

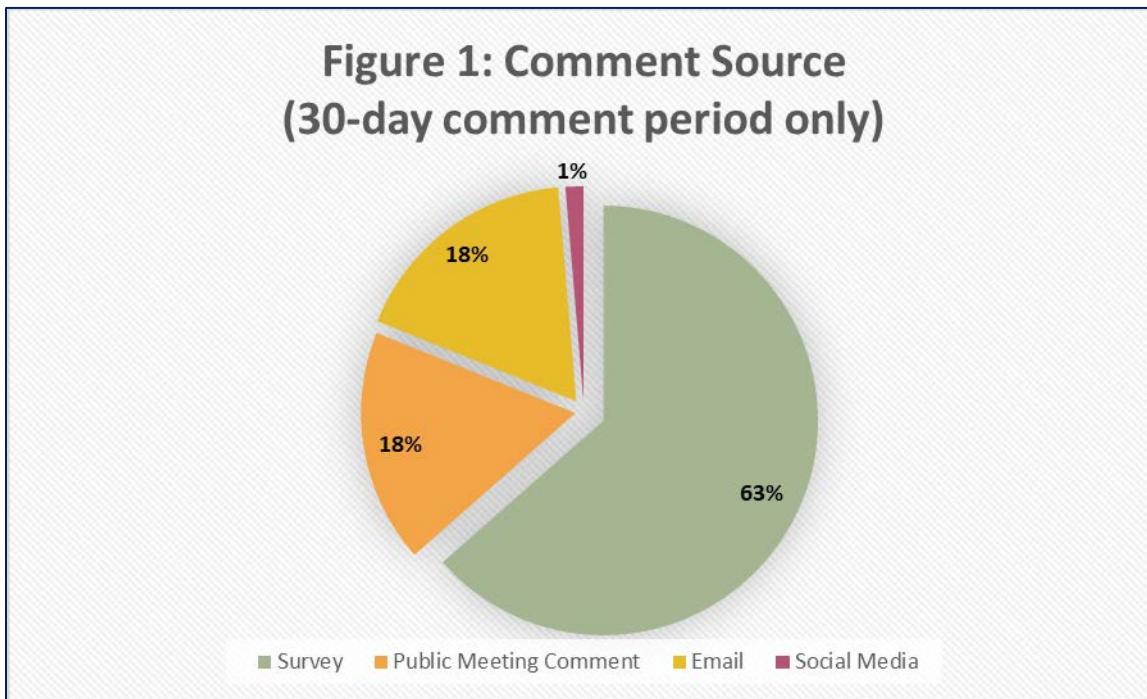


**McDowell Mountain Regional Park  
Master Plan Update  
Comments from February 20, 2018 Public Open House Meeting**

## SUMMARY

This public meeting was conducted in an open house style format; a Power Point presentation was presented on a loop feed. Additionally, display boards were stationed throughout the room and the public was invited to work their way around the room to view each board after the presentation. Department staff was available to answer any questions and to engage in discussions during the presentation and afterward. Members of the public were asked to view the displayed maps for the park and write down comments to post to the map locations associated with those comments. Comment cards were also available for interested parties to provide more detail comments and feedback. Approximately 10 people signed in for the meeting and 14 sticky note comments were collected from the maps, eight (8) notes were written on the easel pads, and three (3) comment cards were received.

