

PARKS VISION 2030 – MARICOPA COUNTY REGIONAL PARK SYSTEM PLAN

Continuing the Legacy



Maricopa County
Parks and Recreation Department
www.maricopacountyparks.net

2022

OUTLINE

- About Maricopa County Parks and Trails
- History and Importance of System Park Plans
- Maricopa County – Vision 2030
- **Parks Vision 2030 Overview**
- Outreach Efforts
- Trends & Benchmarking
- Key Findings, Recommendations and Goals
- Next Steps





Maricopa County
Parks and Recreation Department



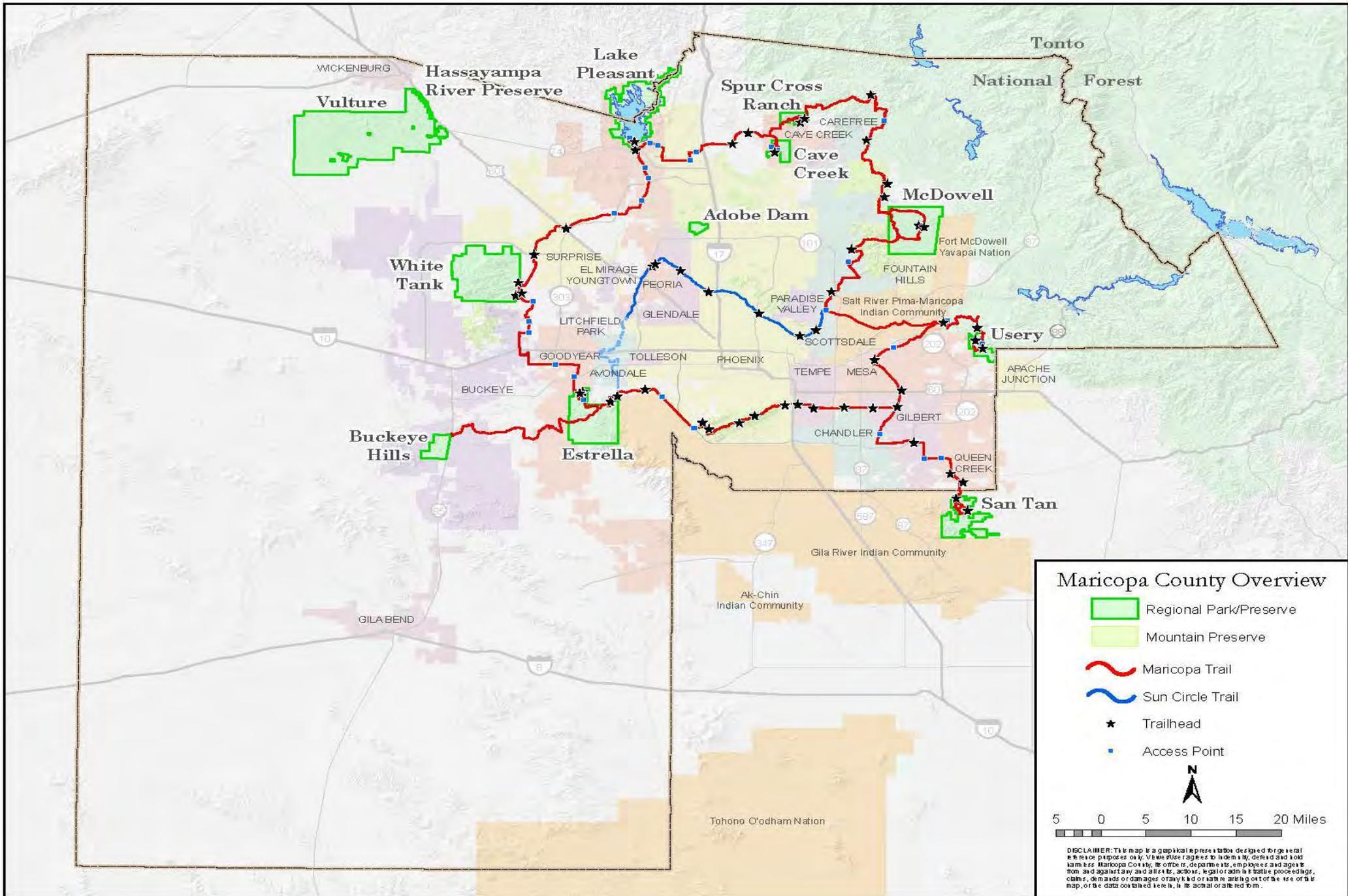
One of the largest regional park systems in the country with ~120,000 acres.

12 regional parks including:

- mountain parks
- **the region's largest lake**
- conservation areas
- education center
- major concession areas
- a new regional park under development

Outdoor recreation opportunities:

- campgrounds
- nature centers
- fishing and boating
- hundreds of miles of trails
- wildlife viewing
- and much more!



