



**Westside Creeks Restoration  
Oversight Committee (WCROC) Meeting  
San Antonio River Authority  
In-person: 100 E. Guenther St.  
Virtual: Gotomeetings  
February 21, 2023 - 6 p.m.**

**Committee Members Present**

Robert Ramirez, Co-Chair  
Skye Curd, Co-Chair  
Rita Avery, Bexar Audubon Society  
Charles Blank, River Aid SA  
William Buhrman, St. Mary's Univ.  
Erwin DeLuna, United SA Pow Wow, Inc.  
Michael Lopez, Opportunity Home  
Charles Oisten, Woodlawn Lake NA

Kamala Platt, Ph.D., TexasTejano.com  
Ana Alicia Romero, San Antonio ISD  
Kate Ruckman, SA Conservation Society  
Brianna Salas, Our Lady of the Lake Univ.  
Mary Ann Hernandez, Historic Westside  
Residents Assn.  
Gabriel Velasquez, Avenida Guadalupe  
Assn.

**Staff and Public Present**

Lourdes Galvan, RA Board Member  
Derek Boese, RA General Manager  
Meera Keshav, RA  
Rebecca Krug, RA  
Brian Mast, RA  
Steven Avery, Sierra Club  
Dolores Gamez  
Natalie Guerrero  
Reb Mari  
Isaac McClemmons

Sean McMains  
Bill Pennell, CoSA  
Monica Ortega-Trevino, Bexar County  
Roberto Reyna, CoSA Public Works  
Roberto Rodriguez  
Michael Salas  
Bernard Sanchez  
Frates Seelingson, SA River Foundation  
Laura Calderón, Ximenes & Assoc.  
Caller 01

**I. Welcome**

Co-Chair Robert Ramirez called the WCROC meeting to order. He recognized River Authority (RA) Board Member Lourdes Galvan, Roberto Rodriguez, former RA Board Member, and RA General Manager Derek Boese. He introduced Rebecca Krug, the new Westside Creeks project manager. Mr. Ramirez noted there were 3 new WCROC member organizations, Opportunity Home, River Aid San Antonio and River Aid SA.

As requested by Committee member Gabriel Velasquez, the Committee observed a moment of silence for world-renowned, local artist Jesse Trevino who had recently passed away. Mr. Ramirez spoke of Trevino's impact on San Antonio and the art world.

Co-Chair Skye Curd thanked everyone for their presence at the meeting and their commitment to the Westside Creeks project and their community.

**II. Roll Call**

Meera Keshav called the WCROC roll. A quorum was present. Committee members who were present are listed above.

### **III. Approval of Meeting Minutes – May 17, 2022 & September 20, 2022**

The Committee approved the May 17, 2022 minutes as presented. The September 20, 2022 minutes were approved with the following correction: the name of Maria Contreras Avery will be listed under “Committee Members Present,” instead of “Staff and Public Present,” in recognition of her appointment to the WCROC.

### **IV. General Manager Updates – Derek Boese, RA**

Before Mr. Boese began his update, Mr. Ramirez reminded the Committee of the new, condensed presentation format, and that questions from citizens or WCROC members would be taken later in the meeting, during Citizens to be Heard. Online audience members could ask questions through the meeting platform’s Chat feature.

Mr. Boese welcomed everyone to the RA’s updated Board meeting room.

Mr. Boese reported a major step forward for the creeks’ restoration. He said the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) recently signed the contract with the project designer, and this is considered a win.

Mr. Boese reported the RA has been advertising its public meetings for the new draft floodplain maps on social media, television and other outlets. They have already completed six of the thirteen meetings planned. He said the RA will hold a public meeting in every Bexar County Commissioners’ precinct and San Antonio City Council district. He noted that there are upcoming meetings in February and March.

Mr. Boese asked Ms. Keshav to present on the RA’s updated website. She said the 10-year old website was launched at the November Open House. Beautiful, new pictures have been added and she invited everyone to visit the site.

Mr. Boese gave an update on WCROC membership. The RA Board of Directors removed three organizations and added the Historic Westside Residents Association, River Aid SA, Opportunity Home, and the Opportunity Home Residents Association.

He reviewed the WCROC’s new meeting schedule developed in conjunction with the WCROC co-chairs. The Committee will begin meeting every other month on the third Tuesday in February, April, June, August, October, and December. He reminded members to communicate with Ms. Keshav if they will miss a meeting.

