

**CITY OF SAN ANTONIO  
INTERDEPARTMENTAL MEMORANDUM  
PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT**

**TO:** Mayor and City Council

**FROM:** Malcolm Matthews, Director, Parks and Recreation Department

**THROUGH:** Terry M. Brechtel, City Manager

**COPIES:** Melissa B. Vossmer, Assistant City Manager; Finance; Management and Budget; Legal; File

**SUBJECT:** Land Use and Management Planning Guidelines for Natural Areas

**DATE:** January 16, 2003

**SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

This ordinance amends the San Antonio Parks and Recreation System Plan to include the "Land Use and Management Planning Guidelines for Natural Areas."

Staff recommends approval of this ordinance.

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

In January 1999 the City Council adopted the Parks and Recreation System Plan as an instrument to guide decisions impacting the City's system of parks, park facilities and recreation and leisure programs. This plan is being used as a "roadmap" in implementing capital improvement projects and in developing program changes. With the passage of Proposition 3 and the 1999 Park Bond Issue, which included funding for park land located in sensitive environmental areas, there is a need to have clear planning and design guidelines for the development of natural areas in our community.

On June 6, 2002, City Council authorized a professional services contract with the Adams Environmental, Inc. consultant team to prepare the "Land Use and Management Planning Guidelines for Natural Areas." The guidelines will serve as the basis for the formulation of management practices, capital improvement plans and maintenance programs for properties already purchased as well as those that may be acquired in the future. The document will apply to all of the City's natural areas.

Adams Environmental has completed the guidelines. They conform to current local development regulations; best-use management practices; local, state and federal environmental and archeological regulations; and adopted planning documents. Adams Environmental developed a matrix of criteria to be used in evaluating and projecting future use and protection of

properties. The guidelines were presented to the Conservation Advisory Board, the Open Space Advisory Board, the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board and the Quality of Life Committee. Copies of the guidelines were distributed to each of the City Council offices for review.

The City of San Antonio's Parks and Recreation System Plan will be amended to incorporate the final Land Use and Management Planning Guidelines for Natural Areas. A previous amendment incorporated guidelines for creek greenway parks.

### **POLICY ANALYSIS**

Ordinance No. 89162, passed and approved on January 28, 1999, adopted the City of San Antonio's Parks and Recreation System Plan as an instrument to guide decisions impacting the City's system of parks, park facilities and recreation and leisure programs. In addition, Ordinance No. 93920, passed and approved on May 10, 2001 adopted the first amendment to the Parks and Recreation System Plan to include the "Planning and Design Guidelines for Creek Based Greenway Parks," which guide decisions and development of the City's creek greenways. The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) has approved both the original plan and the greenway amendment as our local parks plan for grant purposes. This amendment for natural areas will also be forwarded to TPWD for approval.

### **FISCAL IMPACT**

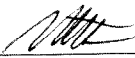
Approval of the amendment to the San Antonio Parks and Recreation System Plan will not have any immediate fiscal impact. Over time, the use of these guidelines should save time and money in the improvement plans for each park by determining a course of action and the appropriate location and type of improvements before site planning is initiated.

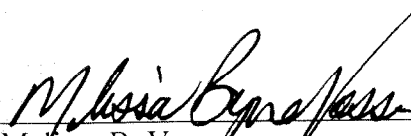
### **COORDINATION**

Development of these guidelines was coordinated with the Public Works Department, the Planning Department, the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board, the Open Space Advisory Board, the Conservation Advisory Board and the City Council Quality of Life Committee. The guidelines received favorable review from each group.

