



**Westside Creeks Restoration  
Oversight Committee (WCROC) Meeting  
San Antonio River Authority (RA)  
In-person: 100 E. Guenther St.  
Virtual: Gotomeetings  
April 18, 2023 - 6 p.m.**

**Committee Members Present**

Robert Ramirez, Co-Chair  
Skye Curd, Co-Chair  
Mary Ann Valdez-Hernandez,  
Historic Westside Residents Assoc.  
Ramiro Gonzales, Prosper West  
Charles Blank, River Aid SA  
Kate Ruckman, SA Conservation Society  
Anna Alicia Romero, San Antonio ISD

Abel Ramirez, SA Wheelman  
William Buhrman, St. Mary's Univ.  
Kamala Platt, Ph.D., TexasTejano.com  
Erwin DeLuna, United SA Pow Wow, Inc.  
Charles Oisten, Woodlawn Lake NA  
Rita María Contreras Avery, Bexar  
Audubon

**Staff and Public Present**

Lourdes Galvan, RA Board Member  
Derek Boese, RA General Manager  
Meera Nguyen, RA  
Rebecca Krug, RA  
Brian Mast, RA  
Steve Graham, RA  
Aarin Teauge, RA  
Laura Calderón, Ximenes & Assoc.  
Christina M. Castaño, Ximenes & Assoc.  
Linda Ximenes, Ximenes & Assoc.  
Manuel Garza, WETC Advisory Board  
Member  
Roman Pena  
Hunter Warren

Mark Liberatore  
Andrew Blouet, Prosper West  
John J. Speegle  
Natalie Guerrero  
Christine Clayton, Michael Baker Int.  
Robert Perez  
Britt Coleman, Bexar Audubon  
Zach Rosen, Resource Environmental  
Amanda De La O  
Yaw Bangolame  
M. Clemmons, Michael Baker  
Tomas Guadino  
Monica Ortega-Trevino, Bexar County

**I. Welcome**

Co-Chair Skye Curd, called the WCROC meeting to order. Co-Chair recognized Laura Calderón (Ximenes & Assoc.), thanking her for her work supporting the committee with the minutes, and welcomed Christina Castaño (Ximenes & Assoc.) to the position of meeting recorder.

Meera Nguyen (RA) was asked by Co-Chair Ramirez to remind citizens about the new sign-in process. Ms. Nguyen explained the process, first requesting the members present in the room, utilize microphones to help on-line listeners hear discussion; second, requested citizens to speak, hold questions to the "Citizens to be heard" agenda section and online audience members could ask questions through the meeting platform's chat feature; lastly, in the interest of time, asked that everyone provide their comments and questions in a concise manner.

**II. Roll Call – Meera Nguyen, RA**

Ms. Nguyen explained the new "sign-in process" and then called the WCROC roll. A quorum was not present at the outset of the meeting but was achieved later in the meeting. Committee members who were present are listed above.

### **III. Approval of Meeting Minutes – February 21, 2023**

Once a quorum was achieved, the Committee approved the February 21, 2023, minutes as presented. Mr. DeLuna moved to accept the meeting minutes as presented, and Mr. Ramirez seconded the motion. The motion passed.

### **IV. Calendar Items – Meera Nguyen, RA**

Ms. Nguyen reviewed the calendar items listed on the respective PowerPoint slide.

### **V. General Manager Update – Derek Boese, RA**

Mr. Boese covered updates by reviewing the respective PowerPoint slides: 1) Membership Update, 2) San Pedro Creek Improvements Project, 3) SA-DC Trip, and 4) the July Public Involvement Session.

- 1) Membership Update: The Board of Directors (BOD) removed three inactive organizations from the Committee; and added four new interested stakeholders: Historic Westside Residents Association, River Aid San Antonio, Opportunity Home (Formerly SAHA), and Opportunity Home Residents Association.
- 2) San Pedro Creek continues to make progress, the map was reviewed displaying the respective phases of improvements. Phase 2 is anticipated to be completed in June; Phases 3 and 4.1 anticipated completion is at the end of the year 2023. Problems continue with UP Railroad. Phase 4.2 is still being negotiated with the property owners.
- 3) SA-DC Trip: the trip, meetings and communications with key elected officials went well. They appreciated the progress and updates. As a result of these meetings, the RA will add-in additional restoration activities to Martinez Creek.
- 4) July Public Involvement Session: The meeting is on schedule, in conjunction with the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and will be held at a key location within the area of significance. This meeting is very crucial as it is a good time in the planning process to take input, as in September (tentatively) the public meeting will be on 35% and at that time it will be more difficult to make any changes. Mr. Boese asks the WCROC Members to help get the word out about the meetings. He is open to any ideas and will work with elected officials to communicate to their constituents. Ms. Galvan suggested the potential meeting location be at the Avenida Guadalupe. Ms. Romero offered to assist in getting the word out to SAISD. Dr. Platt asked what input the WCROC will be asking of the public. She wants to ensure a meaningful “public input process”, with regards to cultural heritages, the future and livable cities. Mr. Boese stated that the July meeting will seek input from the public on key elements of the plan, which is considering ecological philosophy and concepts called adaptive management, guiding design. As soon as meeting dates and locations get locked in, staff will reach out to the WCROC and community.

