

URBANWATERS

FEDERAL PARTNERSHIP

Restoring Urban Waters, Revitalizing Communities

On October 28th the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and other federal agencies announced the San Antonio River basin in Bexar County as the 19th Urban Waters Federal Partnership location. The City of San Antonio and San Antonio River Authority (SARA) are the local leads for the Urban Waters Federal Partnership (UWFP), which seeks to revitalize urban waters and the communities that surround them, transforming overlooked assets into treasured centerpieces and drivers of urban revival. The other local partners, including Bexar County, National Park Service (NPS), San Antonio Housing Authority (SARA) and SAWS, worked together with the City and SARA to nominate projects that look to reconnect people with urban waters by enhancing recreational opportunities, improving water quality, expanding community water resources and restoring and revitalizing urban creeks.

Last year, the San Antonio UWFP welcomed Perla Alarcon, a CDC Fellow working with the San Antonio Metropolitan Health Department, as the location's Ambassador. UWFP Ambassadors serve as coordinators, facilitators, and reporters, providing support in both strategic planning and project implementation. One goal of the ambassador program is to accelerate and prioritize on-the-ground projects that are critical to improving water quality, restoring outdoor spaces, and fostering community stewardship in urban watersheds.

Nationally, the UWFP seeks to reconnect urban communities, particularly those that are overburdened or economically distressed, with their waterways by improving coordination among federal agencies and collaborating with community-led revitalization efforts to improve our Nation's water systems and promote their economic, environmental and social benefits. Specifically, the partnership will:

- Break down federal program silos to promote more efficient and effective use of federal resources through better coordination and targeting of federal investments.
- Recognize and build on local efforts and leadership, by engaging and serving community partners.
- Work with local officials and effective community-based organizations to leverage area resources and stimulate local economies to create local jobs.
- Learn from early and visible victories to fuel long-term action.
- This partnership aligns with President Obama's America's Great Outdoors initiative, which calls on agencies to support innovative community efforts to provide safe, healthy and accessible outdoor spaces.

The San Antonio-area projects presently in the UWFP are:

- Brackish Groundwater Desalination;
- Olmos Basin/San Antonio Zoo Water Quality and Ecosystem Restoration;
- Eastside Promise Neighborhood/Wheatley Choice/Promise Zone and Salado Creek Greenway;
- San Pedro Creek Restoration;
- Westside Creeks Ecosystem Restoration; and
- San Antonio Missions World Heritage and Cultural Connections.