Parks Vision 2030 – Fall 2021 Park Planning Internship

Maricopa County is home to one of the largest regional parks systems in the nation with over 120,000 acres of open space parks that include hundreds of miles of trails, campgrounds, nature centers and the Desert Outdoor Environmental Learning Center at Lake Pleasant.

Currently, there are 12 regional parks in the system which were visited by over 2.4 million people in 2018. Whether you're planning on hiking along a barrier-free trail, enjoying the scenic Sonoran Desert views on horseback, or peddling rigorously up a trail on a mountain bike, the parks offer a variety of opportunities for all types of users, ages and comfort levels. Best of all, Maricopa County's regional parks are all within a 45-minute drive from downtown Phoenix! Our pristine Sonoran Desert park system includes the following parks and trails:

- Adobe Dam Regional Park
- Buckeye Hills Regional Park
- Cave Creek Regional Park
- Desert Outdoor Center
- Estrella Mountain Regional Park
- Hassayampa River Preserve
- Lake Pleasant Regional Park
- McDowell Mountain Regional Park
- San Tan Mountain Regional Park
- Spur Cross Ranch Conservation Area
- Usery Mountain Regional Park
- Vulture Mountains Recreation Area
- White Tank Mountain Regional Park
- Maricopa and Sun Circle Trail

**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

The Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Department (MCPRD) is in the process of developing the **Strategic Systems Master Plan: Parks Vision 2030**. The purpose is to update the 2009 Strategic System Master Plan. This plan will include an assessment of the entire park system, including the county regional parks and trails as well as looking beyond park borders. The plan will identify opportunities to leverage success through partnerships to protect priority areas and enhance regional connectivity for people and wildlife.

The **Strategic Systems Master Plan: Parks Vision 2030** will reflect the current park system, identify current community needs and concerns, review system-wide best practices, forecast future needs, and identify recreational trends that will continue to elevate the park system.

The guiding principles of the plan include:

- Community Health and Well-Being
- Quality of Life and the New Economy
- Exceptional Visitor Experiences
- Preserving Regional Natural Heritage
- Sustaining and Maintaining Park Resources
- Connected Landscapes and Trails
This plan will outline the long-range vision for the park system including 10, 20, and 50 years into the future, for both the public’s enjoyment and the long-term protection of natural and cultural resources.

**Tasks of Park Planning Intern (Interns may be assigned to one or multiple tasks depending on interest and expertise of the individual):**

1. Conducts research related to parks, open space, and trails, to support the development of Maricopa County’s Parks Vision 2030 plan;

2. Assists with researching and writing the benchmarking portion of project by comparing various statistics from other county park systems in the country to Maricopa County;

3. Reviews associated planning documents from various cities and towns and other planning organizations in Maricopa County for relevancy and opportunities relating to the Parks Vision 2030 plan;

4. Prepares presentation slides relating to research;

5. Assists with planning and technical support for meetings, in particular with stakeholders and the public;

6. Reviews previous recordings and documents associated with the Parks Vision 2030 project as training;

7. Meets weekly or bi-weekly with the MCPRD Park and Open Space Planner;

8. Coordinates and communicates with MCPRD staff and consultants to provide information and present findings relating to internship research; and

9. Assists with other planning-related duties for the Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Department, as needed.

**Organization:** Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Department (MCPRD)

**Website:** [https://www.maricopacountyparks.net/](https://www.maricopacountyparks.net/)

**Type of Internship:** Unpaid internship, course credit encouraged, mostly remote position with 1-3 possible in-person meetings.

**Time Commitment:** Approximately 10-12 hours a week. The internship is expected to last approximately 12-15 weeks (credit can be earned for the internship) beginning in September 2021. Timeframes can be condensed to fit a compressed schedule.

Please submit your resume and a statement or letter expressing your interest to Eileen Baden, Park and Open Space Planner at Eileen.Baden@maricopa.gov by August 30th, 2021.