



# Maricopa County Parks & Recreation Department

## MEMORANDUM

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**Date:** October 10, 2019  
**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 **September 2019**.

### Administration

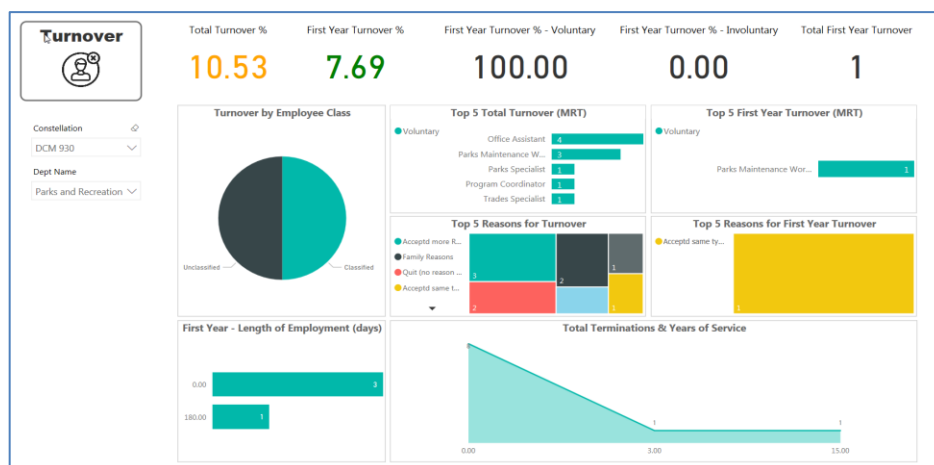
The purpose of the Administrative Division is to provide strategic direction, leadership, administrative and financial support to the Director and employees of the department so they can produce the results necessary to achieve the departmental mission and vision. The following information is provided as a high-level overview of the activities of the Administrative Division:

**Budget/Financial Report:** (first quarter month-end data not available for this report)

### Human Resources:

- **Welcome New Employees:**
  - Sandra Bennett, Contact Station Assistant, San Tan – 8/12/2019
  - Ryan Dunning, Park Maintenance Worker, White Tank – 8/12/2019
  - Penny Hansher, Accounting Specialist, HQ – 8/26/2019 (transfer from MCDOT)
- **FY20 first quarter status:**





## Planning and Development Division

### Project Management

- The Parks and Recreation Department Project Manager has been working with contractors on the pump house wall at Estrella Mountain Regional Park. The wall, when completed, will match the existing walls on the electrical service section areas and will help tie the park design together.
- The Project Manager met with contractors at the White Tank Regional Park Willow project area to go over the dish-wash station sink project. Blockwork for the sink base will begin in early October.

### Park and Open Space Planning

- *Parks, Trails, and Open Space Master Plan - Vision 2030*: The Park and Open Space Planner continues to develop elements of the plan to guide the department into the next 10 years with 5 years of strategic objects as we continue to be the fastest growing county in the country. Important factors that influence the plan include the sustainability of the system, visitor experience, and the economic impacts of the regional park system on the local economy.
- The Parks Planner has been working with McDowell Mountain Regional Park and Trails Division staff on new trail alignments in the park.
- The Department Planning and Development Manager attended two County Department planning meetings this month. Maricopa County Flood Control District (MCFCD) kicked off their *2020 Floodplain Management Plan Update* stakeholder process on October 3. The planning process helps MCFCD identify flood hazards and potential solutions. Maricopa County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) held the second meeting for the *Transportation System Plan 2040*. The 2040 Plan will help MCDOT prioritize future transportation system projects as population, development, and technology impact the County.

### Trades Crew

- Trades staff completed a water line repair project at White Tank Ford Canyon this past month. The particular repair was challenging due to the depth of the line and the soil material in the park.
- Trades staff completed a repair of the overlook water tank at Lake Pleasant Regional Park. The new probes regulate the water levels in the tank to decrease the holding time of the water in the tank thereby improving overall water quality for the system.
- Trade Staff continues to work on the Willow project at White Tank Mountain Regional Park. New ramada roof frames were constructed and the contractor is bead blasting the old frames prior to final re-assembly of the ramadas.