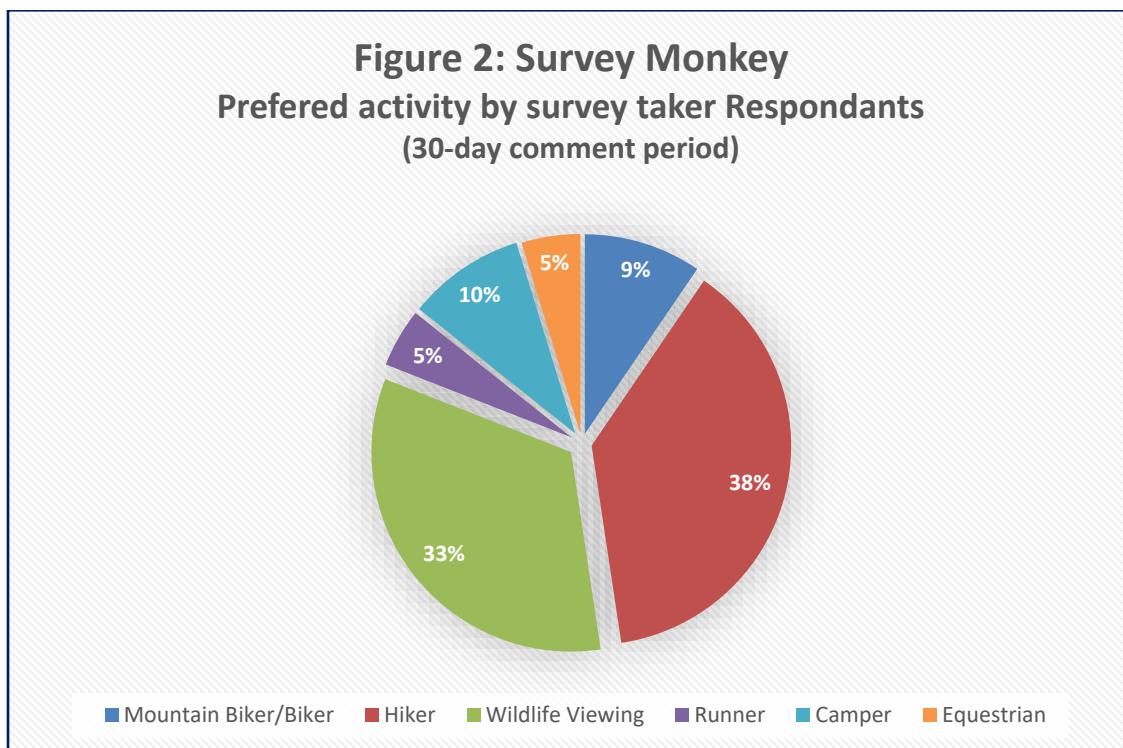
The Department allowed a 30-day comment period, concluding on March 22, 2018, to provide the general public adequate time to comment. Figure 1 demonstrates how the various pieces of communications were received during the 30-day comment period.



Commenters were allowed to choose more than one activity group that best represents themselves. Of those that specified their preferred activity, "Hiker" represented 38% of respondents, followed by "Wildlife Viewer" at 33% (Figure 2).



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Department planning staff reviewed the 21 surveys received. Out of those 21 surveys, the Department planning staff recognized 94 unique comments. Further, out of the 94 unique comments, 22 (or about 23 percent) were considered to be out of the scope of the Master Plan Update. *Out of scope* means that the comment or suggestion is already covered by another planning document; it may also mean that the comment pertains to an operational matter; or it may mean that the comment does not otherwise fall under the purview of a master plan. Other comments deemed out of scope may also be too generalized or vague to work with. In any case, all comments were forwarded to park management for their reference.

Table 1: Unique and Out of Scope Comments	
Unique Comments:*	94
Out of Scope Comments:	22
Percent out of scope	23%

\*One comment card may have contained more than one type of comment.  
Total will exceed number of respondents.

A master plan does not dictate hours of operation, staffing, programming or other day-to-day activities. A master plan also does not dictate activities that occur outside of park boundaries. As noted at the public meeting, the purpose of a master plan is **to outline the long-range vision for the park as well as development priorities that will provide for both the public's enjoyment and the protection of the park's resources**. A master plan also:

- Serves as a guide and policy document for current and future park staff, partnering agencies, elected officials, and interested members of the public.
- Guides management of natural, cultural, and recreational resources.
- Considers a range of issues such as staffing, funding, encroachment, wildlife corridors, public needs, and more.
- Considers staff, stakeholder, and public recommendations.