Maricopa County Overview

- Regional Park/Preserve
- Mountain Preserve
- Maricopa Trail
- Sun Circle Trail
- Trailhead
- Access Point



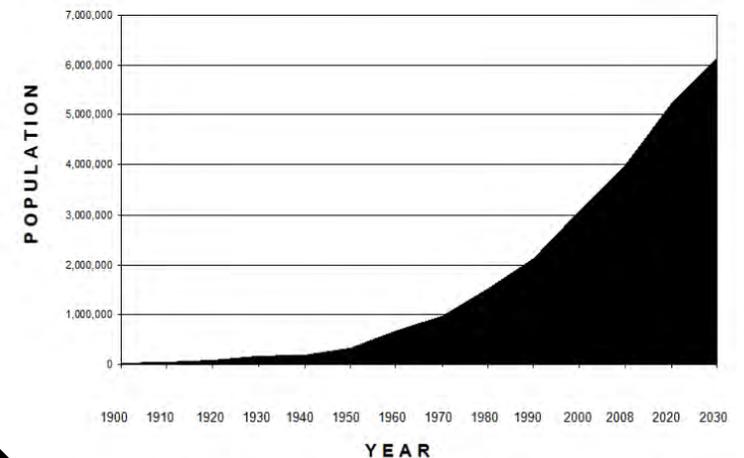
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System Master Plan History

- **1965 Maricopa County Regional Parks System Plan**
 - 1953 – First large regional park Estrella Mountain
 - 1965 – First regional park system plan adopted
 - Focus on large, unspoiled mountain preserves
 - Retreat from urban areas
 - Activities passive in nature
 - Recreation & Public Purposes (R&PP) Act of 1926



Figure 2 – Maricopa County Population Trends



2009 Strategic Systems Master Plan

- **2009 Strategic Systems Master Plan**

- Internal operations including operations, maintenance and finances
- Community needs and programs
- Assessment of land and facilities
- Implementation strategies were defined

- **Maricopa County Comprehensive Plan Vision 2030**



2009 – MISSION & VISION



VISION: Our vision is to connect people with nature through regional parks, trails and programs, inspire an appreciation for the Sonoran desert beauty and natural open spaces, and create life-long positive memories.

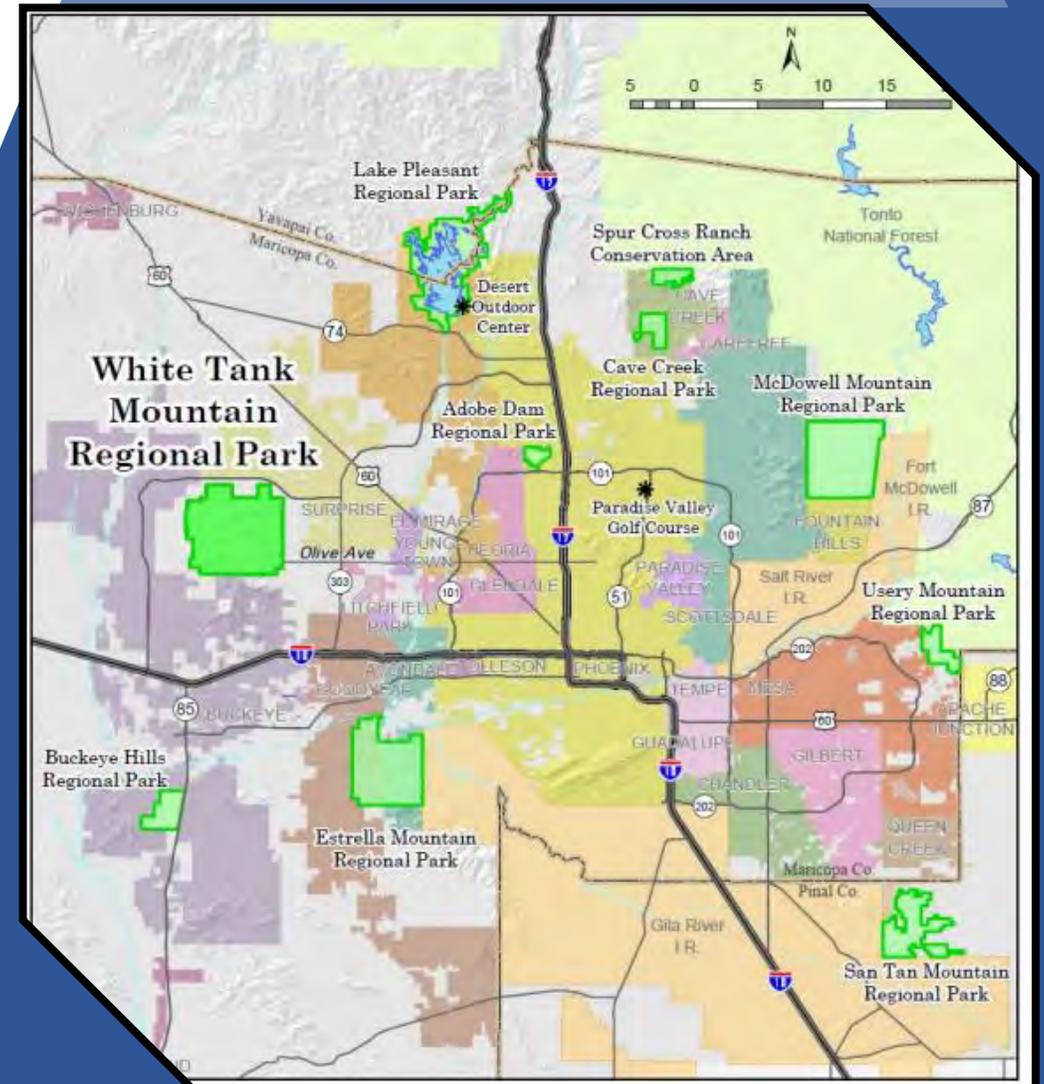


MISSION: Our mission, through responsible stewardship, is to provide the quality parks, trails, programs, services and experiences that energize visitors and create life-long users and advocates.

