



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

**OCTOBER 12, 2010**

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**CEREMONY MARKS START OF CONSTRUCTION  
ON FINAL PHASE OF MISSION REACH**

*SAN ANTONIO, Texas* – Delivering on a promise to accelerate construction of the Mission Reach Project, County Judge Nelson W. Wolff was joined by elected officials from Bexar County, City of San Antonio and San Antonio River Authority, along with members of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, San Antonio River Foundation, San Antonio River Oversight Committee and National Park Service to celebrate the beginning of construction on the third and final phase of the reach. The Mission Reach Ecosystem Restoration and Recreation Project is the southern 8-mile portion of the overall San Antonio River Improvements Project (SARIP).

"Today is a remarkable day because restoring the San Antonio River south of Downtown has been a dream of many local leaders for decades," Judge Wolff said. "Now they, along with South Side residents, are beginning to see those dreams come to fruition with construction of this final phase. I am happy to say the Mission Reach will be completed in 2013 and the San Antonio River will once again belong to the residents."

Phase 3 winds 5.75 miles through the South Side from Mission Road to Mission Espada and will include the relocation of more than 2 million cubic yards of soil and construction of a pilot channel, 14 riffle structures and 10 acres of embayment habitats. River remnants near Mission San Juan and Mission Espada will be restored along with approximately 260 acres of native riparian vegetation. This vegetation will include native grasses, wildflowers and more than 16,000 trees to be planted under a separate contract in 2015.

"This project represents the final piece of a fantastic collaboration to restore our signature waterway while enhancing the quality of life around it for everyday San Antonians," Mayor Julián Castro said.

Bexar County Commissioners Court committed local funding to the overall project to fill any shortfalls in federal funding and to ensure completion of the Mission Reach by

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## **Page 2 – Ceremony Marks Start of Construction on Final Phase of Mission Reach**

2013. Bexar County's portion of the entire Mission Reach project, which is locally managed by the San Antonio River Authority (SARA), is \$176.6 million of the \$245.7 million total cost. SARA also will be responsible for the operations and maintenance of the Mission Reach once construction is complete.

"The San Antonio River Authority is pleased to be here with all of our partners to celebrate breaking ground on the final phase of this project," said Gaylon Oehkle, Chairman of the San Antonio River Authority. "As managers of construction on this phase, SARA is committed to ensuring completion of this project in 2013. Thereafter, we will be charged with operating and maintaining the Mission Reach. This will be a large task, but I am confident that our highly skilled staff is up to the challenge."

Funds from the County's Visitor Tax, approved by voters in May 2008, will be used to provide enhancements along the entire Mission Reach, including overlooks, upgraded pedestrian bridges, pavilions and picnic areas, street connections and portals to Missions San Jose, San Juan and Espada.

"As a South Side native and continued resident of this area, I have worked diligently with our stakeholders to ensure the level of investment and the millions of dollars poured into this project and the South Side was maximized," said Bexar County Commissioner Sergio "Chico" Rodriguez. "Bexar County's commitment to South Side development and improvements is clearly illustrated by the collaborative closeness Commissioners Court has with our partners and I will continue to work hard and push for continued South Side growth."

The entire SARIP is an on-going \$358.3 million investment by the County, SARA, City of San Antonio, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the San Antonio River Foundation. The project will provide flood control, amenities, ecosystem restoration and recreational improvements along 13 miles of the San Antonio River from Hildebrand Avenue south to Loop 410 South. The overall project is broken into four distinctive reaches: The Museum Reach, a four-mile segment of the river from Hildebrand Avenue south to Lexington Avenue; the Downtown Reach, a segment of the original River Walk from Lexington Avenue to Houston Street; the Eagleland, a one-mile segment from South Alamo Street to Lonestar Boulevard; and the Mission Reach.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers awarded the Mission Reach Phase 1 contract in May 2008 to restore the first mile of river starting at Lone Star Boulevard. The Phase 2 contract was awarded by the Corps of Engineers in December to Zachry Construction Corporation for approximately 35 percent less than the original construction estimate. The contract for the final phase was awarded by SARA in June, also to Zachry Construction Corporation, at 20 percent less than the estimated project budget.

"As we enter with our partners into the final phase of the Mission Reach Project, we are excited about the multitude of positive impacts its completion will bring to the environment, the city of San Antonio and especially those in the community who will get to enjoy the natural beauty for generations to come," said Colonel Richard J. Muraski, Jr., U.S. Army Corps of Engineers District Commander. "The partnership with SARA and other teammates has been a great example of what is possible when we all share a common vision."

For more information, please visit [www.sanantonioriver.org](http://www.sanantonioriver.org).

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