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- Identifies park enhancement opportunities including possible upgrades to park facilities, recreation infrastructure, restoration opportunities, etc.

The remaining substantive comments will be further evaluated and potentially carried forward into the recommended park improvements for the master plan. Table 3 details each unique comment received.

Public Meeting #1		
30-Day Public Comment Period		
Method	Comment	Out of Scope
Comment Card	Add 25 plus RV sites	
Comment Card	Add a nature play area	
Comment Card	Partner with SWCC for a wildlife rehabilitation and education center	
Map Sticky note	Keep the open spaces as much as possible, preserve the natural space and beauty	x
Map Sticky note	More educational programing i.e. geology	x
Map Sticky note	Add a flow trail that is one direction	
Map Sticky note	Add campsites to camp ground	
Map Sticky note	Add a trail extending north to south through the center of the park connecting or crossing east to west trails	
Map Sticky note	Add trails to the competitive track area	
Map Sticky note	Obtain state land near the southeast corner of the park	x
Map Sticky note	Add access point northeast of the southeast boundary corner	
Map Sticky note	Add access point from state land area	
Map Sticky note	Add more trails on Lousley Hill	
Map Sticky note	Add a shade structure to CO right at map label	
Map Sticky note	Add a bike lane along the road throughout the park	
Map Sticky note	Add hike/bike in camping near the northwest corner of the park	
Map Sticky note	Make use of the mountains encompassed by the sport loop at the comp track	
Map Sticky note	Add campsites to camp ground	
Easel pads	Walking trails separate from biking trails	
Easel pads	Demo gardens of native plant life	
Easel pads	Signage to provide mileage	x
Easel pads	Consistent signage going to the Tonto National Forest	x



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Easel pads	Web events notice 1 month out	x
Easel pads	ADA Trails (paved)	
Easel pads	Add campsites to campground	
Easel pads	More garbage disposal at competitive track	x
<b>Survey Monkey - Question #3: After reviewing the original 1967 Master Plan map, is there anything you would like to see kept in the updated plan?</b>		
Survey Monkey	No. It was horrible!	x
Survey Monkey	Western Historical History Interpretation and Displays	
Survey Monkey	additional access points like the north gate	
Survey Monkey	A ridgeline hiking trail on Lousley Hills	
Survey Monkey	I would love to see something like Southwest Wildlife there.	
Survey Monkey	The camping area and youth areas.	
Survey Monkey	ALL	x
Survey Monkey	hiking, wildlife viewing	
Survey Monkey	Wildlife preservation	x
Survey Monkey	Educational facilities from Southwest Wildlife. They do great work.	
Survey Monkey	Hiking Trails	
Survey Monkey	More wildlife.	x
Survey Monkey	The desert cattle ranching is no longer a viable activity. The update should include all previous endeavors to keep the area "natural".	x
Survey Monkey	Keep everything the same as it is but add Another loop for rv camping and bring in more revenue. The natural beauty and remoteness is what makes this park so unique.	
Survey Monkey	Youth camps	
Survey Monkey	no	x
Survey Monkey	a second entrance	
Survey Monkey	Less camping	
Survey Monkey	Interpretive exhibits	
Survey Monkey	No. It was horrible!	x
<b>Survey Monkey Question #4: After reviewing the current park map, what do you like about the park?</b>		



