



**Westside Creeks Restoration  
Oversight Committee (WCROC) Meeting  
San Antonio River Authority (RA)  
Hybrid Meeting: In-person & Virtual  
September 20, 2022 - 6 p.m.**

**Committee Members Present**

Robert Ramirez, Co-Chair  
Skye Curd, Co-Chair  
Rita Maria Contreras Avery, Bexar Audubon Society  
Barbara Chavez, Los Bexareños Genealogical Society  
Norberto Jeremy Landin, Prospect Hill NA

Charles Oisten, Woodlawn Lake NA  
Kamala Platt, Ph.D., TexasTejano.com  
Abel Ramirez, SA Wheelmen  
Kate Ruckman, SA Conservation Society  
Brianna Salas, Our Lady of the Lake Univ.

**Staff and Public Present**

Lourdes Galvan, RA Board Member  
Derek Boese, RA General Manager  
Collen Brownlow, RA  
Frank Engallina, RA  
Meera Keshav, RA  
Brian Mast, RA  
Karen Smith, RA  
Aarin Teague, RA  
Mohamed Bagha

Charles Blank, River Aid SA  
Clint Chapman, IUOE Local 450  
Amanda De La O  
Tomas Guadiano  
Roberto Reyna, COSA Public Works  
Alfonso Riera  
Freddy Romo, IUOE Local 450  
Bebe Tayler  
Laura Calderón, Ximenes & Assoc.

**I. Welcome**

Committee Co-Chair Robert Ramirez called the WCROC meeting to order. He recognized River Authority (RA) Board Member Lourdes Galvan and RA General Manager Derek Boese.

**II. Roll Call**

Meera Keshav called the WCROC roll. A quorum was not present. Committee members who were present are listed above. Mr. Ramirez said no formal business would be conducted without a quorum.

He said members will notice a difference in the meeting agenda. Questions from citizens who sign up to be heard and from WCROC members will now be taken later in the meeting, as shown on the agenda, Item VII. Citizens to be heard. Questions can also be asked using the online meeting's Chat feature. He thanked everyone for their cooperation and for giving speakers the courtesy of presenting without interruption.

**III. General Manager Updates – Derek Boese, RA General Manager**

Mr. Boese reported the new draft floodplain maps are complete and the RA will be communicating their availability to the public. RA staff will brief city and county elected officials during October and November. In January, the RA will hold a public open house in each council district. Attendees can check the status of their address and ask the staff questions. They will also have the opportunity to comment on the map before it is finalized.

Regarding the San Pedro Creek Improvement Project, Mr. Boese said all of Phase 1 opens in mid-October, as shown in the calendar. Mr. Mast will provide details on the events in his presentation.

Mr. Boese said the RA continues to work with various stakeholder groups on the AME Church site, in particular, on the signage and interpretive elements to ensure these features reflect stakeholder and community expectations. In October, Power of Preservation will recognize the project for its historic preservation by the RA and the stakeholders. He said the San Antonio River Foundation is fundraising for and managing an effort to add more interpretive elements and protective coverings.

He provided updates on the San Pedro Creek Improvements Project for Phases 1.2 and 1.3. Among other recent project milestones, he noted that water is now flowing in the channel from Houston St. to Cesar Chavez Blvd.

He reviewed Phase 2. Work is ongoing and expected completion date is April 2023. Phase 3 is also underway and expected to be complete in early 2024 pending the resolution of issues with Union Pacific Rail Road. Phase 4.1 is anticipated to begin construction in October 2022. Current Phase 4.2 activities are focused on meetings with hotel property owners and have slowed progress for this section of the project.

Mr. Ramirez said Mr. Boese's presentation reflected the changes in the agenda and meeting format he had mentioned earlier. Presentations will now be high-level summaries. For members wanting more details, the San Pedro Creek Sub-Committee reviews projects closely, and their meetings are available online. Also, Calendar Items will remain on the agenda for informational purposes, but will no longer be formally reviewed during the meeting. Important event dates are covered by staff during their presentations and they will continue this practice.

See the related presentation, General Manager Presentation, for additional details.

