



Maricopa County

PARKS & RECREATION DEPARTMENT

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MEMORANDUM

Date: March 14, 2018
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 **January and February 2018**.

From the Office of the Director

- **Commercial Management Concession Agreements (CMCA's):** As part of an effort to streamline the process for the private sector entering into CMCA's and to expedite offering new and enhanced services for park visitors, staff submitted an Agenda item to the Board of Supervisors to delegate to the Park's Director the authority to execute, on behalf of the County, any CMCA that has been executed by the concessionaire. A CMCA standard template has been developed in cooperation with legal counsel for the County, Director Maricopa County Real Estate, Deputy Director Risk Management, Assistant County Manager, Chief Financial Officer, Deputy County Manager and the County Manager.
- **Partnerships:** On February 1, 2018, an invitation to negotiate was issued for partnering with the County to assist Parks with the ongoing challenges of developing new programs and expanding existing park and recreation programs, opportunities and initiatives that improve the quality of life for park visitors and provide responsible stewardship of our natural and cultural resources. By sharing resources and using our Parks, the County and the Partner(s), will be able to achieve strong, comprehensive opportunities to utilize parks in the way that best meets the needs of the recreating public and benefits our Partner(s). This solicitation will be an open solicitation for one year.
- **Buckeye Hills Joe Foss Shooting Range:** Staff extended the Special Use Permit (SUP) that will allow Arizona State Rifle and Pistol Association (ASRPA) to manage and coordinate public use of the Joe Foss Shooting range until September 2018. Work will continue with the ASRPA in the negotiation of a Use Management Agreement.
 - Attendance by the public was 298 shooters for the two weekends in January and 402 shooters for two weekends in February.
 - Luke AFB is currently working with the MCSO for using their range and not the public range.
 - The County is working diligently with County Facilities Management Department, APS and BLM to provide electrical service to the Park, with an anticipated completion date of approximately 18 months.
- **The proposed park user fee schedule revisions** were approved by the Maricopa County Board of Supervisors on February 21, 2018 and will become effective April 1, 2018.

Board of Supervisors Agenda Items:

Date/Status	Tracking Number	Summary
1/17/2018 Approved	C-06-18-277-7-00	Reappointment to the Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission: Reappointment of Denise Merdon through December 31, 2019
1/17/2018 Approved	C-06-18-274-7-00	Donation Report for December 2017: Cash value of \$289.38
2/7/2018 Approved	C-06-18-294-7-00	Reappointment to the Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission: Reappointment of Dr. Robert Branch through December 31, 2019
2/21/2018 Approved	C-30-11-037-3-4	Amendment to Agreement with Pleasant Water Sports, LLC: Approve Amendment three to the CMCA as amended to effectuate renewal options and administrative changes.
2/21/2018 Approved	C-30-18-014-D-00	Donation for Parks Memorial Bench: Accept the restricted monetary donation for a memorial bench to be placed within White Tank Regional Park.
2/21/2018 Approved	C-30-18-011-M-00	Proposed Revisions of Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Department User Fee Schedule: Convene the scheduled public hearing to solicit comments and consider adoption of the proposed changes. Upon Board approval, this item will become effective April 1, 2018.
3/21/2018 Pending	C-30-18-016-M-00	Resolution to Delegate to the Director of Parks and Recreation the Authority to Execute Commercial Management Concessionaire Agreements: Adopt a Resolution to Delegate to the Director of Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Department (Director) the authority to enter into Commercial Management Concessionaire Agreements, on behalf of Maricopa County, that are approved "as to form" by the County Attorney's Office, with properly licensed and insured entities.