PARKS VISION 2030

STRATEGIC SYSTEMS MASTER PLAN

- Focus on a larger regional system
- 10-to-50-year horizon
- Addresses growth, development pressures
- Identifies opportunities for new parkland, buffers to existing parks, expanded partnerships
- Address regional scale conservation measures to sustain a system of connected landscapes - *"Continue the Legacy"*





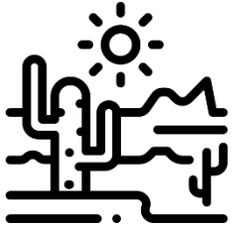
Vision

Maricopa County Park System Vision Statement

Dedicated to preserving a connected system of exceptional open spaces for future generations

PARKS VISION 2030

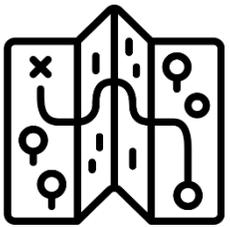
IMPORTANCE OF A PARK SYSTEM MASTER PLAN



Protects and Conserves
High Quality Natural
Desert Places



Promotes Transparency,
Engagement and
Partnerships



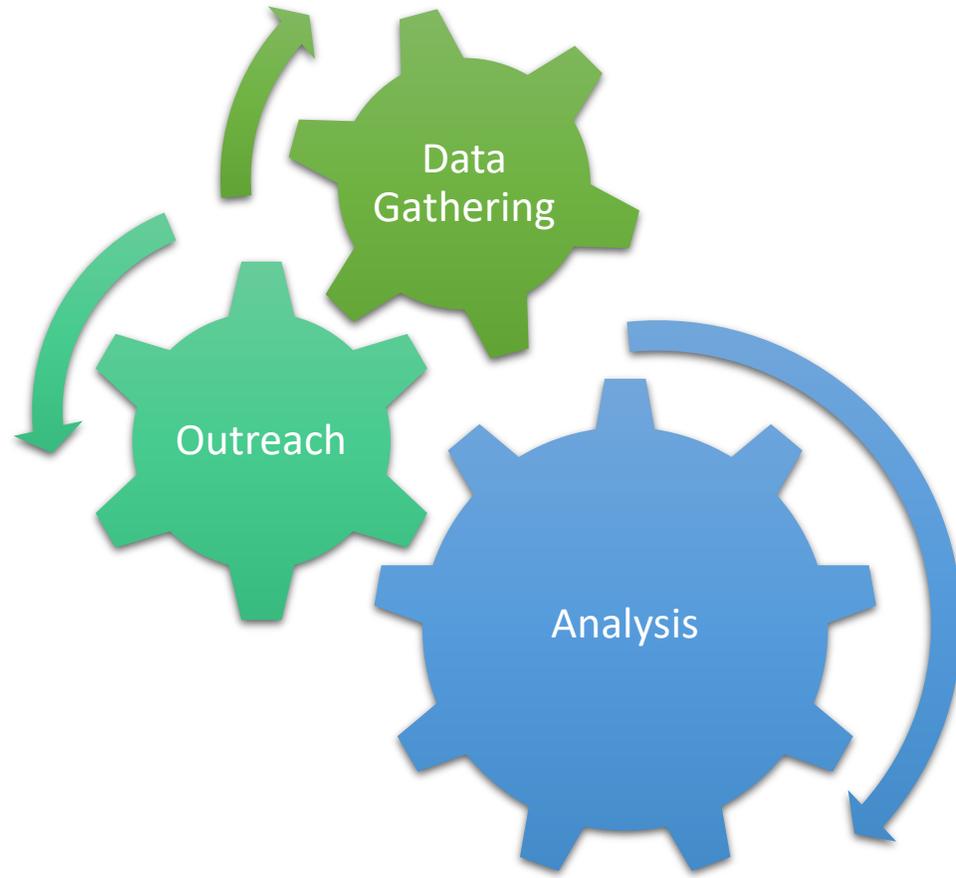
Connects People and
Nature Through
Outdoor Recreation
Opportunities

GREAT PARK SYSTEMS...

- Value to community - natural and cultural heritage
- Recreational benefits and opportunities health and wellness
- Economic opportunities
- Are guided by a compelling vision



PARKS VISION 2030 PLANNING PROCESS



2019

Park Visitor Study
Economic Impact Study
Staff and Volunteer SWOT
Analysis

2020

On-hold due to pandemic
Executive Team

2021

Stakeholders
Executive Team
Staff
Public

2022

Stakeholder/Executive
Preparing Draft Plan

REASONS FOR VISITING

Maricopa County Park visitors rank their Satisfaction with Parks as "Extremely High".