### Trails Crew

- The Trails Division completed repairs on the Beardsley Trail off the By-Pass road at Lake Pleasant Regional Park. Heavy rains the week of September 23 washed the trail away as Morgan City Wash over-topped the roadway in the area.

### **Maricopa Trail, Sun Circle, and Trail Facilities:**

- The following trail segments are currently in progress – 11, 27, 33, 77, and 78.
- Agreement preparation/negotiations:
  - Bureau of Land Management – Meeting with BLM personnel was held the week of September 2 regarding the use of the route and signage on the proposed route between Estrella Mountain Regional Park and Buckeye Hills Regional Park. Staff is waiting for their response.
  - City of Phoenix – The draft for Segment 1 and Segment 7 have been sent to Phoenix Transportation and Parks Departments for review.
  - MCDOT – Received approved driveway plans for the trailhead on Sun Valley Parkway.
  - Bureau of Reclamation/SRP – Segment 27 Trailhead - License application preliminarily approved June 2019. Waiting for archeological clearance direction in October 2019.
- Maintenance
  - Segment 78 – Major storm damage inside Lake Pleasant Park being repaired by Trails Crew.
  - Segment 14, 15, 16 and 18 – Prickly Pedal route – Will assess damage from 9/24/19 storm event.
  - Coordinating with the Maricopa Trail + Parks Foundation volunteers for fall 2019 work events.
- Trailheads
  - Segment 11 – Sun Valley Parkway – Received approved MCDOT driveway plans on September 11, 2019.
  - Segment 27 – Bush Highway – Trailhead design completed by MCDOT; BOR License preliminarily approved. Waiting for environmental clearance in October 2019.

### **Parks Operations Report**

#### **Buckeye Hills Regional Park**

- Estrella's maintenance staff is working on improvements in the park and at the Joe Foss Shooting Range. They are revitalizing Restroom #2 and are making repairs to the Range's trap house.
- Department staff met with APS to plan the re-seeding of access roads used in the park for the now-completed power line construction project.

#### **Cave Creek Regional Park**

- Planning for the County Manager's 13K Volunteer Program is underway. A tree planting session is scheduled for November 6. Volunteers will be planting 30 to 50 native Sonoran trees to enhance and provide shade to campsites and areas that are in need of revegetation. In partnering in this program, both departments have the opportunity for cost savings and can help provide a positive team-building and volunteer experience for County employees.
- In September, the park hosted six interpretive programs with 109 participants attending.
- The host site shade structures have been installed.

#### **Desert Outdoor Center (DOC)**

- Arizona Game & Fish Department held their Wildlife Management Division Awards at our facility on September 11.
- Two DOC rangers (with 6 other park rangers) attended the first annual AZ Association of Environmental Education Conference in Prescott, AZ on September 12. They were excited to participate in popular educational workshops including Project Wet and Project Wild, which provided them with many educational resources.
- The final *Homeschool Happening* event occurred on September 24, which brought our total homeschool attendance for the summer to 98 people. Due to the overwhelmingly positive feedback from participants, we will continue to offer homeschool programs throughout the school year.
- Schools continue to book field trips for this school year. We are currently about 80% reserved at this time.
- There are currently 12 weddings reserved this fiscal year, which is a 400% increase over last year.

#### **Estrella Mountain Regional Park**

- Estrella Park held 14 programs with 258 people.
- The *Homeschool Happenings* program offered once a week had close to 50 people in each class with families from across the Valley attending.
- An Eagle Scout, his troop, and park staff removed 16 salt cedar trees from around the ball fields. Planning for two additional Eagle Scout projects includes the entry area kiosk repair and a new irrigation system for the butterfly garden.

- Department staff met with representatives from a concession at Adobe Dam to discuss the removal and re-use of the rodeo lights and bleachers. Parks' electricians disconnected the power and are working on the removal of the equipment.