#### **IV. Calendar Items**

Mr. Boese highlighted the River Symposium activities and the Grand Opening of the San Pedro Park Creek Phase 1. Calendar items shown on the Agenda included:

- Creekside Chats with Ruby City, September 21, Noon - 1 p.m. - Virtual
- River Symposium Appreciation Mixer, September 23, 6 p.m. - 8 p.m., Tobin Center
- River Symposium, September 24, 9 a.m. - 4 p.m., Confluence Park
- San Pedro Creek Sub-Committee Meeting, October 13, 9 a.m. - Virtual
- San Pedro Creek Park Completion: Phase 1 Ribbon Cutting Celebration - October 14, 6 p.m.
- San Pedro Creek Park Completion: Phase 1 Grand Opening Weekend - October 15 -16
- Community Drum Circle, November 8, 7 p.m. – SPC Plaza de Fundación

#### **V. Approval of Meeting Minutes – May 17, 2022**

The minutes were tabled due to a lack of a quorum.

#### **VI. Status Report Agreements and Financials with Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) - Brian Mast, River Authority**

Mr. Mast reviewed the recent RA Board actions and execution of agreements between the RA and the USACE for the upcoming restoration project. He said the proposed schedule begins with design activities in September 2022 and is expected to be fully complete in 2029.

He showed a comparison of project cost estimates from various years. In May 2014, the project estimate was \$67.5M. In April 2021, the cost was updated to \$115.4M due to inflation. Then in July 2022, the projected cost totaled \$227.9M. The RA believes the actual cost will fall between \$115M and \$227.9M, as they are not designing to the higher dollar figure. Bexar County is aware of the projected increases and is scheduled to approve \$15M in funding in October for the local portion of the project design.

Mr. Mast said studies from 2011 through 2014 identified a large amount of public utilities, primarily SAWS wastewater lines, located at the Martinez Creek centerline. Eventually, SAWS abandoned the old lines in place, grouted them and placed new infrastructure deeply enough in anticipation of an eco-system restoration. This presents an opportunity since the original plan called only for riparian meadows due to the old infrastructure. Now, the RA can do pilot channel work and make Martinez Creek resemble the other three creeks. This is a modification to an improved project and approval involves a two-year legislative process. The application for the modification was submitted in August 2022.

Mr. Mast reviewed the Zarzamora Trail extension from Alderete Park near NW 36<sup>th</sup> Street to Tierra Del Sol Park near Acme Road. The project is beginning the design phase. Work continues on the Martinez Creek Trail, which is incomplete due to nearby SAWS work and the need to update the trail's design.

He reviewed the River Symposium Appreciation Mixer and opening events taking place between October 14 and 15, 2022. Mr. Mast said in lieu of a November WCROC meeting, the RA will hold an open house on November 15, 2022, 6 p.m., for the community to meet RA staff and learn more about the upcoming ecosystem restoration project.

See the related presentation, Status Report Agreements and Financials with Army Corps of Engineers, for additional details.

## **VII. Citizens to be Heard**

Mr. Ramirez turned the meeting over to Co-Chair Skye Curd. Ms. Curd said there was a 3-minute time limit for questions. She asked Ms. Keshav for questions from the Chat.

Via Chat, Dr. Kamala Platt asked: Would you have the budget to get the invitation postcards for the Nov. workshop event out on the west side? Mr. Mast said the RA will place information in the weekly City Council and Commissioners Court newsletters, post in the RA's social media channels, and use La Prensa to get the word out. Mr. Ramirez said SAISD schools should be asked to distribute information to their families and Mr. Mast agreed. Ms. Galvan suggested a partnership with SAWS or CPS Energy to have them distribute open house notices.

Mr. Ramirez reminded everyone the minutes document all Chat questions and comments.

Via Chat, Rita Maria Contreras Avery commented: I agree. People do notice the difference between the work done on the other creeks compared to the deep Westside concrete channels.

Mr. Charles Blank asked if the RA would be interested in participating at an upcoming resource fair on the city's westside to promote the open house and provide project information. Mr. Mast asked that event information be sent to him.

Mr. Clint Chapman, Operating Engineers, asked for the number of people employed locally during project construction.

Mr. Boese said the project was not designed yet and the USACE handles all procurement for the project, so the RA would not have that information. He encouraged him to contact the Fort Worth office of the USACE for more information on contracting.

Via Chat, Dr. Kamala Platt commented: Also, I wanted to comment that there was a lot of thought behind moving the public citizens to be heard at the beginning of the meetings. I am a little concerned about it being moved to the back of the meeting without input from us (to my knowledge.) Mr. Ramirez responded the streamlined meeting format shortens the wait time for citizens to be heard before they need to leave the meeting.

