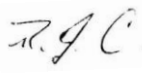




234 N. Central Avenue
Suite 6400
Phoenix, AZ 85004-2187
Phone: 602-506-2930
Fax: 602-506-4692
www.maricopa.gov/parks

MEMORANDUM

Date: September 11, 2012
To: Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission
From: R.J. Cardin, Director 
Re: Director's Summary of Current Events

Listed below are issues the department has been involved with since the July 10, 2012 Director's Summary.

From the Office of the Director Board of Supervisors Agenda Items:

- **Intergovernmental Agreement between Arizona State Parks and Maricopa County –**
An agreement to further the development and maintenance of the motorized and non-motorized trails and support facilities for the benefit of the public and to provide opportunities to educate the public concerning safe and responsible recreation practices.

Budget

Due to difficulty completing outstanding payments for FY2012, revenue for the first month of FY13 was not reported prior to month end close.

Information Technology

- ADP time clock installation was completed and all non-exempt staff members are required to use the time clock for day in/day out and lunch out/lunch in punches. The new time clocks will efficiently and accurately keep staff time cards.
- Internet connectivity issues continue at Lake Pleasant, mainly on the weekends. OET has been working on possible other contributing issues causing the outages.
- The POS/Reservation Manual is almost complete. Through a series of meetings with the Parks' Office Assistants, a user manual will be available for all staff and hosts/volunteers. This will ensure all users have uniformity in processes within the computer system.

Human Resources

Congratulations and Welcome!

- Welcome Emily Miller, Contract Administrator, who started on August 20th.
- Congratulations to Dan Wilson who was selected as Park Supervisor for Utery Mountain Regional Park.
- Congratulations to Sarah Steele who was selected as Parks Supervisor for San Tan Mountain Regional Park.

Other personnel news to note:

- Interviews for the Park Planning and Development Division Manager were held and an applicant has been selected (awaiting background results).

- Interviews for the vacant Trails Technician position were held and a candidate was selected (awaiting background results)
- The following positions are open for recruitments and/or are waiting to be filled:
 - Accounting Specialist (HQ) – Interviews are scheduled for September 7, 2012.
 - Volunteer Coordinator (HQ) – Position is under recruitment.

Finance Program

After a slow start to revenue reconciliation and reporting for the new fiscal year, Finance staff worked diligently to get back on schedule. All revenue through July and August monthly close dates were reported to Finance. The department is still developing ways to improve the reconciliation of the bank and POS revenue reports, a daunting task due to the amount of transactions and money the department handles.

Central Reservations

Phone calls to the reservation line remain slow as we approach the end of the summer. The fall promotion – Buy Two Nights of Camping and Get One Free – but so far, participation has been limited.

Volunteer Program

The final draft of the Maricopa Trail Maintenance and Operations Plan was submitted to Director Cardin for review.

Souvenir Fund

August has been a busy month for the Souvenir Fund. Our Parks are stocking up for the upcoming season, ordering their normal merchandise as well as selecting new items that were added to the product line. In addition to the increase in order size, a full inventory of each park was completed.

Superintendent Reports

Cave Creek Regional Park – The Park hosted 4 interpretive programs with 45 participants. Program highlights included Reptile Feeding; Bug Theater; Venomous Creatures; and Michelin Man by Moonlight.

Estrella Mountain Regional Park – The Park hosted 13 interpretive programs and hikes primarily aimed toward youth and families which brought in an estimated 75 attendees. The sunrise hike series is a favorite of hikers of all ages despite the early 5:30 a.m. start time.

In August, park attendance continued to be seasonally slow; however, there seemed to be a few minor spikes related to the weather. Monsoon weather related damage continues to be handled by severity.

Summer projects throughout the park are progressing. Improvements and repairs have been made to the Rodeo Arena facility in anticipation of our new tenants. Drywall, ceiling and painting repairs have been made by park staff. The 7 Crew has been repairing electrical, water and welding issues as well as additional roof repairs.

The Parks Department Trails Division continues to renovate and construct new trails in Estrella Park. The Interpretive Ranger transplanted a number of cacti salvaged by the Trails Crew around the Nature Center area.

The Centennial Trail Project continues to move forward as the planning phases of the trail, the art, and the interpretive elements progress. Volunteers continue to help clear invasive Salt Cedar every weekend despite the high temperatures and adverse conditions. Recently, a group of female prisoners from the Perryville facility helped to feed the green waste into a chipper loaned to us by the City of Goodyear. The Centennial Trail committee continues to meet with Park staff.