Mr. Boese provided updates on the San Pedro Creek Improvements Project for Phases 1.2 and 1.3., which opened to the public in October. Punch list items are being completed and a final inspection is expected in the next couple of months.

He reviewed Phase 2 of the San Pedro Creek project. Work is ongoing and the expected completion date is June 2023. Phase 3 is also underway and completion is expected in November 2023. In Phase 4.1, the area has been fenced and is getting prepped for the start of construction. The staging of materials has also started. The completion date is August 2023. He concluded that the San Pedro Creek project remains on track for completion before the end of 2023.

Regarding ongoing communications with the USACE, Mr. Boese said the RA staff has been actively engaged with the USACE Project Delivery Team. They are holding quarterly in-person leadership meetings with USACE staff, and the USACE has finalized their contract with the selected design firm.

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

Mr. Ramirez asked Ms. Keshav to identify the individuals representing each new organization. She named Michael Lopez with Opportunity Home, Mary Ann Valdez Hernandez with the Historic Westside Residents Association, and Charles Blank with River Aid SA. The Committee is waiting to learn who will represent the Opportunity Home Residents Association. She also said that San Antonio ISD, currently on the WCROC, has added a new representative, Ana Alicia Romero, in addition to Patti Radle.

## **V. Calendar Items**

Mr. Ramirez reviewed the calendar items on the agenda:

- Yoga on the Creek, Mondays, 6 p.m. – San Pedro Creek Culture Park/St. James AMEC Culture Crossing
- San Pedro Creek Sub-Committee Meeting, March 9, 9 a.m. – RA Boardroom
- Unveiling of temporary murals by Art of Four – April 8, San Pedro Creek Culture Park/St. James AMEC Culture Crossing
- Creekfest – April 15, San Pedro Creek Culture Park/St. James AMEC Culture Crossing
- Westside Creek Restoration Oversight Committee – Tuesday, April 18, 6 p.m.

Mr. Ramirez reminded members seeking details on the San Pedro Culture Creek (SPCC) should attend the SPCC meetings. He recognized and thanked Jerry Guyer, who retired from the SPCC Committee, for his 15 years of service to the SPCC Committee and support for the Westside Creeks projects.

## **VI. Review of November Open House - Brian Mast, RA**

Mr. Mast reviewed the November 15, 2022 Open House. There were approximately 40 attendees at the meeting. General project information was displayed and Mr. Mast said that a substantial number of comments were submitted on features participants would like to see along the 11 miles of trailhead. Across all creeks, the top features mentioned were wildlife enhancements, interpretative signage, permeable design materials and pedestrian trailheads.

Mr. Ramirez said this was the first of many opportunities for the Committee and the public to give their input on what they expect for this project.

One of the Committee members said he noted wildlife was a big interest for all of the creeks, but did not see any betterments mentioned. Mr. Mast pointed out the bathhouses. For the restoration itself, there will be mechanisms within the creeks which will provide the habitat for the fish species and other creek life. The RA has documented fish coming up the Mission Reach and San Pedro Creek towards the Westside Creeks, which they anticipate will continue. The riparian habitat, which includes grasses, shrubs, and planted trees, should attract the bird species that will enhance the habitat. He said a recent update showed 217 bird species using the Mission Reach. The RA does not know if all of those species will come to the Westside Creeks, but the habitat is being created.

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

## **VII. Status Report on Project, Rebecca Krug, RA**

Ms. Keshav introduced Rebecca Krug as the new project manager for the Westside Creeks Eco-system Restoration.

Ms. Krug said two major funding milestones were reached when the RA remitted funds to the USACE in the amounts of \$1.26M for San Pedro Creek design activities, and \$6M for Apache, Alazan, and Martinez creeks design activities.

She provided an update on the various pre-design activities for the Westside Creeks eco-restoration, which should be completed by May 2023. She said that as geotechnical activity increases on the project and becomes more visible, the RA will keep the westside community informed. Ms. Krug said the website provides information to the community about survey markers they may see along the Apache Creek trails, such as painted ground markers and colored tape flags. These help surveyors gather information for the project design.

Ms. Krug said the restoration project includes recreational features, but betterments are extra features desired by the community to enhance the project. After receiving community feedback, the RA will coordinate with the USACE to see how the feedback relates to the budget. The RA will also coordinate the funding of betterments with Bexar County and the City of San Antonio.

