



Maricopa County

Parks & Recreation Department

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MEMORANDUM

Date: September 12, 2018
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 **August 2018**.

From the Office of the Director

- **Southwest Wildlife Conservation Center (SWCC):** We are continuing to work with Southwest Wildlife Conservation Center (SWCC), respondent to the published Request for Expression of Interest (LOI) for the native wildlife rescue conservation and nature center (Center) at McDowell Mountain Regional Park (Park), on a pre-development agreement. SWCC indicated it would take five years to produce all the funding needed to develop the site. The pre-development agreement will establish a framework, timelines and parameters to include, but not limited to, 1) identifying SWCC as the exclusive party to negotiate the project as contemplated by the LOI response; 2) SWCC to provide site viability and financial feasibility; 3) SWCC to assist with outreach to the public for the Park Master Plan Update; and 4) SWCC to develop all plans and studies.
- **NACo Award:** The Parks Department received a NACo award in the Growth and Economic Development category for the transition of the Hassayampa River Preserve from The Nature Conservancy to Maricopa County Parks. The addition of the Preserve marks the first new major acquisition of parkland in nearly 20 years for the department. In addition to enabling the department to bring a regional park to the northwest valley, the Preserve will serve as the gateway to the Vulture Mountains Recreation Area. Since the transition, staff has made structural and cosmetic improvements around the Preserve, while protecting the natural and historical features, to expand services and enhance park visitor experiences. The park supervisor, west-side superintendent, and operations manager joined the director to receive the award at the Board of Supervisor's Awards Ceremony.
- **Maricopa Trail Grand Opening:** On Saturday, November 17th from 10 am until noon, the Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Department will celebrate the completion of Phase One of the Maricopa Trail. The dedication ceremony will be held at Cave Creek Regional Park located at 37900 E. Cave Creek Parkway. The celebration will include a multitude of individuals that have played a key role in bringing the Maricopa Trail to fruition, a sign branding ceremony, giveaways, and interpretive hikes and programs held system wide highlighting the trail. In addition, November 17th is National Take a Hike Day, which is a complimentary day-use entry day into all of Maricopa County's regional parks. Between the two events, November 17th promises to be festive day around Maricopa County's regional park system. Electronic invitations and information on both events will be sent out in October.

Board of Supervisors Agenda Items:

| Date/Status | Tracking Number | Summary |
|-----------------------|------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|
| 8/29/2018 Approved | C-06-19-034-7-00 | Donation Report for July 2018: Cash value of \$570.45 |

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:

Financial/Budget Status through August 2018:

| AUGUST | | | YTD | YTD |
|------------------------------------|------|-----------------------------|--------------|----------------|
| Fund Name | Fund | Type | Actual | Budget |
| General Fund | 100 | Expenditures | \$144,647.72 | \$145,494.00 |
| | | Budget to Actual Amount | | \$846.28 |
| | | Budget to Actual Percentage | | 0.58% |
| Spur Cross Ranch Conservation Fund | 225 | Revenue | \$1,321.85 | \$19,860.00 |
| | | Budget to Actual Amount | | \$18,538.15 |
| | | Budget to Actual Percentage | | 93.34% |
| | 225 | Expenditures | \$46,039.05 | \$43,777.00 |
| | | Budget to Actual Amount | | -\$2,262.05 |
| | | Budget to Actual Percentage | | -5.17% |
| Lake Fund | 240 | Revenue | \$621,119.85 | \$511,901.00 |
| | | Budget to Actual Amount | | -\$109,218.85 |
| | | Budget to Actual Percentage | | -21.34% |
| | 240 | Expenditures | \$475,325.40 | \$550,340.00 |
| | | Budget to Actual Amount | | \$75,014.60 |
| | | Budget to Actual Percentage | | 13.63% |
| Enhancement Fund | 241 | Revenue | \$811,968.11 | \$905,531.00 |
| | | Budget to Actual Amount | | \$93,562.89 |
| | | Budget to Actual Percentage | | 10.33% |
| | 241 | Expenditures | \$827,649.43 | \$1,005,989.00 |
| | | Budget to Actual Amount | | \$178,339.57 |
| | | Budget to Actual Percentage | | 17.73% |

GREEN Positive variance, no concern
 RED Negative/under budget - watch

Contracts:

- **Adobe:**
 Special Use Permits Issued:
 - Sahuaro Central Railroad Preservation Society
 - November 4, Maricopa Live Steams Annual Fall Train Meet
 - October 27, Arizona Model Railroading Society 2018 Fall Model Railroading Adventures
 - Victory Lane
 - December 12, Anthem Preparatory Academy 5K Run
 - December 15, 4 Peaks Race 5K Run
- **Buckeye Hills (Joe Foss Shooting Range):** 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 (Friday, Saturday and Sunday) a month until December 31, 2018. We are continuing to work diligently with the ASRPA in the negotiation of a Use Management Agreement.