Volunteers and scouts have been utilized this month on a variety of projects including kiosk repair, tree trimming, ramada cleaning and improvements and trash barrel painting. A scout group is lined up to do a large restroom and ramada painting project at Buckeye Hills Park.

Desert Outdoor Center – The Center two Get Wet Kayaking events with Cabelas in August with a total of 39 first-time kayakers develop their skills at flat-water kayaking.

The Center was also very busy taking reservations for the upcoming school year field trips. Currently we have only a hand full of dates still available for this school year.

Our Rangers have been reviewing program curriculum to improve content where needed, while the maintenance staff have been busy stripping floors in the dorms and main building, then sealing and waxing them for longer life and beauty.

Lake Pleasant Regional Park – The Lake hosted 30 programs with 503 participants. Animal Planet also held a film shoot for their cable channel for a documentary on the Komodo Dragon.

McDowell Mountain Regional Park – The project to reduce the fuel load along the north boundary of the park has concluded after 35 days of work. Beginning at the northwest corner of the park the crew worked along the boundary clearing dead and non-native plant material from the boundary back 30'. They also trimmed up the native brush and trees to 6' again to reduce the likelihood of fire being carried across the desert.

The Park hosted 18 interpretive programs with 347 participants, an increase of 121% over the participant's numbers in 2011. The Mountain Bike by Moonlight held one ride on the competitive track for 93 riders.

MCDOT sealed and restriped all the paved roads within the park; the work greatly improved the condition and appearance of the pavement.

San Tan Mountain Regional Park – San Tan hosted 6 interpretive programs with 800 program participants. The highlight of the month was Ranger Adam's launch of the 1st Meteor Shower Viewing with over 325 people!

The Friends Group donated a tortoise metal work sculpture complete with areas for signage. Construction on the new Desert Tortoise burrow was completed, making a more natural burrow that faces southeast, is 10.5 feet long and reaches 2 feet deep.

Staff worked with MCSO and AZGFD to successfully recover all 4 animals (chuckwalla, scorpion, tarantula, and tortoise) stolen from the park. All animals are readjusting well and will go on to live out their happy lives at the park.

We are currently working with an Eagle Scout to develop, design and construct a new interpretive/ADA trail that would start near the memorial and loop back. Our goal is to have this completed before mid-October so it may be utilized during our big Halloween Bash.

Spur Cross Ranch Conservation Area – Spur Cross hosted 6 interpretive programs with 65 participants. A few of the programs included Full Moon Hike; Healthy Hiking; Ruins of Spur Cross; Sunset Walk; and Rock Art of Spur Cross.

Usery Mountain Regional Park – Usery Mountain Regional Park conducted 24 interpretive programs in August totaling 641 participants, with 384 repeat attendees. The highlight of the month was the Scorpion Hunt which included a brown bag lecture All about Scorpions.

Shakira, the park's Western Diamondback Rattlesnake laid 10 "slugs" (eggs) in her enclosure at the park. This was a very rare event because rattlesnakes usually do not lay eggs, but they have a live birth. It's also very rare because Shakira has been without a mate for close to 20 years! Ranger B documented this exciting event and posted a YouTube video on the parks Face Book page.

The Archery 101 class remains a popular class. The August 4th class was maxed out at 20 participants. The October and November classes are already fully booked. Due to the popularity, these classes are filling up months in advance and many participants are being turned away.

A memorial bench for the Amundsen family was installed on the Pass Mountain Trail on August 29th by the parks maintenance staff. Pat Amundsen visited the nature center to compliment the staff on a job well done. She loves the location of the bench and is excited to showcase it to the rest of her family.

Usery Mountain Archery Club held a Field-Hunter shoot on August 25th at the park. Archers from various skill levels came out to compete on the west range. These league shoots have been beneficial for our beginning shooters to learn tips from more experienced shooters.

White Tank Mountain Regional Park – The Park hosted 10 programs and 2 outreaches with 651 people in attendance. There were 120 people for the Blue Moon Hike alone! This is a record for August, the highest number ever for an August at White Tank Park.

The new host sites at the Maricopa Trailhead are close to completion. The utilities trench from the road to the electric panel is complete, the cabinet pad is poured and the next tasks on the plan are to pour the site pad concrete and pull electric wire to each site.