TOP FIVE REASONS



1. Observe the scenic beauty



2. Enjoy physical exercise



3. Experience the open space

TOP FIVE REASONS



4. Improve my physical health



5. Relax

IMPORTANCE AND PERFORMANCE OF FACILITIES



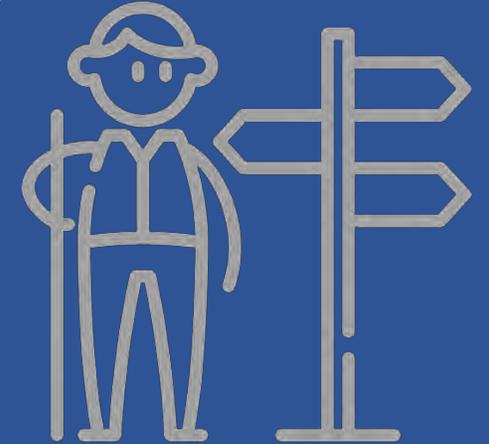
FACILITIES - Importance

1. trails
2. trail signs
3. restrooms
4. parking availability
5. directional signs



FACILITIES - Performance

1. boat ramps
2. nature/visitor center
3. parking availability
4. primary trails
5. park campsites



More than 75% of Maricopa County Park visitors agree or strongly agree more regional parks are needed.

2019 ECONOMIC IMPACT STUDY



For every
\$1 spent
in the
parks

There is a
regional
economic
benefit of \$4.85



Staff SWOT Analysis Workshop

Strengths

- Natural resources and
- Location
- Staff and volunteers

Weaknesses

- Limited law enforcement
- Budgets and funding
- Aging infrastructure



PLAN ELEMENTS

Balancing People and Place

PEOPLE



PLACE



**COMMUNITY
HEALTH AND
WELL-BEING**



**PRESERVING
REGIONAL
NATURAL
HERITAGE**



**QUALITY OF
LIFE, AND THE
NEW ECONOMY**

**QUALITY
REGIONAL
SYSTEM OF
PARKS, OPEN
SPACES, AND
TRAILS**



**SUSTAINING
AND
MAINTAINING
PARK
RESOURCES**



**EXCEPTIONAL
VISITOR
EXPERIENCES**



**CONNECTED
LANDSCAPES
AND TRAILS**

2020 Survey Attitudes and Opinions About Environmental Issues in Arizona

- 98% of Arizona voters indicated that **“parks, preserves, forests and open spaces”** are important.
- 87% of Arizona voters indicated that environmental issues facing Arizona are either *“very serious”* or *“serious”* – up from 81% in 2017.



ASU Morrison Institute
for Public Policy
Arizona State University



NINA MASON PULLIAM
CHARITABLE TRUST

The Arizona We Want: The Decade Ahead

Insights from the 2020 Gallup Arizona Survey

- 92% of Arizonans think it's important to **preserve and protect Arizona's rivers, natural areas, and wildlife.***
- 82% think it's important to protect and expand open spaces for parks and recreation.*
- 75% think it's important to reduce the heat island in our urban areas by planting trees and creating cooler outdoor walkways.



GALLUP®

The Arizona We Want: The Decade Ahead

Insights from the 2020 Gallup Arizona Survey
& An Action Agenda for Arizona's Future

Maricopa County Parks and Open Space Stakeholders

August 2, 2021

Presented by: Ian Dowdy, AICP

Director, Strategic Data Initiatives

* The Arizona We Want: The Decade Ahead, 2021, Center for the Future of Arizona, page 51

** The Arizona We Want: The Decade Ahead, 2021, Center for the Future of Arizona, page 50

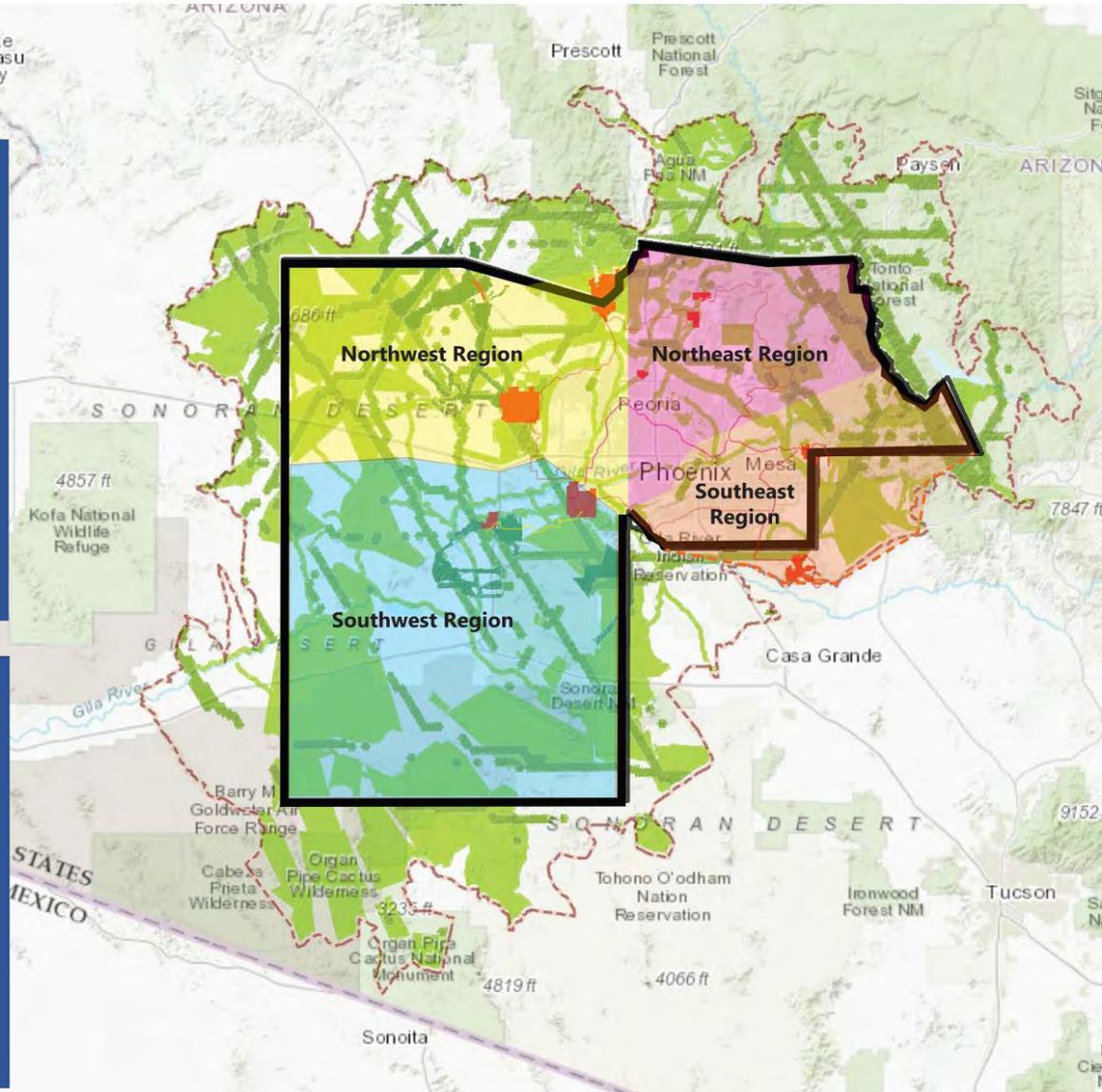
2021 - STAKEHOLDER FOCUS GROUPS BY REGION

