



234 N. Central Avenue  
Suite 6400  
Phoenix, AZ 85004-2187  
Phone: 602-506-2930  
Fax: 602-506-4692  
www.maricopa.gov/parks

## MEMORANDUM

Date: December 22, 2009  
To: Parks and Recreation Department Commissioners  
From: R.J. Cardin, Director  
Re: **Director's Summary of Current Events**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R.J. Cardin".

Listed below are issues that the department has been involved with since the November 10<sup>th</sup>, 2009 Director's Summary.

### **Budget**

Monthly Financial Report – November, FY2009-2010

Fund 240 - Lake Pleasant Recreation Services (Agency 302)

Fund 240 is reporting expenditures 4.8% or \$33,106 under the year to date (YTD) budget through 42% of FY09-10.

Fund 240 is reporting revenues 12.8% or \$84,451 over the YTD budget for FY09-10.

Fund 241 – Parks Enhancement Fund (Agency 305)

Fund 241 is currently reporting expenditures 2.0% or \$30,460 under the year-to-date (YTD) budget.

Fund 241 is reporting revenues 4% or \$33,515 under the year to date (YTD) budget.

Fund 100 – General Fund (Agency 300)

Fund 100 is reporting expenditures 12.5% or \$35,862 under the YTD budget.

Fund 100 is funded by the County General Fund subsidy. Revenues are not collected in this fund.

### **Superintendent Report**

**Spur Cross Ranch Conservation Area:** During the month of November, 19 programs were conducted by the interpretive ranger and park volunteers. 18 programs are scheduled for the month of December.

The park supervisor and interpretive ranger presented a session regarding vegetation management activities to the South West Vegetation Management Symposium in Casa Grande. The interpretive ranger presented the park's star thistle abatement activity and the park supervisor presented the restoration treatment and results at the Cave Creek Regional Park burn site. Both presentations were well received.

Audubon representatives met with the park staff to delineate the "Important Bird Area" perimeters in Spur-Cross for the annual Christmas bird count.

**December 22, 2009**

Director's Summary

Page 2 of 5

The Town of Cave Creek had their 1<sup>st</sup> Open Space Bike Race and Ride that went through Spur Cross and Cave Creek parks. The event went off without any major problems and \$14,000 was raised for open space preservation.

The Arizona Game and Fish Department (AZGFD) released 159 desert pupfish into the solar oasis pond. This is the 2nd federally listed species to be introduced back into Spur-Cross.

**Usery Mountain Regional Park:** There were 57 interpretive programs performed in November with a total of 1439 participants with 467 repeat attendees. *Stargazing for Everyone* twinkled with 325 bedazzled gazers. Also, 86 fascinated participants raved about the Venomous Critters with speaker, Cale Morris, from the Phoenix Herpetological Society.

There were 72 interpretive programs performed in December with a total of 1162 participants with 392 repeat attendees. Brown-bags talks are proving to be very popular in the Nature Center even with the heat of the summer long gone. Each month, the ranger has a new topic along with a few of the stand-bys for park visitors to choose from the list.

Yoga with Inner Vision Yoga Studio is stretching successfully each month. Consistently, there are 15-17 returning participants with numbers growing every Tuesday and Thursday mornings in the Nature Center classroom. A new Monday night class has been established as a result of requests by annual pass holders that work during the morning week classes. The Saturday class is starting to grow with campers coming in for the weekend.

The Bird Lady is back! The ever-popular bird programs are up and flying with 6 programs. Sandy Hornbaker, Usery's Audubon expert hosting in the park's campground, has the visitors walking, hiking and identifying birds on the trails, Nature Center and at Campsite #21.

The Mesa Convention and Visitors Bureau held a Members' Networking Breakfast meeting in the Nature Center for local community business owners. The park supervisor and ranger presented the new facility to the Mesa owners and all were excited about its potential for the future.

The park supervisor attended a 3-day Nature Quest Workshop sponsored through the Arizona Association for Environmental Education and Arizona Audubon at the new Audubon facility in central Phoenix. Nature Quests are "community treasure hunts" created and designed with place-based environmental education.

The interpretive ranger, an archery park host and a park maintenance crewmember attended an intermediate certification class in order to teach the basics of youth archery. This training was paid from a National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) grant the Park received for youth archery programming.

The park supervisor has added a new arm to the Park's marketing plan: a 12-minute radio talk show once a month. The show is Mesa Talking on Channel 11 - Cox Cable. She will talk with the radio host about Usery and the upcoming month's programming.

**McDowell Mountain Regional Park:** The 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Javelina Jundred was held with a record number of participants. A new course record of running 100 miles was set, breaking the old record by over an hour. The 2<sup>nd</sup> 24 Hours of Fury was conducted with 116 racing through the night and finishing on Sunday. The 3<sup>rd</sup> Dawn to Dusk mountain bike race was a great success having sold out all categories with 470 riders participating. The Valley of the Sun Equestrian ride took place with 47 horses and riders completing 50/75 mile ride with no injuries or lost horses this year.

