



# MEMORANDUM

Date: February 27, 2023

To: The Honorable Chair and Members  
Pima County Board of Supervisors

From: Jan Leshor   
County Administrator

Re: **Update on Events at Rillito Regional Park**

During Call to the Public at the February 7, 2023 Board of Supervisors Meeting, two individuals commented on events at Rillito Regional Park (RRP) that included amplified music. Supervisor Scott requested a report on such events. The attached memorandum from our Natural Resources, Parks and Recreation (NPRP) Director provides details on events at RRP from 2018 to 2023.

During this time period, the number of events that used a public address system or amplified music ranged from 7 to 16 events annually. Summarized in the report is the approach for issuance of NPRP special use permits for events, referral to the City for any additional requirements or permits for large events, and sound mitigation measures that are applied including:

- Inclusion of conditions on special event permits for events with public address systems or amplified music;
- Financial disincentives for events that continue live music after 9:30 PM;
- Orientation of the performance stage in a westerly direction away from the majority of area residential properties whenever possible;
- NRPR briefing with event organizers, inspection of event set up and spot checks during the event; and
- Prohibiting non-compliant event organizers from future use of the facility.

RRP a large central-located regional park that is desirable for use by a wide variety of community residents and event operators. Understanding this, NRPR continually works to balance the hosting of a broad range of arts, cultural, sports and entertainment activities with the need to minimize impacts to the surrounding residential and business communities.

JKL/dym

Attachment

c: Carmine DeBonis, Jr., Deputy County Administrator  
Francisco Garcia, MD, MPH, Deputy County Administrator & Chief Medical Officer  
Steve Holmes, Deputy County Administrator  
Victor Pereira, Director, Natural Resources Parks and Recreation

FEB 27 23 AM 09:40 PCLK OF RD

A handwritten signature or set of initials, possibly "JL", is written in dark ink over the stamp.



**Re: Special Events at Rillito Regional Park (D1)**

The purpose of this memo is to provide information regarding inquiries you have received about events at Rillito Regional Park from the February 7, 2023, Pima County Board of Supervisors' meeting.

## BACKGROUND

Rillito Park is a 54-acre Regional Park, located at 4502 N. First Avenue, Tucson, AZ. It is the birthplace of Quarter Horse racing (1953) and has been Tucson and Pima County's premiere location for horse racing since 1943. Additionally, this site is the location of the Heirloom Farmer's Market, Tucson and Pima County's largest year-round farmers market, and is contiguous with the Pima-County-owned and operated Chuck Huckelberry Loop. It is also the location of 11 rectangular ball fields that are used for field sport games, practices, tournaments, as well as special events, private parties, musical acts, charity walks/runs and other arts and entertainment activities.



Except for the Farmer's Market, which occurs every Sunday morning, all activities are either seasonal, annual, or one-time events. The majority of special events at Rillito are hosted by non-profit organizations and therefore accrue benefit to the non-profits themselves, as well as providing cultural enrichment to the community.

All events are authorized via Special Use Permits issued by the Natural Resources, Parks and Recreation Department. Horse Racing and the Heirloom Farmer's Market operate under Operating Agreements approved by the Pima County Board of Supervisors.

#### **FIVE-YEAR RECAP**

The following represents all approved events at Rillito Regional Park for the last five (5) years:

<b>2018</b>			
<b>DATE</b>	<b>EVENT</b>	<b># ATTENDED</b>	<b>NOTES</b>
10 Feb - 18 Mar	Horse Racing	1-3K daily	Every Sat-Sun; live music
5 May	Sabroso Festival	~6K	Live music
11 Aug	Steelers Football	~350	
8-9 Sep	Ultimate Frisbee Sectionals	~600	
21-23 Sep	Strikers Cup Soccer Tournament	~1.5K	
2-4 Nov	Celtic Festival	~3.5K	Live music
9-12 Nov	CDO Dog Show	~300	PA system
16 Dec	UofA Cancer Center	~500	PA system

<b>2019</b>			
<b>DATE</b>	<b>EVENT</b>	<b># ATTENDED</b>	<b>NOTES</b>
9 Feb – 17 Mar	Horse Racing	1-3K daily	Every Sat-Sun; live music
16-17 Aug	TYFSF (youth football)	~600	
21-23 Sep	Strikers Cup Soccer Tournament	~1.5K	
20 Oct	Bank of America	~500	DJ/music
1-3 Nov	Celtic Festival	~5.5K	Live music
8-11 Nov	CDO Dog Show	~300	PA system

