



Maricopa County PARKS & RECREATION DEPARTMENT

MEMORANDUM

41835 N Castle Hot Springs Rd
Morristown, AZ 85342-9887
Phone: 602-506-2930
Fax: 602-372-8596
www.maricopa.gov/parks

Date: September 14, 2017
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 2017**.

From the Office of the Director

- **McDowell Mountains:** The Request for Expression of Interest to identify potential government or non-profit private public partnership opportunities for the development, permitting, construction, operation, management and maintenance of a native wildlife rescue conservation and nature center at McDowell Mountain Regional Park was issued on August 24. The mandatory pre-submittal meeting is scheduled for September 14 and the response date is October 10.
- **Buckeye Hills:** Maricopa County Parks and Recreation (MCPR) issued a Special Use Permit that will allow Arizona State Rifle and Pistol Association (ASRPA) to manage and coordinate the exclusive use of the Joe Foss Shooting Range (Range) from October 2 through December 31, 2017, for local law enforcement agencies. MCPR is unable to open the range to the public at this time. MCPR is diligently working with the ASRPA, local law enforcement agencies, and Luke Air Force Base to assemble all criteria necessary to facilitate in the negotiation of a Use Management Agreement that would include public shooting days.

Board of Supervisors Agenda Items:

| Date/Status | Tracking Number | Summary |
|---------------------|------------------|---|
| 9/6/17 Approved | C-30-18-003-M-00 | New Commercial Management Concessions Agreement (CMCA) with Desert Dogs: Approved CMCA with Desert Dogs to manage and operate a commercial food concession within the Maricopa County Regional Park System. |
| 8/23/17 Approved | C-30-16-007-M-01 | Termination of Use Management Agreement with Estrella Youth Sports: Approved the termination of the Use Management Agreement (UMA) for the Estrella Youth Sports located at Estrella Park. Termination is mutually requested due to the Concessionaire's lack of funding as required for the improvements per the UMA. |
| 8/23/17 Approved | C-30-02-047-B-05 | Amendment to Arizona Karting Association's Special Use Agreement: Approved the extension to the term of the existing agreement to run concurrent with the term of the Phoenix Kart Racing Association term. |
| 8/23/17 Approved | C-30-98-017-B-03 | Amendment to Phoenix Kart Racing Association's Special Use Agreement: Approved the extension to the term of the existing agreement to run concurrent with the term of the Arizona Karting Association's term. |
| 8/23/17 Approved | C-30-11-041-M-03 | Amendment to Arizona Outback Adventures, LLC: Approved an amendment to the CMCA that will allow this concessionaire to expand their outdoor hiking education guided tours for the Spur Cross Ranch Conservation Area and the Hassayampa River Preserve. |

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 through August 2017:

Procurement/Accounting Services:

- The Department has updated Donation reporting to the Board of Supervisors to more closely align with current Maricopa County Policy. Previously, donations were reported on a yearly basis and will now be reported monthly. Below are the donations received for July and August, 2017:

| Date | Description | Donation Type | Value | Park | Donor Name |
|---------|-------------------|----------------|------------|---------------|--------------------|
| 7/1/17 | Park Donation Box | Donation Box | \$20.22 | Lake Pleasant | n/a |
| 6/28/17 | Park Donation Box | Donation Box | \$95.23 | White Tank | n/a |
| 7/8/17 | Park Donation Box | Donation Box | \$0.10 | Lake Pleasant | n/a |
| 7/13/17 | Penny Machine | Donation Box | \$61.25 | White Tank | n/a |
| 7/12/17 | Park Donation Box | Donation Box | \$20.00 | White Tank | n/a |
| 7/12/17 | Memorial Bench | Memorial Bench | \$900.00 | San Tan | Jessica Jones |
| 7/11/17 | Park Donation Box | Donation Box | \$5.00 | Usery | n/a |
| 7/11/17 | Park Donation Box | Donation Box | \$2.00 | Usery | n/a |
| 7/12/17 | Park Donation Box | Donation Box | \$5.00 | Usery | n/a |
| 7/21/17 | Park Donation Box | Donation Box | \$14.20 | White Tank | n/a |
| 7/20/17 | Memorial Bench | Memorial Bench | \$900.00 | Cave Creek | Darwin Klockers |
| 7/20/17 | Memorial Bench | Memorial Bench | \$900.00 | Usery | Elaine Shapiro |
| 7/19/17 | Park Donation Box | Donation Box | \$1.00 | Usery | n/a |
| 7/22/17 | Park Donation Box | Donation Box | \$8.00 | Usery | n/a |
| 7/29/17 | Park Donation Box | Donation Box | \$1.00 | Lake Pleasant | n/a |
| 7/27/17 | Penny Machine | Donation Box | \$36.00 | White Tank | n/a |
| 7/29/17 | Park Donation Box | Donation Box | \$20.00 | Usery | n/a |
| 8/5/17 | Park Donation Box | Donation Box | \$5.00 | Estrella | n/a |
| 8/2/17 | Memorial Bench | Memorial Bench | \$900.00 | White Tank | Wendy Romanchuk |
| 8/2/17 | Park Donation Box | Cash | \$1,624.35 | San Tan | Michele Rhode |
| 8/5/17 | Park Donation Box | Donation Box | \$3.50 | Cave Creek | n/a |
| 7/31/17 | Memorial Bench | Memorial Bench | \$1,800.00 | Spur Cross | Michelle McDougall |
| 8/8/17 | Park Donation Box | Donation Box | \$1.00 | Cave Creek | n/a |
| 8/11/17 | Memorial Bench | Memorial Bench | \$900.00 | Lake Pleasant | Jerry Wilson |
| 8/8/17 | Cash Donation | Cash | \$200.00 | White Tank | Robert Ruggiero |
| 8/11/17 | Park Donation Box | Donation Box | \$23.86 | White Tank | n/a |
| 8/8/17 | Park Donation Box | Donation Box | \$1.00 | Cave Creek | n/a |
| 8/9/17 | Park Donation Box | Donation Box | \$5.00 | Usery | n/a |
| 8/19/17 | Park Donation Box | Donation Box | \$1.00 | Cave Creek | n/a |
| 8/29/17 | Park Donation Box | Donation Box | \$6.00 | Estrella | n/a |

Financial/Budget Status:

- The FY18 Revised Budget is being loaded to the Financial System and is expected to be completed by September 14, 2017. Budget to Actual reporting is unavailable for August close.

Contracts:

- **Adobe:** Special Use Permits Issued.
 - Sahuaro Railroad Preservation Society:
 - October 23 through October 29, Annual Fall Train Meet
 - October 28 Fall Model Railroading Adventures/Everything Railroad Swap Meet
 - Victory Lane:
 - September 30, Intense Fitness & Events 5K Run/Walk
 - November 18, One Step Beyond 5K Charity Run
 - Wet N Wild:
 - October 01, 2017 through March 2018, Farmers Market
 - Arizona Karting Association:
 - September 22 through September 24, Grand Nationals
 - Phoenix Kart Racing Association:
 - October 19 through October 22, 4-Cycle Super Showdown

Information Technology/Facilities:

- Lake Pleasant and Headquarters (HQ) had an unusual data issue during August. The Park's C:\ drive was full which caused the Distributed File System (DFS) not to replicate. This resulted in Lake Pleasant and HQ not having the shared file drive retain data properly during the month of August. In basic terms, when a document was saved by one user, the data was unavailable to the next user and would then disappear for the first user. The County's Office of Enterprise Technology (OET) corrected the issued once it was identified and will monitor the drive to prevent this from happening again.