Human Resources:

- Welcome New Employees:
 - Sharon Nylen, Contact Station Assistant, Lake Pleasant – 8/13/18
 - Mathew Dalton, Electrician, Trades Crew – 8/13/18
- Promotions/Transfers:
 - Andrew Schnapp, Contact Station Assistant, Transferred from Lake to White Tank 8/13/18

- Departing Employees:
 - Larry Beil, Park Maintenance, Lake Pleasant
 - Kristin Gamblin, Office Assistant, Cave Creek
- Open positions and recruitments:
 - Park Office Assistant Specialized, Hassayampa – Interviews held
 - Park Office Assistant Specialized, Cave Creek – Recruitment open
 - Contact Station Assistants (4), Lake: 2 candidates selected, scheduled to start 9/10/18.
2 open recruitments
 - Contact Station Assistant, Userly – Scheduled to start fulltime position - 9/10/18.
 - Park Maintenance, (2) Lake – Interviews scheduled
 - Park Maintenance, White Tank – Scheduled to start 9/10/18
 - Park Maintenance, Estrella – Interviews scheduled
 - Park Natural Resources Specialist, Planning & Development – Interviews held
 - Volunteer Coordinator, HQ – Candidate selected, scheduled to begin 9/11/18

Volunteer Program:

- FY19 Year-to-Date Volunteer Hours:

| | Jul-18 | Aug-18 | FY19 YTD Total |
|--------------------------------------|----------|-----------|----------------|
| FY19 Total Dept. Hours | 2743 | 2824 | 5567 |
| Financial Savings | \$67,725 | \$69,725 | \$137,449 |
| Financial Savings YTD | \$67,725 | \$137,696 | |
| % Diff comparison/prev. FYTD | -20% | 18% | |
| # of Volunteers-current month | 95 | 75 | |
| # of Park Hosts | 23 | 26 | |
| Park Host Hours | 2140 | 2216 | |
| # of Community Volunteers | 34 | 33 | |
| Community Volunteer Hours | 485 | 547 | |
| # of Episodic Volunteers | 36 | 16 | |
| Episodic Volunteers Hours | 129 | 61 | |
| MCSO Prisoner Service Hours | 0 | 0 | |
| FY18 Month Total Hours | 3506 | 4936 | 8442 |
| FY18 Financial YTD Savings | \$84,635 | \$116,292 | \$200,927 |
| Current Value-\$24.69 | | | |
| Previous Value-\$24.14 | | | |

Planning and Development Division

Vulture Mountain Recreation Area Update

- The 60% design work with our consultant EPS is complete on park amenities and the MCDOT roadway design. Staff is currently working on the 60% - 100% final design phase proposal review and specifications to complete the construction document set. Cultural review of the Vulture project is now complete with concurrence from the State Historic Preservation Office. The NEPA consultant is now writing chapters 3 and 4 of the Environmental Assessment with a target date of February 2019 for completion.

Project Management

- Estrella Park renovations are moving forward, initial ramada construction is complete. Phase I water system improvements are complete including back flow prevention, water system isolation valves, and turf area and irrigation system renovations. Major electrical renovations are kicking off now for the east side of the park and Phase II new ramadas have been ordered.
- Park ramada painting project is nearing completion at Lake Pleasant Regional Park. The new color, Sierra Tan, has slowly been replacing the older faded green roofs from the 1990's. As part of the painting project, the contractor repaired metal fascia and cleaned and sealed the concrete picnic tables.

Park and Open Space Planning

- The Parks and Open Space Planner recently presented the Sun Corridor Trail concept to the Kingman AZ City Council. The trail as it is envisioned will connect Douglas Arizona with Las Vegas Nevada utilizing new

and existing trails as well as a large segment of the Maricopa Trail. Kingman has expressed an interest in the concept as the trail could pass nearby in route to Las Vegas.

