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One day in 2012, I stopped by the San Antonio River Authority (River Authority) main office to visit my sister Linda. The people she introduced me to were so friendly and everyone looked so happy! The positive feeling I received stayed with me and inspired me to apply when I came across a position with the Watershed Parks and Operation department in 2014. I was hired as a Riparian Landscape Technician for the San Antonio River Walk Eagleland section. In this role, I learned about equipment maintenance and repairs and how to landscape native vegetation on a large scale. I then moved to a position with the restoration landscaping crew where I learned so much from my coworkers and the training I was provided. When an opportunity to work with the San Antonio River Walk Mission Reach Operations team came up, I knew I would be able to use my past experience. It was a good fit for me, having been a plumber for over 30 years. Shortly after moving into this role, I got my electrician maintenance license, HAZMAT certification training, and began to do some really intense work on and in the river. Now, I office out of the Environmental Sciences building on Euclid as a Facilities Maintenance Technician, where I have acquired my backflow tester certification through Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ). I have been motivated and inspired by all of the great programs the River Authority has for the public and for the employees. I appreciate that the River Authority is always ready to help an employee better themselves. I have participated in quite a few events over the years such as the art shows, Flotilla Festival, and marathons along the river. My job is exciting, and I am always glad to come to work. I appreciate all of the interesting and knowledgeable people I get to meet and learn from every day. I know we are part of something that benefits the community and our watershed environment. We all share a common mission of being committed to safe, clean, and enjoyable creeks and rivers. I am just happy to be here!

There’s much to celebrate this summer in San Antonio, starting with the one-year anniversary of the San Pedro Creek Culture Park. Bexar County, the San Antonio River Authority (River Authority), and the City of San Antonio worked together to provide a lush, environmentally-conscious park along San Pedro Creek for all to enjoy, and just like the Museum Reach and Mission Reach segments of the River Walk, the San Pedro Creek Culture Park is winning awards. Locally, the park has been recognized for the Mayor’s Choice Award for Best Project (2018) and the Best of the City Ongoing Transformation Award (2019). At the state level, the park received the Grand Award Winner for ACEC Texas Engineering Excellence Award (2018).

In addition to the ongoing success of the San Pedro Creek Culture Park, the River Authority is working on other projects such as the Elmendorf Pool and the Linear Creekway Trails. The Elmendorf Lake Park swimming pool is an addition to Elmendorf Lake Park, which is on the Westside of San Antonio. The pool features a beach entry way and a three-lane lap pool area for exercisers, as well as bubblers, shade structures, and a sitting area. The pool’s grand opening was held on June 15 giving the community a new way to cool off from the summer heat!

The Linear Creekway Trails will soon connect the Westside to the San Antonio River Walk. Trails are being built alongside the Apache, Alazán, and Zarzamora Creeks along with benches, shade structures, and water fountains. With Apache Creek aiming for completion at the end of this year, and Zarzamora and Alazán projected to be complete in 2021, the San Antonio community will eventually be able to hike or bike from Woodlawn Lake all the way to Mission Reach section of the San Antonio River Walk! To learn more about the Linear Creekway Trails project, please go to westsidecreeks.com.
Summer time for many families along the San Antonio River represents a time for shifting gears, renewal, journeys, and discovery. We at the San Antonio River Authority (River Authority) are not strangers to the need to mindfully do the same with one of the primary ways you, and people throughout the world, learn about us: our website.

The River Authority is launching its “new face” this summer with the sincere desire to invite people to discover, or even re-discover, their San Antonio River. These extraordinary works of art are designed to entice both trail-goers and Mission visitors to investigate the installations and discover there is a historic landmark or riverine landscape on the other side. Commissioned by the River Foundation in partnership with the San Antonio River Authority and Bexar County over the past eight years, earlier this summer the art portal collection was completed.

On May 17, the final installation, “Árbol de la Vida: Memorias y Voces de la Tierra” opened. Adorning the steel “Tree of Life” are 704 clay sculptures made by individual community members with the help of artist Margarita Cabrera. The objects tell personal stories of rich traditions that complement ranching heritage themes of Mission Espada.