The park hosted the Muddy Buddy event for the first time. As a first year event the turnout was in doubt with a week of rainy cold weather leading up to it. However, both the park and the promoter were pleased that 530 teams of two participated and by all accounts, had a great time and loved the event. Muddy Buddy is already scheduled to return to McDowell Mountain Regional Park in November of 2010.

The interpretive ranger has scheduled 22 programs for December and assisted with two large special events.

An Eagle Scout Candidate is in the process of installing a small pond behind the Visitor Center to provide water for wildlife living in the area. Work got underway November 28 and will wrap up by the end of the year.

**December 22, 2009**

Director's Summary

Page 3 of 5

**San Tan Mountain Regional Park:** San Tan had a very thankful November, with a 9% increase in revenue and attendance. December appears to be very jolly as well.

The park offered a spectacular array of programs during the months of November and December. In December, we will be hosting our 3rd Annual **SANTA WONDERLAND**, with an interesting assortment of fun activities for families. Special thanks to the rangers at White Tank, Usery, and McDowell for assisting San Tan with some outstanding programs.

An Eagle Scout with 35 scout volunteers donated and helped plant 25 Palo Verde trees and 10 mesquite trees around the San Tan Nature Center to help enhance the visual appeal and offer the potential for shade in the near future. The vegetation will also help limit the amount of "off-trail" hiking and social trails (non-designated or blazed paths) in the area.

The park is pleased to announce the arrival of our new recreation assistant. She has worked as a Park Ranger for the County Parks system in the past and will be offering her expertise at San Tan to help with programs and other park-related needs on a part-time basis.

The wildlife refuge pond near the nature center is coming along nicely and the park hopes to have it completed by the end of December. Supplies and funding for the pond were primarily donated through the Friends of San Tan Mountain Regional Park. The pond is going to offer a nice water source for the wildlife in the area and provide a relaxing oasis (including a shade structure and sitting area) for park visitors to enjoy and take in the beauty of San Tan Park. To help keep with the history and old west feel of the area that is so greatly cherished by the community and park visitors, a windmill will be utilized to aerate the pond utilizing "green" technology.

**Estrella Mountain Regional Park:** Despite a weather threat, the Phoenix Faerie Festival was still well attended by nearly 2,000 participants.

The park received three mounted birds (red tail hawk, burrowing owl and roadrunner) that were found at or near the park and taken to a taxidermist by Citizens for Estrella Park (CEMP). Six new swings are now in place on our playgrounds, also courtesy of CEMP.

The Arizona Game and Fish Department (AZGFD) were at Estrella with their helicopters to count Big Horn Sheep and yes, the park has three!

**White Tank Mountain Regional Park:** *November-* There were 25 Interpretive Ranger programs conducted for the month of November, which include 19 outreach programs and six in park programs with a total of 1306 participants.

The Dust Devil mountain bike series was held on November 21, with approximately 200 bikers competing.

Library/ Nature Center - The pace of activity has accelerated noticeably now that a building permit has been approved; Under-slab plumbing and conduit have been inspected and approved; backfilling has begun. Trenching for parking area lighting is underway and work on relocating the park entrance gate has begun. Gate relocation will be accomplished with minimal inconvenience to park visitors.

There are 12 Interpretive Ranger programs scheduled for the month of December, with four outreach programs and eight in park programs scheduled.

**Lake Pleasant Regional Park:** *November -* Lake Pleasant had 32 interpretive ranger park programs conducted with a total of 528 participants.

Lake Pleasant saw another successful triathlon event staged at the 4-lane launch area on November 1. The Amica Champion Triathlon has already scheduled next year's Lake Pleasant race date for November 7, 2010.

Central Arizona Project (CAP) and the Park have teamed up for a new interpretive program aimed at students learning about water. The CAP representative, along with the park's interpretive ranger presented an hour long program to students on Arizona's water supply. Buses brought 70 students for one of the talks!

**December 22, 2009**

Director's Summary

Page 4 of 5

Hiking season is here and Lake Pleasant Regional Park conducted one of its more popular hikes to Indian Mesa on November 21. This hike not only shares the area prehistoric and historic aspects of the park, it also opens people's eyes to the need to protect the park.

Boy Scouts helped trim the Morgan City Wash Trail just in time for the popular *Morgan City Wash Exploring Hike*, which was conducted several times this past month. If you have not gone on this four mile hike before, you're in for fun adventure.

The Nature Center saw its second best day of sales on Friday, November 27 for a day after Thanksgiving Day sale or Black Friday Sale. Park visitors enjoyed the bargains as well as the park enjoyed moving out some old merchandise. This was a first year event, but from the success of this day, it should be returning next year.

