



Contact:

Karen Bishop Kubena
San Antonio River Authority
(210) 227-1373 office
(210) 379-7710 cell

www.sanantonioriver.org

NEWS RELEASE

January 7, 2004

Connections the Focus of Groundbreaking on Eagleland Segment of the San Antonio River Improvements Project

Connections was the theme of a groundbreaking celebration today when local and federal governmental partners joined the community in marking the construction start on the Eagleland segment of the San Antonio River Improvements Project.

The Eagleland project is an \$8.2 million River Improvements Project that, for the first time along the San Antonio River, connects environmental restoration, flood management, and amenities in a single project area. The project area spans from Guenther Street south to the San Antonio River Tunnel Outlet at Lone Star Boulevard.

During the 1950's and '60's, that segment of the San Antonio River was straightened and channelized to increase the River's flood water carrying capacity.

"The Eagleland project is a comprehensive river restoration and flood management project that will yield numerous benefits to the citizens of our community," stated Bexar County Judge Nelson W. Wolff. "New technologies that were not available a half century ago now make it possible to balance concerns for the environment and concerns for flood management."

Eagleland is the next segment to be completed on the San Antonio River Improvements Project and is the first to include the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) as a funding partner.

"Though the Corps remains committed to the sound flood damage reduction practices that produced the channel improvements back in the 50's and 60's, our focus today is to ensure that conservation, environmental preservation and restoration be achieved while still providing communities protection from floods," stated Col. John R. Minahan, USACE, Fort Worth Division, who noted that this new focus makes it possible for the Corps to work with San Antonio's local governments in bringing environmental restoration to the Eagleland Segment.

Eagleland is also the first segment of the River Improvements Project to be implemented south of downtown, and it will connect San Antonio's world-renowned River Walk to neighborhoods in South San Antonio.

"With the Mission Trails Project, new pathways, canoe-friendly waterways, historical displays and other amenities, we will re-connect the river's past to its future," stated Jim Johnson, San

Antonio River Authority Director representing Bexar County District 1. “We will connect our world-renowned river walk to forward-looking neighborhoods of San Antonio’s Southside.”

Improvements to the Eagleland segment will include:

Environmental Restoration:

- Removing concrete channel debris;
- Adding a rock and riffle waterfall-type structure; and
- Reintroducing native vegetation to the channel banks.

Flood Management:

- Armoring the bends in the project area to withstand erosion; and
- Constructing a flood control pool at the base of the S. Alamo Street dam.

Amenities:

- Paving the way for a hike and bike trail system linking the Mission Trails and the heart of downtown.

The project’s funding partners are the USACE, dedicating \$1.8 million toward environmental restoration; Bexar County, funding \$1.3 in flood management infrastructure through the Flood Control Tax; and \$5.1 for hike and bike trail and amenities dedicated by the City of San Antonio, a significant portion of which was approved by voters in the City’s November bond election. The San Antonio River Authority serves as project manager and local sponsor to the USACE.

“This project demonstrates that, by working together, citizens, governments at many levels, and public funds can go a long way in growing a sustainable community,” stated Mayor Ed Garza.

Project Timeline:

- The earthwork and hardscaping that constitute the flood management infrastructure are scheduled to be complete by the end of this year.
- The vegetative component of the environmental restoration work is slated for completion by the end of 2006.
- The hike and bike trail work should also be complete by the end of 2006.
- The amenities should be completed during 2007.

“I encourage all citizens of Bexar County and San Antonio to remain connected to and excited about the River Improvements Projects,” stated Lila Cockrell, Co-chair of the San Antonio River Oversight Committee.

Co-chair Irby Hightower encouraged citizens to learn more about the River Improvements Project by visiting its web site at www.sanantonioriver.org and contacting the various representatives on this citizens’ committee, listed on the web site.