Via Chat, Amanda De La O commented: I agree with Rita and Kamala, let's focus on the Westside Creeks! Especially in terms of educating the community on the importance of habitat and wildlife conservation/preservation.

Via Chat, Dr. Kamala Platt asked: How do we raise our hands? Ms. Keshav responded the feature is not available in GoToMeetings, but the Chat is monitored so questions and comments can be submitted in the Chat and addressed.

Ms. Galvan said an upcoming National Night Out event sponsored by West End Hope in Action is a good opportunity to promote the open house. Mr. Mast said the RA could provide some promotional items and Ms. Keshav said she could also reach out to WETC for help.

There were no citizens who signed up to be heard.

### **VIII. Miscellaneous Items**

Mr. Ramirez reminded members that despite the new abbreviated meeting format, everyone can still communicate through Ms. Keshav and via email. Ms. Keshav keeps everyone updated so members don't have to wait for information at the next WCROC meeting.

He will meet with Ms. Curd and Ms. Galvan to review the membership and attendance. After the review, they will consider replacing members with low attendance, adding new members, or possibly reducing the number of members. Ms. Galvan suggested setting a limit for missed meetings. Mr. Boese said it is a critical time for community involvement and wants to see active participation. Mr. Ramirez recognized new WCROC member Kate Ruckman who represents the SA Conservation Society.

Via Chat, Dr. Platt asked: What has happened to plans for the Robert Rodriguez Ecosystems naming and recognition? Mr. Ramirez said they had experienced delays, but the matter is before the RA Board and an update will be sent when it is available.

Ms. Keshav announced that the RA is in the final stages of approving Rita Avery to replace Anne Parrish as the representative of the Bexar Audubon Society.

### **IX. Adjourn**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 7:10 p.m.

**GoToMeeting Chat Log**  
**September 20, 2022 WCROC Meeting**

**Kamala Platt, PhD, MFA (to Everyone):** 6:38 PM: Would you have the budget to get the invitation postcards for the Oct workshop event out on the west side? (please?)

**Kamala Platt, PhD, MFA (to Everyone):** 6:39 PM: Yes, I am sorry I meant Nov.

**A De La O (Private):** 6:39 PM: Hello! Yes, name is Amanda De La O, Westside resident, near Martinez Creek :)

**Kamala Platt, PhD, MFA (to Everyone):** 6:39 PM: My thought is that we need to pay special focus to the Westside.

**Rita Maria Contreras Avery (to Everyone):** 6:41 PM: I agree. People do notice the difference between the work done on the other creeks compared to the deep Westside concrete channels .

**Kamala Platt, PhD, MFA (to Everyone):** 6:42 PM: I am curious what the role of the WCROC now that we have a new structure given to us?

**Charles Blank (to Everyone):** 6:44 PM: [https://www.instagram.com/p/CiiR-5tul4h/?utm\\_source=ig\\_web\\_copy\\_link](https://www.instagram.com/p/CiiR-5tul4h/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link)

**Kamala Platt, PhD, MFA (to Everyone):** 6:44 PM: Also, I wanted to comment that there was a lot of thought behind moving the public citizens to be heard at the beginning of the meetings. I am a little concerned about it being moved to the back of the meeting without input from us (to my knowledge.

**Charles Blank (Private):** 6:45 PM: Absolutely, my pleasure!

**A De La O (Private):** 6:46 PM: I agree with Rita and Kamala, let's focus on the Westside Creeks! Especially in terms of educating the community on the importance of habitat and wildlife conservation/preservation.

**Kamala Platt, PhD, MFA (to Everyone):** 6:48 PM: How do we raise our hands?

**River Authority Meeting-5 (to Everyone):** 6:50 PM: From Amanda De La O -- I agree with Rita and Kamala, let's focus on the Westside Creeks! Especially in terms of educating the community on the importance of habitat and wildlife conservation/preservation.

**Kamala Platt, PhD, MFA (to Everyone):** 6:52 PM: What has happened to plans for the Robert Rodriguez Ecosystems naming and recognition?

**Kamala Platt, PhD, MFA (to Everyone):** 6:58 PM: Welcome Rita and THanks Robert and Meera.

**Briana Salas (to Everyone):** 6:58 PM: welcome Rita! thanks everyone!