Ms. Krug provided an update on the Martinez Creek Trail Extension. Due to recent SAWS work in the area, surveying is needed to reevaluate the project before construction can begin. Surveying is expected to start in the next two months.

Mr. Ramirez said the Martinez Creek project had been on hold due to utility work by SAWS. He noted that SAWS' had sealed the old wastewater lines, and the new replacement infrastructure had been buried much lower. He asked if this was going to allow for full restoration of Martinez Creek.

Mr. Mast said the RA had coordinated with SAWS and as result, SAWS buried the lines deep enough so full restoration could occur on Martinez Creek. There is a USACE approval process underway for the Martinez Creek's full restoration. The RA has applied, but it is a 12-14 month process. Mr. Mast added that the budget also needs to be considered for this restoration.

Mr. Ramirez asked about the location of the paseos being installed in Phase 3 of the San Pedro Creek Improvements Project. Mr. Mast said he would check and confirm if they were being installed on the west side as shown in the presentation, or the east side.

Ms. Galvan said that a resident Committee member was attending today's meeting. She had expressed concern about rumors that homes near the Westside Creek project would be demolished. Ms. Galvan said she reassured the resident that the RA does not have such plans. Mr. Mast said the USACE will not allow any property buyouts, and requires that the ecosystem restoration occur within current creek boundaries. He added that the RA does not control zoning, private development or offers people may get for their property. Ms. Galvan thanked Mr. Mast for the explanation and Ms. Krug for the information on the survey markers the community would be seeing.

#### **VIII. Citizens to be heard**

Ms. Curd asked if there were any questions.

Ms. Avery asked for clarification on the utility lines beneath Martinez Creek. Mr. Boese explained that there had been utility lines, in particular SAWS lines, near Martinez Creek. The presence of those lines prompted the USACE to choose a less restorative option for the creek. Since then,

SAWS has moved the lines, opening up the possibility of full restoration for Martinez Creek. There is a federal process to approve a full restoration and the RA is waiting to hear.

She asked Ms. Keshav for questions from the Chat. There were no questions in the Chat.

There were no citizens who signed up to be heard.

#### **IX. Miscellaneous Items**

Mr. Velasquez said it was good to hear about the possibility of fully restoring Martinez Creek. He said it was great to have Opportunity Home on the WCROC since he wanted to speak on the Lincoln Courts. The Lincoln Courts housing was built in 1940 as segregated housing for African Americans. The Alazan Creek has divided the Lincoln Courts in two. Through the leadership of Roberto Rodriguez, everyone knows the USACE channelized the creeks in 1954 to control flooding and drowning. Today, Lincoln Courts remains part of an old urban plan to segregate a community. Concrete embankments divide the development and the only connection is a caged bridge linking the Lincoln Courts communities. It's important that entities who can make a difference, like the RA, the WCROC, the city and county, work to change the bridge. Mr. Ramirez said pedestrian bridges are part of the project and thanked Mr. Velasquez for his comments.

#### **X. Adjourn**

Ms. Curd thanked everyone for their attendance. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 7:00 p.m.

**GoToMeeting Chat Log**  
**February 21, 2022 WCROC Meeting**

**Kamala Platt, PhD, MFA to Everyone**  
Congratulations on signing on the Project!

6:24 PM

**Charles Oisten WLCA to Everyone**  
Do we have a sign in sheet for virtual attendees?

6:25 PM

**River Authority Meeting-5 to Everyone**  
Charles we do not. I am keeping track of online attendees. I also have you marked as present as a part of roll call.

**Charles Oisten WLCA to Everyone**  
Thank you.

6:31 PM

**Sean Mc Mains to Everyone**  
The legend says yellow is signage.

**Charles Blank to Everyone**  
Wildlife Enhancement was cited as a high priority community interest on each creek. Have you all identified potential betterments that could address this beyond the general restoration? Aside from Bravo favoring Bat Houses of course

**Sean Mc Mains to Everyone**  
Thanks very much, y'all! Great to be able to get a better idea of what's going on with these projects. Excited!

**Reb Mari to Everyone**  
I live off Martinez Creek I do hope we get full restoration

**River Authority Meeting-5to Everyone**  
adjourn at 6:59pm

6:59 PM

**Kamala Platt, PhD, MFA to Everyone**  
Goodnight