



**Westside Creeks Restoration
Oversight Committee (WCROC) Meeting
San Antonio River Authority (RA)
Virtual - GOTOMEETINGS
February 15, 2022, 6 p.m.**

Committee Members Present

Robert Ramirez, Co-Chair
Skye Curd, Co-Chair
Erwin De Luna, United San Antonio Pow
Wow
Ramiro Gonzales, Prosper West
Hillary Lilly, San Antonio ISD
Norberto Jeremy Landin, Prospect Hill NA

Charles Oisten, Woodlawn Lake NA
Anne Parrish, Bexar Audubon Society
Kamala Platt, Ph.D., TexasTejano.com
Abel Ramirez, San Antonio Wheelmen
Patricia Seidenberger, SA Conservation
Society
Gabriel Velasquez, Avenida Guadalupe
Assn.

Staff and Public Present

Lourdes Galvan, River Authority Board
Member
Reuben Bazan, River Authority
Carrie Brown, River Authority
Collen Brownlow, River Authority
Christine Clayton, River Authority
Richard De La Cruz, River Authority
Steve Graham, River Authority
Brian Mast, River Authority
Monica Trevino-Ortega, River Authority
Aarin Teague, River Authority
Luis Alday, URS Corp.
Linda Alvarado-Vela, Jones/Carter
Mohamed Bagha

Charles Black
Ron Branyon, HDR, Inc.
Joe Carreon
Andy Castillo, Ford, Powell, Carson
Architects
Jerry Geyer, San Pedro Creek Culture Park
Subcommittee
Beth Keel, SA Housing Authority
Vamshi Konduru, Michael Baker
Agdel Rivera, COSA
Shauna McMahon, HDR, Inc.
Eyole Mbongo, Office of Congressman
Joaquin Castro
Laura Calderón, Ximenes & Assoc.

I. Welcome

Co-Chair Robert Ramirez called the WCROC meeting to order. He recognized Lourdes Galvan, SARA Board Member. She told the Committee she was excited about the new funding for the creeks. She asked members to remain focused because many good opportunities are forthcoming. She thanked the staff and committee for their work.

Mr. Ramirez agreed WCROC participation is critical. He said until now, the focus has been to complete the hike-bike trails. Now, the goal is creek restoration.

II. Roll Call

Meera Keshav, RA staff, called the WCROC roll at the start of the meeting, but a quorum was not present. A quorum was reached later during the meeting. Committee members who were present are listed above.

III. Citizens to be Heard

There were no citizens signed up to heard.

IV. Calendar Items

Mr. Ramirez said Carrie Brown, RA staff, would review the calendar items later in the agenda. Calendar items included:

- Yoga on the Creek with Mobile Om – Mondays at 6:00 pm – Legacy Park
- Fit & Flow with San Antonio Clubhouse – Feb. 19, 10 am - SPC
- Get Creative with Creek Lines by Bridge Projects – March 4, 12:00 pm – Virtual
- San Pedro Creek Subcommittee Meeting, March 10, 9:00 am – Virtual
- Creekside Chats with Sundt Construction – March 18, 12 pm – Virtual
- Fit & Flow with San Antonio Roadrunners – April 9, 10 am - SPC
- National Poetry Month Writing Workshop – April 16, 10 am
- Westside Creeks Restoration Oversight Committee Meeting, May 17, 2022, 6:00 pm

When Ms. Brown reviewed the calendar, Mr. De Luna noted the April 9 event might conflict with nearby Fiesta activities. Staff said they would check for any conflicts.

Mr. Ramirez reminded the Committee the SPCCP Subcommittee meetings are held on the second Thursday of the month at 9 a.m.

V. Approval of Meeting Minutes – November 16, 2021

Mr. Ramírez tabled the minutes until a quorum was present. When a quorum was present, Mr. Ramirez made a motion to approve the minutes with a correction to section VXX. Status Report on the SPCCP, paragraph 6. The statement “The construction start date is December 2023” is corrected to read “The construction start date is December 2021.” The motion to accept the minutes as amended was unanimously approved.

VI. Status Report on Westside Creeks Improvements Projects – Richard De La Cruz & Reuben Bazan, River Authority

Mr. Ramirez introduced Richard De La Cruz and Reuben Bazan for updates on the Westside Creeks Linear Trails Project.