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:

Financial/Budget Status (through February close):

Fund	Fund Name		Budget YTD	Actual YTD	Variance YTD	Variance %
100	General	Expenditures	\$1,154,716	\$1,128,206	\$26,510	2.30%
Fund	Fund Name		Budget YTD	Actual YTD	Variance YTD	Variance %
225	Spur Cross Ranch Conservation	Revenues	\$349,714	\$353,180	\$3,466	0.99%
225	Spur Cross Ranch Conservation	Expenditures	\$336,844	\$332,134	\$4,710	1.40%
Fund	Fund Name		Budget YTD	Actual YTD	Variance YTD	Variance %
230	Parks and Recreation Grants	Revenues		\$29,536	\$29,536	
230	Parks and Recreation Grants	Expenditures	\$37,120	\$47,366	-\$10,246	-27.60%
Fund	Fund Name		Budget YTD	Actual YTD	Variance YTD	Variance %
239	Parks Souvenir	Revenues	\$429,280	\$458,904	\$29,624	6.90%
239	Parks Souvenir	Expenditures	\$523,388	\$489,930	\$33,458	6.39%

Fund	Fund Name		Budget YTD	Actual YTD	Variance YTD	Variance %
240	Lake Pleasant Recreation Services	Revenues	\$3,052,450	\$3,887,590	\$835,140	27.36%
240	Lake Pleasant Recreation Services	Expenditures	\$3,678,176	\$3,150,894	\$527,282	14.34%
Fund	Fund Name		Budget YTD	Actual YTD	Variance YTD	Variance %
241	Parks Enhancement	Revenues	\$6,829,108	\$7,656,318	\$827,210	12.11%
241	Parks Enhancement	Expenditures	\$6,777,636	\$6,221,396	\$556,240	8.21%
Fund	Fund Name		Budget YTD	Actual YTD	Variance YTD	Variance %
243	Parks Donations	Revenues	\$39,212	\$36,822	-\$2,390	-6.10%
243	Parks Donations	Expenditures	\$34,754	\$39,468	-\$4,714	-13.56%

Contracts:

- **Adobe:**

Special Use Permits Issued:

- Sahuaro Railroad/Maricopa Live Steamers:
 - March 2-4, Webelos Crossover – Cub Scouts become Boy Scouts
 - March 10-18 Annual Spring Train Meet (March 16, 17, 18 celebrate 50 years)
- Victory Lane:
 - February 17, 5k – Miles for Migranes
 - February 24, 5k – Home Fur Good
 - May 5, 5k Charity Run – Coolwater Christian Church
- Wet N Wild
 - May 27, Fireworks (Memorial Day)
 - June 5-6, Fireworks (private event)
 - July 3-4, Fireworks

The agreements with the Phoenix Kart Racing Association (PKRA) and the Arizona Karting Association (AKA) terminate on March 3, 2019. On March 20, 2018 the solicitation for an invitation to negotiate to promote, manage, maintain and improved the existing PKRA and AKA complexes or provide an alternate facility will be published. The responses can be for the complexes independently or as a combined complex as well an option to provide a response for an alternate facility to expand the recreational opportunities available to the recreating public. The mandatory pre-proposal meeting will take place on April 5, 2018 at 1:00, at the PKRA facility.

- **Paradise Valley:** Parks received two responses to the invitation to negotiate (ITN) that was issued to promote, manage, operate, maintain and improve the existing sports complex, or provide an alternate recreation facility, at Paradise Valley Urban Park. The Evaluation Committee will be interviewing both respondents on March 15, 2018.

Human Resources:

- Welcome New Employees:
 - John Hansen, Park Maintenance, Lake Pleasant – 1/16/18
 - Francis Scott, Contact Station Assistant, Lake Pleasant – 1/16/18
 - Andrew Schnapp, Contact Station Assistant, Lake Pleasant – 2/12/18
 - Elizabeth Bradley, Contact Station Assistant, Lake Pleasant – 2/26/18
 - Charles Ritchey, Contact Station Assistant, Lake Pleasant – 2/26/18
 - Trudie Kenny, Contact Station Assistant (Temp), Estrella – 2/26/18
 - Karen Albers, HR Specialist, HQ – 3/12/18
 - Brian Clancy, Trades Specialist, Trades – 3/12/18