Journeying north of the “Árbol” to Mission San Juan, visitors will pass through artist Arne Quinze’s “Whispers,” a set of eight multi-dimensional sculptures which reference abstract connections to native tress and a color pallet that includes vibrant hues of wildflowers.

Before heading to Mission San José, trail-goers can rest in latticed shade under the two faceted, cactus-like pads of “CoCobjios,” by artist Mel Chin, which arc in a supporting embrace.

On a two-story coiled stone tower within artist Stacey Levy’s “River Return,” visitors can see the iconic twin crosses of Mission Concepción. Swirling designs etched into pavers meld the curving shapes of water with traditional fleur de lis patterns found on the Mission itself.

The ability to connect culture and nature is vital to understanding San Antonio’s origins. Regardless of where you begin, these spectacular art portals will lead you somewhere new.

The nature of a “portal” is to transition from one place or state of mind to another. Visitors along the Mission Reach of the San Antonio River Walk can experience that passage with four monumental sculptures placed between each of the San Antonio Missions and the San Antonio River. These extraordinary works of art are designed to entice both trail-goers and Mission visitors to investigate the installations and discover there is a historic landmark or riverine landscape on the other side. Commissioned by the River Foundation in partnership with the San Antonio River Authority and Bexar County over the past eight years, earlier this summer the art portal collection was completed.

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The San Antonio River Authority (River Authority) is committed to improving parks and green spaces along creeks and rivers to encourage San Antonio River Basin residents to enjoy and care for our natural resources. The River Authority is proud to announce it is partnering with the Falls City Lions Club to improve the Veterans Memorial Park in Falls City.

Veterans Memorial Park, which is located at 703 W. Elwood in Falls City along the San Antonio River in Karnes County, was destroyed by a flood in 2002, leaving a dilapidated wooden playground structure, a worn-out swing set and no amenities for children with disabilities.

The Falls City Lions Club established a goal to restore the park to offer a safe place for all children, including the physically disabled, to enjoy, and also honor veterans of Falls City and Karnes County. They plan to upgrade the existing swing set and install new commercial-grade, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant playground equipment, designed for children ages 2 to 12-years old.

The River Authority supports the Lions Club’s project because it will inspire actions for healthy creeks and rivers and support a safe and enjoyable green space near the San Antonio River. The River Authority has kicked-off the Lions Club of Falls City San Antonio River Authority Challenge Grant for 2019, and we are challenging area residents to match the $25,000 grant to help in the restoration of the Veterans Memorial Park by donating today.

The restoration will be largely funded through local fundraising efforts, but the $25,000 pledge by the River Authority is a huge incentive in encouraging other local agencies, groups, and individuals to contribute local matching funds. Stay connected with the Lions Club on Facebook for more information about a barbecue cook-off fundraiser that is being planned for September.

The Falls City Lions Club was established on March 31, 2015. The Club serves the community of Falls City and the surrounding area by aiding in disaster relief, providing scholarships and initiating community involvement. The Club is also partnering with the City Council of Falls City to pave the way for future improvements to Veterans Memorial Park.

For more information or to make a donation, contact Falls City Lions Club President Kristen Jendrusch at fallscitylionsclub@gmail.com
On June 19, 2019, the Board of Directors of the San Antonio River Authority (River Authority) adopted a $257.2 million budget for Fiscal Year (FY) 2019/20 that funds the operations and a variety of projects and programs that support the organization’s mission: committed to safe, clean, enjoyable creeks and rivers. Of the $257.2 million, the General Fund portion equals $47.6 million. The General Fund is primarily supported by the collection of property tax at the proposed tax rate of 1.858 cents per $100 of valuation, a rate unchanged from the previous fiscal year.

A main objective in the development of the annual budget is to target activities that contribute to planning and execution of the River Authority’s strategic plan and organization priorities. The River Authority continues to work towards establishing and building upon public and private partnerships to leverage its resources for the benefit of the district. The FY 2019/20 Annual Budget is highlighted by several instances of using external funding sources, which supplement existing resources, to advance projects and the existing levels of service provided. Prime examples of this are demonstrated by advancement of several major capital improvement projects, to include San Pedro Creek Culture Park, Escondido Creek Parkway, and the expansion of the Salitrillo Wastewater Treatment Plant. The budget authorizes expenditures of just over $138 million for these and other authorized capital improvement projects. Such efforts highlight the River Authority’s ability to coordinate and execute across multiple community partners.

