



**Westside Creeks Restoration
Oversight Committee (WCROC) Meeting
San Antonio River Authority
100 E. Guenther
Tuesday, April 19, 2016
Notes**

Committee Members Present

Olga Lizcano, Co-Chair
Robert Ramirez, Co-Chair
Theodore Ozuna, Donaldson Terrace NA
Abel Ramirez, San Antonio Wheelman
Evelynn Mitchell, St. Mary's University
Matt Purdy, Beacon Hill NA (alt)

David Turner, St. Mary's University (alt)
Kamala Platt, TexasTejano.com
Jude Valdez, UTSA
Skye Curd, West SA Chamber of Commerce
Leonard Rodriguez, Westside Development Corp.

Staff and Public Present

Jeff Tyler, SARA
Rudy Farias, SARA
Kerry Averyt, SARA
Bridget Hinze, SARA
Amy Middleton, SARA
Nicole Koenig, SARA

Therese Kenner, SARA
Sonia Jimenez, Ximenes & Assoc.
Veronica Mendez, City of San Antonio
Rebecca Johnson, City of San Antonio PASA
Phoebe Gonzalez, Community member

I. Welcome

Ms. Lizcano, WCROC Co-Chair opened the meeting. She recognized Matt Purdy, the Beacon Hill Neighborhood Association alternate and then asked all attendees to do self-introductions.

II. Calendar Items

- San Pedro Creek Subcommittee Meeting – May 12, 2016 at 8:30 a.m. at 100 E. Guenther, Boardroom
- Westside Creeks Restoration Oversight Committee Meeting – June 21, 2016 at 6:00 p.m. at 100 E. Guenther, Boardroom – Co-Chair Robert Ramirez will not be in attendance due to a prior engagement.

III. Approval of Meeting Minutes for February 9, 2015

There was not a quorum present and the agenda item will be carried over to the next meeting.

IV. Briefing on a Trash and Floatables Collection System to be Installed in Alazan Creek

Amy Middleton, an engineer with the San Antonio River Authority (SARA) Watershed Engineering Department provided the briefing. Ms. Middleton explained that SARA would like to conduct a pilot to test a trash and floatables collection device on Alazan Creek, upstream from the San Antonio River Mission Reach. The Mission Reach trash and floatables clean up requires extensive manual labor efforts

and has adverse impacts on the environment. If the device works as expected, other locations will be considered for installation of similar devices.

The device is a litter trap with a trash boom and it will be placed on the Alazan Creek upstream of El Paso Street and downstream of Colorado Street. Ms. Middleton went on to explain the device has no impacts on wildlife based on information from national users. The litter trap, when full, will be emptied using a large crane. The presentation was concluded and Ms. Middleton opened the meeting up to questions.

Questions (Q) and Comments (C)

Responses are in *italics* and were provided by Ms. Middleton unless noted.

Q: Does SARA have any idea what percentage of trash is floatables? *SARA has an estimate based on the entire creek but not for this section alone. The pilot program will provide these numbers.*

Q: How is the project location determined? *The consulting firm, HDR, did a study of key locations. It was determined the channel needs to be a straight section (no bends) and with public access (avoiding private property). The location also needs to be educationally visible, have similar flows/velocity to Alazan Creek, and meet the threshold set for amount of trash. Thirty-nine (39) other locations were considered and eliminated based on one or more of the factors listed above. The equipment is specified to a certain velocity and this location should provide maximum results.*

Q: How much area does it take? *The trap is 13' x30' and trash will stack behind it.*

Q: Does it include collecting trash from right-of-way to right-of-way? *There is an area that is being left open to allow for maintenance access. The device is capable of collecting the trash and floatables just under the top of the channel. For the right-of-way, it may not reach the edge to allow for access to the trails.*

Q: Have there been briefings with the school and others? *Not yet.*

Q: What happens during a flood? *This device is specified for a 100-year flood event. If it is more than a 100-year flood, it can break off and trash will not be captured.*

Q: Will it be permanent if it works? *Yes.*

Q: What will it look like for the neighborhood? *SARA will check it anytime it rains and periodically during dry times. [Picture of boom with trash basket was shown.] The basket is attached to a concrete pier with black hollow pipes to create a dam like structure to hold the floatables.*

