

**MARICOPA COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT  
PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING**  
Meeting of February 12, 2013

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**LOCATION:** 234 N. Central Avenue, Suite 6400, Parks Conference Room, Phoenix, AZ 85004

**COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT:** **Carl Yoshioka, Jack Stapley, Anne Lynch, Dr. Robert Branch**

**COMMISSION MEMBERS ABSENT:** Rod Jarvis

**STAFF PRESENT:** R.J. Cardin, Director; Debbie Lemon and Donna Southard, Records; Jennifer Waller, Operations Manager; Michele Kogl, Planning and Development Manager; Aimee Upon, Administrator; Allen Ockenfels, Trails Development Supervisor; Teresa Retterbush, Eastside Superintendent; Rich Glinski, Park Supervisor; Kim Richard; Volunteer Coordinator; and Betsy Pregulman, Deputy Maricopa County Attorney

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The official correspondence and staff recommendations contained in this Commission folder are hereby entered as supportive material to the official minutes of the February 12, 2013, Parks and Recreation Commission meeting.

**PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING**

**ITEM # 1 – CALL TO ORDER – Carlton Yoshioka, Chair, Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Commission**

- Meeting called to order at 9:04 a.m.

**ITEM # 2 – ROLL CALL – Roll Call taken - a quorum was present. Dr. Branch joined the meeting at 9:48 a.m.**

**ITEM # 3 – APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE JANUARY 8, 2013, PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING – Carlton Yoshioka, Chair, Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Commission - *ACTION ITEM***

- Commissioner Lynch motioned and Commissioner Stapley seconded the motion to approve the minutes of the January 8, 2013, meeting as presented. All in favor, none opposed, and the motion was approved.

**ITEM #4 - DIRECTOR'S SUMMARY OF CURRENT EVENTS – R.J. Cardin, Director, Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Department – *INFORMATION/DISCUSSION ITEM***

- Director Cardin presented highlights to the February Director's Summary.
  - Google Street View is currently taking 360 degree views of selected trails within our parks. At least two trails in each park will be taped.
  - Desert Botanical Gardens formed a Conservation Alliance Coalition to study, protect, and promote the open space preserve system in the greater metro area including the county parks. The first project will be a plant inventory of selected parks, initially to include North Mountain Preserve in Phoenix and Cave Creek Park in the county.

- Vulture Mountain project is slow, but continues. BLM still must finish and approve their travel management plan for the Vulture area before they will approve the Park/Recreation Area Master Plan and allow the county to move forward with a lease or patent. Maricopa County Department of Transportation is currently conducting a roadway study.
- RJ Cardin has been appointed to the Arizona State Parks Board by Governor Brewer and up for Senate confirmation within the next two weeks.
- Staff will be presenting to the Parks Commission at a future commission meeting the continued progress of the Lake Pleasant Commercial Development contract for potential resort/lodging opportunities.

**ITEM #5 – Awards Presentations – R.J. Cardin, Director, Maricopa County Parks and Recreation – PRESENTATION ITEM**

- Director Cardin recognized the following employees for their years of service and presented them with their Maricopa County service pins: Donald Manies, Trades Crew (5 years); John Capes, Interpretive Ranger (10 years); and Michele Kogl, Planning and Development Manager (10 years).

**ITEM #6 – Budget Presentation – Aimee Upton, Administrator, Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Commission – PRESENTATION ITEM**

- Fiscal year 2014 (FY14) draft operating budget has been prepared and ready for submission. The various funds were prepared to target but the department is requesting an increase to both the revenue and expenditure budgets for the Lake and Enhancement Fund based on strong revenue numbers during the past two years. There is currently no Grants activity.

**ITEM #7 – Capital Improvement Projects 2013 – Aimee Upton, Administrator, Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Department – PRESENTATION ITEM**

- White Tank Dump Station project was not started in FY13 due to problems with the contractor installing the electrical pedestals for the RV sites. The funds have been requested to be rolled over to next fiscal year for this project.
- Lake Pleasant Visitor Center Upgrades; funds not dispersed in FY13 have been requested to be rolled over for completion next fiscal year.
- Sale of the Bowtie property in January provided a larger fund balance which will be used to fund several facility renovation and improvement projects.
- New FY14 CIP projects include the ongoing projects for the Vulture Mountain Study and continuation of the Maricopa Trail.

**ITEM #8 – Request from Wild at Heart – R.J. Cardin, Director, Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Department – DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEM**

- Director Cardin provided background regarding Wild at Heart:
  - An Arizona non-profit established in 1994
  - In need to expand their facilities
  - Approached Maricopa County Parks and Recreation and the Town of Cave Creek; propose using the Phoenix Mine site and one to two acres of the Spur Cross Conservation area to house their raptor rehab operations

Director Cardin introduced Bob Fox from Wild at Heart and Ian Cordwell, Planning Director for the Town of Cave Creek. Cave Creek's City Council has been briefed and supports the continuation of this project.

- Mr. Fox presented an overview of their organization:
  - 400-500 raptors from all over the state of Arizona are rehabilitated each year at their facility.
  - Looking for a place to sustain their organization and benefit the community at large.
  - Proposed site would include an open amphitheater, a multi-use education and nature center, rehabilitation and research area, a wetland area and a kitchen/snack bar area for catering large corporate or community events
  - Solar panels would power entire facility
  - The facility will be built with as much sustainable material as possible with a goal to create a soothing environment, fit into the desert, re-vegetate the native areas and provide a Xeriscape landscaped area.
  - Starting capital campaign toward the end of 2013
  - Starting construction in approximately three years
  
- Questions from the Commission about the project were answered by Mr. Fox. Mr. Fox confirmed they are a 501c3 entity and he discussed the proposed amount of the capital campaign. The site would be built in phases beginning with the rehabilitation site.
  
