

SAN ANTONIO RIVER BASIN WITHIN BEXAR COUNTY

THE URBAN WATERS FEDERAL PARTNERSHIP

ABOUT THE URBAN WATERS FEDERAL PARTNERSHIP

The San Antonio River Basin within Bexar County is in the process of being selected as a location for the nation's Urban Waters Federal Partnership (UWFP). This partnership will reconnect urban communities, particularly those that are overburdened or economically distressed, with their waterways by improving coordination among federal agencies and collaborating with community-led revitalization efforts. This partnership further serves to improve our nation's water systems and promote economic, environmental and social benefits. Specifically, the UWFP will:

- Break down federal program silos to promote more efficient and effective use of federal resources through better coordination and targeting of federal investments.
- Recognize and build on local efforts and leadership, by engaging and serving community partners.
- Work with local officials and community-based organizations to leverage area resources and stimulate local economies to create jobs.
- Learn from early and visible victories to fuel long-term action.

Led by these federal agencies and coordinated by the White House Domestic Policy Council and White House Council on Environmental Quality, the Urban Waters Federal Partnership closely aligns with and advances the work of the White House's place-based efforts, including the Partnership for Sustainable Communities, to revitalize communities, create jobs and improve the quality of life in cities and towns across the nation.

For more information, visit www.urbanwaters.gov

ABOUT THE SAN ANTONIO PARTNERSHIP

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development will co-chair this location. There are a number of federal agencies that are engaged in projects with local officials and community members such as the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Bureau of Reclamation, Economic Development Administration, Health and Human Services, Small Business Administration, and the General Services Administration (GSA). Local stakeholders are looking forward to the partnership's assistance in providing additional nexus to other federal agencies that can support existing efforts in a more robust way and providing linkages where possible.

WHAT'S HAPPENING NOW

In an effort to improve public access to waterways, improve water quality, and restore the ecosystem, the Partnership is engaged in a number of joint federal/local projects:

San Pedro Creek Restoration

A portion of the San Pedro Creek runs through downtown San Antonio. Flood prevention efforts from the 1960's and 70's severely reduced the community's traditional connection to the creek. Bexar County funded a preliminary study in 2012 to develop concepts for restoring the environmental conditions of the creek. Creek restoration will provide increased opportunities for people to enjoy the waterway and be catalysts for economic development. In 2014, Bexar County entered into an agreement with the San Antonio River Authority to begin the design phase of the restoration. Design is expected to be completed and construction will begin in 2016. The GSA has selected a site at the banks of the San Pedro Creek for a new Federal Courthouse for the Western District of Texas.

ABOUT THE COMMUNITY AND THE SAN ANTONIO RIVER BASIN

The San Antonio River Basin extends through 15 counties in south Texas. The San Antonio River, with its headwaters in Bexar County, is the basin's major river flowing 240 miles to San Antonio Bay and the Gulf of Mexico. San Antonio's rivers and creeks have been of great importance to those who live in the region throughout history, from pre-colonial times, to the founding of the San Antonio Missions, to the Riverwalk today. The San Antonio community has made significant investments to maintain the connection to its waterways.

Olmos Basin Ecosystem Restoration

This project intends to restore a three mile segment of the Olmos Creek, prevent floatable debris from entering the creek and address the continual flooding of U.S. Highway 281 over the creek. This effort also responds to the San Antonio North Central Community plan to restore natural beauty and habitat of Olmos Basin Park. The project combines water quality improvements and ecosystem restoration to create a more natural habitat. The Army Corps of Engineers agreed in 2014 to fund the restoration project.

Eastside Promise Zone and Promise/Choice Neighborhood

San Antonio's near east side is a historically disadvantaged and minority community. The area has been the focus of several place-based grants and designations increasing the potential for overlapping federal and local funding to promote comprehensive community development. The Eastside area is connected to the City's Salado Creek Greenway trail system through Menger Creek. In an effort to increase neighborhood connections to green spaces the City of San Antonio and Bexar County have committed funds to a project that will improve drainage, reduce the 100-year flood zone, and provide park and trail improvements around Menger creek.

WHAT'S NEXT

Westside Creeks Restoration

Located on the near west side of central San Antonio and in close proximity to three San Antonio Housing Authority properties, the Alazán, Apache, and Martinez creeks, have been the focus of a community-based planning effort since 2008 to develop concepts for restoring the environmental condition of the creeks. In 2011, the Army Corps of

Engineers chose the creeks as one of five national pilot studies to test a new planning paradigm in ecosystem restoration feasibility studies. This report was completed in 2014. Hike and bike trails are planned for the creeks; a larger restoration effort would work in conjunction with these projects and provide spaces for physical activity and recreation.

Brackish Groundwater Desalination

The San Antonio Water System is developing a brackish groundwater desalination project that will diversify the region's water supplies. An additional source of water will help preserve endangered species within the Edwards Aquifer, the primary source of water for over two million people; as well as its natural springs.

San Antonio Missions – World Heritage

The five eighteenth century Spanish colonial mission complexes along the San Antonio River are in consideration for World Heritage Site designation by the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization. Designation as a World Heritage site would increase the areas visibility and create a substantial economic impact. The multi-organization group seeking the designation (Bexar County, the National Park Service, the San Antonio Conservation Society, and the San Antonio River Authority) is working on a feasibility study to identify opportunities for connecting sites and routes associated with El Camino Real de los Tejas National Historic Trail to the San Antonio Mission National Historical Park to provide a living resource with enhanced historic and recreation opportunities.

THE URBAN WATERS FEDERAL PARTNERSHIP

The partnership includes:

Department of Agriculture, Department of Army (U.S. AR Corps of Engineers), Department of Commerce (Economic Development Administration) National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Corporation for National and Community Services, Department of Education, Department of Energy, Environmental Protection Agency, Department of Health and Human Services (U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences), Department of Housing and Urban Development, Department of the Interior Department of Transportation, Geological Survey, National Parks Service and the Alamo Federal Executive Board.

For more information on the San Antonio River Basin Urban Waters Federal Partnership, please contact the lead agency representatives:

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