Q: Is a certain amount of trash desired? *In May, SARA is going to develop a list of pilot protocols. If we don't have any rain, we may not collect as much trash or if the rain continues, we may collect a whole lot. Again, this is one of the reasons for a pilot. If we are going to install a device like this, we want to make sure it is worth the effort.*

Q: Is the trash report from the Mission Reach or just from the Alazan? *The trash report was numbers from the Alazan only so that we have numbers to compare. SARA wants to improve all watersheds and other locations will be determined once the pilot is complete.*

Q: Does it work better with a cement embankment? If the location doesn't work, is there a back up location? *It works on whatever ground it is installed on and the grass will be maintained. This location ranked the highest based on all the criteria and there are others are on the list.*

There was a lot of discussion around the chosen location and its proximity to the school and the neighborhood as opposed to a light industrial area. Some committee members expressed concern about safe schools, environmental racism, the area aesthetic, and the feeling that the school's backyard is a trash collection area. Ms. Middleton reiterated that this location ranked the highest based on the criteria and SARA hopes if the trash is concentrated in one area, then it will be easier to keep it clean. She went on to say that presence of the device is intended to be educational (don't litter) and SARA plans to have these all over the city and have a significant positive impact on the watersheds.

Q: Was this part of the linear creek master plan or a pilot to be inserted into the plan? And if so, why not own a section of the creek and bury the device and tie into the educational component to Tafolla and the community meetings. *This segment, at some point, will be restored with a new trail and signage. Rudy Farias added that it is not in the plan but some flood control benefits were in there. Robert Ramirez, Co-Chair, recalled the master plan had some other components about preventing trash from getting in the creeks and Elmendorf Lake. Ms. Middleton also stated a trash boom is being installed at Elmendorf Lake. It will be a little bit different from the boom on Alazan.*

There was more discussion about the location and placing it in an area that is economically depressed and so close to the middle school. Ms. Middleton informed the committee that there are outreach dollars to educate the public. She will be working with SARA's Intergovernmental and Community Relations Department. Ms. Lizcano suggested educating the children and the school of the potential hazards and the purpose of the project.

Q: What are the precautions in the trap itself and if someone were to climb into it, how would you get out? *The trap is not that large and the vendor will be asked.*

Q: [Going back to the trash slide] How often does the channel look like the picture? *This photo is of a channel that holds water all the time so it is not truly representative of Alazan. The Alazan Creek has a pilot channel and remains empty the majority of the time. If it does rain, SARA is committed to cleaning up with 14 calendar days.*

Q: How was this model selected? *Several were looked at and this one best fits flow and terrain to collect the amount we want to gather.*

Q: For cleaning purposes, is it easier to clean as it works or after the rain event? *All the trash will fall down once the water recedes. If we can get there during the rain event, we may be able to empty the basket with a crane. It is all very experimental at this point as it is a pilot study.*

Q: Does it move or only with water? *It will not physically move up and down the channel but it will move up and down vertically as the water rises and recedes. The device has no electrical parts.*

Q: What happens to the rest of the trash that falls out of the basket when the crane empties it? *The basket will be emptied and cleaned during rain events. After the event, it will be emptied and the trash behind it (outside the basket) will be hand collected.*

Q: How will it differentiate between trash and wildlife? *No other areas around the nation have had an issue with wildlife being harmed or trapped.*

Q: Was this equipment considered with the local climate? *The type of storms we have, have been considered.*

C: Please show us the alternate locations. *They will be sent to Rudy Farias along with the coordinated plan for outreach and education and why this location was selected.*

C: If the pilot works out well, the master plan should be updated to include it.

Q: Is the device prefabricated or does it have to be recreated at each location? The criteria for selecting this model were it has been in use for more than five years with more than five installations. Each litter trap is designed specific to the area and will be checked by a qualified engineer.