- Departing Employees:
 - Sandra Hurlbut, Interpretive Ranger, Lake Pleasant
 - Nancy Staufenberger, HR Specialist, HQ
 - Pam Siegal, Contact Station Assistant, Lake Pleasant
 - Dakota Williams, Contact Station Assistant, Lake Pleasant
 - Nicholas Schultz, Park Maintenance, Spur Cross
 - William Gerchar, Interpretive Ranger, Lake Pleasant
 - John Dwyer, Park Maintenance, Hassayampa
 - Anthony Lombardo, Navigational Aide Technician, Lake Pleasant
 - David Chatfield, Office Assistant Specialized, White Tank
 - Open positions and recruitments:
 - Park Education Supervisor, Desert Outdoor Center – starts 3/26/18
 - Electrician, Trades – starts 3/26/18
 - Office Assistant Specialized, White Tank – In Recruitment
 - Navigational Aide Technician, Lake – Open
 - Park Maintenance (T), Hassayampa – Open*
 - Park Maintenance (T), Spur Cross – Open*
 - Interpretive Ranger (T), Lake – Open*
- * Pending FY19 budget approval for submittal requests to full-time positions

Volunteer Program:

- FY18 Year-to-date volunteer hours:

	Jul-17	Aug-17	Sep-17	Oct-17	Nov-17	Dec-17	Jan-18	Feb-18	FY18 YTD Total
FY18 Total Dept. Hours	3506	4936	4911.5	6682	11841	12353	13804	10817	68850.5
Financial Savings	\$84,635	\$116,292	\$115,715	\$157,428	\$278,974	\$291,037	\$325,222	\$254,849	\$1,624,246
% Diff comparison/prev. FYTD						12%		8%	
# of Volunteers-current month	102	115	406	181	573	372	342	236	
# of Park Hosts	24	21	32	63	108	113	121	113	
Park Host Hours	2490	2084.5	2610	4900	9527	10088	11511	9286	
# of Community Volunteers	31	31	40	41	48	49	44	50	
Community Volunteer Hours	757	611	828	856	798	809	860	809	
# of Episodic Volunteers	46	61	334	62	397	187	156	52	
Episodic Volunteers Hours	252	2234	1472	389	1044	948	1127	317	
MCSO Prisoner Service Hours				500	260	500	300	400	
FY17 Month Total Hours	2945	3146	5113	6283	9900	10972	13274	11967	
FY17 Year YTD Hours	3739.25	6687.75	11255.7	18083.2	29402.43	41368.86	55608.86	67505.86	
FY17 Financial YTD Savings	\$69,384	\$143,504	\$263,966	\$411,994	\$645,238	\$903,738	\$1,216,473	\$1,498,416	
Current Value-\$24.14									
Previous Value-\$23.56									

Planning and Development Division

Vulture Mountain Recreation Area Update

- Staff is continuing 60% design work with EPS Engineering on park amenities as MCDOT continues design with EPS on 60% plans for Vulture Mine Rd as well as interior County park roadway design. Department staff have updated (again) the Plan of Development with construction and travel route information requested by the BLM. The Department is continuing coordination with the BLM on the hopefully soon to begin NEPA process. Parks and Recreation Department's NEPA consultant has stated a more robust Plan of Development with additional detail is easier to defend during the public process.

Project Management

- Hassayampa restroom project is complete and the septic system has been installed!!!!
- The Lake Pleasant Discovery Center deck project construction has begun this month. The concrete work is underway and the steel support beams are being installed, followed by the Trex deck and railings.
- Estrella Park renovations are in full swing, one mile of concrete sidewalk has been installed and ramada foundations are being constructed. Water system improvements are under way including back flow

prevention, potable water isolation valves, and irrigation system renovations. Solid working relationships with other Maricopa County Departments have resulted in grading assistance in the turf area and for future parking area construction.

