COUNCIL DECISION REQUEST

SUBJECT: Funding for Tonto Natural Bridge

MEETING DATE: May 7, 2009

PAYSON GOAL: NEW: EXISTING:

ITEM NO.:

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE:

SUBMITTED BY: Debra A Galbraith

AMOUNT BUDGETED: $0.00

SUBMITTAL TO AGENDA
APPROVED BY TOWN MANAGER

EXPENDITURE REQUIRED: $2,620

CONT. FUNDING REQUIRED: $0.00

EXHIBITS (If Applicable, To Be Attached):
Letter from Arizona State Parks

POSSIBLE MOTION

1) I move to help fund the opening of the Tonto Natural Bridge for the weekends of May (4) and June (4) for an amount not to exceed $2,940.

SUMMARY OF THE BASIS FOR POSSIBLE MOTION:

Per the attached letter from the Arizona State Parks, due to the testimony of Payson representatives, the Parks Board has offered to open the Bridge on weekends and for an extended weekend over Memorial Day.

The letter arrived on April 30, so it is not anticipated that the Bridge will be open for the first weekend in May. Therefore, we are requesting direction to fund the opening for 4 weekends in May at $320 each and 4 weekends in June at $320 each. The cost to have the Bridge open for an extended time over the Memorial Day weekend is $700.00

7 weekends @ $320 =	$2,240
Memorial Day =	$ 700
	$ 2,940

PROS:

Will allow for more tourism related revenue in the area during these weekends.

CONS:

PUBLIC INPUT (if any):

BOARD/COMMITTEE/COMMISSION ACTIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS (if any) (give dates and attach minutes):

FUNDING:

Acct:	Budget:	Available:	Expense:	Remaining:
Acct:	Budget:	Available:	Expense:	Remaining:
Acct:	Budget:	Available:	Expense:	Remaining:

BA: _____ Date: _____

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"Managing and conserving natural, cultural, and recreational resources"

Arizona State Parks

April 30, 2009

The Honorable Ken Evans, Mayor
Town of Payson
303 N. Beeline Hwy.
Payson, AZ 85541

Janice K. Brewer
Governor

State Parks Board Members

Chair
Reese Woodling
Tucson

Arlan Colton
Tucson

Tracey Westerhausen
Phoenix

William C. Cordasco
Flagstaff

Larry Landry
Phoenix

William C. Scalzo
Phoenix

Mark Winkleman
State Land Commissioner

Kenneth E. Travous
Executive Director

Arizona State Parks
1300 W. Washington
Phoenix, AZ 85007

Tel & TTY: 602.542.4174
AZStateParks.com

800.285.3703 from
(520 & 928) area codes

General Fax:
602.542.4180

Director's Office Fax:
602.542.4188

Dear Mayor Evans:

As you are well aware Arizona State Parks closed the Tonto Natural Bridge State Park for stabilization of the historic lodge. This closure had a dual purpose: first to eliminate any safety problems involved with the construction project, and to allow State Parks to assign the Tonto rangers to other parks with vacant positions. At its April 3, 2009 meeting the Arizona State Parks Board listened to testimony from various representatives from Payson. The gist of that testimony was "Payson depends on Tonto Natural Bridge State Park to draw visitors to the 'Rim Country' during the important summer tourist season." The Board agreed and directed staff to come up with a plan to "Open Tonto" during the construction period. The following proposal from staff would allow Tonto Natural Bridge to open on weekends and extend days during major holidays. The success of this plan relies on a partnership with the Town of Payson for the funding of seasonal rangers to fill the gaps in our ranger staff.

Conditions for opening Tonto Natural Bridge State Park

1. The contractor and project manager must agree that it is safe to enter the park near the lodge. (This is not a problem for Memorial Day Weekend)

2. The Town of Payson or its partners would provide $700 to open the park for the four days of Memorial Day Weekend (May 22-25).

3. After Memorial Day the Town of Payson may participate by providing funds for seasonal staff at a rate of $11/hr with each weekend needing 32 hours of seasonal help. Total $320 per weekend. Total cost for 10 weekends through the end of June including Memorial Day is $3,900.

4. The Arizona State Parks Board will meet on May 28, 2009 to review this plan and take comment from the public and our partners from the Town of Payson. The Parks Board will also be reviewing Park closures for Fiscal Year 2010 at this meeting.

Because this park will be open under special circumstances the regular park staff will return from their current special duty assignments to operate Tonto. The supplemental seasonal rangers funded by the Town of Payson may be assigned to other parks to fill behind the returning Tonto rangers. The park would be open its regular hours (8:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.) with three full time rangers assisted by park volunteers and any additional volunteers from the town or Chamber of Commerce.

It is my sincere hope that this plan is acceptable and together we can get this important tourist destination open to the public once again. I look forward to your reply so we can move forward in time for Memorial Day Weekend.

Sincerely,

Kenneth E. Travous
Executive Director

KET:dab