Human Resources:

- Open positions and recruitments:
 - Park Supervisor, Desert Outdoor Center – Job Description under review.
 - Contact Station Assistant, Usery – Request to review temporary to full time status.
 - Park Maintenance, Lake Pleasant – Under Recruitment.
 - Contact Station Assistant, Lake – under recruitment, pending hire action.
 - Park Maintenance Supervisor, Lake – under recruitment, pending hire action.
- Welcome to New Employees:
 - None
- Departing Employees:
 - None

Volunteer Program:

- July and August were hot, but there were still many volunteers who came out despite the heat. For the first two months of FY18, volunteer hours are up by 20% over FY17.
- Effective 10/1/17, all Community Volunteers and Park Hosts will be using the County's electronic training system (The HUB). This will allow volunteers and supervisors to track and access all of their annual training records as well as take required courses online. With this significant conversion, a great deal of work has been done to update processes and provide easy to use reference and training guides to assist volunteers with access.
- In addition, all Community Volunteers and Park Hosts will begin to use Volgistics, the Department's volunteer tracking software, for tracking schedules and hours. The current system has Park Administrative staff reporting hours by hand and this will allow each person to enter their own hours, saving work time for staff and creating a more consistent reporting method.

- FY18 Year-to-date volunteer hours:

| | Jul-17 | Aug-17 |
|--------------------------------------|----------|-----------|
| Total Dept. Hours | 3291 | 4772 |
| Financial Savings | \$79,445 | \$112,428 |
| FY18 Hours | 3291 | 8063 |
| FY18 Savings | \$77,536 | \$189,964 |
| Number of Volunteers in Month | 79 | 112 |

Planning and Development Division

Vulture Mountain Recreation Area Update

- Staff is continuing 60% design work with EPS Group Inc. on park amenities as Maricopa County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) continues design with EPS on 60% plans for Vulture Mine Rd as well as interior County park roadway designs. A completed Environmental Assessment is required before any construction or management activities may begin. The Department is continuing coordination with the BLM on the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process. BLM has indicated the EA may take an additional 12-18 months.

Project Management

- Currently, the department's Project Manager has been busy coordinating bids and quotes for the new FY18 project year. Renovations are commencing at Estrella Mountain Regional Park group ramadas, Lake Pleasant Regional Park restrooms, and the Windcave restroom at Usery Mountain Regional Park.

Park and Open Space Planning

- The department's Park and Open Space Planner has been busy working on travel management routes with the BLM for the Vulture Mountain Recreation Area, finishing up final internal edits on the Department Trail Management Manual, and assisting with interior renovations at the Hassayampa Visitor's Center.

Trades Crew

- The Trades Crew and been busy at the Hassayampa River Preserve Visitor's Center installing new flooring, electrical receptacles and switches, and working on the rear porch and patio. The old Saltillo tiles were removed and replaced to improve the interior experience. The electrical system is being evaluated from the service section into the circuit breakers and new ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) receptacles have been installed for safety. Staff is replacing old wood on the rear porch with steel beams and purlins. Trades staff also finished installing mini split A/C system at Hassayampa.
- Staff continues to make upgrades at Estrella Mountain Regional Park. Electricians installed the new service section at area 2 and Arizona Public Service (APS) will re-energize the area.
- Trades Crew Electricians repaired the electrical pedestals on sites 9, 13, and 137 at Lake Pleasant Regional Park. The electricians also repaired the solar powered access control gate on the upper bypass road.

Trails Crew

- The Trails Crew completed a sign inventory at Estrella Mountain Regional Park. As part of the inventory process, the crew also replaced damaged and faded signs.
- The Trails Crew also assisted with renovations at the Hassayampa River Preserve. The crew assisted the Trades Crew and other staff removing old flooring and installing the new flooring. They completed mapping and a GPS inventory of the trails, an inventory of signs, and assisted with creating a new sign plan.

Maricopa Trail and Trail Facilities:

- Description: The following trail segments are currently in progress – 6, 9, 11, 12, 18, 20, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 29, 30, 31, 32 33 and 35.
- The following portions of the Maricopa Trail are in review by the Arizona State Land Department.
 - Segment 35 – North and south of I-10 on the Tuthill Road alignment.
 - Segment 12 – North of SR303 on Lake Pleasant Road.
 - Segment 11 – East of SR303 on Happy Valley Parkway.

