

From Dana Yost: Arizona Game and Fish Department, Assistant Director, 3-8-07 in response to public inquiries subsequent to the meeting:

"The Department was encouraged by the show of support for the Arizona Game and Fish Department involvement in an archery facility on the west side of Usery Mountain Road. The Arizona Game and Fish Department is committed to the development of an archery facility on the 370 acre site of what is now Maricopa County controlled BLM property adjacent to the Usery Mountain Shooting Range to provide for the continuation of archery practice fields in the east Valley with the impending closure of the existing ranges at Usery Mountain Park.

The Arizona Game and Fish Department will be working with Maricopa County to develop a timeline and step-by-step process for the development of archery ranges on the 370 acre property. The Department will bring a plan to the Arizona Game and Fish Commission in the next few months outlining this process. The Commission will have the opportunity to review the proposal and to provide direction to the Department on the proposed plan. The public will also have significant opportunities for input throughout this process.

Thank you for your support of the Arizona Game and Fish Department." (DY, AZ G&FD, AD)

RE: **Future of Archery at Usery Mountain**
Date: March 5, 2007
Time: 7:00 PM to 9:30 PM
Location: Arizona Game and Fish Department - East Mesa Office
 7200 E. University

Attending: Maricopa County Parks
 Usery Mountain Park Manager, Maricopa County
 East District Superintendent
 RJ Cardin, Assistant Parks Director for Maricopa County
 AZ G and F
 Denise Raum, Archery Coordinator, AZ Game and Fish
 Anthony Chavez, Shooting Sports AZ Game and Fish

Audience: Archery community members including representation from:
 Usery Mountain Archery Club (National Field Archery Association, 3d, Field, Hunting)
 Black Canyon Archers (National Field Archery Association)
 Randy; Archery Headquarter Archery retailer and mfr. (Archery Trade Association)
 Papago FITA Archers (Local State, Nationals, International and Olympic archery)
 Arizona Junior and Collegiate Archery (Youth, Collegiate, International and Olympic Archery)
 Arizona State Archery Association (State, National, International and Olympic Archery)
 USA Archery Junior Olympic Archery Development (USA Archery JOAD) Committee
Additional people were in attendance but not names were not known...

Background:

The existing archery ranges at Usery Park are located near the park entry drive. It has a large parking lot, a restroom building, picnic ramadas, practice range canopies, and a variety of archery opportunities. The archery range fenced area is 178 acres.

RJ stated that the Maricopa County Parks department has conducted park "customer surveys" at its parks including Usery on a three year cycle. The MC Parks department has determined from the surveys that a significant number of park users would like a visitor information/welcome centers with gathering spaces such as an amphitheatre. The MC leadership has given extra ordinary support of the welcome centers at five parks including Usery in the form of construction monies. The buildings are envisioned to be 4,000 SF and have information, exhibit/museum space, restrooms (and support spaces) plus exterior spaces. To site the building economically, provide accessibility and to give the facility a nice view, the lower archery practice range was determined to be an excellent location. The construction and subsequent

occupation of the facility will require that the archery ranges to the north and west be permanently closed. Safety zone between the welcome center and archery is a County concern.

The existing archery facility represents a significant capital improvement. The MC Parks leadership also determined that archery is not a major attraction for the park and is not a part of the park's future. The MC Parks staff are not "archery people" and do not promote or plan to grow the archery effort.

The County parks leadership was hopeful that the archery community would support a strategy whereby archery would ultimately leave its existing location and move west of Usery Pass Road or elsewhere. The park is willing to keep the upper practice range (with canopies) and the "burlap" field course, open in some form for a period of time, perhaps two years.

County staff would like to help the archers re-establish themselves elsewhere. Since the County is not in the "archery business" ideally another entity that does support archery would take the lead. The County does have control of 370 acres of BLM property to the west of Usery Pass Road. County staff suggests that with the support of the county top leadership, it might be possible to turn the area over to others to turn into an archery facility.

Anthony Chavez reports that AZ Game and Fish Department is in the business of supporting and growing archery. The AZ G&F archery coordinator is in place to grow archery in Arizona. Archery in all its forms is on the rise beginning with the National Archery in the Schools Program (NASP). It is estimated that 10,000 school children are introduced to archery in NASP in AZ this year. For Archery to grow, archers need a place to learn, practice, train and compete.

An Archery range to the west of Usery Pass could be supported by AZ G&F since it could be an extension of the Rio Salado shooting facility for the all important grant funding process. AZ G&F commissioner support for any effort is essential. Such support would require that the AZ G&F have effective beneficial use of the property, AKA, ownership. Funding is always a challenge.

After lengthy discussion the audience consensus was that:

1. Maricopa County is not going to support Archery in the long term.
2. The 370 acre area could become an archery facility that far exceeds the existing archery ranges including, Indoor facility, youth archery area, Olympic and International practice and tournament area in addition to hunting training, 3d target and field archery.
3. It is essential for the AZ G&F choose to pursue control and development of the 370 acres.
4. The involvement of at least a replacement archery facility AZ G&F is imperative!
5. If Maricopa County and/or AZ G&FD choose not to pursue an archery facility to the west of Usery Pass Road. The existing Archery range should remain as is for as long as the club members can sustain it with minimal park support.

Bob Pian's conclusions: Maricopa County leadership including the Parks Department and AZ G&FD commissioners are encouraged in the strongest terms to cooperate to create a better archery facility than the existing archery ranges.

Questions and answers:

1. How do you know that archery is not worth supporting?...Survey, entry fees and annual pass records.
2. Does the County have money to improve the archery range?...No, the parks receive no tax money. Since the archery ranges are not big money makers, there is no motivation to improve or support them.
3. Why not build somewhere else?...Other areas are remote or take away from an area the park want to keep (ie camping RV area) or don't have utilities or don't have nice views.
4. Can the county or AZ G&F provide a time line?...No.
5. Do we have choice?... if the audience wants to keep the existing ranges with little or now county support the county will consider the wishes.

Arizona Junior and Collegiate Archery

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6. Can the county and AZ G&FD agree on a property lease or deed?...*Hopefully yes.*
7. What can the archery community do to support a new archery range on 370 acres west of Usery Pass Road?...*tell the AZ G&FD and the Maricopa County Supervisors.*

Important AZ G and F representatives contact information:

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Arizona Game and Fish 2007 Commission meeting schedule:

http://www.azgfd.gov/inside_azgfd/meeting_schedule.shtml

Submitted by:

Robert Pian