

Tucson Mountain Park Management Plan

Public Open House - February 28, 2008

Project Status:

During the past 12 months a series of studies have been conducted to document the existing conditions at Tucson Mountain Park.

These studies included:

- Evaluations of the park's biological, cultural, and visual resources
- Evaluations of the park's public use facilities, operations and maintenance facilities, and supporting infrastructure
- Evaluations of the park's trails, trailheads, and access points
- An assessment of park visitation including the number of park visitors and the activities in which they engage

An on-line survey was also conducted to obtain information related to park user attitudes and preferences.

This information was summarized in the "Tucson Mountain Park Background Report." This document is available for review on the Pima County website.

(www.pima.gov/nrpr/places/tucs_mtplk/TMP_Mgmt_Plan_Bkgd_Rpt_Nov07.pdf)

The information collected was used to develop a Draft Management Plan for the park. The draft plan makes specific recommendations related to:

- Resource conservation
- Facility and infrastructure development
- Public use
- Park expansion
- Park staffing and administration

Purpose of Public Meeting / Open House:

This Open House is being conducted to provide the public with an opportunity to review key elements of the draft plan, to ask questions of the Pima County Natural Resource, Parks, and Recreation Department staff, and to provide written comments related to Draft Management Plan for Tucson Mountain Park.



Trail System: Planned Actions

Authorized Trails

- Retain / improve 62 miles of existing trail
- Install trail markers
- Post trail maps at trailheads
- Make official trail map available for download

Unauthorized Social Trails

- Evaluate 40 miles of social trail for potential closure
- Close and revegetate selected trails

New Trails

- Design and construct new trails at Robles Pass Trails Park
- Design and construct new trails at (BLM) Expansion Area

Trailheads and Walk-in Entries

- Relocate existing King Canyon Trailhead
- Retain / improve Starr Pass, 36th Street, Camino de Oeste, and Sarasota trailheads
- Develop Explorer Trailhead
- Retain walk-in entries at J.W. Marriott Hotel and Tucson Estates
- Construct new trailhead at (BLM) Expansion Area



Existing and New Public Use Facilities: Planned Actions

Visitor Contact Station

- Construct new Visitor Contact Station with interpretive patio and interpretive trail
- Install standard facility identification sign

Gates Pass Overlook

- Construct new A.D.A. accessible trail to viewing area away from parking lot
- Install standard facility identification sign

G-3 Overlook

- Reconfigure parking lot / create handicapped parking space
- Improve walkways / viewing areas

Gilbert Ray Campground

- Replace registration building
- Improve campground electrical system
- Improve campground water system
- Install standard facility identification sign

Juan Santa Cruz Picnic Area

- Repair / reconstruct ramadas
- Improve picnic sites
- Provide A.D.A. access to picnic sites
- Install standard facility identification sign

Brown Mountain Picnic Area

- Repair / reconstruct ramadas
- Improve picnic sites
- Provide A.D.A. access to picnic sites
- Install standard facility identification sign

Ironwood Picnic Area

- Repair / reconstruct ramadas
- Improve picnic sites
- Provide A.D.A. access to picnic sites
- Install standard facility identification sign

Archery Range

- Pave entry drive / reconfigure and pave parking lot
- Repair shooting ramada and small ramadas
- Repair restroom building
- Redevelop roving courses
- Install markers at perimeter of site
- Install standard facility identification sign

Rifle / Pistol Range

- Pave entry drive and parking lot
- Repair shooting ramada
- Extend water service to site
- Construct restroom / office / storage building
- Install standard facility identification sign





Park Roads: Planned Actions

Roadway Status

- Retain Gates Pass Road, Kinney Road, and McCain Loop Road as part of County roadway system, maintained by the Department of Transportation

Roadway Cross-section

- Retain “Park Road” cross-section
 - 11' travel lanes with 2' paved “edge”
 - No graded shoulders (vegetation to edge of pavement)
 - No widening for new bike lanes

Traffic Safety and Mitigation Measures

- Construct traffic calming islands at North / South Kinney Road entrances
- Construct traffic calming island at Gates Pass Road entry
- Modify traffic controls (3-way stop) at Mile Wide / Kinney Road intersection
- Reconstruct Kinney Road / McCain Loop Road intersection (at proposed Visitor Contact Station)
- Install speed humps where appropriate for drainage / bicycle safety
- Reduce Kinney Road pavement width at selected areas near Old Tucson

Off-Site Improvements (By Pima County Department of Transportation)

- Develop alternate commuting routes to reduce traffic on park roads (possible San Joaquin Rd.-Sandario Rd. Connection)

