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MEMORANDUM

Date: September 13, 2024
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 insert dates here.
Insert activities here.

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS AGENDA ITEMS:

Date/Status	Tracking Number	Summary
June Approved	C-06-25-018-X-00	Monthly Donations for June \$773.82
July Approved	C-06-25-053-X-00	Monthly Donations for July \$470.43
August Approved	C-30-25-001-X-00	Execute the letter to the Department of the Interior Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to exercise Maricopa County’s option to request a land patent for the 170 acres of land at Cave Creek Regional Park that is currently under a land lease.



ADMINISTRATION/FINANCE DIVISION:

PARKS VISITOR ATTENDANCE REPORT (FY24 THROUGH AUGUST):

FY25	Jul-24	Aug-24	Sep-24	Oct-24	Nov-24	Dec-24	Jan-25	Feb-25	Mar-25	Apr-25	May-25	Jun-25
FY24	Jul-23	Aug-23	Sep-23	Oct-23	Nov-23	Dec-23	Jan-24	Feb-24	Mar-24	Apr-24	May-24	Jun-24
Cave Creek	1,384	1,303										
FY24	1,266	1,621	3,312	9,690	12,328	12,736	13,249	14,271	17,256	12,085	4,392	1,566
Estrella	1,710	2,279										
FY25	1,864	2,003	5,174	6,395	10,104	9,024	12,047	11,453	17,739	10,452	5,525	2,967
McDowell Mtn	979	1,791										
FY24	1,268	1,766	3,851	14,137	13,901	15,071	15,379	15,388	17,288	9,778	5,090	4,980
San Tan Park	348	4,471										
FY24	3,680	4,209	8,094	13,823	22,089	23,452	28,344	26,251	27,136	16,149	10,300	5,244
Spur Cross	287	458										
FY24	130	118	488	1,575	6,699	4,511	6,053	7,258	8,282	4,917	1,184	241
Usery Mtn Park	8,770	9,641										
FY24	7,169	6,670	10,119	17,968	32,940	34,058	34,879	37,369	44,888	26,124	14,814	8,118
White Tank	4,315	5,380										
FY24	4,393	6,164	9,396	17,812	26,356	28,524	33,741	39,129	46,464	25,763	13,906	6,682
Hassayampa	733	1,068										
FY24	339	411	795	1,133	1,752	1,536	1,461	1,951	2,716	2,375	1,238	471
Mountain Park Totals	18,526	26,391	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
FY24	20,109	22,962	41,229	82,533	126,169	128,912	145,153	153,070	181,769	107,643	56,449	30,269
Lake Pleasant	141,764	95,149										
FY24	146,522	76,963	81,319	73,010	47,229	37,638	42,195	62,353	95,518	101,975	146,615	157,420
DOC	5,013	5,825										
FY24	50	80	97	796	496	856	452	847	1,389	2,087	1,878	960
FY23	183	225	151	639	972	1,302	875	493	2,516	1,618	1,855	402
Agua Fria	40	0										
FY24	6	6	0	0	7	97	130	112	192	232	149	0
Lake Totals	146,817	100,974	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
FY24	146,578	77,049	81,416	73,806	47,732	38,591	42,777	63,312	97,099	104,294	148,642	158,380
System Total	165,343	127,365	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
FY24	166,687	100,011	122,645	156,339	173,901	167,503	187,930	216,382	278,868	211,937	205,091	188,649

FY24 BUDGET REPORT (PERIOD 02):