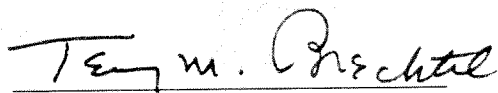
**SUPPLEMENTARY COMMENTS**

An Ethics Ordinance Disclosure Statement is not required.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Malcolm Matthews,  
Director of Parks and Recreation

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Melissa B. Vossmer,  
Assistant City Manager

Approved:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Terry M. Brechtel  
City Manager

# **Land Use and Management Planning Guidelines for Natural Areas**

***City Council Meeting  
January 16, 2003***

***Department of Parks and  
Recreation***

1

## **Background Information**



The Land Use and Management Planning Guidelines for Natural Areas will provide a guidance document for planning, improvement and management of natural areas:

- Existing natural areas
- Proposition 3 land acquisitions
- Future property acquisitions

2

## Background Information



*San Antonio  
Parks and  
Recreation  
Department*

- On June 6, 2002, City Council authorized the selection of Adams Environmental, Inc. consultant team
- The Parks and Recreation System Plan will be amended to include the Land Use and Management Planning Guidelines for Natural Areas

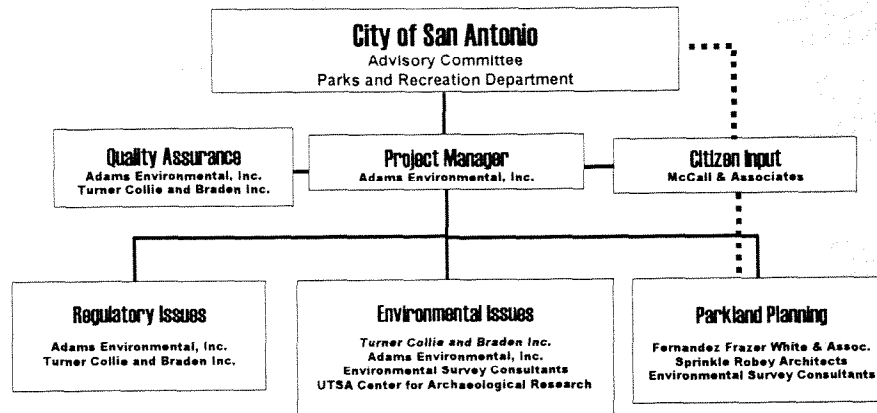
3

## The Consultant Team

Adams Environmental, Inc.  
Turner Collie & Braden Inc.  
Fernandez Frazer White & Assoc., Inc.  
Environmental Survey Consulting  
UTSA Center for Archaeological Research  
Sprinkle Robey Architects  
Dixie Watkins III  
McCall & Associates

4

# The Land Use and Management Team



5

## Natural Areas Are...

...areas established for the protection and stewardship of outstanding natural attributes of local, regional, and statewide significance, which may be used in a sustainable manner for scientific research, education, aesthetic enjoyment, and appropriate public use not detrimental to the primary purpose.

*San Antonio Parks and Recreation System Plan*

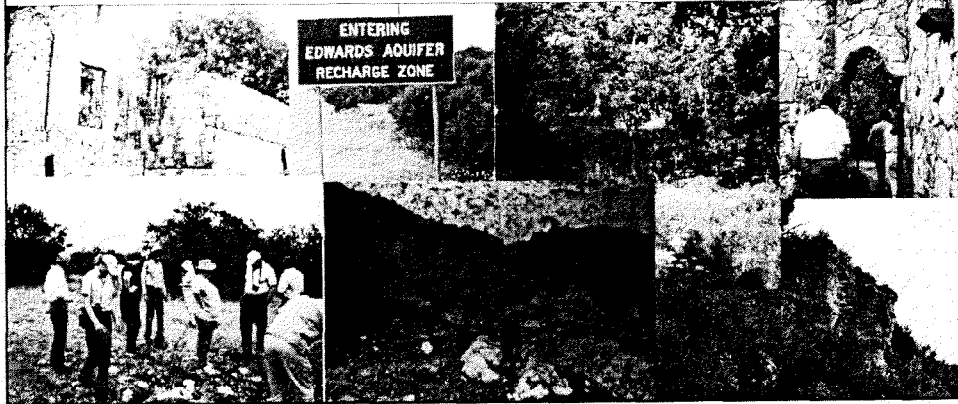
6

Natural Areas:

- Resource-Based
- Primary Goal: Protect natural resources
- Passive Recreation

Recreational Areas:

- User-Based
- Primary Goal: Recreation for users



## **How Will the Land Use and Management Plan Work?**

- Provides a process to evaluate acquired properties
- Provides guidance and tools to create a strategy for the use and protection of each City-Managed Natural Area