Mr. Bazan reviewed the status of the Apache Creek Trail project. The project was completed in August 2021 and is fully operational. The RA will manage the trails and park amenities, which include a shade structure, tables, benches, trash receptacles, a drinking fountain, signage and ADA parking.

Mr. Bazan presented the status of the Zarzamora Creek Trail project. It totals 1.45 mile long. There are trailheads and eight street connections. Park amenities will include shade structures, drinking fountains, benches, signage trash receptacles and solar lights.

The hardscape portion of the project was substantially completed late December 2021. The contractor is now working to establish the vegetation and trees, and placing the trailhead signage. He reminded the committee about the substantial delay due to a nearby SAWS project. Completion is expected within a few weeks.

Mr. De La Cruz provided an update on the Alazan Creek Trail project. The trail will connect to the existing trails at Woodlawn Lake and the Apache Creek confluence. Substantial completion is expected late February 2022.

Mr. De La Cruz reviewed the ongoing construction activities. He noted the completion of the street connections, landscaping, anti-graffiti treatment for the retaining walls and the installation of the railroad bridge canopy.

Mr. Ramirez asked about recent vandalism. Mr. Bazan said someone vandalized a retaining wall along the Zarzamora Creek project using a hammer. This damage was noted during the substantial completion review and the contractor fixed the damage. The contractor also noticed similar damage on 30 other locations along the wall. The COSA Park Police was notified. COSA will be responsible for repairing the damage. He said he would follow-up and report back.

Ms. Galvan asked about the vandal. Mr. Bazan said the contractor had seen a woman damaging the walls. She requested follow-up information on this issue. She asked if graffiti on the Alazan Trail project had been addressed. Mr. De La Cruz said it was removed and anti-graffiti coating had been applied. Since then, two other instances of graffiti have occurred, which the contractor will address. Ms. Galvan said the community will need to be engaged to help protect the areas.

Gabriel Velasquez, WCROC member, said the community needs to know these projects are not meant to gentrify the community. Damaging the wall may be an intentional act of violence against gentrification. He said the community should be made aware these projects reflect the environmental justice concerns taken on by Westside leaders, beginning with Roberto Rodriguez.

Mr. Velasquez said the Committee should note for the record the pipes running through the creekways created delays in scheduling the creek projects. It should be noted SAWS has worked in coordination with the Westside Creeks projects. Mr. Mast agreed they have been good partners.

Mr. Ramirez said he had not considered the vandalism might be due to perceived gentrification. He encouraged the community to express their concerns in productive ways at WCROC meetings or voicing them to the RA. As the public increases their use of the trails, they will experience the benefits offered by the trails and help protect them.

Jerry Geyer, San Pedro Creek Culture Park Subcommittee, asked about the purpose of the railroad bridge canopy in the Alazan Creek project. Mr. De La Cruz said the project design was coordinated with Union Pacific Railway since it is their right-of-way. One of their criteria was a railroad bridge canopy to prevent rocks from falling onto the trail.

The Martinez Creek Trail Project is on hold awaiting funding.

See the related presentation, Linear Creek Trailways, for additional details.

VII. Ecosystem Restoration Funding Update, Brian Mast, River Authority

Brian Mast thanked members and staff for their ongoing support of the creek projects. The funding announcement affects San Pedro, Apache, Alazan and Martinez creeks. All are receiving funding and will have ecosystem restoration. The design will include native grasses, shrubs, ripple features in the creekways, removal of riprap currently lining the banks, and shade trees. They will look like natural creeks, but will function in a flood-carrying capacity. The total cost is \$115 million. The federal portion is 65 percent, totaling approximately \$75 million. The local match, provided by Bexar County, is 35 percent. Mr. Mast said the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) workplan language indicates they are fully committed through the project's completion. The USACE will act as the contractor and issue the RFP.

Mr. Mast said the design will take 18-24 months. During this time, the WCROC quarterly meetings could increase to bi-monthly meetings. In addition to the WCROC's input, the RA will need to work directly with the community to identify the desired features for the design. He expects this process to begin in fall 2022.

Mr. Ramirez said activities, like charrettes, will be ramping up so WCROC members should begin discussions now within their own organizations. He said it is a mistake when a project does not invite public comments from the beginning.

