
- Phoenix International Raceway (PIR) closed the parking area to the Estrella Park Competitive Track due to a NASCAR event in early November. PIR will reopen the parking area Nov. 23rd.
- The Parks Department is planning to begin demolishing the older ramadas starting in November. To minimize impact, park staff and department staff are alerting the public and preparing the reservation system and turf sprinkler system for the work.

### Lake Pleasant

- Lake Pleasant offered 17 interpretive programs during the month of October to the enjoyment of 336 program participants. The highlights of the month included *Archery 101*, *Native Fish Exploring Hike*, and *Hiking through a Desert Forest*.
- The park held its National Public Lands Day cleanup on Saturday, September 30. The turnout and efforts were a huge success with approximately 250 volunteers. The crew was able to clean up the following areas: Fireman's Cove, Castle Creek Boat Ramp/Parking Area, Cottonwood Cove, Two Cow Cove, Desert Tortoise Campground Shoreline, the end of Desert Tortoise Road, Sunset Ridge/Sunfish Lane, 10 Lane Boat Ramp, 10 Lane East, shoreline near Bobcat Day-Use Area, along with the Concrete and Dirt Spillways. The land team of 230 volunteers were able to collect approximately 425 bags of trash. In addition, approximately 37 bags of trash were removed from the water (to include underwater) by 20 scuba divers.
- The Maricopa County Sheriff's Office (MCSO) Chain Gang unit came out to the park on six occasions to perform tasks such as guardrail vegetation maintenance, landscaping efforts around the Discovery Center, trash cleanup, and tree trimmings.
- The 10 Lane west dock has been temporarily repaired from the July storm and is functioning until a new dock can be acquired. Special thanks to the Arizona Game and Fish Department for their assistance.
- The Agua Fria Conservation Area project is nearing completion to allow for park host access and monitoring. A temporary storage facility and entry station is planned to be installed late December/early January along with providing a water storage tank for the area. The host sites have been installed and staff is currently waiting for the electrical connections to be established. A permanent structure will be established at a later date when funding is available thru collaboration with the Arizona Game and Fish Department to complete the project.
- Renovations are currently underway in a variety of areas around the park to include: Cottonwood Day-Use Area, Pipeline Canyon Day-Use Area, Wild Burro Day-Use Area, Bobcat Day-Use Area, Ringtail Day-Use Area, 10 Lane East restroom, and Roadrunner Campground campsites. The various efforts range from painting roofs to installing/updating fixtures (i.e. partitions, toilets, sinks, lighting, etc.).

- The Lake and MCPRD continue to work with Air Quality in an effort to bring an interactive kiosk out to the lake to help promote awareness regarding air quality concerns, efforts and related information. Lake Pleasant will be one of three kiosk locations around the Valley reporting real-time air quality information.
- Progress for a playground near the Discovery Center remain strong and still in the design phase of the process. The park is working to provide a unique, nature-based playground and atmosphere to engage youth.
- Various Lake Pleasant park staff received training in a variety of areas to include First Aid/CPR, Skid Steer, Tractor, Triton Boat Operations, and Trailer training. Our maintenance supervisor and one of the maintenance workers took things a step further by completing various Train-the-Trainer instructions. This will allow Parks to more efficiently provide on-going training support at the park level to new staff and refresher courses to existing staff.

