

**MARICOPA COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT
PARKS AND RECREATION ADVISORY COMMISSION MEETING**
Regular Meeting of November 18, 2025

LOCATION: Virtual Meeting

COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT: Megha Budruk, Jack Stapley, John Crane, Eric Mears

COMMISSION MEMBERS ABSENT: Isabel Chavez, Samantha Stelp, Shelby Scharbach

STAFF PRESENT: Jennifer Waller, Director; Betsy Pregulman, Deputy County Attorney

The official correspondence and staff recommendations contained in this Commission folder are hereby entered as supportive material to the official minutes of the November 18, 2025, Parks and Recreation Commission regular meeting.

PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING

ITEM #1 – CALL TO ORDER – Megha Budruk, Chair, Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission

- The regular meeting was called to order at 10:03 a.m.

ITEM #2 – ROLL CALL – Roll Call taken - a quorum was present.

ITEM #3 – PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

ITEM #4 – APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE PARKS AND RECREATION ADVISORY COMMISSION MEETINGS – Megha Budruk, Chair, Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission

- With all in favor and none opposed, the motion passed.

ITEM #5 - DIRECTOR'S SUMMARY OF CURRENT EVENTS – Jenn Waller, Director, Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Department

- Director Waller provided an overview of the Director's Summary for September and October 2025.
- Parks FY26-28 Fee Proposal is moving forward, with public comments under review. A presentation is scheduled for the Board of Supervisors meeting on December 10th, at 9:30 a.m. Commissioners were invited to attend in support if available.
- The San Tan Regional Park Master Plan is being moved up by one year (2026), and the Lake Pleasant Regional Park Master Plan is being moved back by one year (2027), due in part to impacts from the federal government shutdown and coordination challenges. Year one is being wrapped up with the next steps to complete public comment and stakeholder input. Master plans for San Tan, Estrella, and Buckeye Hills will move forward in 2026.
- The Natural Resource Program pellet workshops have been a great success as a combined effort between the Natural Resource Specialist and the Desert Defenders.
- Wildlife cameras are still on and recording in the parks. There are now two dedicated interns working on this project.
- The Natural Resource Program is adding a greenhouse at Cave Creek Regional Park, where native plants will be grown and then returned to the native environment.
- County Security Services and the Parks Volunteer Coordinator, who has a law enforcement background, have been asked to conduct security evaluations at Estrella Mountain Regional Park and

Lake Pleasant Regional Park, with results that can be applied across the system. Evaluations will focus on lighting, walking paths to and from vehicles, and exposure concerns.

- Maricopa Trails and Parks Foundation has created a training program utilizing grant funds. Past Parks Director RJ Cardin is now the Foundation's Executive Director and has put together training sessions within our system, with the first training being held at Usery Mountain Regional Park in October. As a result of these training sessions, we may have 16 individuals interested in serving as a trail ambassador.
- Cave Creek Regional Park had electrical upgrades done to 40 campsites. Cave Creek's campground has been around since 1997, so this was a much-needed overhaul, especially considering camping units continue to get bigger.
- McDowell Mountain Regional Park waterline replacement phase two has been completed.
- At Usery, restroom number six has been torn down and will be replaced later this year.
- Dr. Stein from Arizona State University has been doing a bird study, and that will continue in the spring.
- San Tan has been working on replacing several old trail signs.
- Meetings with San Tan Shredders continue regularly.
- September rains had some impact on the parks, Spur Cross and Hassayampa, in particular. Spur Cross received four inches of rain, which washed out the bridges crossing the trails. Thanks to Supervisor Kevin Smith and volunteers, they are now back up and functional.
- A SkillBridge intern began at White Tank, a 16-week program focused on learning park operations. The Department of Defense (DOD) SkillBridge program enables service members to gain civilian experience during their last 180 days of service.
- Chair Budruk asked whether any photos of the Northern Lights from any of the parks had been sent in. Director Waller stated that she imagined there were probably photos, but she had not seen any.

ITEM #6 – NOTICE OF SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS TO NOMINATE CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR FOR 2026– Megha Budruk, Chair, Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission

- Chair Budruk asked if anyone would like to nominate themselves for the subcommittee to nominate a new Chair and Vice Chair for 2026.
- Commissioner John Crane volunteered and will join Chair Budruk.