For FY 2019/20, the River Authority has allocated an additional $5.25 million in General Fund revenues to support new and ongoing projects across five goals identified within the strategic plan of the agency. The new fiscal year begins year two for several key initiatives that were launched in the FY 2018/19 Adopted Budget. Past events such as Hurricane Harvey and other community initiatives throughout the district significantly informed a multi-year commitment to improve our capabilities specifically in the areas of floodplain mapping, predicting flooding, low impact development (LID), water quality modeling, and recreation. The continuation of funding for these projects was a top priority of the adopted budget.

To begin addressing long term facility needs, the budget has $1 million in initial funding for the planning and phased implementation of necessary improvements at the River Authority’s headquarters facility. Additionally, the budget supports a multiyear effort to complete the improvement, acquisition and development of administration and maintenance facilities to meet long term space needs and enhance operational efficiencies for the organization.

“The River Authority strives to improve the quality of life for the communities we serve through our expertise and services and this budget is designed to allow us to fulfill our responsibilities to best of our capabilities.”

- Suzanne Scott, General Manager
“The budget for the upcoming fiscal year contains projects and activities that contribute to the planning and execution of our strategic plan for the benefit of our agency’s four-county service district,” said River Authority General Manager Suzanne Scott. “The River Authority strives to improve the quality of life for the communities we serve through our expertise and services and this budget is designed to allow us to fulfill our responsibilities to best of our capabilities.”

The River Authority is authorized by the State Legislature to collect an ad valorem tax at a maximum of 2 cents per $100 of assessed property value. The tax rate must be set at the same rate throughout the River Authority’s four-county district including Bexar, Wilson, Karnes and Goliad counties and may only be used for planning, operations and maintenance activities. The San Antonio River Authority Board of Directors will take action on the final tax rate in September after receipt of the final property valuations in late July. A public hearing will be held prior to adoption of the tax rate.

Additional highlights and organization narratives can be found within the budget document posted at sara-tx.org.
Each year, the San Antonio River Authority (River Authority) undertakes a comprehensive strategic planning and budget development process. The process involves a thorough assessment of the goals and opportunities emerging within each department and program at the River Authority. For Fiscal Year (FY) 2019/20, which runs from July 1, 2019 to June 30, 2020, the River Authority Board of Directors and staff worked to identify and prioritize initiatives related to safe, clean, enjoyable creeks and rivers.

For Wilson County and the southern basin, the budget conversations produced continued investment in key partnerships that maximize resources for the benefit of the watershed. The River Authority’s cost share assistance program for the implementation of water quality conservation practices in cooperation with local soil and water conservation districts and the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) continues to be funded in the FY 2019/20 budget. As do the popular Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) Collection events that provide southern basin residents an opportunity to recycle oils, paints, unused pharmaceuticals, electronic waste and old tires. Increased outreach for the HHW events has also been included in the budget. The River Authority’s water quality monitoring through our own stream monitoring and engagement in the state’s Clean Rivers Program are funded to assist us in assessing the health of the watershed.

This is also the second year for several key long-term initiatives that seek to improve flood awareness and preparedness. These include the updating and improvement of floodplain maps, continuing our participation in the Federal Emergency Management Agency’s (FEMA) risk Mapping, Assessment and Planning program, predictive flood modeling and low impact development implementation. Continued funding for these initiatives was a top priority for the board.

This year’s process resulted in appropriations totaling $257.2 million and is built on a tax rate of 1.858 cents per $100 of property valuation. This rate is unchanged from the previous FY rate and falls below the rollback rate even as property values continue to grow across the district. The River Authority places a high value on responsible stewardship of public resources, and we budget and operate conservatively to perform our mission.

I recently found out about Texas Logperch (Percina carbonaria) from one of our biologists, whom had just completed surveying the creeks and rivers in the San Antonio River Watershed. Texas Logperch are native fish found exclusively in four Texas river basins: the Brazos, Colorado, Guadalupe and San Antonio. This species reaches a maximum length of about seven inches, easily fitting into the palm of a person’s hand. It also has dark bands running vertically along its sides.