### **VI. Review of design kick off, Rebecca Krug, San Antonio River Authority**

Ms. Krug provided the update of the Westside Creeks Ecosystem Restoration Project (WSC ER), stating RA staff and Engineering Design Firm (Michael Baker) met with the USACE in Fort Worth, March 27-29, to discuss the project scope, background, expectations, data requirements, and critical path for the schedule. Moreover, the following was reiterated by the RA staff: the overall project goals, feasibility study outputs (now inputs to the plan), the goals, interest, ecosystem,

and culture of the Westside community, for flood mitigation and provide habitat for migratory birds and other animals. March 31<sup>st</sup>, the RA staff hosted a tour of the project site for the USACE and design team; they shared lessons learned from the Mission Reach and San Pedro Creek Cultural Project. The tour was very successful in communicating to the design team the challenges and opportunities of this project.

WSC ER Predesign Activity: surveys are in progress and expected to be completed by June 2023.

Martinez Creek Trail Extension Update: coordination with SAWS is underway, and the WSC ER.

William Buhrman sought clarification on the name of the project, and project goals. Ms. Krug provided a holistic answer to include the name of the project “Westside Creek Ecosystem Restoration.” The term “ecosystem” refers to the Feasibility Study to create habitat for migratory birds. The term “restoration” refers to restoring the creek in a way that will provide the food sources for the birds: microorganisms that are a food source for small fish and insects, which are then food sources for the birds and other animals as well. Regarding the “goals of the project being published,” she stated they are in the Feasibility Study (2014) which is on the westsidecreeks.com website.

Ms. Curd suggested that perhaps the WCROC can visit alongside the design team to have the opportunity to provide direct input. Christine Clayton, with the Michael Baker Design Team, said although the design team does not have tours scheduled, one may be coordinated. Brian Mast stated he will coordinate a tour for the Committee. Ms. Curd inquired whether or not personnel from the Michael Baker design team will be at the July public meeting; Ms. Clayton expressed that she is local and will be at any meetings she is invited to; Ms. Curd invited her to attend.

Mr. Ramirez addressed Mr. Buhrman’s inquiry regarding “published goals”; he stated that a “concept plan was published in 2010” and there have been different iterations of that; and all can be found on westsidecreeks.com for those that would like to reference them.

## **VII. Citizens to be heard**

Britt Coleman, President of Bexar Audubon Society. Mr. Coleman advocated for birds, especially the Insectivores (fly around and eat insects). Habitat development must be accommodated/developed and maintained, otherwise, the habitats become overtaken by invasive birds and other non-desirable animals. He advised The WCROC to get the community engaged and involved into creating and maintaining the habitats. He offered Bexar Audubon’s assistance to provide guidance for this issue. Mr. Ramirez thanked Mr. Coleman for information and input into the process; and noted that his comments will be taken into consideration.

Manuel Garza, Chair of Advisory Board at the Westside Education Training Center ACCD College Campus. They have a new larger facility, which has the only water treatment program in the region. He thanked the RA staff that presented at the Advisory Board meeting, and invited staff to the new site to present on the creeks and be part of the review to develop the plan. Students want to become involved in the planning process, which could encourage students to become water experts, as they’re needed in our community. He offered the organization’s assistance in any manner. Dr. Platt inquired if they did water testing; Mr. Garza responded that they do conduct water testing seminars. The new campus address is 601 SW 41<sup>st</sup> Street.

Roman Pena, LULAC and CASAs Residents Council (located at Mexican American Unity Council building on West Commerce). In the past, we had a presentation on the WCROC, and later asked

the Mayor to provide more tax funding for the creeks. The community feels the project will increase taxes and invited WCROC members to conduct an informational meeting in the community to dispel misinformation. Mr. Ramirez explained that WCROC does not have any authority over property taxes; and offered information on upcoming workshops the City/County is hosting to provide information to the public on property tax.