On-Street Bicycle Improvements

- Construct traffic calming features to reduce traffic speed
- Construct traffic calming features and construct alternate off-site commuter routes to reduce traffic volume



Park Resource Protection: Planned Actions

Biological Resources

- Develop and implement a Resource Monitoring Program that includes:
 - Establishment of permanent framework (plots, transects, etc.) for monitoring vegetative changes
 - Establishment of permanent photo monitoring stations to record user impacts and landscape level changes
 - Periodic surveys of individual plant and wildlife species (such as Desert Tortoise) to identify population changes and trends
 - Coordination of in-park monitoring with Sonoran Desert Conservation Plan

(SDCP) Ecological Monitoring Program (EMP)

- Acquire key real estate parcels to maintain biological connections with other natural resource areas
- Continue on-going collaboration with other Pima County departments and other resource management agencies to advance regional-scale habitat conservation efforts
- Continue existing programs to remove invasive, non-native species
- Construct traffic calming features on park roads to reduce traffic volume and speed and reduce wildlife road kill
- Restore / replant previously disturbed park areas
- Adopt a requirement to remain on park trails except as authorized by permit

Cultural Resources

- Conduct sample survey of cultural resources in park to:
 - Check condition of 48 recorded sites in park
 - Sample the 75% of park area not previously surveyed
 - Develop prioritized plan for follow-up focused surveys
 - Identify prehistoric and historic sites suitable for interpretation
- Update recorded site data based on current conditions
- Institute a site steward program for on-going monitoring of cultural resource sites
- Evaluate potential for CCC era sites in Tucson Mountain Park (And in Saguaro National Park) to be nominated to National Register of Historic Places as Historic Landscape



Public Use Rules and Regulations: Planned Actions

Park Hours of Operation

- Maintain Park Hours of Operation (7:00 AM to 10:00 PM)
- Monitor after-hours park use and coordinate with Sheriff's Department to cite violators
- Review requests and, where appropriate, issue permit for evening activities such as star-gazing

Trails and Trailheads

- Continue to provide for appropriate non-motorized trail uses without fee (hiking, trail running, mountain biking, and horseback riding)
- Adopt and enforce park rule requiring all trail users to remain on trail (except as may be authorized by permit)
- Establish a walk-in, call-in and/or on-line system for requesting and issuing permits for authorized off-trail activities

Picnic Facilities

- Continue to provide for access and public use of facilities during Park hours of operation (7:00 AM-10:00 PM) without fee

Campground

- Continue to provide for access to campground during designated hours of operation with collection of user fee per established fee schedule
- Continue to enforce the 10 consecutive day limit for stays at the campground

Rifle / Pistol Range

- Continue to operate Rifle / Pistol Range (in conjunction with Recreation Division) during designated hours and when Pima County Staff is present
- Continue to collect fees for use of Rifle / Pistol Range per established fee schedule

Archery Range

- Continue to operate Archery Range (in conjunction with Recreation Division) during designated hours with collection of user fee per established fee schedule

Special Events

- Adopt and implement system for reviewing proposals for in-park events (i.e. bicycle, running, other events), for approving appropriate events, and for coordinating events with Pima County Sheriff's Department and/or other Pima County departments

Hunting

- Continue to allow archery hunting in Park (For deer and javelina) during designated seasons and in accordance with rules established by the Arizona Game and Fish Department

Law Enforcement & Emergency Response: Planned Actions

Law Enforcement

- Continue Law Enforcement in Park by Pima County Sheriff Department's Parks Enforcement / Search & Rescue Unit

Fire and Emergency Response

- Continue fire protection and emergency response in Park by Drexel Heights Fire District, Three-Points Fire District, and Northwest Fire District

Fire Hazzard Reduction

- Continue existing program(s) to remove invasive, non-native species with high potential to support wildland fires
- Implement "Fire-Wise" fire risk reduction actions in vicinity of public use areas, as appropriate

Leased Facilities: Planned Actions

- Collaborate with Pima County Department of Economic Development and Tourism, the Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum (ASDM), and Old Tucson to develop strategic plans for infrastructure improvements, resource conservation, and other issues not addressed in existing lease agreements
- At termination of current lease (or short-term extensions thereof) evaluate highest and best use of site / facilities currently leased by the Sonoran Arthropods Studies Inc.

Park Expansion -Planned Actions

Land Acquisitions and Park Expansion

- Finalize “acquisition” of BLM site through the provisions of the Recreation and Public Purposes Act
- Attempt to acquire existing in-holdings from willing sellers
- Attempt to acquire adjacent lands from willing sellers as identified in the proposed 2008 Open-Space Bond Program
- Incorporate and actively manage new acquisitions as part of Tucson Mountain Park