Park and Open Space Planning

- Staff held two public meetings for the McDowell Mountain Regional Park Master Plan Update process. Although attendance was light for the public meeting, staff are expecting continuing comments through the department survey via Survey Monkey and e-mail.

Trades Crew

- Trades staff fabricating steel screen fence panels for the Hassayampa River Preserve picnic area. The screens will help delineate the picnic area and improve the area for Ranger programs, presentations, and picnicking. The rear porch on the visitor's center is now complete. Staff removed the old porch system and reconstructed the porch with new steel and wood decking.
- The Trades staff electrician has been replacing light fixtures in the Hassayampa River Preserve Visitors Center. Through careful design, staff was able to choose high efficiency LED lighting to balance the incoming exterior light with the new fixtures to allow visitors to better view the exhibits and architecture of the building.
- The Trades Crew welcomed a new employee. Trade Specialist Brian Clancy starts on March 12th. Brian will come to Parks from Maricopa County Flood Control. He will be operating heavy equipment and assisting the crew on numerous park projects. Welcome Brian.

Trails Crew

- The Trails Crew, working with the Parks and Open Space Planner, designed, scouted and flagged the OHV trail re-route for BLM at Vulture Mountain Recreation Area. This re-route will clear current motorized OHV access from a portion of the box wash as it runs through the campground area of the park west of Vulture Mine Rd. The new route will take the OHV out of the wash and connect motorized off road traffic back into the BLM travel management routes north of the R&PP area.
- Trails Crew staff participated in a Volunteer day at White Tank Mountain Regional Park to stabilize the edges of the new concrete surface Waterfall Trail. Trails staff and volunteers hauled decomposed granite up the trail and placed the material on edges of the walkway.
- The Trails Crew has been busy assisting staff at the Hassayampa River Preserve over the past several weeks. Staff was able to section and remove four large dead palm trees around the visitor's center clearing potential hazards and mitigating fire potential.
- The Trails Crew designed and constructed a new trail connecting the Palm Lake trail to Mesquite Meander trail. The (Brill Bypass) trail will provide a legitimate route for visitors to more efficiently navigate through the preserve trails.

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 (ASLD). They have given us a tentative auction date of August 2018.
 - 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 – BLM land to Estrella Community
- Agreement preparation/negotiations:
 - Bureau of Land Management – Submitted plan of proposed route between Estrella Mountain Park and Buckeye Hills Park. We are 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 – Completed construction of the new trail in December, including a bridge. The trail is now open to the public but due to some OHV route changes, we installed four additional gates to protect the trail. We are also performed maintenance on portions of the trail constructed in spring 2017. WAPA (Western Area Power Administration) is working on a vegetation clearing project under their lines that will affect about 50% of Segment 22. We will re-grade and repair when they are complete.
 - Segment 25 – The Arizona Canal at Pima Road to the McDowell Sonoran Preserve – The route was signed on 2/22/18.
- Maintenance
 - The following segment had maintenance completed this period. This includes grooming the tread, brushing and signage: Segment 20–Bronco Trailhead to Spur Cross; An American Conservation Experience (ACE) crew spent 32 days over two months backpacking in and repairing this Forest Service Trail. They were paid by a \$30K grant and Maricopa Trail funds.
- Trailheads
 - Segment 35 – Northern Avenue – Proposed location will allow user access due to weekend closures of the gate to the Case/New Holland Proving Grounds. Requires Maricopa Water District approval.
 - Segment 11 – Sun Valley Parkway - Proposed location will allow users access due to the Maricopa Water District cutting off access on Greenway Road. Requires State Land easement in order to access MCFCD property where the trailhead is located. MCDOT and MCFCD are working together to secure access and build the facility.

