



**News Release
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**For more information contact:
Laura Waldrum (210) 683-8130**

**“River. Life. Love it” Public Outreach Campaign Launched to Help
Protect River Walk**

San Antonio, Texas – The San Antonio River Walk is a world-renowned destination which is consistently one of the top tourist attractions in the State of Texas. The River Walk is undoubtedly the treasured feature of our city, and protecting this valuable natural resource and significant economic generator is an important task. Now, helping to keep the San Antonio River clean is something that everyone who works near, lives by or visits the River Walk can be a part of. This morning at 10:30 a.m., a news conference was held by the River Walk Watershed Alliance (RWWA) at the Hotel Contessa to commemorate the launch of the “River. Life. Love it.” public outreach campaign. The “River. Life. Love it.” public outreach campaign seeks to educate businesses, residents and visitors of the River Walk about what they can do to help improve water quality in the river.

The RWWA was formed to address water quality issues in the River Water watershed and it is comprised of representatives from the City of San Antonio, Bexar County, the San Antonio River Authority, Paseo del Rio, Downtown Alliance, Downtown Residents Association and the San Antonio Water System. A watershed is an area of land that drains to common point, usually a river or stream. The River Walk watershed is comprised of a several block radius around the famed River Walk, and when it rains, storm water run-off drains from this land area directly into the San Antonio River as it flows through the River Walk.

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In recent years, water quality monitoring along the River Walk has indicated an increase in e. coli bacteria levels, which has a negative impact on water quality. Although e. coli bacteria does not often cause harm to humans, there is still a potential for harm to humans and wildlife if they are exposed to the bacteria. Furthermore, the River Walk area is part of a larger river ecosystem that can be damaged by high e. coli levels. The overall goal of the RWWA is to reduce bacteria levels in the River Walk area by 50% over the next several years and to sustain a healthy river by promoting lasting improvements to water quality.

Public input and ideas were closely considered by the RWWA as the “River. Life. Love it.” public outreach campaign was developed. The RWWA held multiple public meetings and conducted interviews with River Walk businesses and residents in order to capture as much of the public’s input as possible. The resulting “River. Life. Love it” public outreach campaign seeks to educate residents and businesses about how they can implement small changes in their daily operations to improve water quality. The campaign also seeks to encourage visitors to refrain from feeding the wildlife on the river. Although it may seem harmless, feeding wildlife actually contributes to high bacteria levels because it allows animal populations to reach numbers that are unnatural for the ecosystem. Additionally, feeding salty and sugary foods (including bread) can cause health problems in animals.

For more information about the RWWA and the “River. Life. Love it.” campaign, contact Karen Bishop at (210) 302-3642, or visit www.RiverLifeLoveit.org.

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