This little fish prefers to live within riffles, shallow areas of rivers with rocks along the bottom. Their torpedo-shaped body and flat head are perfect adaptations for this swift environment. They hide under rocks to find refuge from predators. You might find it endearing that, when hungry, they flip rocks over with their lips to eat aquatic insects living along the bottom of the river.

Another interesting fact is that logperch are an “intolerant” species, meaning they are sensitive to water quality. For some time, San Antonio River Authority (River Authority) scientists would rarely find any logperch in Bexar during fish surveys. However, within the last 15 years, River Authority scientists have started finding them more frequently and in greater numbers in the Upper San Antonio River in Bexar County. Earlier this year, the River Authority field crew recorded 20 logperch at a monitoring station on the San Antonio River upstream of the Media River Confluence, and for the first time, two logperch were identified in the Mission Reach section of the San Antonio River Walk. While there is certainly more work to be done to improve area creeks and rivers, the growing presence of logperch in the San Antonio River can be interpreted as an indicator that water quality is improving. So, on your next visit to your favorite creek or river in the San Antonio River Watershed, be on the lookout for this small fish, that can tell you a big story.
Freshwater mussels are one of the strangest and most misunderstood groups of organisms in the world’s lakes and rivers. They are also one of the most ecologically important due to the vast number of ecosystem services they provide to our rivers such as contaminant filtration, increasing food availability for other aquatic animals, and increasing habitat along the river bottom. The San Antonio River is home to a variety of these creatures and biologists at the San Antonio River Authority (River Authority) have several active studies that aim to better understand and protect them.

It all started in 2014 with the inception of the Holistic Mussel Project. River Authority scientists have searched all 240 miles of the San Antonio River counting, measuring and identifying every mussel they came across all in an effort to understand the species and size distribution of these animals. While it was not a huge surprise, it has become abundantly clear that the number of species, as well as the overall abundance of freshwater mussels, drastically decreases as you move in an upstream direction towards downtown San Antonio. However, scientists presume that a thriving population of mussels would have once existed upstream into the reach that is now the San Antonio River Walk.

The Mission Reach Ecosystem Restoration and Recreation Project (under the umbrella of the San Antonio River Improvements Project), completed in 2013, has improved the instream and riparian habitats and subsequently enhanced the biological resiliency of this eight-mile stretch of river. These improvements inspired River Authority biologists to examine whether or not a mass scale reintroduction of freshwater mussels into this reach would be advisable. These scientists are conducting a mussel survivability and growth study to determine how a small number of individuals housed in the Mission Reach section of the San Antonio River Walk fares in comparison to wild mussels in the lower basin.

The River Authority is also partnering with United States Fish & Wildlife Service to develop ways to produce large amounts of juvenile mussels in a lab. These efforts are happening simultaneously so that if the Mission Reach section of the San Antonio River Walk is deemed adequate for mussel survival and growth, scientists will be ready for a reintroduction. A mussel reintroduction like this one would have huge ecological benefits for the waters of the San Antonio River as well as putting the San Antonio River on the map as the first urban river reintroduction of its kind.

Learn more about SARA’s conservation efforts by visiting sara-tx.org or these popular social media sites.

@sanantonioriver
FREE!

**BAT LOCO BASH**

TUESDAY, AUGUST 6, 6 P.M. - 9 P.M.

Learn about bats and see thousands emerge from under the I-35 bridge!

Bat Parade • Balloon Bat Wings • Live Music
Educational Activities • Food Trucks

Special Appearances by Echo the Bat, SA Batman, Batwoman and Bat Girl
Photo Opportunity with licensed 1966 Batmobile™

Let’s get social! Tag your photos with #BATLOCO!

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**MAP LEGEND**

- Bat Loco Event (street level)
- River Level Access
- ADA Access Points
- Bat Colony

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**KIDCATION WEEK**

SAN ANTONIO RIVER AUTHORITY

SAN ANTONIO RIVER FOUND.

