

The Once and Future River

In response to catastrophic flooding, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers constructed 31 miles of trapezoidal flood control channels on the San Antonio River and four creeks on the west side of San Antonio. The river's shape and path was altered significantly in order to improve the rivers ability to move floodwaters away from San Antonio. Unfortunately, no thought had been given to the ecological, historical and cultural value of the river to the region. Through the Mission Reach Project, funded primarily by Bexar County and with additional funding from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, City of San Antonio, San Antonio River Foundation and San Antonio Water System, the ecosystem of the San Antonio River is being restored from a trapezoidal storm water channel into a functioning habitat that will reestablish ecological functions lost after the original channelization. The San Antonio River Authority will be responsible for operations and maintenance of the Mission Reach after the project is constructed.

If You Restore It, They Will Return

A word play on a famous movie quote holds true for the San Antonio River. Through ecosystem restoration, not only will the San Antonio River be restored to a healthier state, but numerous species of native animals will return to the area after years of living elsewhere. In the sky, ospreys, red-tailed hawks, ducks, egrets, cormorants and a host of other birds will return to feed on the fish and invertebrates that will thrive in the restored river and native vegetation that lines its banks. The wildlife is already returning to the parts of the Mission Reach where construction is completed, and the habitat there has yet to reach full maturity. And, not only will wildlife return to the restored river, but humans will return to enjoy the restored river as well!



Riparian Ecosystem Restoration

The Mission Reach will restore hundreds of acres of riparian and aquatic habitat through the process of ecosystem restoration. Initial riparian habitat restoration will plant over 60 species of native grasses and wildflowers. Following establishment of the grasses and wildflowers, over 23,000 individual specimens of native trees and shrubs representing over 30 species will be planted. This native ecosystem will play a very active role in stabilizing the river banks, filtering pollutants, providing habitat and conserving native plant biodiversity.

Aquatic Ecosystem Restoration

When it comes to healthy river channels, diversity is a good thing. But channelization for flood control on the San Antonio River standardized the river channel, subsequently decreasing aquatic diversity. Ecosystem restoration will

return some aquatic habitat diversity to the San Antonio River by incorporating riffles (A), pools (B) and runs (C).

Riffles are shallow, turbulent segments of the river that incorporate oxygen into the water and provide habitat for aquatic insects that are consumed by fish. Pools are slow-moving, deep regions that clean the water by allowing sediment to settle, and they also provide cooler refuges for larger fish. Runs are river sections of average velocity and depth that connect riffles and pools; while important, it is not good for the river to be one big run as it was after channelization.

Embayments are unique aquatic habitats adjacent to the river channel. Embayments have slow-moving or still water, allowing them to process pollutants while providing a place for sediment to settle. Embayments also provide important habitats for certain freshwater plants, aquatic insects and migratory waterfowl.



MISSION REACH

Ecosystem Restoration and Recreation Project



The Mission Reach Ecosystem Restoration and Recreation Project is transforming an eight mile stretch of the San Antonio River into a quality riparian woodland ecosystem. This unique project restores riverine features and riparian woodlands, reintroduces native plants, enhances aquatic habitat, reconnects cultural and historical features and includes hike and bike trails and other recreational amenities.

The Mission Reach will have over 15 miles of trails stretching from Lone Star Boulevard to Mission Espada, with direct street connections at Lone Star Boulevard, Theo Avenue, Mission Road, Roosevelt Avenue, Southcross Boulevard, VFW Boulevard, Padre Park and City Park. As part of the trail system, six footbridges will allow pedestrians to cross

over the river throughout the project. All of this will complement and connect the Spanish colonial missions through "portals" between the trails at river level and the missions at street level. The portals at Missions Concepción, San José, San Juan and Espada will tell the unique story of each mission and of the people who once lived there.



A Timeless Cultural Resource

Archeological evidence shows that humans have been living around the San Antonio River for at least 10,000 years. Native Americans historically used the river as their source of food, materials and water.

When Spanish explorers arrived in the 1700s, they built their missions and their lives around the river's abundance. The San Antonio River was the primary source of water for daily consumption as well as agricultural irrigation. The man-made ditch system that provided irrigation to farmlands is known as the acequias, and the acequias are still functioning today. These missions thrived on the river as the center of cultural and community development for what would eventually grow to be the City of San Antonio.