Report ID: FIN-BA-MC010
Run Date: 09/11/2024
Run Time: 1:27:33 PM

Dept Name	Fund	Fund Name	Approp Group	Revised Revenue	Actual Revenue	Revenue Variance	Revised Expenditures	Actual Expenditures	Expenditure Variance	Budgeted Structure Balance	Actual Structural Balance	Structural Balance Variance
Parks and Rec	100	General	NRNP	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$2,272	\$2,509	(\$237)	(\$2,272)	(\$2,509)	(\$237)
Parks and Rec	100	General	OPER	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$217,816	\$143,550	\$74,266	(\$217,816)	(\$143,550)	\$74,266
Parks and Rec	225	Spr Cross Ranch	NRNP	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$20,834	\$20,834	\$0	(\$20,834)	\$0	\$20,834
Parks and Rec	225	Spr Cross Ranch	OPER	\$57,818	\$20,041.80	(\$37,776)	\$58,234	\$49,560	\$8,674	(\$416)	(\$29,518)	(\$29,102)
Parks and Rec	230	Parks&Rec Grant	NRNP	\$4,334	\$0	(\$4,334)	\$4,334	\$4,334	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Parks and Rec	239	Parks Souvenir	OPER	\$58,334	\$11,956.42	(\$46,378)	\$58,507	\$57,043	\$1,464	(\$173)	(\$45,087)	(\$44,914)
Parks and Rec	240	Lk Plsnt Rc Svc	NRNP	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$369,082	\$32,914	\$336,168	(\$369,082)	(\$32,914)	\$336,168
Parks and Rec	240	Lk Plsnt Rc Svc	OPER	\$737,692	\$944,544.53	\$206,853	\$744,654	\$721,234	\$23,420	(\$6,962)	\$223,311	\$230,273
Parks and Rec	241	Parks Enhncmnt	NRNP	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$212,584	\$40,717	\$171,867	(\$212,584)	(\$40,717)	\$171,867
Parks and Rec	241	Parks Enhncmnt	OPER	\$1,257,356	\$943,169.69	(\$314,186)	\$1,268,116	\$1,343,968	(\$75,852)	(\$10,760)	(\$400,798)	(\$390,038)
Parks and Rec	243	Parks Donations	NRNP	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$0	(\$5,000)	\$0	\$5,000
Parks and Rec	243	Parks Donations	OPER	\$6,358	\$5,862.30	(\$496)	\$6,358	\$1,332	\$5,027	\$0	\$4,531	\$4,531
Parks and Rec	243	Parks Donations	WMD3	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$4,166	\$4,166	\$0	(\$4,166)	\$0	\$4,166
Parks and Rec	296	Coronavirus FRF	NRNP	\$2,188,030	\$1,036,831.51	(\$1,151,198)	\$2,188,030	\$1,036,832	\$1,151,198	\$0	\$0	\$0
			Sum:	\$4,309,922	\$2,962,406	(\$1,347,516)	\$5,159,987	\$3,429,658	\$1,730,329	(\$850,065)	(\$467,251)	\$382,814



HUMAN RESOURCES:

Welcome/Promotions/Transfers:

- Oliva Holderness, Interpretive Ranger, Desert Outdoor Center, 5/6/2024
- George Urrea, Trails Specialist, Estrella, 5/27/2024 County Transfer
- Brandy Sherman, Park Custodian, Lake Pleasant, 6/6/2024
- Chris Matthews, Park Supervisor, Hassayampa, 6/24/2024 Promotion
- Augustine Gonzales, Park Maintenance, White Tank, 07/21/2024 Transfer
- Kayden Hitzeman, Contact Station Assistant, McDowell, 08/01/2024
- Natalie Harper, West Side Superintendent, 08/04/2024 Promotion
- Tammi Watkins, Park Office Assistant, Hassayampa, 08/19/2024 Promotion
- Wade Risinger, Park Custodian, Utery, 08/27/2024

Farewells:

- Donna Southard, Executive Assistant, 5/1/2024
- Darci Kinsman, Park Supervisor, Cave Creek, 6/3/2024
- Eric Baker, Park Maintenance Worker, White Tank, 6/30/2024
- George Urrea, Trails Specialist, Estrella, 08/30/2024
- Trudie Kenny, Contract Station Assistant, 08/30/2024

Current Vacancies:

- JR11936 P1481 – Park Supervisor, White Tank
- JR11959 P14334 – Park Supervisor, Estrella
- JR10442 P17169 – Park Maintenance Worker, McDowell
- JR11279 P67608 – Executive Assistant, HQ
- P15510 – Park Education Supervisor, Desert Outdoor Center
- P68191 – Contact Station Assistant, Lake Pleasant
- P76932 – Park Maintenance Worker, Utery
- P100033 – Park Assistant, Hassayampa
- P102572 – Trails Specialist, Estrella

PARK OPERATIONS DIVISION:

NATURAL RESOURCES:

- Hosted over 24 native seed harvest events at five parks and collected an estimated 45+ pounds of native seed (mostly clean), representing over 40 native plant species.
- Submitted a Health Forest Initiative Grant proposal with the Department of Fire and Forest Management to implement three years of habitat enhancement in the Diamond Wildfire area at McDowell Mountain Regional Park.
- Staff teamed up with Maricopa County Flood Control and the Arizona Department of Forest and Fire Department to complete a tree survivability study at Estrella Mountain Regional Park in the Tamarisk



and Riparian Habitat Enhancement Project. After four days of monitoring the 1300+ trees planted in December and January, the results showed a 93% tree survivability and a 90.37% survivability rate.

