



NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
Thursday, September 7, 2006

Contact: Erika Resendiz
RJ RIVERA Associates, Inc.
(210) 785-0888
resendiz@rjrivera.com

Restoring the Mission Reach of the San Antonio River *Corps of Engineers Presents 30% Final Designs at Upcoming Community Meetings*

SAN ANTONIO – The United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), in cooperation with local project partner agencies, is hosting two community meetings to present an update on the design for the ecosystem restoration and recreation improvements planned for the Mission Reach of the San Antonio River Improvements Project. The community meetings will be held:

Monday, September 18, 2006

6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.
Connell Middle School - Cafeteria
400 Hot Wells Blvd
San Antonio, TX 78223

Tuesday, September 19, 2006

6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.
St. P.J.'s Children's Home
Valero Recreational Therapy and
Education Center
919 Mission Road
San Antonio, TX 78210

The two community meetings will have identical agendas and feature numerous displays to visually demonstrate the planned improvements to the eight-mile section of the San Antonio River extending from Lone Star Boulevard to south of Mission Espada.

"The San Antonio River Improvements Project will benefit the San Antonio community in many ways," stated Todd Smith, USACE Mission Reach Project Manager. "The Historic Mission Reach phase will take this portion of the river back in time so it can once again be enjoyed by everyone in the community."

Each community meeting will begin with a presentation on the 30% Final Design work as presented by the USACE and their consultant team led by Carter Burgess. The overall concept for the Final Design is to restore the ecosystem of the river, including wildlife and aquatic habitat, while maintaining or improving the flood control functions of the river. The project includes planting approximately 24,000 new trees in the river channel, widening the channel in certain areas, and laying the slopes back to reduce the "engineered" look of the current river.

After the presentation, participants will be able to visit different stations to view maps and renderings of the various components of improvements planned for the Mission Reach of the San Antonio River. Each station will have technical staff available to answer questions regarding the project. The local USACE partners include the San Antonio River Authority, the City of San Antonio, and Bexar County.

--MORE--

Some of the improvements that will be presented at these public meetings include:

Ecosystem Restoration Features:

- Embayments – Shallow, damp areas along the river, parallel to the channel, that are prime wildlife habitats
- Run-Pool-Riffle River Sequences – Features that recreate the chute-pond-rapids sequences on natural rivers
- Tributary Mouths – Damp or wet areas where river tributaries or storm water outfalls empty into the river
- Aquatic and Riparian Vegetation
 - 33 different planting “suites” or palettes, types of area-specific plantings grouped together according to tree density and understory, natural plant succession, and relative soil moisture necessary along various points of the Historic Mission Reach
 - installation of a Bottomland Hardwood Forest downstream of Ashley Road
 - *SPECIAL NOTE: All trees will be planted as seedlings, ¼ inch to ½ inch diameter, 2 ft to 3 ft tall. The community meetings will offer area residents an opportunity to learn more about the planting process and what they can expect to see once the Final Design is 100% complete and the project moves into construction.*

Amenities & Recreational Features

- Hike and bike trails
- Pedestrian bridges over river pilot channel
- Shade structures
- Picnic tables
- Trash receptacles
- Interpretive and directional signage

In the 1960s and 1970s, the vast majority of the Historic Mission Reach was stripped of vegetation and its natural landscape, as part of efforts to redirect and widen the river channel to reduce flooding

The San Antonio River Improvements Project is a \$198.7 million on-going investment by the City of San Antonio, Bexar County, the USACE and the San Antonio River Foundation in flood control, amenities, ecosystem restoration and recreational improvements along 13 miles of the San Antonio River from Josephine Street south to Loop 410 South. The USACE completed a General Reevaluation Report (GRR) in September 2004 which recommended a \$96.1 million ecosystem restoration and recreation project to bring back the natural habitat to a segment of the San Antonio River previously channelized for flood control purposes by the USACE. Construction on the first of four phases of the project is scheduled to begin in June 2007 with construction on all phases scheduled for completion by 2012.

For more information on the upcoming community meetings or the San Antonio River Improvement Project, please call (210) 302-3666 or visit www.sanantonioriver.org

--END--