

# MEMORANDUM



TO: Rafael Payan, Director

FROM: Kerry Baldwin, Natural Resources Division  
Manager

DATE: April 21, 2008

SUBJECT: Parks Commission Report for April,  
2008

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## **Open Space/Ranch Property Management-**

Intermittent staff has been working on Canoa Ranch clean up, 20 cu yard dumpster last week, and security gates. A new horse access gate was installed north of Elephant Head rd to keep horses from having to go over the Santa Cruz bridge to reach Anza Trail from east of the river. Additional interior gates have been installed to control access to parts of the property.

Spring roundups are going on at several of the ranches. Staff will ride and work to monitor herd condition and assist property managers. The majority of the new calves are on the ground at A7 ranch. We will be monitoring the calf crop more extensively this year due to excessive Mt. Lion predation last year. We estimate we lost about 20% of the calves vs. a more acceptable 2-4%.

The Parks Commission will be presented an overview of the Tucson Mountain Park Resource Management Plan at the May 2, 2008 meeting. The completed Plan will be placed on the NRPR website by mid May for public access. Management actions recommended in the Plan will go through normal rule making or funding allocation process.

The first public draft of the A7 Ranch Resource Management Plan should be out for public review in late May. The draft will be put on the NRPR website for at least 30 days for easy downloading and electronic comment.

NR Staff is doing Willow Flycatcher surveys in Cienega Creek, locating and tagging endangered Pima Pineapple cactus on new acquisitions and monitoring the burrowing owl reintroduction at Canoa Ranch.

### **Invasive Species/Buflegrass-**

Many agencies and organizations are beginning to organize control efforts for the July-September green up period. NRPR is conducting training of its operations staff to identify and control buffelgrass so they can be prepared to treat parks after monsoons start.

The Weed Wackers conducted several work days and removed over 100 bags of buffelgrass along the CAP canal. Elite BG crews are successfully tackling the stands of buffelgrass under Bushmaster Peak in TMP. NR staff did a story with Channel 4 on problems and dangers of invasive fountain grass as a landscape plant.

### **Open Space Acquisition-**

Several properties are being evaluated for acquisition under the 2004 Bond program. One property is in the Tortolita Mountains/Cochie Canyon area, another near Thornydale and Lambert, one along Agua Verde Creek, a group of properties near the A7 Ranch and a parcel south of Three Points near the Madera Highlands Pima Pineapple Cactus mitigation bank.

### **Environmental Education-**

January was an all time high contact month for the EE program at over 7,000 participants. Over 4,300 participants were contacted in interpretive and educational programs during the past month and the volunteers gave 836 service hours. April 22<sup>nd</sup>, Earth Day, will be a major event day at Agua Caliente Park. Over 400 students will participate in EE programs.

### **NR Parks-**

Catalina Park staff is working on an agreement with U of A to establish a 4-H Center at the White Dog Ranch complex. The complex is being renovated and improvements made. Phase one of the development plan for a parking lot, restroom and play area near the Golder Bridge and a parking area with picnic Ramada on north end of property and in final design stages.

A successful pancake breakfast and outreach event is anticipated for April 26, 2008 at Agua Caliente Park put on by the Friends of Agua Caliente Park. Plans to rebuild the historic bridge have hit a funding snag with transfer of funds to operations of Sports Park. Staff is evaluating additional alternatives to lower costs and do support construction of the bridge when funds are available. The spring has not started summer drop off of flow and is at 39 gal./minute so water is temporarily reaching pond two. Two new brochures were completed and were provided to the Parks Commission last meeting. They were funded from Arizona Game and Fish heritage Fund Grant and are entitled "Please Don't Feed Wildlife"

and “Please Don’t Abandon Your Animals”. This is about the time we begin to see Easter ducks being dropped off at the main pond.

Tucson Mountain Park is experiencing the rapid flight of the last winter visitors from Gilbert Ray campground. Use is down to about 20% of capacity. We were at about 80% last month. The registration building is shut for the season. Four educational groups were accommodated at the campground last month. Another water break was detected under Kinney Road in water lines affecting Old Tucson Studios and the Desert Museum. The repairs shut down the road for a day and cost about \$3,500. Due to age and improper original construction of the line we average about one break a month like this one