TEXAS PARKS & WILDLIFE

BAT CONSERVATION INTERNATIONAL

batcon.org
On May 25, 2019, the San Antonio River Authority (River Authority) was joined by the City of San Antonio, Bexar County, and project partners to commemorate the 10th anniversary of the San Antonio River Walk’s Museum Reach segment. The public was encouraged to join in the celebration as Museum Reach stakeholders hosted events throughout the entire segment the weekend of May 24-26 as part of the Decennial Fest 4 All. The River Authority also hosted events on the segment that included a unique opportunity to paddle the Museum Reach and a free festival that featured live music, food trucks, and kid-friendly activities. The celebration was also an opportunity to highlight the economic and cultural developments the project has spurred over the past ten years.

Economic data gathered by the River Authority indicates that in the 10 years since the opening of the Museum Reach, the $72 million public investment in the river served as a catalyst to return nearly $2 billion in construction investment from Lexington Ave. to Hildebrand Ave. The data showed that the project stimulated far more investment than what was projected for in the 2007 economic study estimate, and it did so in less than 10 years, which is a shorter horizon than the 2007 study predicted. Other economic points of interest included: land values between Lexington and Josephine St. have increased over 270% since 2009; over 3,500 housing units have been developed, and over 2,100,000 sq ft of office space and retail space has been developed.

Over the years, the expansion of the River Walk north of downtown with the Museum Reach segment has attracted locals and visitors to engage with the San Antonio River and enjoy the cultural amenities that are found throughout the segment. The River Authority installed a trail counter along the Museum Reach near the lock and dam in June 2014. It counts both pedestrians and cyclists and determines if they are going north or south. As of May 2019, it has counted a total foot traffic of 1,009,804 counts and 128,912 cyclist counts for a total count of both pedestrian and cyclists of 1,138,716.

Want to take part in the celebration? Join us for our upcoming events, which are free to the public, like the annual Bat Loco Bash on Tuesday, August 6 and the Museum Reach River of Lights on Saturday, December 7. We also encourage you to bring your loved ones and visit some of the flourishing businesses and art work along the trail.

To learn more about the Museum Reach 10th Anniversary celebration and to plan your visit to the segment, please visit sara-tx.org.
The State of Texas’ 86th Legislative Session produced significant legislation to help Texas and the San Antonio River Basin to mitigate and overcome past and future flood events. The San Antonio River Authority’s (River Authority) watershed-based flood planning expertise and successful governmental collaboration with the City of San Antonio, Bexar County, and many other communities within the basin was specifically highlighted by leaders in the legislature as the model flood planning program to follow as they pushed for more investment for flood planning and disaster relief throughout the state.

At the beginning of the legislative session, Governor Abbott identified disaster recovery as one of his five emergency items. Fortunately, the governor’s priority was acted upon by the legislature and several of the bills the River Authority supported have been signed into law. Below is a quick summary:

- Senate Bill 7 creates the Flood Infrastructure and the Texas Infrastructure Resiliency funds that will provide funding to eligible flood planning and mitigation projects. The Texas Infrastructure Resiliency Fund is split into several accounts. The Floodplain Management, Hurricane Harvey Recovery, Federal Matching, and Flood Plan Implementation accounts will fund a variety of disaster recovery and flood mitigation projects.

- Senate Bill 8 creates a statewide flood planning process similar to the regional and state water planning process.

- Senate Bill 339 requires residential property sellers to disclose information about floodplains, flood pools, floodways, and reservoirs. Sellers are required to disclose whether their property is located partly or wholly within the 100-year or 500-year floodplain.

- Senate Bill 442 requires insurers to provide notification to policyholders when their policies do not include flood insurance. General homeowner’s insurance does not cover flood damage so this notification will help property owners make more informed insurance purchase decisions.

- House Joint Resolution 4 proposes a constitutional amendment creating the flood infrastructure fund to assist in the financing of drainage, flood mitigation, and flood control projects. If approved by voters on November 5, 2019, the amendment will appropriate funds from the Economic Stabilization Fund (Rainy Day Fund).

These new laws will increase our state’s flood preparedness and resiliency. The River Authority was pleased to share our flood planning expertise to help inform legislation and will continue to work with the state agencies who are now charged with putting this legislation into action so we all can benefit from the state’s leadership and investment to protect our families and property from future flooding.