Rita Maria Contreras Avery, did inquire whether or not the property tax information session by the City/County, was on Election Day. Mr. Ramirez reiterated that the workshop is not an RA event, but rather a City/County event. Mr. Mast reminded the audience of early voting opportunities; to enable citizens to not have a conflict.

#### **VIII. Miscellaneous Items**

Dr. Platt commented that the migratory water birds and the WCROC's efforts to provide habitat for them may conflict with City of San Antonio Park's strategy to get the water birds out of San Antonio. Mr. Boese explained that the RA is in negotiations with the City's Drainage Department that is responsible for creek maintenance and the County (funder at \$40 million) for a long-term agreement for the RA to handle the maintenance of the creeks, but must come with funding.

Anna Alicia Romero stated that CoSA used to spray for overgrowth of the vegetation and asked if there is a communication process to advise the City not to spray. Mr. Mast explained that the USACE's Adaptive Management Plan will operate like the one for the Mission Reach, so it will certainly address this issue post-project, and the spray will not occur in the future.

#### **IX. Adjourn**

Mr. Ramirez thanked everyone for their attendance and input. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 7:10 p.m.

# Westside Creeks Restoration Oversight Committee - April 2023

April 18, 2023 · 4:47 PM · ID: 609203941

Chat Log C:\Users\skeshav\OneDrive - San Antonio River Authority\Documents\ChatLog  
Westside Creeks Restoration Oversight Committee \_ April 2023 2023\_04\_18 19\_13.rtf

**SARA Meeting-1 (to Everyone):** 5:15 PM: Good Evening members of the public please use this online form to sign-in

**SARA Meeting-1 (to Everyone):** 5:15 PM: <https://forms.office.com/r/tW9P6k2CGY>

**SARA Meeting-1 (to Everyone):** 5:17 PM: Committee Members - your attendance will be taken at roll call. I will also be monitoring the attendance for any late arrivals

**SARA Meeting-1 (to Everyone):** 6:00 PM: Just a reminder, if you havent already please take a moment to sign in

**SARA Meeting-1 (to Everyone):** 6:00 PM: <https://forms.office.com/r/tW9P6k2CGY>

**SARA Meeting-1 (to Everyone):** 6:05 PM: Bare with us working out audio

**Zach Rosen (RES) (to Everyone):** 6:08 PM: Can you share sign-in link?

**SARA Meeting-1 (to Everyone):** 6:11 PM: Yes here is the sign-in link

<https://forms.office.com/r/tW9P6k2CGY>

**Anna Alicia Romero- SAISD (to Everyone):** 6:23 PM: Let us at SAISD know how we may help.

**SARA Meeting-1 (to Anna Alicia Romero- SAISD ):** 6:24 PM: Yes, thank you Anna- Alicia. We will definetly share the flyers with you

**Anna Alicia Romero- SAISD (to Everyone):** 6:24 PM: We might also have facilities available.

**SARA Meeting-1 (to Anna Alicia Romero- SAISD ):** 6:26 PM: Yes, thank you. Would like to touch base with you on this as well. I will reach out sometime this week!

**Anna Alicia Romero- SAISD (to Everyone):** 6:26 PM: 👍

**SARA Meeting-1 (to Everyone):** 6:39 PM: Just a reminder, if you havent already please take a moment to sign in

<https://forms.office.com/r/tW9P6k2CGY>

**Anna Alicia Romero- SAISD (to Everyone):** 6:47 PM: Agree.

**Anna Alicia Romero- SAISD (to Everyone):** 6:47 PM: On tour idea

**Steve Graham (to Everyone):** 6:48 PM: Caller 03, please mute

**Westside Creeks (Rita Maria Avery) (to Everyone):** 6:54 PM: I am online, Rita María

**Westside Creeks (to Everyone):** 7:05 PM: Is that Election Day???

**SARA Meeting-1 (to Westside Creeks):** 7:10 PM: Ms. Avery Contreras - This is Meera Nguyen. I wanted to give you a heads up. I will reach out to you this week with some questions. I do not think I have your full name and information

**Anna Alicia Romero- SAISD (to Everyone):** 7:10 PM: Have a question

**Anna Alicia Romero- SAISD (to Everyone):** 7:10 PM: About COSA spraying along drainage

**Westside Creeks (to Everyone):** 7:12 PM: Native short grasses!!