VOLUNTEERS:

- Department:
 - May - Over 100 volunteer events occurred so far this fiscal year. Projects include Desert Defender weed removal, seed harvesting, general trash collection, painting, and trail maintenance.
 - Redevelopment of Recognition Program - Once volunteers reach 10, 15, and 20 years of service, they will receive a special predetermined gift. Gifts range from personalized drink mugs to customized plaques.
 - A volunteer photographer has attended several events to provide high-quality current photographs.
- Cave Creek:
 - There was an uptick in community service volunteers in May, who had worked approximately 120 hours removing weeds and invasive species from campsites and around the Nature Center.
- Lake Pleasant
 - On June 7th, the Pacific Seafood Company performed a shoreline clean-up at Lake Pleasant to commemorate World's Ocean Day.
 - Addition of Park Ambassador Level – Shoreline Ambassador – New “Core” volunteer position where individuals educate park visitors on park rules, encourage life vests, explain Leave No Trace Principles, and remind jet skiers and boaters of the No Wake Zones.

Hours (FY24 through August)

TOTAL Volunteer Hours, by month	July	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March	April	May	June	YTD Total	Year End Total	Year End % Change
FY25 - All Hours	3,701	3,338	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7,039	7,039	-11%
FY24 - All Hours	3,759	4,148	4,158	7,290	10,170	11,379	12,796	11,492	12,023	7,957	5,319	4,409	7,907	94,900	-5%
FY23 - All Hours	3,927	4,399	4,844	7,201	10,898	12,187	11,935	11,927	12,756	9,092	4,534	4,335	8,326	98,035	0%

Financial Impact of Volunteers, by Month	July	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March	April	May	June	YTD Total	Year End Total	Hourly Rate
FY25 Financial Impact	\$123,946	\$111,790	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$235,736	\$235,736	\$33.49
FY24 Financial Impact	\$119,536	\$131,906	\$132,224	\$231,822	\$323,406	\$361,852	\$406,913	\$365,446	\$382,331	\$253,033	\$169,144	\$140,206	\$251,443	\$3,017,820	\$31.80
FY23 Financial Impact	\$117,614	\$131,750	\$145,078	\$215,670	\$326,395	\$365,001	\$357,453	\$357,214	\$382,042	\$272,305	\$135,793	\$129,833	\$249,364	\$2,936,148	\$29.95

TRADES:

- During May, the Trades Crew
 - Completed 19 work order requests.
 - Completed 12 locator service calls.
- During July, the Trades Crew
 - Completed 26 work order requests.
- During August, the Trades Crew
 - Completed 20 work order requests.



- Completed 10 locator service calls.
- Parks:
 - Adobe – Completed fence project.
 - Lake Pleasant – Completed – remodel of holding cells.
 - McDowell – Completed – drinking fountain (ADA-accessible, dog-friendly, and chilled) installations, one at the Nature Center and two at trailheads.
 - White Tank – Area 4 – pre-wired the cooking prep islands for installation at Ramadas.
- Safety
 - Electrical Program – finalizing training of specific park staff with the Maricopa County Risk Department.
 - Portable Welder – finalizing Job Hazard Analysis.



TRAILS:

- Maricopa Trail:
 - Segment 11- Inspected trail in response to user notifications of closed-off areas. We are addressing access issues with project partners at Flood Control District.
 - Segment 22 – Due to the Wildcat Fire, this segment is temporarily closed from the Bronco Trailhead to the Tonto Trailhead. It will remain closed until we are cleared to inspect the trail for damage and find it safe.
 - Overall – The team has been completing ongoing repairs to water control features, regularly inspecting trailheads, inspecting trail segments, trimming, and repairing as needed.
- Parks Trails:
 - Cave Creek - All hands involved in recon for a proposed trail.
 - Lake Pleasant – photo below - Improved closure of excess third access route from Bobcat Day Area to the Roadrunner Trail was completed. Park users continued to use the previously closed route, expanding damage to the local flora and topsoil erosion. New "Area Closed" signs have been installed. The improved closure opens two other access routes from the location to the Roadrunner Trail. Inspected numerous trails.