Trades Crew

- The Trades Crew, working with County contractors, has the west pump installed at the Central Arizona Project canal that feeds Adobe Dam Regional Park. The canal pump required a new silent check and new drive belt. This pump is the critical component delivering Central Arizona Project water to the 500 Club golf course at Adobe Dam Recreation Area two miles south of the CAP.
- Trades Crew Electricians re-installed the data cables and electrical wiring in the renovated cubicle office space at the Parks Headquarters building at Lake Pleasant. The space is being renovated to house the new Natural Resource Conservation Specialist position.

Trails Crew

- The Trails Division has been busy with the recent monsoon storm inspections and cleanup at Cave Creek, Estrella, and McDowell Mountain Regional Parks as well as the Hassayampa River Preserve. Staff is monitoring trail erosion in the parks as well as assisting with tree and branch removal at the Hassayampa River Preserve.

Maricopa Trail and Trail Facilities:

- Description: The following trail segments are currently in progress – 11, 12, 18, 27, 29, 32, 33, 77 and 78.
- Agreement preparation/negotiations:
 - Estrella Community – Segment 33, new route.
 - Bureau of Land Management – Waiting for the Travel Management Plan completion on the proposed route between Estrella Mountain Park and Buckeye Hills Park.
 - Goodyear – Sign maintenance and Rainbow Valley route.
 - Queen Creek – Re-route of trail to existing trail systems.
 - City of Phoenix – Agreed to install equestrian gates (2) and kiosk at Tres Rios.
 - Bureau of Reclamation (SRP) – Kiosks at the Arizona Canal and the intersection of the Consolidated and Western Canals.
 - Gilbert – Kiosk at the intersection of the Consolidated and Western Canals.
 - Scottsdale – Kiosk on Arizona Canal.
 - Maricopa Water District – Trailhead on Segment 35 at Northern Avenue.
- Construction
 - Segment 11 – Surveyed centerline for new section of trail on recently obtained Arizona State Trust Land, construction scheduled for November 2018.
 - Segment 12 – Surveyed centerline for new section of trail on recently obtained Arizona State Trust Land, construction scheduled for November 2018.
 - Segment 27 – Utery Mountain Park – 1.5 miles inside Park for Nature Center connection scheduled for November 2018.
 - Segment 35 – Buckeye – Received permit from Flood Control District, installed gate and signs that completed this Segment from Estrella Mountain Park to White Tank Mountain Park.
- Maintenance
 - The following segments had maintenance completed this period. This includes grooming the tread, brushing and signage:
 - Segment 35 – 195th Avenue from Indian School Road to Missouri Avenue.
- Trailheads
 - Segment 35 – Northern Avenue – waiting for Maricopa Water District approval.
 - Segment 11 – Sun Valley Parkway – working with Flood Control District to establish trailhead.
 - Kiosks – The Maricopa Trail + Parks Foundation has secured grants from REI to purchase seven kiosks for trailhead placement. Installation will take place in September 2018.

Parks Operations Report

Cave Creek

- The park hosted six interpretive programs with 88 participants in attendance. The highlighted program was the *Hot August Night Hike* with 25 attendees.
- Construction has finally begun for the wildlife pond. Excavation will be completed within the next few weeks. Equipment for the pond has been purchased and some of the materials have arrived.
- The maintenance staff have been busy getting the campground sites ready for the season. They also completed the interior and exterior of the entry station at Spur Cross and built two display cases for the Nature Center gift shop at Cave Creek.

Estrella Mountain Regional Park

- The newly constructed ramadas are waiting for the construction and placement of grills and the addition of new cement tables.
- Estrella Park's new 10-acres of hydro-sprayed Bermuda grass continues to improve as the battle with the weeds and the sprinkler system kinks are worked out. A new three-acre plot is being prepared for hydro seeding in the near future.
- Estrella Park had ten public programs in the month of August. The donated Wet 'N' Wild tickets are a helpful incentive for people to come visit the park during the warmer months. Night programs (moonlight hikes, scorpion searches, etc.) are the most popular programming we have during the hot summer months, followed by indoor kids activities. Volunteer Jack Jenkins came to give a presentation about insects and led a short informative hike on how to look for small animals in the desert. The 25 attendees were excited to learn from him and enthusiastic about returning to the park for similar programming.
- Ranger Amanda attended the National Association for Interpretation training to become CIG (Certified Interpreter Guide) certified. The class was a huge success; principles learned in this class will be immediately helpful and relevant to the current ranger duties.