Q: Are there any situations where it could be so overwhelming that it becomes a dam? *It is designed to float on top and shouldn't cause a problem. There is no net involved and it has been approved by the USACE as not impacting flow. The crane will only be out when it needs to be emptied.*

V. Status Report on Westside Creeks Improvements Projects

Westside Creeks Linear Creekway Trails

Rudy Farias with SARA provided the report. He reminded the committee that voters approved funds for the trail system in May 2015 under Proposition 2. The proposition provides \$80 million for the trail system. Mr. Farias showed the trail map with the recommended trail projects and further reminded the committee that they made a request to the Linear Creekway Parks Advisory Board for \$7.6 million of the \$80 to go to Westside Creek trails. If the request is approved the trails on Martinez Creek and Alazan Creek will be nearly complete. The only segment that will not be included in this trail package is Martinez Creek from I-10 to Fredericksburg Road. The advisory board will vote on the recommendations on April 26, followed by City Council review on May 4, and the City Council vote on May 12.

Mr. Farias informed the committee that Councilwoman Gonzalez is advocating to include funding for a trail at Zarzamora Creek to Alderete Park in the 2017 bond. Jeff Tyler added that San Pedro Creek Phase 3 is also being recommended for inclusion in the 2017 bond.

Mr. Tyler then provided an update on the current trail improvement projects. The 3.5 mile trail from Cassiano to the San Antonio River is 85% complete. The effort is on schedule to be complete in June 2016. Progress photos were shown.

With regard to Alazan Creek and Martinez Creek trails, they are both 80% complete with one trailhead to complete on Alazan and one asphalt section to complete on

Martinez. A trailhead will be developed at the casting pond at Woodlawn. Mr. Tyler showed progress photos of both trail projects.

Elmendorf Lake Park

Jeff Tyler with SARA provided the update. The entire effort is 75 percent complete. The bridge portion of the work is expected to be complete by the end of April, followed by the southern portion in May, and the northern portion in June. The development of the mosaic tile benches has begun. The benches will be placed in the plaza area. Mr. Tyler showed the committee a sketch of what the benches will look like. He also solicited donations for items to be part of the mosaic. The artist, Oscar Alvarado, needs glass, china, dominoes, or other heirlooms by May 9th.

Mr. Tyler went on to say the south bank and island are wrapping up. The north bank is at about 70 percent complete. He also stated the lighting has been tested, the entire park is lit, and each bridge has lighting on and under it. Mr. Tyler concluded the presentation with progress photos and opened the discussion up for questions and comments.

Questions (Q) and Comments (C)

Reponses are in *italics* and were provided by Mr. Tyler unless noted.

C: A request was made to provide the line item budget to the committee. *The budget will be provided at the next meeting.*

Q: Who made the decision to not do the [swimming] pool? *The City of San Antonio decided it was more feasible to build a new pool because the existing pool cost too much to rehabilitate.*

Q: How many barbeque grills and tables are going to be included? *I don't know the exact number but will get a count for the next meeting.*

Q: Where will this trash boom be placed? It will be upstream of the park on Zarzamora Creek near General McMullen.

Q: What will be the placeholder for the [swimming] pool area? *There will not be anything in the space [it will be green space]. The playground is going to be much larger than originally planned and the splash pad area is adjacent to the playground. The swimming pool, when constructed, will be in this same area. This area is out of the flood plain and the idea was to have an area concentrated for families.*

Q: How many swim teams are there on the Westside? *I don't know.*

Q: What is the completion and grand opening date? *It is anticipated the park will open sometime this summer in June or July depending on the weather.*

Q: Is there any concern about the splash pad being defecated on by the wildlife? *The splash pad water is treated and turned off when not in use. The City will be doing the maintenance.*

Q: Are there any sun covers? *Shade structures are going in with two in the playground area and the other two in the plaza area.*

Q: What about restroom facilities? *The existing pool house is being renovated to also include family and handicap restrooms. New restroom facilities will be included when the new pool is constructed.*

VI. Briefing on Elmendorf Lake Park Public Art Project

Mr. Tyler continued with the briefing. He stated the triangle property [that formerly housed a restaurant] is going to be used for a pedestrian “hot” crossing, vegetation, and was originally intended to a construct gateway monument. However, the City’s Public Art San Antonio (PASA) is going to install something much more substantial. Mr. Ramirez reminded the committee that Abigail Rodriguez was on the PASA selection committee. Mr. Tyler then introduced Becky Johnson with PASA.