- McDowell - The trails team has been repairing and improving all water control features on the Tonto Tank Trail using handwork, power tools, and a mini excavator; initial field recon for Warmup Loop for the Competitive Track; completed repairs to Tonto Tank Trail and repairs to Pemberton Trail and Granite Tank Trail.
- Usery – Large fallen Saguaro removed from the Ruidoso Trail.



DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS:

- Desert Outdoor Center
 - Well rehabilitation was completed, including brushing and bailing the casing, installing a new pump and motor, and piping the column.
- Estrella
 - Fresh Water Pump Station – Completed upgraded pumps, motors, and controls.
 - Irrigation Pump Station – Completed rebuilding three pumps, new platform deck, and control screen.
- Lake Pleasant
 - Sewer Repairs – Repaired/Replaced sections of sewer line, installed new utility hole covers, epoxy coated utility holes, and jetted & camera entire line to the evaporative transfer bed.
 - Wind Warning System- Replaced existing wind speed towers with modern electronic equipment that sends warning messages to the new signs at both ramps.
- McDowell
 - Ironwood Host Sites – Installed a new solar system.
- White Tank
 - White Tank – Demoed and repoured 450 feet of curbing, demoed and repaved 130,000 square feet over 40 parking lots, and sealed coat slurry 43,000 square feet over five parking lots - all 45 restriped.





CAVE CREEK REGIONAL PARK:

- Park Master Plans:
 - Public Open House events were held for Spur Cross and Cave Creek Parks in the Nature Center classroom on May 4th and 11th, respectively.
 - Staff Focus Group for Cave Creek, Spur Cross, and McDowell was held on July 23rd. Feedback was mapped under the headings Goals, Facts, Needs, Issues, and Ideas for each park discussed.
- Natural Resources:
 - A brush fire just outside the park (at 28th Street and Cloud Road) was reported on May 29th. Campers in the campground were notified quickly and told to be ready to evacuate if necessary. Approximately 10 acres burned, but the park had no damage or impact.
 - One of Cave Creek's animal ambassadors, western diamondback rattlesnake "Sluggo," was humanely euthanized on July 26th due to a large tumor that had grown back even after a couple of surgeries to remove it.

DESERT OUTDOOR CENTER AT LAKE PLEASANT:

- Training
 - Park staff attended a rattlesnake handling class to handle our captive venomous snakes better and address any venomous public interactions.





ESTRELLA MOUNTAIN REGIONAL PARK:

- Natural Resources:
 - The Pollinator Garden is doing well. Pollinator Interpretive Signs are being manufactured and were installed in June. Educational signs are on their way and will be placed soon.
 - The Forest Service continues to go down into the Gila Riverbed to water newly planted mesquite trees.
- Events:
 - June 15th - Aravaipa Running Event - Four hundred nine participants.
 - June – Avondale Parks and Recreation - brought 15 hikers on two days to explore their neighborhood trails.
- Maintenance:
 - Irrigation Pump System - New components continue to be added; thus, operation improvement is shown.

HASSAYAMPA RIVER PRESERVE:

- Natural Resources:
 - Arizona State University - In May, conducted three bird banding events, in June, hosted two, led by Dr. Stein.
 - Rose Fire – June 12th – A fire starting southwest of Preserve burned several homes and did make it onto the Preserve property. Approximately 100 acres were affected, including the temporary evacuation of park personnel, captive animals, and artifacts. The Nature Conservancy and park staff met post-fire to evaluate the damage, including GIS mapping, and to determine the necessary actions to protect the habitat.
 - The Nature Conservancy – Continued discussions regarding the leased lands, Rose Fire, and operations.
- Projects:
 - Construction on the Interpretative Displays in the Visitor Center has finished. We undertook some cleaning by positioning new and/or older furniture, exhibits, and artifacts before opening it up to the public. Reopening occurred after the Rose Fire.



