



**BEXAR REGIONAL
WATERSHED MANAGEMENT**

Partners combining resources to improve flood control and water quality.

Press Release

For Immediate Release
November 30, 2004

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Partnership Delivers Progress Report on Flood Control

SAN ANTONIO – The management committee of the Bexar Regional Watershed Management (BRWM) program will present a progress report of accomplishments to improve flood control at a public meeting scheduled for Tuesday, Dec. 7 at 6 p.m. in the conference room at the Texas Department of Transportation Bexar/Metro Area Office, 9320 S.E. Loop 410. Bexar County residents interested in flood management and water quality are encouraged to attend.

There is much good news to report about the BRWM program. Partners in the program have combined their resources and initiated or completed more than 60 projects totaling \$122 million. These include: The linking of flood control and water quality models; development of the Map2Map system; the Salado Flood Retention Dam 15R; the Culebra/Loop 410 regional storm water (detention) facility; the Martinez 4 & 5 Flood Control Dam Rehabilitation Project; a coordinated Pre-Disaster Mitigation Plan; and development of Bexar County regional

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watershed models and digital flood insurance rate maps (DFIRMs). The investment in flood control includes over \$92 million in local funds. These funds were used to leverage other state and federal funding sources that total more than \$30 million.

The BRWM program was formed in late 2002 with an interlocal agreement between the Bexar County Commissioners Court, San Antonio City Council and the San Antonio River Authority (SARA) Board of Directors. The partnership's goal is to address flooding and surface water quality issues under a consistent, unified and equitable program for the citizens of Bexar County. The program also includes 18 suburban cities within Bexar County.

Members of the management committee include Gabriel Perez, executive director of Infrastructure Services for Bexar County; Thomas G. Wendorf, P.E., director of the City of San Antonio Public Works Department; Greg Rothe, P.E., general manger for SARA and Susan Rash, city administrator of Alamo Heights and the suburban city representative.

The partnership is dedicated to improving citizen's quality of life, protecting life and property and providing for safe transportation during heavy rains and flood events. More importantly, BRWM is a partnership of governments addressing water quantity and quality issues collectively, rather than individually.

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Agenda topics for the Dec. 7 meeting include: the BRWM program report card; the county-wide Flood Insurance Studies and development of digital Flood Insurance Rate Maps; the 2004-2005 Capital Improvement Projects; the ongoing studies with the Texas Water Development Board and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and the San Antonio River Improvements Project.

Wendorf says, "Two years ago many people expressed skepticism that a coalition of governmental agencies could actually work together to tackle the monumental problem of flooding. We sincerely believe that we have made great progress in the last two years, and our accomplishments have resulted in better efficiency and effectiveness in the planning and implementation of projects and programs."

Steve Graham, P.E., director of Watershed Management for SARA says, "We believe that the BRWM program partnership is working. Through communication, collaboration and partnerships, we are equipped to do a better job for our constituents. We have clear and unified goals and objectives that we are jointly seeking. We are improving our approach to flood management and water quality and are developing better tools to help us make better decisions."

Wendorf adds, "While we still have a lot of work left to do, we believe that governmental

efficiency and effectiveness in the areas of flood and water quality protection have been greatly enhanced.”

With the three governmental agencies focused on this issue and working as a team, new doors have been opened in the area of funding. “We are seeing a dramatic increase in the investment into flood control. Of the projects that have been identified, we have been able to leverage over \$30 million from federal and state funds for these projects which probably would not have been possible if we had been working independently. These are dollars that will yield real benefits to our residents,” Graham says.

“The strong local partnership between SARA, the City of San Antonio and Bexar County will result in better flood risk information for county residents. The partnership contributes funding, technical expertise and communication with key stakeholders. The local contributions greatly enhance the federal investment,” according to Jack Quarles, head of FEMA’s regional flood mapping team.

Stephen L. Brooks, SWF, chief, civil branch of the Programs and Project Management Division of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Fort Worth District says, “The Corps is participating as a partner to the Bexar Regional Watershed Management program through our cost-shared studies of the Cibolo Creek and Leon Creek watersheds.

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“The partnership that has been formed by SARA, the City of San Antonio and Bexar County, with various consultants and universities and the Corps, is looking holistically at ways to reduce flooding of existing infrastructure and to ensure future development is planned so that it does not increase the likelihood of future flooding. Cutting-edge technology is being developed so that San Antonio, frequently referred to as ‘Flash Flood Alley,’ can better plan safe future development. The Corps is proud to be a part of this challenging endeavor,” Brooks adds.

The BRWM program has raised the profile of flooding among all partners, and now all entities, including the suburban cities, have given this problem a higher priority. Perez adds that since flood waters don’t know boundaries, one jurisdiction cannot do it alone. “What happens upstream dramatically affects what happens downstream. Flood control requires a regional perspective and approach, and the Regional Watershed Modeling System that is currently being developed will negate the piecemeal approach that was used before,” he says.

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