Northwest Region

Cities	Agencies/Org.
Wickenburg	White Tank Mtn Conservancy
Surprise	BLM
Peoria	USFS
Glendale	BOR
El Mirage	CAP
Youngtown	AGFD
Buckeye	State Land

Southwest Region

Cities	Agencies/Org.
Buckeye	Gila River Indian Community
Goodyear	NPS
Avondale	BLM
Litchfield Park	AGFD
Gila Bend	State Land
Tolleson	



Northeast Region

Cities	Agencies/Org.
Phoenix	Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation
Carefree	Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community
Cave Creek	Yavapai County
Fountain Hills	McDowell Sonoran Conservancy
Scottsdale	USFS
Guadalupe	BOR
Paradise Valley	CAP
	SRP
	AGFD
	State Land

Southeast Region

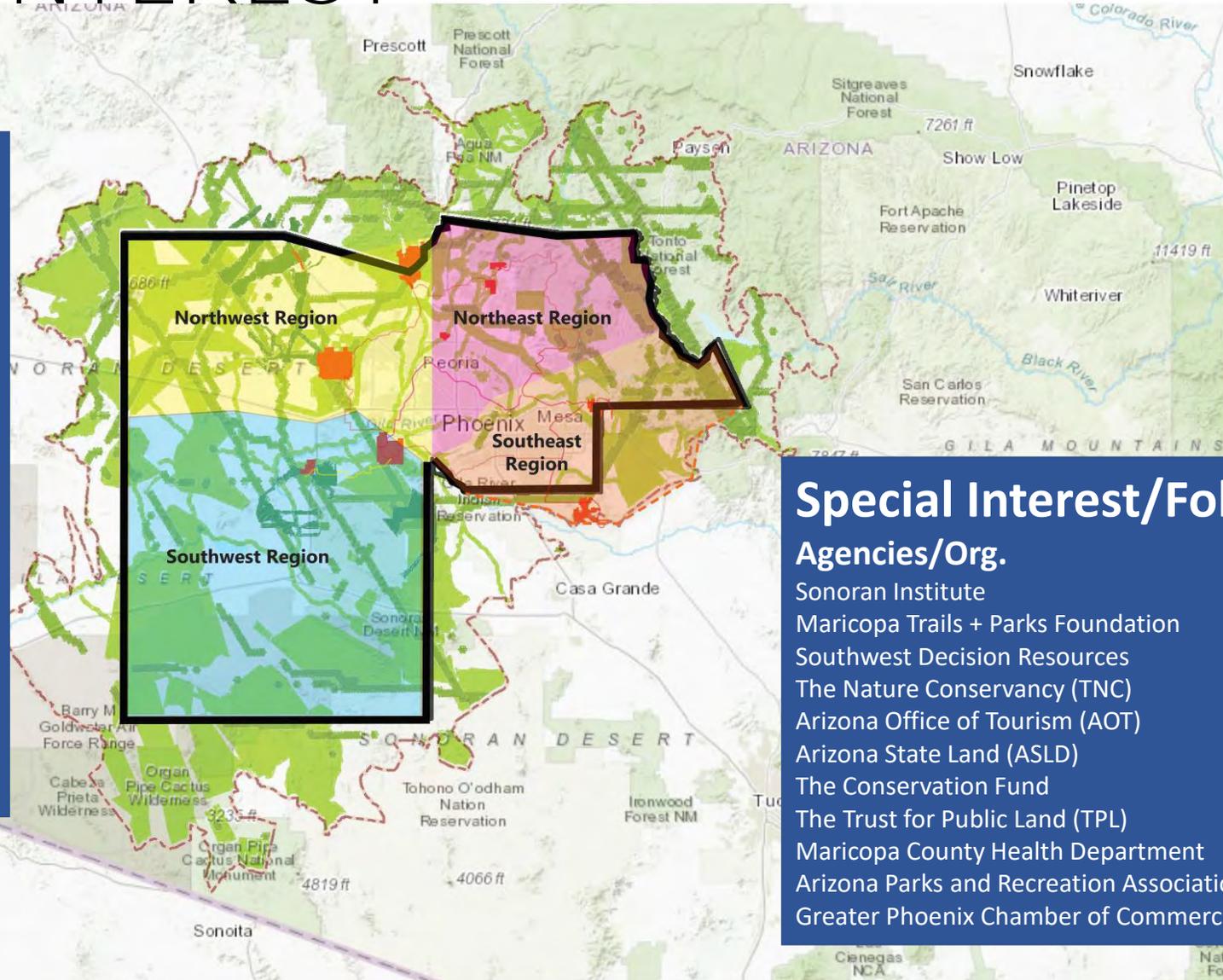
Cities	Agencies/Org.
Phoenix	Pinal County
Mesa	Gila River Indian Community
Gilbert	USFS
Queen Creek	BOR
Apache Junction	CAP
Tempe	SRP
Chandler	AGFD
	State Land