Ms. Johnson provided more details on the PASA effort. The funding was accomplished as part of the 2012 bond project with \$190,000 for this art installation. The artist selected is David Dahlquist from Des Moines, IA. Ms. Johnson showed a couple of examples of his previous work. For the Elmendorf triangle, the artist is proposing a series of vertical panels inspired by water. It will be illuminated at night and people can walk through the panels. Councilwomen Viagran and Gonzalez met with the artist. PASA will conduct a focus group in early May that will include representatives from SARA and the selection committee. PASA will work with the elected officials to determine others who will be asked to participate in the focus groups. Ms. Johnson concluded her presentation and the meeting was opened for comments and questions.

Questions (Q) and Comments (C)

Reponses are in *italics* and were provided by Ms. Johnson unless noted.

Q: What is the scale and the materials being used? *The panels are about 22’ wide and 14-16’ tall at the largest points. The material is steel with soft angel hair finish. The design and development is not final.*

C: It doesn’t look like it will fit. *The existing circle may not stay. The art will be intertwined with the walkways. The artist will work with the community to determine the local influence. Focus group participants are being considered now. Mr. Ramirez suggested contacting the councilwoman if someone is interested in or wants to suggest someone to be part of the focus groups.*

Q: What was the process for selecting the artist? *PASA has a list of pre-qualified artist who are eligible for consideration to be selected. The entire list was reviewed which is comprised of 35 percent local artists. The final selection came down to the selected artist and Oscar Alvarado. Alvarado is a local artist and is the same artist doing the mosaic benches in Elmendorf Lake Park.*

Q: Will you let us know the percent of Mexican-American/Hispanic artist on the list? *I don’t have that information and it is not requested when asked for qualifications. The male/female ratio is about equal.*

VII. Status Report on San Pedro Creek Improvements Project

CMAR (Construction Manager at Risk) Solicitation Update

Kerry Averyt, SARA's San Pedro Creek Project Manager, provided the update. He explained the CMAR delivery method was selected to get the project constructed quicker and for less cost. There is a premium paid before the design is finished but the benefit of the CMAR on site during the design outweighs these upfront costs. Mr. Averyt provided the timeline and is hopeful the CMAR will be hired by the end of May 2016. Full construction is expected to be underway by late 2016 or early 2017. The May 2017 City of San Antonio Tricentennial is the goal to have the segment from the tunnel inlet to Cesar Chavez Boulevard complete. The two teams shortlisted for the selection are Zachry and Sundt/Davila.

Design Overlay District

Bridget Hinze with SARA provided the report. She explained SARA is working closely with the City's Office of Historic Preservation to develop a design overlay district for San Pedro Creek similar to the San Antonio River overlay districts, the RIO's. Overlay districts help to ensure private development is harmonious with the creek development. An executive summary of the purpose and need as well as the process was distributed to committee members. Ms. Hinze stated two public stakeholder and property owner meetings have been held and comments on the current draft are being accepted through April 21. The draft will be posted on the website. The approval process includes review and action by the City's Historic and Design Review Commission on May 18 followed by review and action by the Zoning Commission's Neighborhood and Livability Committee with a target date for City Council adoption on August 4. Mr. Averyt added that the overlay district is not part of the construction project. There will be additional opportunities for comment during the City's formal review and adoption process. The presentation was concluded and committee members shared their comments and questions.

Questions (Q) and Comments (C)

Reponses are in *italics* and were provided by Ms. Hinze unless noted.

Q: Are there any "learnings" or aspects that might be applied to the Westside Creeks (i.e. Apache Creeks overlay district)? *This overlay is modeled on the San Antonio River overlay and controlling future development. This process could be examined for use with the other Westside Creeks too. Mr. Ramirez added this is a nationwide practice that needs to be kept in mind.*

Public Art Program Update

Ms. Hinze provided the update. She informed the committee that, last August, Bexar County Commissioners voted to remove public art funding from the base program. SARA is currently working with the County to develop the structure of the art program and who will be responsible for it. Ms. Hinze said the art advisory committee has been formed and the members were listed in the presentation. She also noted that the City's PASA Director, Jimmy LaFlore, is very much involved.