Parks Operations Report

Cave Creek

- In January, the park hosted 22 interpretive programs with 393 participants attending. The highlighted programs for the month: *All about Hummingbirds* with 54 attendees and *Ride to the Clay Mine* with 47 attendees.
- In February, the park hosted 25 interpretive programs with 872 participants attending. The highlighted programs for the month: “Arizona Herpetological Association” and “Rattlesnake Solutions” joined the Interpretive Ranger for the first annual *Rattlesnake Festival* at Cave Creek Regional Park. There were numerous presentations and displays provided throughout the day to educate our visitors of facts and fictions about reptiles, along with games, face painting and a food vendor on site. The festival was a huge success with 650 visitors attending the event.

Estrella Mountain Regional Park

- Estrella Park had 25 public programs in January with a total attendance of 454 people. Archery continues to be a great success with every class filling within a few days of opening. Many of the participants at the archery programs are first time visitors to the park and have never attended a public program. *Stargazing for Everyone* on January 6th experienced weather that was not conducive for stargazing, but there was still a good turnout for an indoor presentation. *Homeschool Happenings* had its largest turnout yet with 56 participants in the January 12th class.
- Many people are enjoying hiking the *100 miles in 100 Days Challenge* as it soon comes to an end. The Interpretive Ranger has also been promoting the “Passport Estrella Hike Series” which is getting good attendance and a very enthusiastic following. In addition, the Interpretive Ranger has a dedicated Facebook following.
- The Park received more benefits through the contractors performing work in the park. Several old cement pads, picnic tables and an old backstop were removed in January. Contractors also worked steadily on the mile-long sidewalk project with about a half-mile of sidewalk completed around the park’s turf area.

- On January 20th and 21st, the *Aravaipa Coldwater Rumble* was held at Estrella Park with 488 participants running a variety of distances including several 100-mile runners competing through the night in the park.
- On January 27th, the park had a record shattering MBAA state mountain bike race; 639 mountain bike riders enjoyed the challenging Competitive Track.
- At the end of January, primitive camping was no longer offered to the public as a park amenity. This service will resume once the design and installation of sites can be implemented from the recent approved Master Plan update. RV camping is still available.
- Horseback rides and wagon ride events were busy in January.
- Estrella Park had 21 public programs in February with a total attendance of 388 people. *Homeschool Happenings* continues to grow each month with 52 and 28 participants respectively in the February classes.
- Estrella Park now has a 1-mile long sidewalk! Contractors completed the sidewalk that goes around the park turf area. Smaller sidewalk connections are being made to the locations where each new ramada will be built.
- Maintenance staff and volunteers have been working diligently to remove sprinkler valves and water lines ahead of the contractor's pouring of the concrete sidewalk and the new ramada pads. Several areas needed to have the sprinkler pipes dug out and capped to prevent water issues under the new installations.
- To supplement the construction efforts, the Park Supervisor arranged for the female Arizona State Wildland Fire Crew to conduct training on a number of the dead trees around the turf area. The Fire Crew removed large trees and several small and medium trees. This work not only saved the park money and labor, but also helped to train the Fire Crew for the season ahead. Park staff then assisted with the removal of logs, palm tree trunks and stumps.