- Segment 33 – Rainbow Valley – Bureau of Land Management (BLM) land to Estrella Community.
- Agreement preparation/negotiations:
 - Arizona Game & Fish – Segment 9 access across the Gila River.
 - Bureau of Land Management – Submitted plans of proposed route between Estrella Mountain Park and Buckeye Hills Park. MCPR is a participating agency and will be part of the team designating trails.
 - Goodyear – Sign maintenance and Rainbow Valley route.
 - Queen Creek – Re-route of trail to existing trail systems.
 - Gilbert - Re-route of trail to existing trail systems.
 - Chandler - Re-route of trail to existing trail systems.
 - Sun Corridor Trail connecting Pinal County to the Maricopa Trail via the Spook Hill Flood Retarding Structure.
- Construction
 - Segment 22 – McDowell Sonoran Preserve to the Bronco Trailhead – Started construction 3/6/17 and it is 90% complete. The contract was suspended on 5/11/17 due to fire danger and 1.3 miles of hard rock trail that requires specialized equipment. Inspected southern half of completed trail in order to compile a list of areas that require additional work.
- Maintenance
 - Completed maintenance on segment 22; included grooming the trailhead, clearing weeds and brush (brushing) and signage.
- Trailheads
 - Segment 35 – Northern Avenue – Proposed location will allow users access due to weekend closures of the gate to the Case/New Holland Proving Grounds.
 - Segment 11 – Sun Valley Parkway - Proposed location will allow users access due to the Maricopa Water District cutting off access on Greenway Road.

Parks Operations Report

Cave Creek

- The park hosted four interpretive programs with 42 participants attending. The highlighted program for the month: *Full Moon Hike* with 15 participants.
- The Park Ranger and a new volunteer are getting ready to launch a new program for the season - *Wag 'n' Walk Adoption Hikes*. The program will be on the third Saturday of every month (October – March). Maricopa County Animal Care and Control will bring out several dogs for people participating in the program to walk. All of the dogs being brought out are up for adoption. This pilot program began at Usery Park and was very successful.

Estrella Mountain Regional Park

- Hiking at Estrella has now picked up after monsoonal rains have freshened up the desert. Mornings and evenings are still the most popular with the heat and humidity.
- August interpretive ranger programs had a total of 170 people. The most popular programs were the *Moonlight Hike* and the *Scorpion Hike* (both evening programs). The evening hikes seem to be popular because of the cooler conditions.
- Plans continue to progress toward electrical improvements in Estrella Park with help from department staff and Facilities Management.
- Park hosts and staff have been mowing continually after the rains and warm weather have created a bumper crop of grass.

Lake Pleasant

- Lake Pleasant offered nine interpretive programs during the month of August to the enjoyment of 79 program participants. The highlights of the month included the *Great Scorpion Hunt* and *Kayak Talk* with the Ranger. Unfortunately, Lake Pleasant experienced a few battles with Mother Nature not cooperating with program times which impacted attendance.
- Parks is working with the Arizona Game and Fish Department to perform a temporary repair on the 10 Lane west boat dock due to recent storms. The Lake hopes to have the repairs completed in the coming weeks

and are working with the same parties along with the County's Facilities Management Department to install new docks at the 10 Lane and the Castle Creek boat ramps.

- Lake Pleasant is working with Maricopa County's Air Quality Department to install a public monitoring device/kiosk at the Discovery Center. These kiosks will educate visitors about the air quality at the lake in comparison to other areas around the valley and provide some very helpful information to create awareness about things people can do to make a cleaner environment for all to enjoy.

McDowell

- Eleven interpretive programs were offered at the park with 21 people in attendance.
- The *Summer Night Ride* program took place on Saturday, August 19 at the Pemberton Trailhead area, approximately 170 people participated. Fountain Hills Bike Shop co-sponsored this program by providing water, soda and snacks after the ride.
- AZ Mining, Mineral and Natural Resources Education (MMNRE) Museum installed a new display at the visitor center, showcasing Arizona state symbols, minerals of Maricopa County, and Arizona ores. This case is part of their "Museum without Walls" outreach program to make their mineral collection more visible and accessible to the public.
- On Thursday, August 10, Ranger Amy participated in the *Ragnar Gear Up* event which took place at the REI Co-Op store. Park staff provided park information, maps; including the course map for the Ragnar event held at McDowell Mountain Regional Park, answered questions, etc. Over 150 people were in attendance.

