



**Minutes of the
Westside Creeks Restoration Oversight Committee (WCROC) Meeting
August 14, 2012**

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 pm in the San Antonio River Authority's Boardroom, 100 East Guenther Street, San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas.

Committee Members Present:

Robert Ramirez, Co-Chair	Olga Lizcano, Co-Chair
Abigail Kinnison, Beacon Hill N.A.	Theodore Ozuna, Donaldson Terrace NA
Abel Ramirez, San Antonio Wheelman	Ray Flores, Westside Development Corporation
Roberto Hinkson, San Antonio Conservation Society	

Elected Officials Present:

Mr. Roberto G. Rodriguez, San Antonio River Authority Board Director, District 2

Staff and Members of the Public Present:

Suzanne Scott, SARA	Rudy R. Farias, SARA
Danny Allen, USACE	Brian Mast, SARA
Rosemary Geyer	Jerry Geyer
Betty Bueché, Bexar County.	John Espinoza, Brown & Gay Engineering
Dr. Garri Dryden	David Parkhill, URS
Jason Nelson, AECOM	Jeff Tyler, SARA
D. Stallworth, Bexar County	Gloria Rivera Rodriguez, SARA
Kathleen Tronehard	Steven Evans, Linda Pace Foundation
Steven Caparo, USACE	William Long
Brady Haynes, SARA	Charlotte Kahl
Caleb Etheridge	

AGENDA ITEM NO. 1: Welcome

San Antonio River Authority Board Director, Roberto G. Rodriguez welcomed and thanked everyone for attending the meeting.

Co-Chairs Robert Ramirez and Olga Lizcano also thanked all attendees and introduced Jeff Tyler, SARA Engineer.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 2: Approval of Minutes for June 12, 2012

Mr. Ramirez presented the minutes to the Committee and asked if there were any corrections. As there were none, a motion was made to approve the minutes as presented. The minutes were approved by consensus.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 3: US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Feasibility Study Update

Danny Allen, USACE presented an update on the Feasibility Study. He explained that the spring bird surveys were complete and that the fall surveys were underway. He also stated that USACE was modeling the creeks to determine the extent of restoration. To maintain the existing surface water elevation, the USACE is modeling an excavated pilot channel along the existing channel to allow for the addition of native grasses and woody vegetation. San Pedro Creek, Alazan Creek, and Martinez Creek pilot channel installation design is complete. Apache Creek is showing a significant rise in flood elevation when the concrete is removed, therefore additional modeling is required and will take longer to formulate.

Mr. Allen explained that the bird surveys would feed into an Avian Index of Biotic Integrity (IBI) model to produce cost benefit projections. He then described the bird habitat findings in each of the creeks and how they compare to other creek findings.

Mr. Ramirez asked about the bird habitat. Once the project is complete, is the goal to bring back the types of birds we had before the original channelization or is it to attract new species? Mr. Allen explained that the plan is always to bring back the original species but there is potential to bring additional species that are unexpected.

Mr. Jerry Geyer, in the audience, asked if there was a way to combine all of the studies and projects together so that the public could see in the future a way to capitalize on all the work that has already been done. He explained that it would help the public advocates to understand how all the plans fit together. Mr. Farias explained that SARA is coordinating the previous studies with the USACE which helped reduce the overall budget for the USACE Feasibility Study.

Mr. Rodriguez asked Mr. Allen if it was possible to plant some trees in the floodplain to help bring some of the bird species. Mr. Allen stated that USACE is looking at ways to maximize plantings on the top or in the pilot project area.

Mr. Ramirez thanked Mr. Allen for his report then recognized additional committee members joining the meeting. He also thanked Abigail Kinnison for coordinating the VIA PRIMO bus preview which was prior to the oversight committee.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 4: Update on San Pedro Creek Preliminary Engineering Report

Rudy Farias provided an update on the San Pedro Creek Preliminary Engineering Report. As reported at the last meeting, Pape-Dawson Engineering and Kelly Munoz Architects formed a joint partnership and were selected as the consultant for the San Pedro Creek project. He explained that SARA hopes to have them under contract by the end of the following week.

He reminded the committee that the project begins at the tunnel inlet and continues south to Alamo St. The total contract cost is not to exceed \$600,000 and the duration of the project is twelve months. The three items being looked at in this report are fatal flaws, cost estimates, and visuals. Renderings will be produced to illustrate the possibilities for restoration.

Mr. Farias explained Bexar County is funding the project and an executive committee will be established. The committee will consist of staff representatives from Bexar County, City of San Antonio, and SARA to assist with oversight and management decisions as the report progresses.