Lake Pleasant

- Lake Pleasant offered 55 interpretive programs during the months of January and February to the delight of 583 program participants. The highlights of the months included *Desert Awareness*, *New to Arizona*, *Full Moon Hike*, and *Hiking thru a Desert Forest*.
- The Prickly Pedal event took place on Saturday, January 20th. It was a huge success with approximately 240 riders participating. Despite cold, rainy weather, bikers braved the elements and enjoyed the wonderful after-party festivities.
- A majority of park staff attended spill response training with the Bureau of Reclamation. The course offered an insight to the proper steps to take should a spill occur, along with discussing potential scenarios that may occur. From the meeting, a sub-committee has formed to continue to narrow down and define operating procedures for all involved with Lake Pleasant responses to include the Central Arizona Water Conservation District/Central Arizona Project, Maricopa County Sheriff's Office, Bureau of Reclamation, Peoria Fire, Maricopa Water District, and several others.
- Lake Pleasant maintenance staff, in collaboration with the Trades Crew, installed new fence barriers along the entry ways to the sides of the Discovery Center building. The crew was able to repurpose sections of the old floating bridge at Pipeline Canyon to construct the fence for a minimal financial impact to the park.
- Construction is also underway at the Discovery Center to build an ADA trail down to the basement area where a patio deck is being constructed which will provide park staff opportunities for conducting interpretive programs and provide park patrons with a wonderful view.
- Ramadas and picnic site structures within the areas of the Cottonwood Day-Use Area, Pipeline Canyon Day-Use Area, Wild Burro Day-Use Area and Sunset Ridge Day-Use Area received a fresh coat of paint and cleaned and sealed picnic tables.
- Future electrical upgrades to the Bajada Loop within the Desert Tortoise Campground are scheduled to undergo repairs beginning in March and shall conclude Phase 1 at the end of May in time for the Memorial Weekend.
- The bald eagles have returned for another season of producing offspring at Lake Pleasant. So far, one of the nest sites currently has at least one baby eaglet hanging out under the watchful eye of mom and dad. If all continues to go well, an eagle banding will be scheduled for the end of March.
- It is with great sadness and a heavy heart, we acknowledge the loss of one of our own, William "Bill" Gerchar. Bill was a tremendous part-time Interpretive Ranger for Lake Pleasant. His passion for nature was evident in everything that he said or touched and without a doubt, left a lasting impression on all that he came in contact with. We will forever miss him and appreciate all of the wonderful things he did for this Department and our visitors.

- The Park is also losing a long-time Park Host, Julie Stevens, to a new venture in her life. Julie has been with us for over 12 seasons and has been a steady person to rely on. Julie has been assisting at the Contact Station, providing a wide array of contributions. We wish her the best in her future endeavors.

McDowell

- During the month of January 2018, 15 interpretive programs were offered at the park with 280 people in attendance. The most popular single program was "Rattlesnakes! Fact or Fiction", 74 people attended this program.
- Two special events took place during the month of January:
 - MBAA McDowell Meltdown, 893 people participated in the Mountain Bike race plus nearly 500 spectators were in attendance.
 - TPK Endurance, this was a first time event involving a series of obstacles with a Mountain Bike portion and trail run portion, 15 people participated.
- Lee Likes Bikes hosted a bicycle skills clinic with 20 people participating.
- Pivot cycles hosted a free bike demonstration on January 27 and 28 at our Competitive track parking lot.
- Southwest Wildlife Conservation Center hosted an outreach program at the park; they brought several of their captive critters to display, provide information and answered a number of questions. 74 people were in attendance.
- McDowell Park received a number of new park signs to replace old/worn signs; our Park Maintenance crew spent a good amount of time replacing.
- During the month of February 2018, 16 interpretive programs were offered at the park with 190 people in attendance. The most popular single program was our *Reptile Feeding* program with 26 in attendance.
- The Campground and Tent Camping area have continually stayed full (beginning in January). We've had several weeks/weekends with a full Overflow area as well.
- Four special events took place during the month of February:
 - Xterra (Trail Run), 292 participants and approximately 150 spectators in attendance.
 - Pemberton 50K, 140 runners participated along with about 100 spectators in attendance.
 - AZ Powerman Duathlon, 250 people participated with approximately 100 spectators.
 - Stoneman 14K, 33 runners participated.