2021 STAKEHOLDER - REGIONWIDE AND SPECIAL INTEREST

Regionwide

Agencies/Org.

Central Arizona Conservation Alliance
Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT)
Arizona State Parks and Trails (ASPT)
Maricopa County Planning & Development
Central Arizona Project (CAP)
AZ Alliance for Livable Communities
Maricopa County Department of Transportation (MCDOT)
Flood Control District of Maricopa County
Arizona Public Service (APS)
Maricopa Trails + Parks Foundation
Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG)
Arizona State Land Department (ASLD)
Arizona State University (ASU)
Arizona Planning Association (AZ APA)
Bureau of Reclamation (BOR)
Arizona Game & Fish Department (AGFD)
National Audubon Society



Special Interest/Follow-up

Agencies/Org.

Sonoran Institute
Maricopa Trails + Parks Foundation
Southwest Decision Resources
The Nature Conservancy (TNC)
Arizona Office of Tourism (AOT)
Arizona State Land (ASLD)
The Conservation Fund
The Trust for Public Land (TPL)
Maricopa County Health Department
Arizona Parks and Recreation Association (APRA)
Greater Phoenix Chamber of Commerce

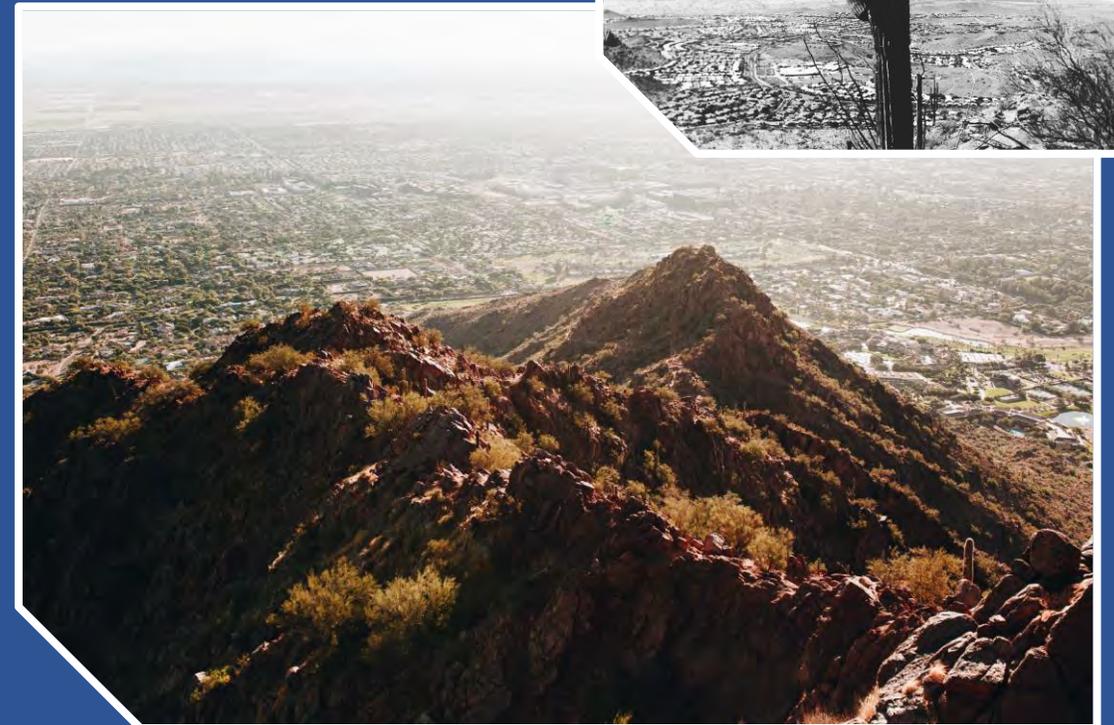
Emerging Themes From the Focus Groups

1. Improving Existing Regional Parks

- Trail Connections to Regional Parks
- Edge pressures on regional parks and open space
- Additional Access Points

2. Responding to Population Growth and Increased Visitation

- Future Regional Park Areas for Expansion
- Identifying/Acquiring Lands for Future Regional Open Space
- Epic Outdoor Adventures