San Tan

- For the month of August, San Tan Mountain Regional Park hosted 20 programs with a total of 405 participants. A big draw was the *Scorpion Hunt* program with 68 people for the classroom talk and 200 people for the trail walk. Also, for the *Meet the Critters* program, 20 participants were introduced to the Animal Ambassadors in our Critter Room and learned about their habits and ways we can safely and responsibly coexist with their wild counterparts.
- Early in the month, park staff continued to work on monsoon trail damage by filling in ruts and maintaining drainage culverts. For one project involving north Goldmine Trail, several members of the running and biking communities gave back to the park by volunteering their time to assist with the labor.

Spur Cross

- The park hosted eight programs with 109 participants in attendance.
- The highlighted program for the month: Moonlight Hike with 43 participants.
- The new entry station is getting closer to completion. Once the interior is finished, staff will be ready to install merchandise and interpretive displays.

Usery

- Usery Mountain Regional Park offered 16 interpretive ranger programs totaling 646 participants. Scorpion Hunts continue to be a big draw with 152 people participating.
- The Usery Mountain Archers completed their Thursday night Archery league in August. The program brought in 195 total archers during the three months, 33 of the archers were youth.
- Two-Wheel Jones wrapped up the Summer Night Ride Series. Riders of all ages use headlamps and rode the trails in the evening when the weather is cooler. The bike shop provided free snacks to participants after the ride. A total of 75 riders participated in the program.
- The Park Supervisor attended the Arizona Parks and Recreation Association (APRA) Conference in Phoenix. At the conference, he was awarded a \$750 scholarship to attend the 2017 NRPA Conference in New Orleans. These conferences help provide Continuing Education Units (CEU's) needed to maintain the supervisor's Certified Parks and Recreation Processional (CPRP) certification.

White Tank Mountain Regional Park

- The park provided 12 programs and community outreaches with a total of 467 attending. The most popular August event was the "Family Moonlight Hike" which brought in 138 visitors! The scorpion night hikes continued to be popular as well, with 86 total night adventurers. Many local families come out for these night hikes and are asking about when the next event is happening.

- On August 5, Aravaipa Running hosted the *Vertigo Night Run* on the competitive track, bringing in 301 participants. Aravaipa Running had EMTs out on the track and were able to keep all runners healthy in the August night heat.
- Cows in White Tank! The end of August brought cows to the park, which had previously not been an issue. The State Trust Land bordering the park's eastern boundary has been supporting 140 head of cattle since March. The cows found "greener grass on the other side of the fence" and discovered the cool collected rainwater of the park pond. The Park Supervisor, Interpretive Ranger, and the maintenance team worked together to repair the fence line. Contact was made with the local cowboy who tends to the cattle. He helped staff herd the cows back to State Trust Land and also aided in some of the fencing issues. No more cows have been found in the park since this project was completed.

Vulture Mountains Recreation Area and Hassayampa River Preserve

- In August, the Hassayampa River Preserve welcomed a full-time Interpretive Ranger to the staff.
- Visitation continued to be light during these dog days of summer with high temps and high humidity. This lull gave staff and volunteers time to continue to work on various improvements around the Preserve.
- The Preserve was closed for two weeks at the end of August to complete infrastructure and facilities improvements, including electrical and HVAC upgrades. Staff from HQ and other parks assisted Preserve staff with a fresh coat of paint in the interior of the Visitor Center and the Trades Crew installed new flooring in the public area of the Visitor Center.
- The Interpretive Ranger, with assistance from other interpretive rangers, reconfigured the existing interpretive displays in the Visitor Center. Upgrades were made to the staff and volunteer parking area.
- A grant-funded contractor completed fuels reduction around the perimeter of the buildings to reduce the threat of wildfire. Planning continues for the ADA-accessible restroom building to be installed adjacent to the visitor parking lot. More improvements are to come throughout the next several months as Parks prepares for an exciting busy season.