San Tan

- In January, San Tan hosted 27 programs with a total of 511 participants. Programs included guided daytime and evening family hikes and two homeschool geology classes presented by the ranger, as well as a presentation on the medicinal uses of native plants by a special guest speaker. The month ended with a big turnout of over 100 people for a walk to view the *Full Blue Blood Moon* rise just after sunset on the 31st.
- San Tan served as the host site for Aravaipa Running's *San Tan Scramble* multi-distance trail run race with more than 452 participants and volunteers.
- For February, San Tan held 26 programs with a total of 490 participants. A popular special activity was presented by the San Tan Valley Master Gardeners. More than 50 adults and kids made bird nest "gift bags" for their backyard trees to help supply neighborhood birds with materials to build their family homes. Visitors were also treated to a special evening program to watch the kingsnake and gopher snake eat their dinners.
- The park also hosted an Archaeology Day at the main trailhead this month, which reached approximately 100 people. Representatives from the Arizona Site Stewards program and the San Tan Chapter of the Arizona Archaeological Society were on hand to speak with visitors about their organizations and encourage involvement.
- Craft specialists with the SALT group (Study of Ancient Lifeways and Technologies) hosted tables that showcased ancient skill traditions such as pine needle basket weaving, shell jewelry making, stone tool making and plant fiber weaving.

Spur Cross

- In January the park hosted 19 interpretive programs with 500 participants in attendance. The highlighted program for the month: *Full Moon Hike* with 198 participants.
- In February, the park hosted 16 interpretive programs with 199 participants in attendance. The highlighted program for the month: *Ruins of Spur Cross* with 35 attendees.
- Souvenir sales have increased by \$2,665.00 in comparison to the same time period as last year.

Usery

- Usery Mountain Regional Park offered 47 interpretive programs in January totaling 2,013 participants, and 51 interpretive programs in February totaling 1,386 participants.
- January's *Full Moon Hike* had 435 participants who came out and enjoyed a night hike. That was the highest number of participants ever attending this program at Usery. Hikers were treated to a campfire marshmallow roast after the hike to cap off the evening.
- 281 archers from around the state competed in the Cactus Classic Archery Tournament hosted by the Usery Mountain Archers. The tournament was held on the walking courses at the archery range and showcased archers of all ages ranging from pee-wee to seniors. The Cactus Classic is the first of a four leg archery series held in Arizona.
- 44 riders participated in the *Tonto Twist* 50 Mile Endurance Ride. This horse ride started in Apache Junction, passing through Tonto National Forest to the Maricopa Trail and entering the park on Pass Mountain Trail. Riders used the Trailhead Staging area as a stop to water their horses and then headed out of the park back to their starting point.
- The Arizona Parks and Recreation Association (APRA) hosted the 4th Annual Hike for Hops event at Usery. Hike for Hops is a fundraising event for APRA. Each year, a new agency hosts the event to raise money for future educational opportunities for all parks and recreation professionals in Arizona. 100 participants hiked Pass Mountain or Wind Cave Trail and returned for lunch and drinks sponsored by The Perch Brewery.
- REI hosted the first annual *Blevins Bolt 5K Run*. 97 runners raced through the cholla forest on Blevins trail competing for bragging rights and fun prizes.
- The park set up a booth at the Apache Junction Parks & Recreation Outdoor Expo promoting upcoming educational programs and hiking trails.
- The Park Ranger gave a presentation on Nature Based Programming at the Great Outdoors Maintenance and Trails Workshop in Oro Valley. The workshop, sponsored by Arizona Parks and Recreation Association was geared for park rangers and trail maintenance staff around the state and had 10 different municipalities participate.
- The Buckhorn Campground was 98.6% full during the month of January with 170 camping units in overflow. The campground was 99.8% full during the month of February with 428 camping units in overflow.
- The park received and installed a new memorial bench on Blevins Trail and the Desert Hawk Trail.