Emerging Themes From the Focus Groups

3. Improving Regional Connectivity for Wildlife and People

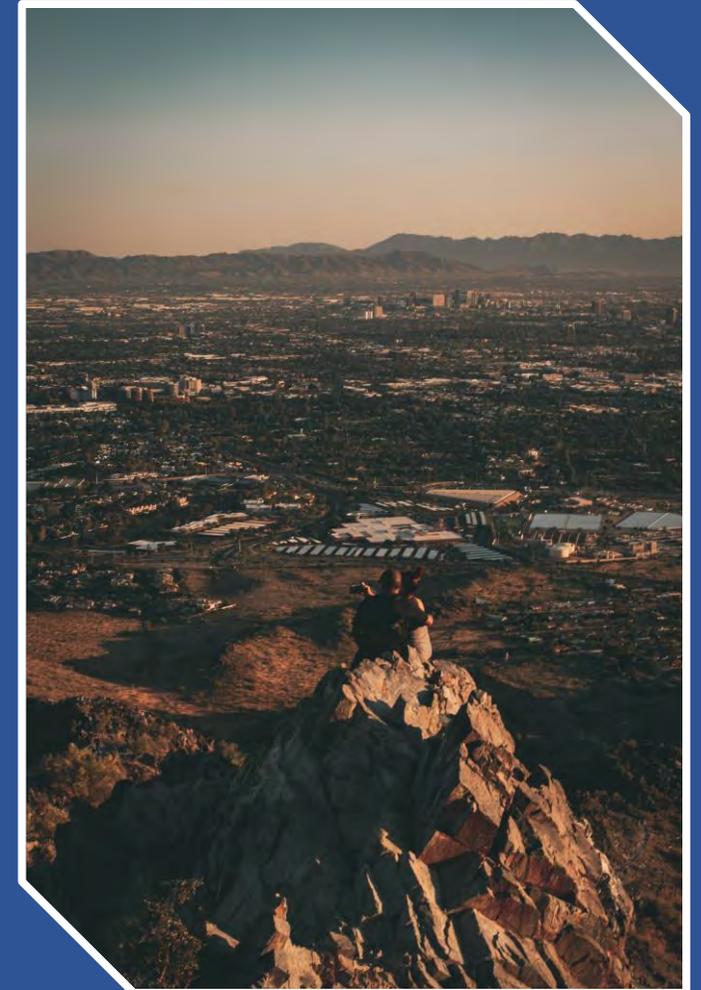
- Regional Recreation Connectivity
- Wildlife Connectivity
- Trails throughout the Region
- Maricopa Trail
- River Corridors



Emerging Themes From the Focus Groups

4. Addressing Priority Concerns & Challenges

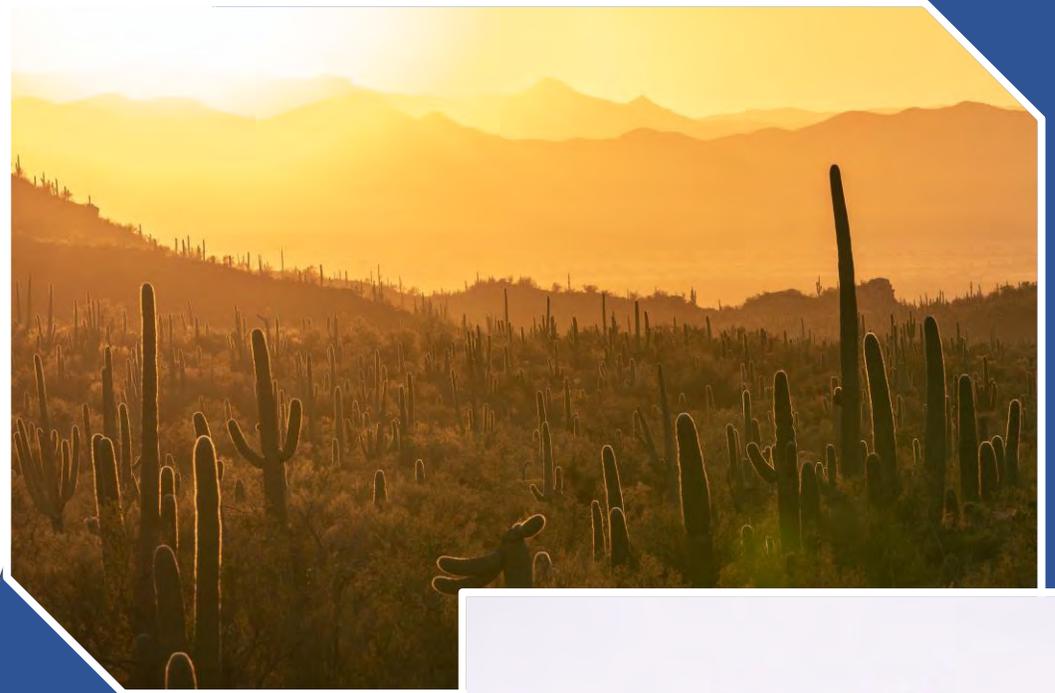
- Urban Interface Areas
- Increased Use
- Organization Resources
- Development Impacts
- Land Ownership
- Priorities of Organization Missions
- Environmental Stewardship and Public Knowledge on Conservation
- Community Preferences
- Inclusion and Equity
- Funding