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Survey Monkey	Extensive trail system.	
Survey Monkey	I like the Nursery Tank barrier free trail but it needs updating and I would like to see a full loop trail there with interpretive displays and covered picnic area that is ADA as well.	
Survey Monkey	I like the camping near the north east corner of the park but I wish there was an area for pop up trail camping that was better suited to that style of camping. Maybe a gravel area with parking, picnic tables and fire pits similar to the tent area but less expensive than the traditional RV slots.	
Survey Monkey	I think Southwest Wildlife would be an excellent addition and draw to the park.	
Survey Monkey	The hiking trails	
Survey Monkey	Well marked hiking trails	
Survey Monkey	open natural desert	
Survey Monkey	The size.	
Survey Monkey	The trail maps provided and convenient parking.	
Survey Monkey	Real Arizona not an amusement park	
Survey Monkey	Nice hiking biking trails	
Survey Monkey	Location and opportunities for outdoor activities	
Survey Monkey	Easy to camp and hike	
Survey Monkey	I love the trails, the opportunity to be outside in such a great area. We see wildlife regularly. its great.	
Survey Monkey	I love the natural state of the environment, the ability of wildlife to survive unchallenged by development.	
Survey Monkey	The variety of trails and uses is perfect. Again, keeping the acreage natural cannot be more alluring. It should not be developed to be just another "arcade tombstone". Possibly a Native American interactive lead talk to reveal how people could live here for so many years but keep and respect the land.	
Survey Monkey	Multi-use trails	
Survey Monkey	Great trail system and links to other parks	
Survey Monkey	Lots of hiking trails, limited number of people, no or less horses on trails, lots of natural desert area	
Survey Monkey	lots of trails!	
Survey Monkey	More trails	x



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Survey Monkey	I like the Nature Center.	
<b>Survey Monkey Question #5: Of the existing amenities and services, what would you like to see more of in the future?</b>		
Survey Monkey	Interpretive trails that focus on inclusivity such as ADA and sensory displays, i.e. sound garden. More historical programing.	
Survey Monkey	More walking trails and opportunities to see local wildlife	
Survey Monkey	More paved trails for the elderly. I myself like more challenging hikes however my dad who is 77 is still a hiker and now shuffles when he walks and can easily be disoriented by things such as bikers on trails. He still loves to get out there and hike and I believe that this park is perfect to create more trails the elderly can go on that are paved and easy to walk. Also add in more informational signs along the way discussing the terrain and animals to further educate both the old and the young about the beautiful dessert we live in.	
Survey Monkey	I would like to allow the SWCC (SOUTHWEST WILDLIFE CONSERVATION CENTER) to relocate on public land. It is a fantastic facility and should NOT be in a residential area.	
Survey Monkey	organized educational hikes, wildlife viewing	x
Survey Monkey	Green space and wildlife viewing.	
Survey Monkey	Restroom facilities at locations that do not offer them presently.	
Survey Monkey	They are minimal and should be kept that way.	x
Survey Monkey	There are a lot of amenities but would like to see animal education programs	x
Survey Monkey	Wildlife education	x
Survey Monkey	More wildlife	x
Survey Monkey	trails - but there are already lots.	
Survey Monkey	More information and history about the area would be most welcome.	x
Survey Monkey	An additional campers loop	
Survey Monkey	Wildlife Viewing areas	
Survey Monkey	Trails, expanded comp loops	
Survey Monkey	I think it is just right as it is now.	x
Survey Monkey	more wildlife viewing opportunities	
Survey Monkey	more trails just for hikers	
Survey Monkey	Trailheads on the north side of the park	
Survey Monkey	Nature center.	