Ms. Galvan said she and staff briefed Councilwoman Terry Castillo about the project and the importance of community involvement in the upcoming planning. They have also reached out to Districts 1 and 7, as well as the media.

Mr. Velasquez said he was glad the project now has the support of city leaders. History needs to record the leaders, like Roberto Rodriguez, who steadfastly worked on the creeks. He said the WCROC needs to follow through on renaming the Westside Creeks Restoration Project. He congratulated everyone for their work.

Mr. Erwin De Luna, WCROC member, said there were many meetings early in the process where input was given on the ecosystems. These notes should be referenced so the committee is confident in their work. He thanked the RA for their support and work on the creeks.

Dr. Kamala Platt, WCROC member, asked who will maintain the creeks' restoration and hold decision-making authority once restoration is complete. Mr. Mast said ongoing discussions are underway with the city and county, and decisions have not been made. COSA currently operates and maintains the Westside Creeks. They also operated the Mission Reach prior to its restoration.

Dr. Platt asked if a WCROC member could participate in those discussions because she feels the COSA Parks department is not focused on the ecological wellbeing or cultural legacies of places like Woodlawn or Elmendorf lakes. She asked if someone representing the Committee and community could participate. Mr. Mast said RA leadership was present at this meeting and understand her concerns. They will continue to make them heard.

Mr. Mast noted that Eyole Mbongo, from Congressman Joaquin Castro's office, was present. He thanked the federal delegation for their critical role in securing federal funding.

Mr. Ramirez said there will be significant community input during the 18-24 months of design. He shared Ms. Platt's concern about trees being destroyed and birds being impacted. These concerns should be reflected in the plan. Then, the WCROC should be vigilant that the plan is implemented as intended.

Mr. Velasquez requested the WCROC Co-Chair draft a letter of thanks to Congressman Castro from the WCROC members. Mr. Ramirez said he first wanted to recognize a quorum was present before considering the motion.

When a quorum was confirmed, Mr. Velasquez moved the Co-Chair draft a letter of thanks for the ecosystem restoration funding in the USACE workplan, said letter to be sent to Congressman Castro, to mention Roberto Rodriguez, and to be signed by all WCROC members. Hillary Lilly, WCROC member, said other delegation members be included in the letter.

Mr. Velasquez asked if it would suffice to have the Congressman be the recipient of the letter with other delegation members copied. Mr. Ramirez agreed with Ms. Lilly and asked about protocol since other legislators had helped.

Mr. Velasquez restated his motion requesting a letter of thanks be drafted to the legislative delegation in a manner reflecting the delegation's hierarchy, said letter to recognize Roberto Rodriguez's contributions, and that Ms. Lilly work with Mr. Mast to ensure it meets Committee expectations. Mr. Mast said he, Ms. Lilly, and Ms. Keshav will draft and provide the letter to the Co-Chairs for review.

Ms. Galvan said they lobbied for the project for six years. Congressman Castro was important but other legislators also supported the project. It would be difficult to isolate individuals supporters because there were so many.

Mr. Velasquez said he appreciated Ms. Galvan's clarification. He then restated his motion that a letter of thanks for the ecosystem restoration funding be drafted and addressed to the proper entities, said letter to recognize Roberto Rodriguez's contributions and to be prepared for signature by all WCROC members. Mr. De Luna seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Geyer extended congratulations to the WCROC on behalf of the SPCCP Subcommittee. He emphasized community involvement and the importance of setting public expectations. Regarding the operation and maintenance of the creeks, he said having the RA care for San Pedro Creek is a "tremendous blessing." He hoped the RA can assume this responsibility for the Westside Creeks.

Ms. Keshav introduced Collen Brownlow, project manager for the RA's creeks and trails included in the Bexar County River and Creeks Program. She said the RA was presenting to the WCROC because several projects connect to and are synergistic with the Westside Creeks. Mr. Brownlow said there are 24 river and creek projects involving trails, restoration and drainage. An interlocal agreement outlines the roles and responsibilities for the city, county, and RA. He detailed three projects now underway: the replacement of the SA Zoo water well, the extension of the Zarzamora Creek Trail from Alderete Park to Tierra Del Sol Park, and the link between San Pedro Creek and the San Antonio River.

Norberto G. Landin, WCROC member, asked what the source of water was for the San Pedro Creek link project. Mr. Brownlow said the project was still being conceptualized, but one idea was to use condensate water from nearby buildings.