The Agua Fria Conservation Area (AFCA) fence assessment shows that none of the existing fencing is accurate. We are starting the process to complete a GPS boundary.

Aqua Fria Closed for the season to boating as of December 15.

**Desert Outdoor Center (DOC): November** - For the annual Boy Scouts of America (BSA) Scout-O-Rama, the park had a manned booth for the Lake Pleasant Camp (LPC) which was held at Kiwanis Park in Tempe on November 7, 2009. Good weather brought many people out to enjoy the day and with an excellent booth location near the entrance, the interpretive ranger had an opportunity to speak to many potential campers about LPC and the Council's Aquatics Committee.

The BSA Council Camp Director's meeting was attended by DOC interpretive ranger on November 16, 2009 and attendees were given a packet of information about the 2010 summer camp season by the newly-appointed Council Programs Director. They would like LPC to participate in many events to promote the camp, including University of Scouting, Downhill, Jamb-o-Rama and also an All-Camp Staff Training Weekend in April.

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) initiated burro trapping at the leach bed on October 6 and took down the pens after about one month, where they trapped 3 burros. There are still about at least 10 burros in residence, and more than half are still parading into and through the amphitheater and past the dorms on a regular basis.

Annual Friends of the Desert Outdoor Center meeting took place on October 27th with 16 people in attendance. The meeting outlined the accomplishments of the group over the past year, endowment program, and elections of officers took place.

An Academics Workshop was implemented by a couple of the departments' park rangers. All rangers within the park system attended this training. A standard curriculum format was presented and Arizona Academic Standards were introduced.

The Lake Pleasant Sailing Club Christmas Party took place on December 12.

DOC staff is currently contacting school officials to market and increase attendance.

Interpretive rangers are revising the self-guided hiking brochure for the Honeymoon Cove trail. Wooden trail signs with 15 different numbers were mounted in different areas along this two mile trail.

**Cave Creek Regional Park: November** - On November 14, mountain bikers rode through Cave Creek Park and Spur Cross via the Maricopa Trail for an Open Space event. On November 15, road bike riders rode on the Park's roads as part of the event. There were over 350 riders participating between the mountain bike race/ride and the discovery road ride.

A new partnership program called 'Horses, Gold and Critters, Oh My!' between the park and Cave Creek Trail Rides was a huge success. Valley Girl Scouts enjoyed a combination horseback ride and interpretive program. The program was featured in a 3 page article in December's "Images AZ" Magazine.

**December 22, 2009**

Director's Summary

Page 5 of 5

### **Contract Updates**

**Adobe Dam Regional Park** - The agreement reached between Parks and Desert Wake Park, LLC for a cable ski lake concession was approved on November 18 by the Board of Supervisors. The department is still waiting on final decision/clearance from Flood Control regarding degradation of dam structure.

**Buckeye Hills Regional Park** – The Board of Supervisors approved naming of the pistol range at the General Joe Foss Shooting Complex on November 18 to the “Silvestre S. Herrera Pistol Range”.

The Buckeye Sportsman Club received a grant from the AZGFD allowing the start of construction of the shotgun range. The amount of the grant was \$16,000; permitting process has begun and an anticipated opening date is April 2010.

Coordinated planning and funding has begun for the archery range.

**Paradise Valley** - Proposals were due on December 23, 2009 for a new concession agreement, for the golf course.

**Estrella Mountain Regional Park** - Released the Request for Proposal (RFP) for an RV Park at Estrella. The Pre-Proposal Conference was held on December 3 and proposals are due February 25, 2010.

On November 18, the Board of Supervisors also approved the amendment with Phoenix Speedway Corp (PSC/PIR). This agreement pertains to use of Estrella for camping during racing events held at PSC/PIR. Two times per year.

**All Parks** – On December 17, the RFP was released for RV Pumping Service with Pre-Proposal Conference scheduled for January 7, 2010. The service would be offered at each site and be fee based.

**Parks Department** – The RFP for a Point of Sale/Inventory Control/Reservation System was released on November 16 and the Pre-Proposal Conference was held on Monday, November 30. Proposals were due to Materials Management on Friday, December 18. The RFP review committee is scheduled to meet with Materials Management on January 6, 2010.

### **Coming and Going in Human Resources**

Interviews were held for the vacant Park Maintenance Worker position at Lake Pleasant. Two internal candidates were initially interviewed and both declined the job offer. The requisition has been re-posted, "External" with the closing date of December 15, 2009.

The Park Maintenance Worker from San Tan transferred to Utery, effective December 14, 2009, to fill the vacant position left when one of Utery's Park Maintenance Worker's resigned. The supervisor will wait until after the holidays to fill the San Tan position.

A temporary Recreation Assistant was also hired to assist at San Tan and the position was filled effective November 30, 2009.