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<b>Survey Monkey Question #6: What amenities and services would you like to see added to the park in the future?</b>		
Survey Monkey	Trail connecting Nature Center (Tortoise Trail) with Wagner Trail. A new Nature Center.	
Survey Monkey	Horse rentals and a rope course.	
Survey Monkey	Southwest Wildlife	
Survey Monkey	An entrance similar to the McDowell Sonoran Conservancy (Lost Dog Wash Trailhead & Gateway Trailhead) would be great! It is very inviting, bathrooms are right at the start of the main trailheads and on weekends when I have gone I have seen people there promoting the parks and trails along with the fact that there are large trail map signs and handouts available.	
Survey Monkey	wildlife viewing areas	
Survey Monkey	A wildlife sanctuary and education about native wildlife.	
Survey Monkey	More to promote Arizona wildlife	x
Survey Monkey	Animal Education programs like Southwest Wildlife	
Survey Monkey	Southwest Wildlife Conservation education center and future expansion	
Survey Monkey	More camping and hiking. View wildlife.	
Survey Monkey	If Southwest Wildlife wanted to add an education center or expand their facilities into the park, I would be all for that.	
Survey Monkey	Southwest Wildlife is nearby but, if relocated to the park, could offer a golden opportunity to view wildlife in captivity.....an additional draw to the park for the general public and an added attraction to entertain and educate.	
Survey Monkey	Wildlife Sanctuary, more information about native wildlife	
Survey Monkey	Better restrooms and showers	
Survey Monkey	Hiking trails if anything.	
Survey Monkey	Southwest Wildlife Conservation Center!	
Survey Monkey	Expanded nature center.	
<b>Survey Monkey : Additional Comments</b>		
Survey Monkey	Best location for SWCC is near Nature Center because the area already has a lot of development; don't place it in less-developed areas to the north. Dust mitigation at Four Peaks Staging Area ahead of Ragnar during dry years.	
Survey Monkey	Expand the areas for special events and add more restrooms	



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Survey Monkey	I believe that the trails such as the Sonoran Trail should be listed on maps as the entire trail length not just the portion on the McDowell Mountain Regional Park side alone. It would help bring more people into this park to hike trails that are more challenging	x
Survey Monkey	The gated neighborhood where the Dixie Mine Trail & the Sonoran Trail can be accessed in Fountain Hills really don't make us hikers feel welcome by deciding to be closed on certain holidays and having the gateman remind you as you walk in when the community gates are closed to the public. If this trailhead could be moved to a location where we feel invited that would be awesome. I love our parks for the beauty of nature and the challenges of hiking them and would love to help where I can.	
Survey Monkey	none	
Survey Monkey	it would be a great area for wildlife from SWCC to be available for public viewing at the park	
Survey Monkey	The preserve offers beautiful scenery and wildlife viewing as well as educational opportunities. Continuation of these opportunities is appreciated.	x
Survey Monkey	Keep it as natural Arizona as possible	x
Survey Monkey	Keep up the good work.	x
Survey Monkey	Addition of Southwest Wildlife Conservation Center would be perfect for the park!	
Survey Monkey	Love the attention to our desert in one of its purest forms.	x
Survey Monkey	The current layout is extremely unique and should not be altered just for more revenue	x
Survey Monkey	Space and accommodations for Southwest Wildlife Conservation Center	
Survey Monkey	Would like to see better connections from comp loop to the rest of the trail system	
<b>Comments submitted via email and Facebook</b>		
Email	Consider a coin-operated laundry facilities for the RV campground. The closest laundromat is the Eagle View RV Resort at Fort McDowell.	
Email	I think it is a good idea to move the North trail head to the restroom.	
Email	The North Trail needs to be updated. Some of the points of interest markers are in poor condition and some of the indicated plants no longer exist.	x
Email	If the Verde Trail reroute to the Pemberton Trail is built it may be wise to close the North Trail to bikes. The North Trail is popular with the elderly snowbirds and kind of tight for shared traffic.	x
Email	A shower facility in the tent camping area would be appreciated.	
Email	The picnic area needs a few small shade Ramada's.	



