



100 East Guenther
P.O. Box 839980
San Antonio, Texas 78283-9980
210-224-2694 voice
210-302-3692 fax
www.sariverfoundation.org

NEWS RELEASE

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For more information contact: Shana Avery
(210) 224-2694
shana.avery@sariverfoundation.org

SAN ANTONIO RIVER FOUNDATION ANNOUNCES CONFLUENCE PARK GROUNDBREAKING

Construction of "San Antonio's Largest Outdoor Classroom" to Begin May 11

SAN ANTONIO - The San Antonio River Foundation (SARF) announced at a groundbreaking ceremony today that construction of Confluence Park will begin at the future site located at 310 W. Mitchell Street. The park, SARF's largest single project to date, will provide hands-on learning, environmental education and community connectivity along the Mission Reach Ecosystem Restoration and Recreation Project on the city's south side.

"Confluence Park will be a wonderful educational and recreational addition to the south side of San Antonio," said Suzanne Scott, General Manager of the San Antonio River Authority (SARA). "Since the opening of the Mission Reach project, thousands of school children and adults have taken part in SARA's outdoor educational programs and experienced first-hand the ever-evolving riparian and aquatic habitats of the San Antonio River. The unique features and facilities at Confluence Park will enable us to expand our programming to even more people who are eager to learn and explore the diverse ecosystem of the watershed."

Through its use as a premier education facility, Confluence Park will fulfill the San Antonio River Foundation's commitment to the San Antonio River Authority (SARA) to provide the students and citizens of San Antonio and surrounding counties with an innovative and welcoming space to learn about natural river ecosystems and one of our most precious local resources – the San Antonio River. It will offer inviting gateways to hike and bike trails along the Mission Reach section of the San Antonio River Walk and it will encourage local citizens to become more involved with their river and its stewardship for many years to come.

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“Our educational system, which relies on textbooks, lectures and standardized tests in fluorescent-lit classrooms, is simply not engaging our students,” said SARF Executive Director Estela Avery. “Providing innovative instruction in a beautifully and thoughtfully designed artistic space can only inspire more learning. It’s what our students and community deserve.”

The project was able to plan to move forward with the groundbreaking shortly after it received a \$2.4million gift from leading global resources company BHP Billiton that provided the funds necessary to construct and name the Lake | Flato Architects-designed “BHP Billiton Pavilion” at the park.

“Confluence Park promises to make a valuable contribution to the local community by educating people about environmental responsibility and sustainability,” said David Banks, BHP Billiton's General Manager of Shale Oil. “We see this as a great investment in our future, aligned with our corporate values and our commitment to the communities where we operate.”

The building of Confluence Park will assist area schools and non-profit partners in demonstrating environmental science lessons and providing activities outside the traditional classroom setting, in a free-to-nonprofits physical meeting space along the San Antonio River.

“Confluence Park will be a first-of-its-kind, world-class park, connecting our neighborhood, our River, our ecosystem and our heritage,” said City of San Antonio District 3 Councilwoman Rebecca Viagran. “It is another chapter in the story of so many organizations working together to bring something dynamic to the south side and all of San Antonio.”

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About the San Antonio River Foundation: The mission of the San Antonio River Foundation is to promote educational, cultural and scientific projects and activities that enhance the conservation, stewardship, restoration, preservation and enjoyment of the land and water resources of the San Antonio River basin and its tributaries. Established in 2003 by the San Antonio River Authority (SARA), the River Foundation’s primary focus has been the San Antonio River Improvements Project, one of the country’s most exciting public works projects. The San Antonio River Foundation’s role is to augment public funds with donations from corporations, foundations and individuals to fund enhancements along the San Antonio River and its tributaries.