Emerging Themes From the Focus Groups

5. Improving Communication, Collaboration and Coordination

- Working Group Development on Partnerships & Funding
- Focus on Community Health and Well-being
- Creating Mechanism to Sustain a System of Parks, Trails and Open Spaces



Outreach Feedback Form Results

Ranking Major Focus Group Themes

5. How important are the major themes from the focus groups to MCPRD on a scale of 1 (not important) to 5 (very important)	Executive	Stakeholder	Staff	TOTAL	TOTAL %
Wildlife Connectivity	4.61	4.53	4.47	4.54	90.7%
Identifying/Acquiring Lands for Protection, including park buffers	4.61	4.47	4.18	4.42	88.4%
Improvements to Existing Regional Parks	4.00	4.05	4.4	4.15	83.0%
Future Areas of Expansion of Regional Parks	4.50	4.25	3.7	4.15	83.0%
Developing a regional work group dedicated to park and recreation partnerships and funding	4.16	4.38	3.8	4.11	82.3%
Infill/River Corridors	4.22	4.05	3.73	4.00	80.0%
Trails in Existing Parks	3.89	3.87	4	3.92	78.4%
Regional Recreation Connectivity	4.05	4.13	3.3	3.83	76.5%
Maricopa Trail	4.11	3.85	3.45	3.80	76.1%
Trail Connections to Regional Parks	3.67	4.18	3.38	3.74	74.9%
Additional Access Points at Parks	2.94	3.49	3.15	3.19	63.9%

PUBLIC OUTREACH

- Flyers in Parks
- Ads on Social Media (Facebook, Nextdoor)
- Stakeholder networks
- Annual pass holders
- Website
- Contact List
- About the Project Video
- Virtual Public Meetings

PARKS VISION 2030

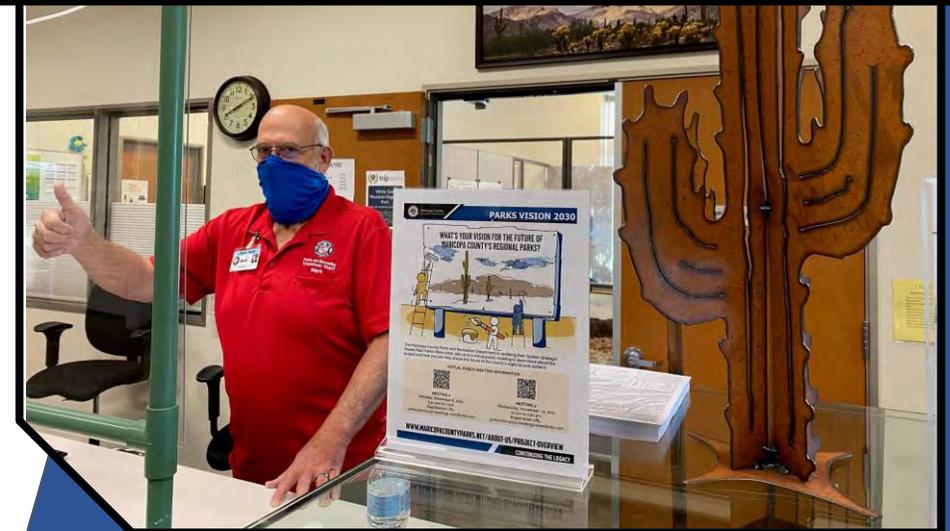
**STRATEGIC SYSTEM
MASTER PLAN UPDATE**

Continuing the Legacy

Public Meetings
November 8 and 10, 2021

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Miley, ¿quieres que haga una pregunta y luego seguida de la siguiente



PUBLIC OUTREACH FEEDBACK FORM

- Open from November 8, 2021 - December 31, 2021
 - 1,400 responses to English survey
 - 20 responses to Spanish survey
 - **TOTAL = 1,420 Responses**
- Public Contact List
 - 190 – SurveyMonkey Sign Up Form on Website
 - 168 – Public Meeting Registration
 - 473 – Public Outreach Feedback Form
 - **TOTAL = 831 Public Contact List**



Maricopa County
Parks and Recreation Department

Parks Vision 2030 Public Outreach

Introduction

The Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Department is seeking the community's input to help guide priorities for the parks system as part of the **Parks Vision 2030** plan.

This plan will outline the long-range vision for the park system.

The feedback form should take less than 15 minutes to complete.

At the end of the form you will be given the option to enter into a **drawing for five Maricopa County Regional Park day-use entry passes**.

Parks Vision 2030 Public Outreach Feedback Form

93.4% agree that *Access to regional parks, natural areas, and trails is important to my health and well-being.*

95.5% agree that *Wildlife corridors and open space are important to protect for the health of the ecosystem now and in the future.*

86.4% agree that *Restoration of the river corridors throughout metropolitan Phoenix is important to provide increased public access to nature.*

92.9% agree that *Natural resource conservation efforts to protect native plants and animals throughout the park system and Maricopa County is important.*

87.8% agree that *Increased funding to provide for expanded regional park, recreation, trail, and open space opportunities is important*

How would you allocate \$100 to support the Maricopa County Parks?

Maintain

Maintain existing parks, open spaces and trails – **\$32**

Protect

Acquire and protect new open space - **\$22**

Restore

Restore/protect river and wildlife corridors - **\$21**

Develop

Develop new regional parks- **\$14**

Connect

Expand outdoor recreation programs and nature-based education - **\$11**



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