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Email	If glamping cabins or safari platform tent are trialed then shower and bathroom facilities need to be close by.	
Email	Consider an astronomy area in the area of the proposed nature area. Some circular pads for setting up telescopes close to a parking area. The area needs to be away from street lights and auto headlights. Perhaps screened from the parking lot. Other suitable areas would be the picnic area or Minks Camp. Good astronomy viewing sites are starting to become travel destinations.	
Email	Dixie Mine Area: A trail heading North or North East from the Dixie Mine trail head that connects to the Dixie Mine trail to create a five mile loop.	
Email	Scenic Trail: Create a link trail near the North end that heads Northeast to the Lousley Hill trail.	
Email	Granite Trail: Run a trail from the rock piles near the West region of the Granite Trail near the old concrete tank West to the Pemberton Trail. There are a number of interesting rock formations in this area.	
Email	Old Minks Camp trail: Restore the Minks Camp (MC) trail and extend it from Minks Camp site past the Youth Group Area and connect it to the Verde trail.	
Email	The Clay Pit SW of the Pemberton Pond that is eroding away the Pemberton Trail. Use a crawler dozer and push the clay spoil piles back into the pit to prevent erosion of the pit walls next to the Pemberton Trail.	x
Email	Four Peaks Staging Area needs a restroom facility or portable restrooms. Also the lot needs grading more frequently. Some sizable ruts form that are a bit much for sedans.	
Email	The Pemberton Pond and ranch house site area needs some maintenance. It is starting to look kind of ragged.	x
Email	More signage about keeping dogs on a leash (retractable leashes are a hazard) at all times in all areas of the park. We've encountered dogs off leash both on the trails and in the campground (our dog was actually attacked in the campground by a dog that got past its owner).	x
Email	Even with the poop bags supplied throughout the park, it's amazing the amount that is not picked up by dog owners on the trails (there's coyote poop too, but you can tell the difference, and there's a lot more dog poop). Maybe more visible signage about cleaning up after pets.	x
Email	Covers on all volunteer sites.	
Email	With the addition of the restroom at Four Peaks Staging Area, probably 2 or 3 volunteer sites so there is someone keeping an eye on things down there since it's so far removed from the campground. You would probably need at least 2, if not 3, because it would probably be overwhelming for 1 host to be there alone. We noticed many people would wait until they knew the entry station was closed to come into the park. We've also encountered vagrants in the park.	x
Email	Camp host site at tent area. The current camp host has to travel miles to check on the tent camping area. And, as mentioned above, many people come in after the entry station is closed and leave before volunteers/employees are have a chance to make their rounds.	
Email	We've seen many people cutting through the desert part (center of the loops) of the campground to go visit friends on the other side or to go to the restroom. We saw that	



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	Usery has some designated paths so that people aren't blazing their own trails. Maybe not a bad idea for MMRP?	
Email	Wi-Fi in the Visitor Center for volunteers or in the campground. Many campers upon checking in at the entry station would ask if the campground had wi-fi. I guess there are many State Parks (not sure which States) that have wi-fi available in the campground. The cell phone coverage at MMRP is very sketchy, so this would really help if not for all campers, at least for the volunteers.	
Email	At the last meeting there was talk about another campground loop for short term camping. We could definitely use more campsites.	x
Email	Any additional activities (additional playground, zip line, etc.) would probably be best somewhere near the Competitive Track. The campground is nice and peaceful (except the playground at times can be loud), I think that is one of the things that draws people to camp here. It's not like a commercial campground. Like you said at the meeting, there's such thing as loving the park to death. When there are big events near the Competitive Track, you couldn't even tell anything was going on from the campground, which was nice.	
Email	It was mentioned at the last meeting about having a different way for the police to access the compound. I know it's bc they might not drive 15mph through the campground, but I think that police presence is always a good thing. It's better to have people see them driving through than not see them, to deter unlawful activity. If they had a different access to the compound, they might never drive through. (Also, I think the park is thinking about installing speed bumps throughout the campground. We would strongly encourage this. It would slow everyone down without the added inconvenience/expense of putting in a new road).	
Email	Any new volunteer sites (if possible) would be best if they faced north. Most of them face south and if they have a Class A Motorhome, the windshield gets the afternoon sun and it's harder to keep cool.	
Facebook Response	Create a new RV camping loop	
Facebook Response	Add laundry facilities to the camping area	