Lake Pleasant

- Lake Pleasant offered 16 interpretive programs during the month of August to the delight of 150 program participants. The highlights of the months included the *Full Moon Paddle*, *Searching for Scorpions* and *Island Hopping Paddle*.
- The lake is currently at lower than normal water levels – roughly 1,635 elevation feet (36% full). The water has not been this low in about six years. The Central Arizona Project (CAP) has been pumping water solely out of Lake Pleasant, while repairs are made to pumping stations along the CAP water system. Despite the low levels, attendance has remained consistent.
- Phase II of the Bajada Loop electrical upgrades is underway. The upgrades are focusing on the cul de sac loop. In addition, decomposed granite is being laid throughout the entire loop to further define parking delineations. Campsite #134 is being restructured to make access more convenient for campers.
- The painting renovation project for Roadrunner and Desert Tortoise Campgrounds is nearing completion. Approximately 150 campsites (to include seven hosts sites) are receiving a fresh coat of paint, metal work repairs, and cleaned/sealed concrete picnic tables. The project is anticipated to be completed by the end of September.
- Boat Ramp renovations are currently being reviewed for needs and shall be addressed in the coming weeks. The main areas of emphasis will be at the 10-Lane and Emergency Boat Ramps. The ramps will be power washed, vacuumed, reinforced rock shoulders, erosion control gutters, concrete repairs and other related items. The renovations will be taking place during the months of September and October.
- The Discovery Center continues to evolve as enhancement projects are ongoing. The playground equipment is currently being constructed and coming along nicely. Additional concrete benches and privacy walls to hide air conditioning units will be installed near the patio area. Improvements to the old trail/sidewalk from the Discovery Center leading down toward the basement pathway will be enhanced to meet current ADA standards.
- The park is currently conducting visitor surveys in collaboration with Arizona State University to capture user information and identify satisfaction levels for customer service, programming and facilities. The surveys will be ongoing thru the rest of 2018.

- A group of 15 community volunteers came out to celebrate the birthday of a park patron and as part of the celebration, helped pick up approximately 10 trash bags worth of litter from the end of Desert Tortoise Road.
- Special thanks to James "JD" Apthorp for his seven years of service as a park maintenance worker at Lake Pleasant, as he will be transferring to White Tanks fulfilling the same role.

McDowell

- Ten interpretive programs were offered at the park with 39 people in attendance.
- Two *Summer Night Ride* series took place with 101 and 87 participants respectively. The series takes place at Pemberton Trailhead area (Pemberton Trail) and the Fountain Hills Bike Shop co-sponsors this program by providing water, soda and snacks after the ride.
- The Fountain Hills Astronomy Club along with Ranger Amy hosted a Perseid Meteor Shower viewing at the park with 25 people in attendance.

San Tan

- The park hosted 23 programs with a total of 322 participants.
- A highlight for the month was a *Tortoise Feeding* and indoor tortoise class with 50 people. This program was attended by a photographer from the *Queen Creek Independent* with event photos posted on their Facebook page and in both their online and print newspapers.
- The interpretive ranger presented a Monsoon class with a supplemental section on Stormwater Pollution Prevention, the latter of which was brought about by a collaboration with the County Environmental Services Department Water Quality & Compliance Division. Both a Water Outreach Coordinator and a Quality Tester were on hand to observe the program and help answer audience questions to promote public awareness of how our daily environmental choices at home have an effect on stormwater runoff and eventually our household drinking water.
- Continuing the Departments' efforts to enrich staff knowledge of countywide natural resources, staff members Peter, Blake, Nikki and JoAnn went for the first time to Hassayampa River Preserve to learn about their unique riparian environment and the types of recreation opportunities they offer guests.

Spur Cross

- The park hosted seven interpretive programs with 60 participants in attendance. The highlighted program was the *Moonlight Hike* with 26 participants.
- Trail volunteers continue to help with restoring rain-damaged trails and other regular maintenance tasks.
- The interpretive ranger and trail volunteers will be pitching in to help the Cave Creek crew with the wildlife pond project for the next few weeks.