### McDowell

- In the month of September, twelve interpretive programs were offered with 30 people in attendance.
- Our last *Summer Night Ride* for 2017 took place on the Pemberton Trail with approximately 125 people participating. Fountain Hills Bikes is a partner of this program and provides after ride snacks and a movie.
- One special event took place during the month of September, *Javelina Jangover*, which is an overnight series of trail runs involving different lengths on the Pemberton and Scenic Trail(s). 385 runners participated plus nearly 200 spectators were in attendance.
- Scout Troop 649 donated the materials and provided help from several troop members and parents to add a split-rail fence around our playground area in our Campground. This has been a nice addition to our playground area.
- In October, twelve interpretive programs were offered at the park with 122 people in attendance. The most popular single event of the month was the *Stargazing for Everyone* program which drew 95 people.
- Three special events took place during the month of October:
  - AZ Interscholastic Cycling league hosted a Middle School/High School Mountain Bike race with approximately 600 total participants and 400+ spectators.
  - *Javelina Jundred* took place, participants had the opportunity to compete in either a 100 mile or 100K trail run with 30 hours to complete both, approximately 825 total runners participated plus 500+ spectators were in attendance.
  - Southwest Collegiate Fall Series took place which involves a mountain bike portion and trail run portion; nearly 100 participants were in attendance.
- Western Spirit Cycling hosted a guided mountain bike trip (totaling three days) at McDowell Mountain Park; approximately 15 people participated with 2 guides.
- *Niner Bikes* offered a free bike demo at our Competitive Track lot on October 8, approximately 150 people came out to enjoy.
- During the month of October, Ranger Amy participated in the Fountain Hills Leadership Academy, specifically the Environmental Stewardship day by offering a brief presentation regarding the park. She also brought some park exhibits and critter displays to showcase; 20 students were in attendance.

### San Tan

- San Tan held 21 programs with a total of 314 participants in September. The highlight was the annual *Nathan Martens Memorial Service* honoring Arizona's fallen heroes of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. Local government and military officials, along with Martens family members were guest speakers for a crowd of 100 guests. This month was also the seasonal return of the popular Archery 101 and 202 programs with a total of 27 participants.
- San Tan also represented Maricopa County Parks at the Queen Creek's annual Founders Day Festival. The Ranger and three volunteers staffed a table in Sustainability Square and shared park information, maps, annual pass information and game worksheets for the kids to over 200 visitors.
- October brought 304 participants to 20 park programs. Of note was the first class presented in a partnership with the San Tan Valley Master Gardeners Club. The speaker discussed the topic of planting the proper vegetation to attract native hummingbirds and butterflies to your yard. 25 visitors watched an indoor presentation and learned firsthand about particular plants samples that were displayed outside.
- San Tan also hosted a Volunteer Trail Work Day with 11 community members that helped with needed repairs on Hedgehog Trail, filling in ruts created by the monsoon rains in late July and early August.



- San Tan took part in the East Valley Environmental Resource Fair at Veterans Oasis Park in Chandler. The Ranger hosted a table with information on our parks as a whole and how they can be a resource to local teachers, either with field trips, outreach or information sharing. Twenty-five teachers took part in this event.

### Spur Cross

- The park hosted six interpretive programs with 93 participants in attendance in September. The *Full Moon Hike* was enjoyed by 28 park visitors.
- In October, the park hosted 18 interpretive programs with 241 participants in attendance. Attendance is picking up this month with the *Full Moon Hike* as our highest attended program with 96 participants.
- The interpretive ranger and his trails' volunteers have been busy the last couple of months removing and pruning over grown vegetation, digging drains for erosion issues, and removing loose rock from the trails.

### Usery

- Usery Mountain Regional Park offered 14 interpretive programs in September totaling 537 participants and 19 interpretive programs in October totaling 973 participants.
- 85 participants participated in the Ranger's *All About Gila Monsters* presentation. Participants had the opportunity to learn just how dangerous Gila Monsters really are, how they survive in the desert, and what to do if you encounter one.
- 180 ghosts joined our ghost ranger on our annual *Goofy Ghost Walk*. Families came to the park dressed in costumes and participated in a quarter-mile hike, a costume contest, and an educational critter presentation by the Phoenix Zoo. The event finished with some ghost stories, a bonfire and s'mores.
- 42 archers participated in the Arizona Bowhunter Field Archery Association (ABFAA) State International archery shoot held by the Usery Mountain Archers.
- The Buckhorn Campground was 89% full during the weekends (F/Sa/Su) in October due to the BOGO camping promo offered each year. Campers get one free night per seven days with purchase of at least one night camping. Many local campers use this opportunity to stay the weekend at the park.
- The Park Supervisor attended the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) Conference in New Orleans, Louisiana. The NRPA Conference fees were paid for with a \$750 scholarship awarded to the supervisor from the Arizona Parks and Recreation Fellowship (APRF).
- All park maintenance staff received tractor training from Risk Management on the park's new Kubota tractor.