Today, four of the historic missions constructed by the Spanish along the San Antonio River and

Additional Amenities

In addition to the trails, there will be other recreational amenities throughout the Mission Reach funded by the Bexar County Venue Tax. Welcoming picnic tables, park benches and shade canopies will invite visitors to sit down and relax. Further complementing the Mission Reach are public art installations that have been paid for with private money raised by the San Antonio River Foundation.



some of the remaining acequias are part of the San Antonio Missions National Historic Park. The Mission Reach Project is helping to reconnect the river to the citizens, surrounding community and historic missions. Modern day San Antonians might not rely on the river for all of their daily needs as the Native Americans and Spanish explorers once did, but connections with the river can improve their quality of life.



Respect Your River

Please help keep the Mission Reach enjoyable for everyone by properly disposing of your litter or even picking up litter you may see on the trails. Be a responsible pet owner and pick up after your pet. Being so close to the river means that everything left behind goes straight into the river. This is not only unsightly, but can also be a health hazard to those using the river for recreation. And please, do not feed the wildlife.

Anne Wallace • "The Once and Future River"
Pedestrian footbridge at the confluence of the San Antonio River and San Pedro Creek showing images of native flora and fauna.

Printed on paper containing recycled fiber
Printed with soy ink

Pre-channelization: Roosevelt Park near the Lonestar Brewery, circa 1955
Post-channelization: Roosevelt Park near the Lonestar Brewery, circa 2007
Current: Roosevelt Park near the Lonestar Brewery, circa 2010

Image courtesy of National Parks Service



Museum Reach

0 mi.

1 mi.

2 mi.

3 mi.

4 mi.

5 mi.

6 mi.

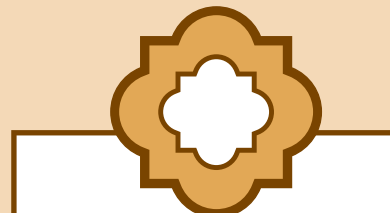
7 mi.

8 mi.

9 mi.

10 mi.

NORTH



SAN ANTONIO RIVER WALK

- Visitor Information
- Public Restrooms
- Points of Interest
- Picnic Area
- Water Fountain
- Historic Mission
- Parking
- Accessible River Walk Path

On Street Bike Route

This exhibit is for demonstration purposes only and is subject to change. No warranties or representations express or implied, concerning the actual design, location or character of the facilities shown in this exhibit are intended.

HIKE & BIKE PATH
CLOSED FOR CONSTRUCTION
SOUTH OF MISSION RD.

Map Labels: Museum Reach, The Alamo, HemisFair Plaza, Convention Ctr., Institute of Texan Cultures, Alamodome, Durango Blvd., King William District, Main Plaza, El Mercado, San Antonio River, San Pedro Creek, Riverside Golf Course, San Antonio Missions National Historical Park, Espada Dam, Espada Aqueduct, Stinson Municipal Airport, Brooks Air Force Base, Acequia de San Juan, Acequia de Espada, Historic Piedras Creek, San Antonio Missions: San Jose, San Juan, Espada, Concepcion.

Streets: N. Alamo St., Broadway, Navarro St., St. Mary's St., Travis St., Houston St., Dolerosa St., Nueva St., S. Main St., S. Flores St., S. Laredo St., S. Alamo St., E. Guenther St., S. St. Mary's St., S. Presa St., Lone Star Blvd., Lone Star Brewery, Probandt St., E. Theo Ave., Felisa St., Mitchell St., Steves Ave., Roosevelt Ave., Padre Dr., Napier Ave., Mission Rd., March Ave., Ashley Rd., Southcross Blvd., Pyron St., SW Military Dr., S. Flores St., Villamain Rd., Graf Rd., South Presa St., Espada Rd., Shane Rd., Camino Coahuilteca.

Highways: Loop 13, Loop 37, Loop 10, Loop 410, 536.

Landmarks: Alamodome, Convention Ctr., Institute of Texan Cultures, King William District, Main Plaza, El Mercado, Villa Finale, Steves Homestead, Blue Star Arts Complex, Yturri-Edmonds House & Mill, Confluence Park, Concepcion Park, Mission County Park, Padre Park, San Antonio Missions National Historical Park, Espada Park, San Antonio Missions National Historical Park, Espada Aqueduct, Stinson Municipal Airport, Brooks Air Force Base, Acequia de San Juan, Acequia de Espada, Historic Piedras Creek, San Antonio Missions: San Jose, San Juan, Espada, Concepcion.

Icons: Visitor Information (i), Public Restrooms (restroom), Points of Interest (star), Picnic Area (picnic table), Water Fountain (W), Historic Mission (mission), Parking (P), Accessible River Walk Path (wheelchair), On Street Bike Route (orange line).