Usery

- The park offered 18 interpretive ranger programs totaling 697 participants. The popular *Scorpion Hunt* was the big draw for the month with 120 people searching the trail for scorpions with their black lights.
- The Usery Mountain Archers completed their Thursday Night Archery League that ran from May thru August. The program brought in 220 adult archers and 25 youth archers during the 4 months.
- Aldo Gonzalez was hired on as the full-time Contact Station Assistant. Aldo has been part-time with the department for over a year and a half and brings excellent customer service skills to the position.
- The new Lost Sheep Trail was completed by the Trails Crew in August. This 1.5-mile long trail connects Moon Rock Trail to the nature center and completes the Maricopa Trail section within the park.

Vulture Mountains Recreation Area and Hassayampa River Preserve

- Visitation to the Preserve continued to be overall slower during this hot, humid month, with approximately 350 visitors. Weekend attendance is starting to pick up as visitors anticipate the cooler weather.
- The interpretive ranger and guest presenters provided eight programs for a total of 83 visitors over the course of the month. The interpretive ranger led several early morning bird walks providing visitors with the opportunity to see some of the bird species that are passing through the Preserve on their fall migration. The *Creatures of the Night Walk* continues to be popular despite the nighttime heat.
- The Central Arizona Butterfly Association (CAZBA) presented their annual *Moth Night* at the Preserve. The evening started with a presentation about the importance of pollinators, including moths. After dark, visitors

enjoyed observing a variety of moths and other nighttime bugs attracted to the black light tent set up in the picnic area. Attendees were also treated to views of the curious ringtails in the nearby palm trees.

- The Preserve continues to work with local ranchers to remove the trespassing cattle from the Preserve.
- This month, the Preserve welcomed their new full-time maintenance worker, Charlie Sizer, who transferred from Lake Pleasant. The summer monsoon season has provided him with many tasks, including cutting and clearing fallen trees and repairing damaged fencing.
- Monsoons have also resulted in some river flooding with one trail that will remain closed until the end of monsoon season. The Trails Crew assisted in removing several widow-maker branches in the large cottonwood trees which were the result of monsoon windstorms. The Trades Crew finished the pipe rail fencing along the driveway providing a welcoming atmosphere for visitors.
- The interpretive ranger joined rangers from the other County parks at a 4-day interpretive training for certification as a Certified Interpretive Guide, or CIG. This training is a core training developed by the National Association for Interpretation and is essential to those in the professional field of Interpretation.

White Tank Mountain Regional Park

- In August, White Tank Mountain Regional Park offered 11 interpretive programs with a total of 281 attending. August tends to be a slower month with programming as families are wrapping up their summers with vacations and children are starting school back up. *Snake Feeding* was well attended with 40 park guests, and the nighttime scorpion hike attracted 74 excited hikers!
- Park Ranger Williams, along with several other Maricopa County Interpretive Rangers attended the Certified Interpreter Guide Course sponsored by The National Association for Interpretation. This 32-hour course was spread over 2 weekends in August and focused on the following:
 - The history, definition, and principles of interpretation
 - Techniques on how to make your programs purposeful, enjoyable, relevant, organized, and thematic
 - How to use tangible objects to connect your audience to intangible ideas and universal conceptsThis training was an opportunity for Ranger Williams to expand and hone his interpretive skillset, in addition to networking with other professionals in the interpretive field.
- On August 25, Aravaipa Running hosted the *Vertigo Night Run* on White Tank's Competition Track. This is the last night run of their summer series and included races from 6 - 52km. The weather cooperated beautifully for the races, averaging in the high 80's for most of the evening. This year was the largest Vertigo race yet with 416 runners in attendance. The event ran very smoothly and brought some excitement on a normally quiet Saturday August evening.
- August brought an expansion of the White Tank full-time staff, as Andrew Schnapp officially transferred from Lake Pleasant as the first full-time White Tank contact station assistant. Andrew started training at White Tank in August and continued to assist Lake Pleasant by working the busy weekends. In the past, White Tank has had two part-time positions; these part-time positions were difficult to keep staffed as employees often needed to work another job or were attending school. With this full-time position, the entrance station at White Tank will be able to be open longer in the summer when seasonal hosts have departed and during the busy season.