Mr. Ramirez asked where the San Pedro Creek link would be located. Mr. Brownlow said the connection would follow Saving St., as well as a portion outside of Saving St.

Ms. Lilly asked where a project listing and schedule could be found. Ms. Keshav said the RA is working with the county to develop a website. She will notify the committee when it is launched.

Mr. Geyer said regarding water reuse, the original idea had been to take advantage of the reuse water injected into the San Antonio River. An engineering study confirmed it was feasible to feed the water in the San Pedro Creek by pumping it back up from the tunnel. He said sustaining the creek beyond rainfall requires another water source, so reuse is a good idea.

VIII. Status Report on the San Pedro Creek Culture Park and Communications, Christine Clayton & Monica Trevino-Ortega, River Authority

Christine Clayton, RA staff, reviewed Phase 1.2 construction, from Houston St. to Nueva St., which includes archaeological and historic sites. The contractor recently poured a pedestrian bridge which connects the Alameda–Texas Public Radio side of the creek to the eastside of the bridge. This is near the AME archaeological site at the Camaron and Houston streets intersection. The contractor will soon pour the paseo next to the Alameda Theater so pedestrians can access both banks.

She said a 3-D scan of the AME church foundation had been completed to assist in the design. She anticipates having a stakeholder meeting in the next week to present some of the interpretive elements for the site.

Ms. Clayton reviewed Phase 1.3, which runs from Nueva St. to Cesar Chavez Blvd. There is ongoing installation of the stone channel walls and the sub-surface structural support for the Nueva St. bridge. The northern half has been completed and is open to pedestrians. A concrete pilot channel has also been poured along with the high paseo between Graham St. and Cesar Chavez Blvd.

For Phase 2, Ms. Clayton reviewed project construction consisting of the installation of sub-surface structural support for the Guadalupe St. and Alamo St. bridges. Upcoming work consists of the installation of a storm sewer and water line.

Construction on Phase 3, from Alamo St. to the I-35 bridge, began in January. Currently, vegetation removal and other preparatory work is being done. She said flaggers are temporarily located on Cevallos St. so construction equipment can enter and exit. The RA continues to coordinate their design with Union Pacific since the project impacts the railroad near Alamo St.

IX. Update on Public Art for San Pedro Creek Culture Park (SPCCP) - Carrie Brown, River Authority

Ms. Brown reviewed an upcoming call to artists for public art in Phases 2, 3 and 4. The first request will be in Phase 3 for large scale artwork to be located at the confluence of San Pedro and Apache creeks. Phase 4 will be a 3-dimensional sculpture for the El Paso St. trailhead. Phases 2, 3 and 4 will focus on tile designs and poetry. The RA will use various platforms to inform artists about this opportunity.

Ms. Brown provided an update on the Phase 1.1 public art project, *Creek Lines*, a county-funded tricentennial project at SPCCP. The art installation is complete. In the next several weeks, light fixtures will be installed. A dedication will occur in March or April 2022.

She reviewed the Five-Panel Mural, *La Gloriosa Historia de San Pedro Creek*, in Phase 1.2. Panel 1 is completed and is now in production. Panel 2 is being completed and will soon be in production.

Ms. Brown said more information can be found on the SPCCP website, by going to the “Art” tab and clicking the “Works in Progress” link.

Mr. Ramirez requested staff provide renderings of Phase 3 at the next meeting. He said half of Phase 4 was already planned from El Paso to Guadalupe streets. He would like to see these renderings as requested at the last WCROC meeting. Mr. Geyer said these renderings are

available and have been shown at SPCCP meetings and are on the project website. He said many public meetings were held with stakeholders, which included the St. James AME Church, now located on the Westside. He suggested the WCROC consider what can be provided for the community at the various trailhead intersections.

Ms. Brown reviewed calendar items related to the SPCCP, shown under IV. Calendar Items.

See the related presentation, San Pedro Creek Culture Park, for more details.

X. Miscellaneous Items

Mr. Ramirez noted that Roberto Ramirez's son had passed away. The RA, on behalf of the WCROC & RA, sent flowers to Mr. Rodriguez. He reminded the Committee they had passed a motion requesting COSA designate the Westside Creeks as the "Roberto Rodriguez Westside Creeks Ecosystem." He said the project will end, but the ecosystem will remain in perpetuity. He will convene a meeting of the renaming committee soon.