Mr. Ramirez asked to what extent is this study leveraging off of the best practices from the Museum Reach improvements, which is another urban stretch of water. Mr. Farias explained that the cost estimates that SARA developed were based upon the Museum Reach and were incorporated into the project costs. Mr. Ramirez asked if there were any items that were done on the Museum Reach that could be done on San Pedro Creek. Mr. Farias stated having a subcommittee on the Museum Reach worked well. Mr. Farias indicated that there are plans to engage the San Pedro Creek subcommittee.

Mr. Rodriguez asked Mr. Farias to elaborate on the item in the scope of services which states there will be an assessment on threatened and endangered species. Mr. Farias explained that the consultant team would use their experts to identify threatened or endangered species within the project area.

Mr. Geyer explained that the subcommittee will be re-established as soon as the parameters are identified under the guidance of SARA. He thanked SARA and Bexar County personnel on work that has already been done to establish the contract.

Mr. Ramirez thanked Betty Bueché for her attendance and work at the County level.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 5: Briefing on Design Services for Elmendorf Lake Park and Westside Creeks Hike and Bike Trail Improvements

Ms. Lizcano introduced Jeff Tyler, SARA Engineer. Mr. Tyler explained that an interlocal agreement was executed in June 2012 between SARA and the City of San Antonio. The agreement included management of project funds to design and construct linear trail projects as well as the Elmendorf Lake Park project. Design services will be solicited for these projects concurrently. He explained that the coordination of all other Westside Creek projects was extremely important.

Mr. Tyler reviewed the scope of services being solicited. Mr. Rodriguez stated that he served on the City's Linear Creeks Board for 7 ½ years. He explained that all the trails were monitored carefully and that they all happen to be in a flood zone. He strongly recommended that Mr. Tyler coordinate with the City's Linear Creek Board because of their expertise. One of the problems the board encountered in the past with other consultants was the sub-contractors did not providing adequate information. Mr. Rodriguez wanted to ensure we get the very best work on the trails.

Ms. Lizcano asked for more explanation on the short list selection committee. Mr. Tyler explained the process.

Ms. Kinnison asked if the project budget was for design services only or if it included construction. Mr. Tyler stated that the \$15.1M is for design and construction. Ms. Kinnison then asked if there was a mechanism in place to ensure the Elmendorf Lake funds are not mixed with the other funds. Mr. Tyler explained that all funds must be accounted for by funding source, such as Parks Bond, Drainage Bonds, and Proposition 2 funds. This ensures the funds are spent according to their intended purposes.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 6: Citizens to be Heard

William Long announced that Jose Gonzalez, San Antonio Alternative Housing Association, made a comment that the original pilot project is riddled with trash and graffiti and not being maintained by the City of San Antonio. Mr. Rodriguez commented that it was a problem throughout the City. He promised to tackle the problems head on. Mr. Ramirez stated that he met a self-proclaimed street person who told him that he works hard to help patrol the area. Mr. Farias said he would conduct a sight visit, note his observations, and contact the City.

Mr. Ramirez asked if friends of the Westside Creeks could adopt a creek. Mr. Farias suggested coordinating with Basura Bash to support their growing efforts.

Mr. Geyer stated that a month before, he and his wife were meeting with San Antonio River Foundation who would like to learn more about the Westside Creeks. Ms. Rodriguez stated that SARA is working on a volunteer program to help clean up the area. The program will collect volunteer information so that SARA can reach out to them as needed. She also mentioned that she could help Mr. Geyer set up the meeting with the San Antonio River Foundation.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 7: Miscellaneous Items

Charlotte Kale wanted to assure Mr. Rodriguez that Mr. Farias and Mr. Tyler attend the Linear Creekway Advisory Board meetings and she was certain that the communication would continue between SARA and the board.

Mr. Geyer brought information on the downtown transportation study to share with the committee members. He also wanted to thank those that attended the Casa Navarro mural unveiling.

Mr. Rodriguez stated that he had the opportunity to meet with the Veterans committee that is overseeing the Veterans Memorial at Elmendorf Lake. Mr. Rodriguez accompanied the Veterans Memorial Committee to the Bexar County Commissioners Court. Mr. Rodriguez was recognized for his involvement with the Westside Creeks and Elmendorf Lake for many years. Commissioners passed a resolution that supports the Veterans Memorial Committee efforts. He commented that the memorial will bring beauty and pride to the area.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 8: Next Meeting – Tuesday, October 9, 2012

Ms. Lizcano announced the next meeting and adjourned the meeting.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned by consensus at 7:30 pm.