ITEM #7 – APPROVE 2026 PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING SCHEDULE – Megha Budruk, Chair, Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Commission

- Chair Budruk presented the proposed 2026 meeting schedule, noting a return to the third Tuesday of each month.
- Commissioner Crane noted a conflict with the proposed March 17 date. Discussion followed regarding maintaining consistency with the third Tuesday schedule.
- Director Waller recommended keeping the schedule as proposed to maintain routine.
- Commissioner Mears moved to approve the 2026 Commission Meeting Schedule as presented, seconded by Commissioner Crane. With all in favor, none opposed, the motion passed.

ITEM #8 - SET 2026 PARKS AND RECREATION ADVISORY COMMISSION MEETING LOCATIONS– CALL TO THE COMMISSION - Megha Budruk, Chair, Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Commission – DISCUSSION ITEM/ACTION ITEM

- Chair Budruk opened the discussion regarding meeting locations and the use of virtual meetings when agendas are primarily administrative.
- Commissioner Stapley said he marked out the locations where meetings had been held over the past year from the list provided. He stated that the three other locations – White Tank, Usery, and Hassayampa would be options if trying to rotate the meetings throughout the park system every two or three years. Any other locations can be added to those three possible park locations.
- Commissioner Crane agreed that the parks not visited in the past year should be at the top of the priority list. He continued that today's meeting was originally scheduled at the Queen Creek Library to give the commission a chance to check out San Tan Regional Park. He believes that the Queen Creek location should be at the top of the list.

- Commissioners discussed the potential for benchmarking or touring park systems outside the County to observe best practices and identify ideas to enhance county operations. Municipal Park systems, including the City of Phoenix and the City of Scottsdale, were identified as possibilities. Director Waller advised that Maricopa County Parks are unique in scope and amenities and noted that any tour or meeting would require coordination with another agency and could include a time commitment of approximately two to three hours. Commissioners discussed possible options such as a standalone tour or a combined commission meeting and tour, emphasizing that any visit should be selective, limited in scope, and scheduled outside of January and the summer months. Chair Budruk will consult with Director Waller regarding potential benchmarking or tour opportunities and return to the commission with information and recommendations for future consideration.
- Chair Budruk stated that Hassayampa, White Tank, San Tan, and Usery should be designated as priority parks for in-person meetings, with San Tan at the top of the list, and that meetings may be held virtually when only administrative items are on the agenda.
- Commissioner Jack Stapley moved to hold the January Commission meeting at San Tan Regional Park. Seconded by Commissioner Mears. With all in favor, none opposed, the motion passed.
- Commissioner Mears moved to designate San Tan Regional Park as the top priority for in-person meetings, with Hassayampa, White Tank, and Usery as additional priority parks, and to allow virtual meetings when agendas are primarily administrative. Seconded by Chair Budruk. With all in favor, none opposed, the motion passed.

Item #9 – CALL TO THE PUBLIC

- Jim Jensen (San Tan Shredders) presented visitor-use data, stating that San Tan Regional Park has the highest number of visitors per trail mile among county parks. He stated the data support advancing the San Tan master plan schedule and noted impacts on trails, signage, trailheads, shade structures, and emergency access.
- Phil (self-represented) requested information regarding the discussion of the Paradise Valley Golf Course from a prior meeting.
- Kurt Kempton expressed appreciation for advancing the San Tan master plan and offered continued support.

Item #10– CALL TO THE COMMISSION

- Commissioner Mears requested an agenda item for a future meeting to provide a refresher on the park master planning process and schedule.
- Director Waller reminded the Commission of the upcoming 25th Anniversary Celebration of Spur Cross Ranch Conservation Area, scheduled for January 9 at 10:00 a.m., as referenced in the Director's Summary.
- Chair Budruk requested that a calendar invitation for the event be distributed to Commissioners.
- Chair Budruk noted the conclusion of a productive year, stated that the Commission would not reconvene until 2026, and extended holiday well-wishes.

Item #11 – ADJOURNMENT

- There being no further business, Chair, Megha Budruk, motioned for adjournment, and Commissioner Crane seconded. With all in favor, the motion passed. Meeting adjourned at 10:48 a.m.