LAKE PLEASANT REGIONAL PARK:

- Operations:
 - Staff attended numerous Emergency Action Plan meetings led by the Bureau of Reclamation and Central Arizona Project - a series of four sessions to plan actions in a worst-case scenario of a breach of New Waddell Dam breach caused by high water plus a 100–500-year storm event.
 - Staff working with the Arizona Game and Fish Department on bringing back the kayak program.
- Events:
 - Boater’s Education Class - Parks and Arizona Game and Fish Department collaborated to host the first boater’s education courses free to the public - seven attended, including staff. June 16- seven attended. July 14 – nine attended. August 11 – twenty attended.
 - Prickly Pedal – Date set January 19, 2025.

MCDOWELL MOUNTAIN REGIONAL PARK:

- Park Master Plan:
 - On May 18th, McDowell hosted an Open House to provide a public forum to contribute questions and comments for the park’s Park Master Plan. Although attendance was somewhat small, the event was fruitful with public input.
- Projects:
 - On May 6th, AJP Electric began breaking ground in the North Loop of the E.I. Rowland campground for the McDowell campground electrical/plumbing upgrade project. This is the first of six phases in the construction plans that will be implemented this summer.
 - Construction began on the solar panel installation on host sites in the Ironwood campground, with an estimated completion time of early August.
- Maintenance:
 - Staff completed a vegetation management overhaul in the surrounding Nature Center area and the adjacent tortoise habitat. This included invasive species removal, tree pruning, vegetation thinning, and repairs to the ponds behind the Nature Center.
 - The Trades crew and staff removed over 80 yards of debris from our campground and maintenance compound. The debris was removed for a septic project in the El Rowland campground, and fuel was reduced around facilities.
- Natural Resources:
 - The Arizona Department of Forestry and Fire Management (DFFM) continued its initial assessment for the upcoming fuel reduction project that will commence this coming September.
- Events:
 - On May 17th and 18th, Aravaipa Running returned to the park for their Adrenaline Nights Ride\Run races. On May 17th, there were 30+ participants for the ride series; on May 18th, there were 534 participants for the run series.



SAN TAN MOUNTAIN REGIONAL PARK:

- Maintenance:
 - Twelve San Tan Trail Runners members volunteered to clean up trash and debris along both sides of Phillips Road. This is the main road, which is a mile long and leads into the park, and gets a lot of trash dumped along the route.
- Operations:
 - On June 18th, the Park Supervisor met with partner organization San Tan Shredders to evaluate last year's programming and to discuss future programming and training locations.
- Events:
 - On July 26th, the Weather Channel conducted a film shoot featuring Jackie Hunt-Broersma, an amputee ultra runner who trains in the park.
- Natural Resources:
 - Ringtail Sightings – Two have been spotted several times on the top of Goldmine Mountain.

SPUR CROSS RANCH CONSERVATION AREA:

- Natural Resources:
 - The Hohokam Agave demonstration garden was cleared of weeds and dry grasses, and six agave pups were added to the garden.
 - Staff visited the Arizona State University's archives to copy and scan documents and photos related to Spur Cross archaeological sites mapped and excavated in the 1980s.
- Volunteers:
 - An Eagle Scout ceremony was held on May 19 for two siblings who completed their Eagle projects.

USERY MOUNTAIN REGIONAL PARK:

- Natural Resources:
 - The Arizona Department of Forestry and Fire Management suspended their project to clear fire fuel breaks along Usery Pass until the weather cools, likely in October.
 - The Park has lost several tall saguaros due to rot at the bases, compounded by high winds from monsoon storms.
 - Maricopa County Department of Transportation has begun stabilizing the shoulders of Usery Pass Road, which should help reinforce the shaded fuel break project the Arizona Department of Forestry and Fire Management started earlier this year.
 - Seed Pellet Workshop – fifteen participants plus Desert Defenders.
- Operations:
 - Staff continues to work on developing an alternate emergency egress route in the event the main exit becomes blocked by wildfire.
 - Maricopa County Department of Transportation conducted a revised traffic study for the Talon Trail crossing the main park road. They have installed additional safety signs to advise both trail users and drivers of the crossing.
 - Updating the animal enclosures in the Nature Center, which are original to the building (2009).



- Training:
 - Park Supervisor (also serving as Department Animal Co-Curator) worked with Interpretive Rangers to begin implementation of the department's newly created training curriculum for wildlife handling and captive wildlife care and husbandry.
- Events:
 - The park hosted the Aravaipa Stunner Night Ride and Run - over 50 mountain bikers and 500 trail runners participated!

