

## **Helping People Think Sustainably: The San Antonio River Restoration**

The San Antonio River Restoration is a multi-year, multi-agency, multi-objective effort to completely rework and restore 13 miles of a stream and its banks through a major metropolitan area. Flood control, ecosystem restoration, economic development, and recreation and cultural access and improvements are all important components of this \$279 million project that includes the San Antonio River Foundation, City of San Antonio, Bexar County, US Army Corps of Engineers, the San Antonio River Authority, the National Park Service and 22 other partners.

### **Building Public Knowledge and Support**

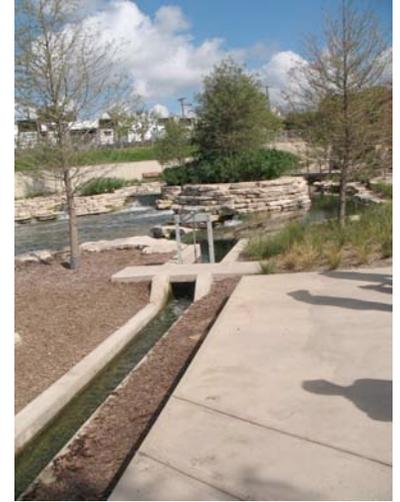
This type of project requires extensive education and outreach to inform and involve stakeholders, develop public involvement, and convince taxpayers of both the need and the potential returns on investment. The San Antonio River Oversight Committee, convened and led by a number of San Antonio community and business leaders, carried the torch for this effort for a number of years before public agencies were convinced to move forward. SONRI President Steve Bonner, through his work with the National Park Service, provided support to this committee and led the development of a key outreach tool, a brochure aimed at helping people who thought of the river as only the famous River Walk downtown or a huge ditch further downstream reconnect with their river, understand its importance to the history and culture of the community, and envision the possibilities of what the river could become. This early effort proved key to helping the public agencies commit funding and resources to the project, and contributed to success in a bond election that was crucial to project funding.

## Adding Sustainability to the Mix

As the Steering Committee developed their vision and concepts for the project, Steve, again through the Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program of the National Park Service, provided research and analysis and technical support to convince project decision makers to think longer term and more sustainably in the development of new and restoration of old infrastructure along the river. Steve conducted an international search of



examples and information on sustainable locks and dams for the Oversight Committee when they added the concept of extending the navigable portion of the River Walk further upstream. In addition, Steve advocated strongly for the restoration of riparian habitat and ecosystems downstream from the River Walk, and natural water filtration and water quality improvement features in the restoration of River Walk



infrastructure. These concepts were embraced by the Oversight Committee, and today are integral parts of the design.

## Helping People Think Sustainably and Ready to Help You

Whether working on massive infrastructure projects or the formation of a new citizens' group, SONRI brings the concepts of balance between economic development, environmental impact and social responsibility to everything we do. SONRI's extensive experience in government, nonprofit organizations, conservation and community planning, and private sector commercial ventures provides our clients with unique perspectives and winning skills that ensure success. SONRI is ready to support you and your partners to help you achieve your goals now and into the future. To learn more about how we can help your organization be a leader, visit [www.sonricorp.com](http://www.sonricorp.com).

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