### White Tank Mountain Regional Park

- The park provided ten programs and community outreaches with a total of 421 attending. The most popular September event was the "Stargazing for Everyone" which brought in over 200 visitors!
- Warmer temperatures kept the park fairly quiet; however, the Nature Center received consistent visitation from library guests. Many library and park visitors enjoy coming in for the bi-weekly snake feeding, which enticed an average of 30 people at each in September.
- In lieu of the coming busy season, park maintenance staff and hosts deep cleaned the bathrooms and opened up those that had been closed for the slow summer season. The new Park Supervisor continued training with the Westside Superintendent, and had the pleasure of meeting many of the park's annual pass holders as she manned the entrance booth on Friday and Saturday mornings due to a shortage of staff and hosts.
- The park provided 14 programs and community outreaches with a total of 767 attending. The most popular October event was the fourth annual "Sonoran Spook-tacular Howl-o-ween Fest" which brought in over 450 visitors! Many parents expressed their thanks to park staff for providing such a safe, fun, and educational trick-or-treating experience for their families, and the joy on the children's faces was radiating.
- Cooler morning temperatures with mid-day highs in the 90's brought several rescues of hikers who had ran out of water miles back into the mountains. Maricopa County Sheriff's Department provided swift and organized assistance, and with their help all hikers were brought back to safety.
- The popular Waterfall Trail was closed on October 17<sup>th</sup> in order for construction to start on trail improvements in the form of a concrete hiking path. Many visitors have expressed their excitement for this new addition to the trail. While many hikers are saddened that their favorite hiking trail is closed, this has brought the opportunity to educate visitors on the variety of other hiking trails that the park offers.

### **Vulture Mountains Recreation Area and Hassayampa River Preserve**

- The beginning of September saw the re-opening of the Preserve after a two week closure during which the bulk of the Visitor Center renovations affecting the public area were completed. Staff has received many positive comments from volunteers and visitors alike regarding the renovations. Parks and Preserve staff and volunteers continued to work on the remainder of the planned renovations during the month.
- Also during September, the new office furniture and computers were installed, including the front desk computer to run the point of sale system through which fees are collected. The Saturday morning volunteer work crew worked with Preserve maintenance staff to put the foot bridges down across the river channels after the end of monsoon season.
- On September 12<sup>th</sup>, a call from the Wickenburg Police informed Preserve staff of an active manhunt occurring along the Hassayampa River, calling for the evacuation of the Preserve. Fortunately, the suspect was caught outside the Preserve shortly thereafter. Park staff appreciated the swift actions of the Wickenburg PD to inform them about an incident that might affect the Preserve.
- During October, staff from across the department continued plugging away at the many site improvements/projects, including reconstruction of the Visitor Center back porch, new trail signage, and ongoing planning for the new restroom building. Construction began on the seat wall in the picnic area, designed to create seating as well as making the existing picnic area multi-functional with a tiered upper level for events or programming.
- Visitation to the Preserve has increased with the cooler weather and many of the seasonal volunteers will be returning in the next few weeks. The Interpretive Ranger has increased the number of programs offered to the public over what The Nature Conservancy had been able to offer and additional programs will be developed in the coming months.
- The most exciting events, however, have been sightings of a mountain lion and a badger on the trails. The lion has since moved on, but reporting the lion sighting to AZ Game and Fish Department gave park staff an opportunity to meet our local Wildlife Manager and establish a relationship with him.
- Preserve staff enjoyed the recent annual All Hands meeting, and the new staff appreciated the opportunity to meet and get to know staff from HQ and the other parks. The Interpretive Ranger was able to shadow some of the other rangers in their parks to learn and exchange ideas. The Park Supervisor, Interpretive Ranger, and Park Host (formerly at White Tank) also assisted the White Tank staff with their annual Halloween event.