#### **Lake Pleasant Regional Park**

- Park attendance is up 4.25% during the first quarter of FY20 compared to the same period last year.
- In September, 12 interpretive programs were offered with 120 participants; several programs were impacted/canceled due to the storms/flooding.
- The National Public Lands Day cleanup event was held on September 28 with approximately 300 volunteers.
- Morgan City Wash and sections of the Beardsley Trail incurred damage from the storms and are in the process of being repaired/re-opened soon
- The water line at the North Entry was impacted from the September storms, but has since been repaired by the Trades Crew.
- The Maintenance team performed repairs to the 10-Lane Boat Ramp dock by adding new cable.

#### **McDowell Mountain Regional Park**

- The park hosted 14 ranger programs with 160 people in attendance including two outreach programs at the River of Time Museum and McDowell Mountain Middle School (Fountain Hills).
- We saw a dramatic increase in visitation as the weather started to cool off with 3,500 visitors in September compared to 1,400 in August.
- Park Hosts have begun to return.
- The first special event of the season, *Javelina Jangover*, occurred with approximately 400 participants.
- The McDowell Mountain Cycles held a clean-up event on the competitive track with 15 volunteers.

#### **San Tan Regional Park**

- In September, San Tan hosted 20 programs with 398 participants.
- The *Scorpion Search Trail Walk* had a season-high of 114 participants in the new Friday night timeslot.
- The first trail work volunteer day of the fall season brought out nine volunteers to repair areas of erosion on the Stargazer Trail.
- Twenty-five members of the Geological Society of America stopped at San Tan during a conference day excursion to discuss the Goldmine Mountain piedmont in relation to Hohokam dry farming and water harvesting. The park received a copy of their Field Guide: "Geoarchaeology of Prehistoric Agriculture, Soils and Floodplain Dynamics on the Lower Salt and Middle Gila Rivers, Arizona."

#### **Spur Cross Conservation Area**

- In September, the park hosted six interpretive programs with 71 participants attending.
- The Interpretive Ranger and his volunteer trails crew have been removing weeds and completing some minor trail damage from the storms.

#### **Usery Mountain Regional Park**

- Usery Park offered 13 interpretive programs in September totaling 328 participants.
- 80 people participated in Ranger B's *All about Scorpions* program and *Scorpion Hunt*.
- Ranger B hosted three outreach programs during the month of September with 52 people attending.
- The Archery Range project (upgrades) began on September 9, with the demo of all existing electrical, media-blasting all picnic tables and painting the large shade structure.
- Park Maintenance staff finished installing all-new water bibs at the Buckhorn Campground (75 sites). This included digging holes, mixing/pouring concrete and setting new water pedestals; a great deal of time and effort on their part resulted in huge cost savings for our department.
- *Phoenix New Times* voted Usery Mountain Regional Park/Pass Mountain Trail as the best "Desert Mountain Bike Trail" in the valley.

#### **Vulture Mountains Recreation Area and Hassayampa River Preserve (HRP)**

- The Interpretive Ranger and volunteers presented 11 programs (314 attendees total), including the popular partner event with the Town of Wickenburg at the pedestrian bridge in Wickenburg – *Bats & Buzzards*, a wildlife viewing event focusing on migratory bats and turkey vultures (220 attendees)
- Heavy rains (2.5") brought river flooding and caused trail closures for several days.

### **White Tank Mountain Regional Park**

- White Tank Park held 16 interpretive programs with 274 park visitors and 1 outreach interpretive program in Sun City with 63 attending.
- Southwest Collegiate Cycling Conference held their mountain biking race with 32 participants.
- West Valley Trail Alliance hosted their first mountain evening bike ride event of a "Night Ride Series" with 30 riders.
- MCDOT chip-sealed White Tank Park's roads.
- Willow Campground construction efforts continued:
  - Trails Crew completed the initial construction of the new trail connector from the communal area in Willow to Mesquite Trail.
  - The Trades Crew focused efforts on new walk-in sites.
- Park received 1.57" of rain the last week of the month.
  - The park temporarily closed for two hours due to flash flooding across park roads.
  - Cooler temperatures and the Waterfall running for a week brought a bump in park attendance.