



100 East Guenther  
P.O. Box 839980  
San Antonio, Texas 78283-9980  
210-227-1373 voice  
210-227-4323 fax  
sara@sara-tx.org

## News Release

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**For more information contact:** Laura Waldrum  
Community Relations Coordinator  
(210) 302-4247  
lwaldrum@sara-tx.org

### **World Water Day 2011: SARA Lends its Water Quality Expertise to World Cities**

SAN ANTONIO – The San Antonio River Authority (SARA) is recognizing International World Water Day, which is held on March 22, by raising awareness of the local efforts to protect the San Antonio River and by offering support to other communities around the world that are seeking to improve their water quality. World Water Day was established by U.N. Water to celebrate fresh water and to advocate for the sustainable management of freshwater resources. The theme for this year's event is *Water for cities: responding to the urban challenge*.

Improving water quality in the San Antonio River and its tributaries is one of SARA's priorities. While the San Antonio River faces some challenges regarding water quality, primarily elevated bacteria levels after heavy rains, these issues pale in comparison to the challenges that rivers face in other areas. The San Antonio community is very fortunate to have a river that visitors and residents alike are able to enjoy; the river is truly the centerpiece of the city.

Cities from across the United States and from foreign countries struggling with waterfront development and water quality issues in their rivers have taken note of SARA's commitment to urban water quality and have asked for SARA's assistance in improving urban waterfront development and water quality in their own rivers. In the last three years alone, SARA has provided information, presentations, tours and generally hosted visitors from over 80 groups from San Antonio and around Texas, 20 groups from across the country and over 15 groups from around the world, including: Vancouver, Canada; Taichung, Taiwan; Be'er Shiva, Israel; Red Deer, Canada; Daejeon, S. Korea; Kumamoto, Japan; Sejong - S. Korea; Yangzho, China; Veracruz, Mexico; Kim-Po City, S. Korea; and Singapore, China.

The World Bank has also noticed the work of SARA and has sent World Bank staff and members of a newly formed river authority (Chennai River Restoration Authority) from Tamil Nadu, India to meet with SARA for a three-day seminar.

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The World Bank also funded a trip to India providing for a SARA staff member to make a presentation at the Joint Workshop of the Minister of the Environment & Forest and the World Bank: Global Experiences in River Clean-Up & Basin Management – Relevance for the Ganga River. While in India, an additional trip was funded by the Chennai River Restoration Authority to travel to Chennai and make a presentation there as well.

On this World Water Day, SARA asks the community to take a moment to appreciate our beautiful natural resource, the San Antonio River, and to be thankful for all that it gives us: a bustling tourist economy, a place to enjoy nature, a community gathering place and so much more. SARA also would like to use this international day designed to recognize the importance of our shared water resources to remind local residents to “Be Watershed Wise” by taking steps to help protect the water quality of the San Antonio River Watershed. Finally, SARA encourages local residents to take time to learn more about the challenges that face our fellow urban-dwellers in cities all over the world. To learn more about World Water Day, visit [www.worldwaterday2011.org](http://www.worldwaterday2011.org). To learn more about what SARA is doing to preserve and protect the San Antonio River and its tributaries, and to learn about actions you can take to Be Watershed Wise, please visit [www.sara-tx.org](http://www.sara-tx.org).

*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).*

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