White Tank Mountain Regional Park

- In January, the park provided 25 public programs and outreaches with a grand total of 1,865 participants. The most attended program was the park's annual Outdoor Adventure Day which brought in 1,100 people during the peak hours of this open house style program. Through the successful collaboration of park rangers from Estrella, Hassayampa, and the Desert Outdoor Center, the park was able to offer programs ranging from an introduction to birding, dutch oven/solar oven cooking classes, information on animal bones and tracks, and a snake station. The White Tank Mountain's Conservancy hosted a mountain biking clinic.
- REI taught *Leave No Trace* ethics, and several park volunteers also assisted with the event.
- Evening hikes continued in popularity and this month's full moon hike was well attended with 216 participants excited to not only see the full moon, but also the rare blood moon, blue moon, and super moon!
- Special events in the park included the *Xterra Trail Run* on January 7th with 283 participants.
- During the second week of January, the White Tank Mountains were the back drop for a photo shoot with Modern Luxury Magazine involving a model and vintage cars. This special use permit included an agreement with the magazine to highlight the park in the published article; keep an eye out this spring for the article!
- In February, the park provided 26 programs with a total of 645 participants. The end of February brought a large increase to visitation and campers as the West Valley prepped for spring training season. The family campground only had 1 site not booked for 2 nights out of the entire month, and overflow camping had anywhere up to 15 units almost every night. A normal Monday in the Nature Center can be as busy as a holiday weekend.
- The Friends of White Tank hosted their 8th annual Arts and Crafts Festival at the competitive track which brought in 4,123 participants to the park over the two days. Attendance for the festival was up 52% from last year, and many new visitors were introduced to the park due to this successful event.

- On February 1st, the Sun City Hiking Club came out to the park for a trail maintenance day on Waterfall Trail. 27 members put in a total of 121.5 hours assisting the Trails Crew with hauling and placing decomposed granite along the sides of the new concrete sections of trail. This hard work improved the safety along the trail in addition to making it more aesthetically pleasing.

Vulture Mountains Recreation Area and Hassayampa River Preserve

- January got off to a slower start with visitation due to cooler, cloudy weather. However, visitation picked up at the Preserve later in the month and the Preserve saw a total of 1,057 visitors.
- The Interpretive Ranger and volunteers presented 13 programs in January with a total of 149 attendees. Park staff also represented the Preserve at the Wickenburg Ranch Taste of Wickenburg community event as well as a local volunteer fair.
- The Interpretive Ranger shared his expertise by leading a birding station at the annual Outdoor Adventure Family Day event at White Tank Mountain Regional Park. The Interpretive Ranger also presented an off-site program for a Valley church group.
- Work continued on the restroom project, culminating in the delivery of the prefab restroom building at the end of the month. The concrete building, which weighs 40 tons, was hoisted up with a huge crane and set into place on the prepared foundation. Everything went smoothly, and the building was set into place in less than 15 minutes.
- Projects continued in the historic Visitor Center as well, with installation of new, energy-efficient LED lighting and reconstruction of the back porch by the Trades Crew. Several dead, hazardous trees were removed by the Trails Crew along the trails. Preserve volunteers also conducted the first Adopt-a-Highway cleanup along Highway 60 for the year as well as repaired several sections of boundary fence.
- Visitation to Hassayampa continued to increase in February as the Preserve headed into the busy season. For the month, the Preserve saw a total of 1,749 visitors (up significantly from previous years), with weekends typically seeing over 100 people per day. An article in the *Arizona Republic* drew many people out to the Preserve and Wickenburg's annual Gold Rush Days drew many people as well.
- Park staff and volunteers presented 15 programs in February at the Preserve to a total of 133 people. The Interpretive Ranger also presented a program to an audience of 160 people in Sun City, providing an overview of the Preserve and the recreation opportunities available. Several attendees from the presentation visited the Preserve later that week.
- February saw the beginning of what is turning out to be a busy school field trip season. Additionally, the Interpretive Ranger and volunteers presented to one local school.
- Preparations are also under way for the Preserve's Grand Re-opening celebration in March.
- Contractors began working on repairing and expanding the leach field for the new restroom building as well as getting the building hooked up to utilities.
- A bee swarm which decided to light on a mesquite tree along the trail was cordoned off and observed for a few days. It was finally collected by a local beekeeper who was very excited to add what he said were happy bees to his existing hives.
- The volunteer work crew kept the trails in tip top condition.