In terms of the schedule and process, a request for proposals was developed to hire an organization to take the lead. An art program of this type has never been done in San Antonio. The program will not be limited to permanent installations (opportunity for rotating art), it will be more programmatic in nature, and take best practices from around the world. The consultant was selected on March 21 and still in negotiations

so selection cannot be revealed. Ms. Hinze concluded by saying the hope is to have the negotiations complete by next week.

There was a comment about the process being so different than the art selection process for Elmendorf Lake. Ms. Hinze agreed and stated the San Pedro Creek art program is selecting a consultant to suggest and develop the structure of the program. When artist are actually being considered, it will be an open call and not limited to a prequalified list. Mr. Ramirez suggested this be the model moving forward. A concern was stated about local artists not having influence. It was suggested that a group of local artists meet with the consultant and a similar approach be used for the other Westside Creeks public art component.

VIII. Citizens to be Heard

A member of the public asked if there was a way to put a moratorium on the Elmendorf Lake Park artwork and use the San Pedro Creek process. Jeff Tyler replied PASA is responsible for the public art at Elmendorf. The concept was always to put a static piece of art to sustain it and funding has already been identified. Leonard Rodriguez, WCROC member representing Westside Development Corporation (WDC), commented cultural arts on the Westside are extremely sensitive with San Anto Cultural Arts and the Guadalupe Cultural Arts Center. He suggested inviting members of these groups to be part of the working group to lessen the angst of some of these cultural arts decisions. Kamala Platt, WCROC member representing TexasTejano.com, expressed concern that the Elmendorf Lake Park public art concept looks like walls and had immigration implications not to mention this area [triangle cross walk] is already confusing. Mr. Tyler explained that PASA came in and this actually adds value to the project since it is art. Jimmy LaFlore can be contacted to advocate for process changes.

IX. Miscellaneous Items

WCROC member, Evelyn Mitchell representing St. Mary's University informed the committee that St. Mary's University President Thomas Mengler has expressed interest in extending the Apache Creek trail to connect the university. Dr. Mitchell stated that since starting her tenure on the committee, she has been asked several times by the General McMullen neighborhoods why the trail doesn't connect to the university. She went on to say as the bond funding is able to extend and fill in gaps on other creeks, we would like to have the greenway network connect to St Mary's and Our Lady of Lake Universities. There are transfer students and the trails could allow for easier commutes. The library is on the greenway and the trail would also create neighborhood access. Campus initiatives such as the farmers market could encourage folks to use the trails to get to campus and the community gardens. This could be another way to extend community service to the neighborhood. Mr. Ramirez added that the precedent has been set with the request to connect Zarzamora Creek from General McMullen to Alderete Park.

Dr. Mitchell made a motion that committee endorse, in the interest of St Mary's University, what it would take to develop this creek way and the ability to seek bond funding to support it. The motion was seconded by Jude Valdez, UTSA. A question was raised if the connection has been studied. Mr. Farias replied that is was not part

of the USACE feasibility study but it was part of the initial concept for restoration. Mr. Rodriguez said the WDC would be happy to support it and has inquired about it. He went on to say that WDC submitted a grant to convert an alleyway from St Mary's to Woodlawn Lake and suggested that other alleyways could be piecemealed together to make the connection. Dr. Mitchell noted that there are some tight areas on the creek and she would like to have St. Mary's senior engineering design students come up with a concept. Mr. Rodriguez suggested a competition. The motion was up for a vote but there was no quorum. Mr. Ramirez suggested the letter from President Mengler be entered into the minutes and sent to Suzanne Scott, SARA's General Manager. The item was tabled.

The second item began with a request for information regarding what is needed to get the creek restoration started. Mr. Tyler replied Bexar County would have to allocate flood control funds or the City of San Antonio would have to get a voter-approved bond. The USACE could offer the majority of the funding or require some sort of match. An update was requested at a future meeting.

X. Adjourn

With no further business to conduct, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:38 p.m.