- Director Cardin explained the Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Master Plan has a proposed nature center located very near the same location and similar in size. The rehabilitation center requires an on-site presence at all times. Potentially one to two acres would be used from the conservation site to build a small living quarters for staff caring for the animals at the center.
  
- Cave Creek supports the building of the complex to be built on the mining site (owned by the town). An agreement will be brought forward for a vote by the City Council to approve the site and provide water and power to the location. Maricopa County would make the land available for the living quarters and Wild at Heart would be providing a public facility and nature center.
  
- Commissioner Lynch made a motion to recommend that the Board of Supervisors support the concept plan as presented. Commissioner Stapley seconded the motion. All in favor, none opposed and the motion passed.

Commission Member Dr. Branch arrived at 9:48 am.

**ITEM #9 – Cave Creek Trail Amendment – Allen Ockenfels, Trails Development Supervisor, Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Department – DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEM**

- Jennifer Waller, Operations Manager, recognized staff for their due diligence in their research, development and soliciting public input for the trail plan amendment.
  
- Mr. Ockenfels presented the amendment for the Cave Creek connection to the Desert Foothills Land Trust. Cave Creek Park's Trails Master Plan was approved in 2000. The connection was not included in the original master plan. In 2011, the horse trail construction was completed and provided an opportunity to build the connection. Desert Foothills Land Trust supports the connection. The Town of Cave Creek also supports the connection and will be sending it forward for final approval to provide funding for the ALTA and Cultural Resources surveys and the construction of the half mile trail.
  
- Commissioner Lynch motioned to approve the Cave Creek Trail Plan Amendment at the connector trail to Desert Foothills Land Trust. Second by Commissioner Stapley. All in favor, none opposed.

Chair Yoshioka called a two minute recess at 10:05 am.

Chair Yoshioka reconvened at 10:08 am.

**ITEM #10 – Feasibility of Rock Climbing in Maricopa County Parks – Jennifer Waller, Operations Manager, Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Department and Curt Shannon, Arizona Policy Analyst, Access Fund – PRESENTATION/INFORMATION/DISCUSSION ITEM**

- Ms. Waller presented a request from the Access Fund to reconsider the no-climbing rule within the County Parks. The goal of the presentation is to start discussion regarding the request and obtain guidance from the Commission. Research of the history of the Parks Master Plan does not reflect that rock climbing is an acceptable activity. Current Park rules state that participants are prohibited to leave a designated trail or walkway between trailheads. Ms. Waller discussed some of the many internal reviews that staff will need to look at if the direction of the Commission is to move forward and pursue a policy change in this area.
- Mr. Shannon provided an overview of Access Fund's history, mission and programs. They are a climbing advocacy organization. Access Fund can provide assistance in development of a climbing management plan and could possibly involve some insurance coverage to help mitigate liability issues. Access Fund believes that similar to hiking, climbing is a legitimate use of public lands. Mr. Shannon has provided a recent rock climbing assessment report to staff.
- Director Cardin discussed with the Commission some of their primary roles, especially with respect to dealing with the public. Commissioners asked various questions and decided it would be beneficial to receive information in steps as staff moves through the due diligence process.

**ITEM #11 – Park Signage – Teresa Retterbush, Eastside Superintendent, Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Department – PRESENTATION ITEM**

- A brief history of the park signage was presented. Phase I included the entry signage and came in \$15,000 under budget. The new signs create a professional appearance and are durable and adaptable. Iron Ranger and Trail Head signs will be started in the upcoming year in Phase II.

**ITEM #12 – Desert Outdoor Center Update – Rich Glinski, Park Supervisor, Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Department – INFORMATION ITEM**

- A brief history of the Desert Outdoor Center (DOC) was presented. The DOC is located on the southeast end of Lake Pleasant and was built to offer environmental educational opportunities. The first visitor was received in April 1998, the 10,000<sup>th</sup> visitor in 2004 and the 250,000<sup>th</sup> visitor last fall. Venues include school educational trips, retreats and weddings. There are approximately 30 outdoor educational classes taught by Park Rangers and all classes meet state academic standards. In 2005, the program was expanded with the Boy Scouts to include aquatic camps during the summer months. A new boat dock was installed two years later, allowing new partnerships with Cabela's kayaking and canoe groups and the Lake Pleasant Sailing Club.

**ITEM #13 – Maricopa Trail Update – Kim Richard, Volunteer Coordinator, Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Department – INFORMATION/DISCUSSION ITEM**

- Ms. Richard, Parks Volunteer Coordinator, advised the Commission that the Maricopa Trail is a planned 240 mile loop connecting all the County Parks. Approximately half of the trail has been completed with an additional 35 miles of trail scheduled for completion by July 2013. A proposed operational plan is in development for maintenance of the existing trails through volunteer organizational groups. The estimated completion date is in 2015.

**ITEM # 14 – CALL TO THE COMMISSION**

- Introduction of the newest Parks Commission member; Dr. Robert Branch gave a brief overview of his experiences.

**Item # 15 – CALL TO THE PUBLIC**

- None.

**Item # 16 – ADJOURNMENT**

- There being no further business, Commissioner Yoshioka adjourned the meeting at 11:07 am.

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R.J. Cardin, Director/Secretary

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Carlton Yoshioka, Chair