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## News Release

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### **SAN ANTONIO RIVER AUTHORITY ADOPTS BUDGET**

*Support for safe, clean and enjoyable creeks and rivers*

**(SAN ANTONIO)** - On June 20, 2018, the Board of Directors of the San Antonio River Authority (SARA) adopted a \$222.4 million budget for Fiscal Year (FY) 2018/19, with a General Fund budget of \$44.6 million. The budget is based on a proposed tax rate of \$0.01858, which would be the first tax rate increase for SARA since the FY 2013/14 budget. The approved budget, which begins on July 1, 2018, supports projects and organization goals that advance the agency's commitment to safe, clean and enjoyable creeks and rivers.

"This budget focuses on addressing the important needs of the watershed in the areas of flood risk management, water quality and watershed sustainability and nature-based recreation," said Board Chairman, Darrell T. Brownlow, Ph.D. "The Board and staff have worked closely together to ensure we provide transparency and accountability to all our constituency throughout this budget process."

The FY 2018/19 budget for the River Authority totals \$222,460,074 across all funds. This includes expenditure appropriations as well as all reserve funds. This represents a decrease from the FY 2017/18 Adopted Budget mainly due to the completion of partner funded capital improvement projects.

"This budget reflects SARA's response to lessons learned following Hurricane Harvey and invests in state-of-the-art technology and flood risk management tools that will make our basin communities more resilient as we prepare for the reality of more intense and destructive storm events," said SARA General Manager Suzanne Scott. "Strategic and timely investments to update floodplain maps, enhance our predictive flood modeling capabilities and improve water quality through sustainable development practices prepare our region for the population growth we're experiencing."

The FY 2018/19 budget consists of the following major fund areas of activity: Capital Improvement Funds, \$136.35 million; General Fund, \$44.6 million; Utility Operations Funds, \$21.6 million; Special Revenue Funds, \$9.2 million; and Other Funds, \$10.7 million. Budget highlights include:

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### **FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT**

- For more than 80 years, cities and counties within SARA's District, and the Federal government, have relied on SARA's engineering and technical expertise in flood management and risk reduction. With the documented increases in the intensity and destruction of major storms, such as Hurricane Harvey, ensuring that hydraulic and hydrology information, rainfall data, land use changes, floodplain maps and watershed and capital improvement master plans stay current is the most cost-effective way to prepare and respond to the impact of these storms.
- SARA is fast-tracking the development of predictive flood modeling technology that will provide first responders innovative tools to avoid loss of life and protect property during heavy rain and flood events.
- SARA is providing the most up-to-date and dynamic floodplain maps, flood risk products and watershed master plans. This critical information will help individuals understand their level of flood risk. It will be used to guide investments in capital projects and inform future development decisions.

### **WATER QUALITY & WATERSHED SUSTAINABILITY**

- Since the 1970s, SARA's scientific leadership and targeted efforts have resulted in reducing pollution and trash in our waterways and improving water quality throughout the basin.
- SARA is advancing the use of sustainable development practices that can mitigate the impact of impervious cover within our rapidly urbanizing communities. SARA is promoting the benefits of Low Impact Development (LID) and other green infrastructure approaches that reduce the velocity of and filters pollutants from stormwater to ensure that the sustainability of our natural waterways is prioritized as we move toward the future.
- SARA's budget is dedicated to clean and healthy creeks and rivers. SARA's scientific expertise is generating lasting and recognized improvements in the health of the San Antonio River and its tributaries by leading efforts to protect and enhance water quality and preserve and restore natural habitats and aquatic ecosystems.

### **NATURE-BASED RECREATION**

- Over the past decade, SARA has added nature-based recreational activities throughout the basin including hike and bike trails, paddling trails, picnic and camping areas, playgrounds, fishing, birdwatching and even disc golf courses. These river-based recreational resources have attracted thousands of users to bask in the beauty and enjoyment of nature.
- SARA is investing in a community partnership to create a new park in Karnes County. The budget has funds to support the construction of the Escondido Creek Parkway in Kenedy, which will provide new recreational opportunities in the southern basin.
- SARA is expanding its park operations and maintenance responsibilities in the budget. SARA is operating the new San Pedro Creek Culture Park in Bexar County, adding to SARA's ongoing role of managing the Museum Reach and Mission Reach sections of the San Antonio River Walk.

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The adoption of the budget for FY 2018/19 is based on a proposed tax rate of \$0.01858 per \$100 in property valuation. This rate represents a slight increase from the current rate of \$0.01729 per \$100 in property valuation. This proposed tax rate would result in an estimated \$35.68 in annual taxes paid by the average homeowner across the district. This tax rate will generate an estimated \$30.9 million in revenue to SARA's General Fund. SARA is authorized by the State Legislature to collect an ad valorem tax at a maximum of \$0.02 per \$100 of assessed value. The tax rate must be set at the same rate throughout SARA's four-county district including Bexar, Wilson, Karnes and Goliad counties and may only be used for planning and operations and maintenance activities. SARA's Board of Directors will hold a Special Board Meeting and public hearing on August 15, 2018 after receipt of the final property valuations in July. The 2018 tax rate will be formally voted upon following the public hearing.

Additional highlights and organization narratives can be found within the budget document posted at [www.sara-tx.org](http://www.sara-tx.org).

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*The San Antonio River Authority (SARA) was created by the 45th Texas Legislature on May 5, 1937 and reorganized in 1961 to plan, manage and implement water-related programs and projects within the San Antonio River Basin. The State of Texas empowered SARA to preserve, protect and manage the resources and the ecology of the San Antonio River and its tributaries. To learn more about the SARA visit our website at [www.sara-tx.org](http://www.sara-tx.org).*