Mr. Velasquez said since the USACE is working on the ecosystem restoration, this might provide a shortcut to the naming of the restoration after Mr. Rodriguez.

Mr. Ramirez said he and Ms. Galvan had been meeting with the RA Foundation to give the Westside Creek a presence in the Foundation. These meetings will continue.

Mr. Ramirez discussed the Committee's hybrid meeting format. He said it is likely they will keep a virtual component and asked members to express their preference to Ms. Keshav. Then, prior to the next meeting, she will confirm the meeting format.

Mr. Ramirez recognized Co-Chair Skye Curd. Ms. Curd thanked members for attending and said she was excited about the USACE funding.

Dr. Platt asked if the funding had been publicly announced. Ms. Keshav said the funding had been covered by several media outlets. Dr. Platt suggested including environmental artists in the SPCCP call for artists.

Mr. Ramiro Gonzales said Prosper West will hold a State of the Westside event on March 22, 2022 at UTSA. He invited the WCROC to present information on the creeks projects. Ms. Keshav asked Mr. Gonzalez to contact her to include the RA's in the event.

Mr. Landin asked about touring the Westside Creek projects. Ms. Keshav said for safety reasons, a tour could be arranged once substantial completion is reached, possibly in May.

XI. Adjourn

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:00 p.m.

VIRTUAL CHAT COMMENTS – FEBRUARY 15, 2022 WCROC MEETING

✕ Chat

Brian M to Everyone 5:57 PM
Good Evening Robert and everyone!

Patricia Seidenberger to Everyone 6:00 PM
Good evening everyone?

Steve Graham to Everyone 6:22 PM
usage by the community is the best way to improve security and safety

Steve Graham to Everyone 6:23 PM
usage of the trails

Kamala Platt, PhD, MFA to Everyone 6:30 PM
I agree that use of the trails will help with safety and security and actually with the false representation as gentrification. If people are out on the trails and see that most of the people on the trails are from the community I think they will take ownership and be involved. Maybe we should have very public trail openings/ blessings along the line of mural blessings on the Westside.

Steve Graham to Everyone 6:43 PM
Brian deserves much of the credit with getting federal funding

Anne Parrish to Everyone 6:43 PM
very exciting. thank you Brian!!!

Kamala Platt, PhD, MFA to Everyone 6:45 PM
)Not sure how to raise my hand on this platform, but I am wondering who will be maintaining the creeks once the ecosystem restoration has been constructed. (?) Does Parks have any role? I hope not.

Kamala Platt, PhD, MFA to Everyone 6:51 PM
I am very sad to hear about Roberto's son's passing. Can we somehow express our condolences as a committee?

Meera Keshav to Everyone 6:51 PM
Hi Kamala, We did send a condolence gift on behalf of the River Authority and the Committee.

Kamala Platt, PhD, MFA to Everyone 6:58 PM
Much much gratitude to Rep. Castro's office...

Anne Parrish to Everyone 6:59 PM
I am very concerned also - there is no planning or effort to make sure the birds have a good place to go.

Lilly, Hillary M to Everyone 7:04 PM
Thankful to continue to be a part of this incredible effort!

Kamala Platt, PhD, MFA to Everyone 7:05 PM
Yes, it would be good to have SARA to maintain Creeks..

Patricia Seidenberger to Everyone 7:15 PM
I agree - Patricia

Brian M to Everyone 7:17 PM
Great work everyone. It's my daughter's 11th Birthday so I'm gonna run.

Skye Curd to Everyone 7:21 PM
I didn't see the slides in the links to open

Norberto Jeremy Landin to Everyone 7:28 PM
A good place to also see some other insight is the Bexar County Parks Master Plan.
<https://www.bexar.org/DocumentCenter/View/31311/Bexar-County-Parks-Master-Plan?bidId=>

Monica Trevino-Ortega to Everyone 7:48 PM
<https://spcculturepark.com/visit/events/>

Carrie Brown to Everyone 7:50 PM
<https://spcculturepark.com/about/art/>

Carrie Brown to Everyone 7:51 PM
Scroll down to see the with Works in Progress!

Kamala Platt, PhD, MFA to Everyone 7:51 PM
It would be wonderful to have public artwork that connects with the ecosystem development. This too can help with community involvement I think.