<b>2020</b>			
<b>DATE</b>	<b>EVENT</b>	<b># ATTENDED</b>	<b>NOTES</b>
8 Feb – 22 Mar	Horse Racing	1-3K daily	Every Sat-Sun; live music; <b>season ended 8 Mar due to C-19</b>
6-9 Nov	CDO Dog Show	~300	PA system
7 Nov	Bag of Food Give-A-Way	~300	PA system
7 scheduled events cancelled due to Covid-19			

2021			
DATE	EVENT	# ATTENDED	NOTES
13 Aug	TYFSF (youth football)	~600	
11 Sep	KIIM FM 911 Memorial	~500	PA system
25 Sep	Loop the Loop	~500	DJ/music
25 Sep	Over the Border Concert	~1.2K	Live music
23 Oct	West Coast Concert	~1.3K	Live music
5-7 Nov	Celtic Festival	~4.0K	Live music
12-15 Nov	CDO Dog Show	~300	PA system
22 Nov	Suncrest Pie-Drive	~300	PA system
9-12 Dec	Christmas Laser Light Show	~700	PA system/music
5 scheduled events + Rillito Racing cancelled due to Covid-19 or weather			

2022			
DATE	EVENT	# ATTENDED	NOTES
26 Feb – 3 Apr	Horse Racing	1-3K daily	Every Sat-Sun; live music
7 May	Cystic Fibrosis Walk	~250	DJ/music
24 Sep	Loop the Loop	~750	DJ/music
8 Oct	Veteran's Nam Jam	~1.5K	Live music
15-16 Oct	Lime & Salt Festival	~1.5K	Live music
22-Oct	Leukemia & Lymphoma	~1.0K	DJ/music
4-6 Nov	Celtic Festival	~4.5K	Live music
11-14 Nov	CDO Dog Show	~500	PA system
21 Nov	Suncrest Pie-Drive	~200	PA system
2 scheduled events cancelled due to weather			

2023			
DATE	EVENT	# ATTENDED	NOTES
7 Jan	Run Around Tucson Relay	~450	DJ/Music
4 Feb – 2 Apr	Horse Racing	1-3K daily	Every Sat-Sun; live music
4-Feb	Tie-Dye Run	~200	PA system/music

To summarize:

- CY18: 13 total events over 25 days
  - o Of which 10 events over 18 days utilized a PA system/music
  - o Of which Rillito Racing equates to 6 events/12 days that utilized a PA system/music
- CY19: 11 total events over 25 days
  - o Of which 9 events over 21 days utilized a PA system/music
  - o Of which Rillito Racing equates to 6 events/12 days that utilized a PA system/music

- CY20: 7 total events over 15 days that utilized a PA system/music
  - o Of which Rillito Racing equates to 5 events/10 days that utilized a PA system/music
- CY21: 9 total events over 17 days
  - o Of which 8 events over 16 days utilized a PA system/music
  - o No Rillito Racing for CY 21
- CY22: 16 total events over 30 days that utilized a PA system/music
  - o Of which Rillito Racing equates to 8 events/16 days that utilized a PA system/music

### **IMPACTS TO THE SURROUNDING COMMUNITY**

Because Rillito Regional Park is a county-owned property located within the jurisdictional boundaries of the City of Tucson (CoT), both the CoT and Pima County have an interest in striking a balance between offering arts, cultural/sporting events and activities, with the impact to the surrounding community. Both the county and the city support arts, cultural, and sporting events. All parties recognize that some level of amplified sound is necessary for such events, either solely for public safety and informational purposes, or because amplified sound is integral to the activity itself. Large event operators at Rillito Park are directed to contact the City of Tucson regarding any additional requirements or permits that may be needed for events within city limits, including such items as special event liquor licenses, light curfew extensions, noise variances, tent permits, fire department support and or off-duty police requests.

NRPR reviews all event requests on a content-neutral basis. Therefore, event operators are typically issued a Special Use Permit unless there is a compelling reason to deny the request, such as past failures to comply with the rules and requirements, or public safety concerns.

### **MITIGATION EFFORTS**

Due to community feedback over the past several years, deliberate language has been implemented into NRPR's Special Use Permits for events with any type of music or PA system. For example, the department has introduced escalatory financial disincentives to ensure events which have live music are concluded by 9:30 pm. Originally, all events at Rillito had a 10 p.m. noise ordinance curfew. Additionally, to the max extent possible, all events that require a stage will position the stage towards the prevailing westerly direction. The majority of residential properties are north, east and south of Rillito Regional Park. Lastly, the department Program Manager personally briefs each Organizer prior to the event, performs a visual inspection during the set-up process and accomplishes spot checks during the actual events to ensure all Organizations are complying with the special use permit. Violators will not be issued another special use permit for Rillito Regional Park.

c: Carmine DeBonis Jr., Deputy County Administrator