# **Document Organization**

- The Process
- Public Involvement
- Recommendations

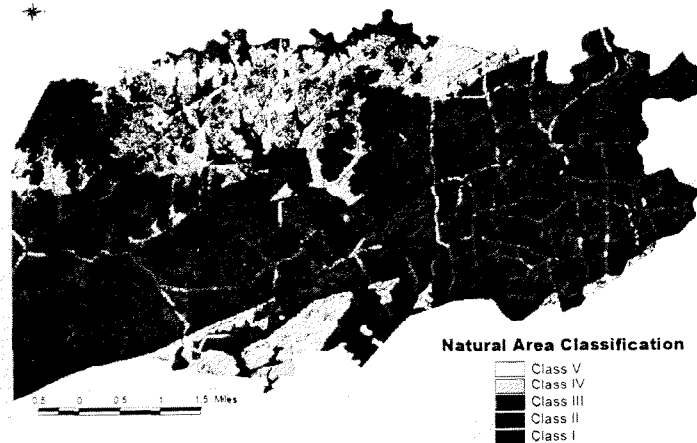
9

# **Process Description**

10



## **Classify land using General GIS Model**



11

## **Place Natural Area under interim management until Final Land Use and Management Plan per site is in place.**

- Identify and secure boundaries
- Ensure property security
- Monitor sensitive resources
- Manage property to maintain resources and value

12

**Evaluate the site-specific characteristics of the property through field investigations**



**Use management tools (GIS, score matrix, etc.) to determine appropriate uses for the Natural Areas based on**

- Protection of the aquifer
- Protection of unique natural resources
- Interpretive/educational/recreational opportunities



## Scoring

**Eight resources are mapped and scored on a 2-meter grid.**

- *Geologic Features (Score range of 1 to 10)*
- *Soil (Score range of 1 to 10)*
- *Surface Water (Score range of 1 to 10)*
- *Species of Concern (Score range of 1 to 40)*
- *Wildlife (Score range of 1 to 40)*
- *Vegetation (Score range of 1 to 40)*
- *Cultural Resources (Score range of 1 to 10)*
- *Slope (Score range of 1 to 10)*

15

## Scoring

**Appropriate possible land uses are identified through a GIS matrix using these scores.**

*Each possible appropriate land use is assigned a recommended maximum resource score*

- *If any resource scored higher, the land use is not recommended in that area.*
- *If all resources scored lower, the land use is recommended in that area.*

16

# Example Matrix

Issue Scoring Matrix

Activity/Improvement	Geologic Features	Soil	Surface Water	Species of Concern	Wildlife	Vegetation	Cultural Resources	Slope
<b>TRAILS</b>								
<b>Low Impact Trails</b>	<8	<7	<10	<30	<40	<35	<8	<7
Low impact, all-weather hiking trails 2-3' wide with erosion control prevention structures including high quality waterbars, sidebars, and steps constructed of existing soils and local native materials								
Interpretive trail with signage, constructed the same as the low impact hiking trail								
<b>Restrictive Trails</b>	<8	<7	<10	<40	<45	<35	<8	<7
Restricted seasonal hiking trails (during endangered species restricted times, only under staff supervision)								
Restricted weather hiking trails (only for water crossing and flood-prone areas)								
<b>Moderate Impact Trails</b>	<7	<6	<7	<20	<30	<20	<7	<5
Hiking trail, up to 4' wide, with permeable surface material (granite/calcium mulch)								
Flat or sloped (< 3%) ADA Trails up to 4' wide, with permeable surface (granite)								
<b>High Impact Trails</b>	<5	<5	<5	<15	<20	<15	<4	<4
Access road: All season 10 ft wide, no surface material								
Dry weather horse trail								
Hard surfaced ADA trails								
Dry weather bike and mountain bike trail								
<b>Very High Impact Trails</b>	0	<3	0	<10	<10	<8	<1	<2
Parking areas for hiking trails								
Access road: All season 10 ft wide, with surface material								
Staging, parking, water access area for horses								

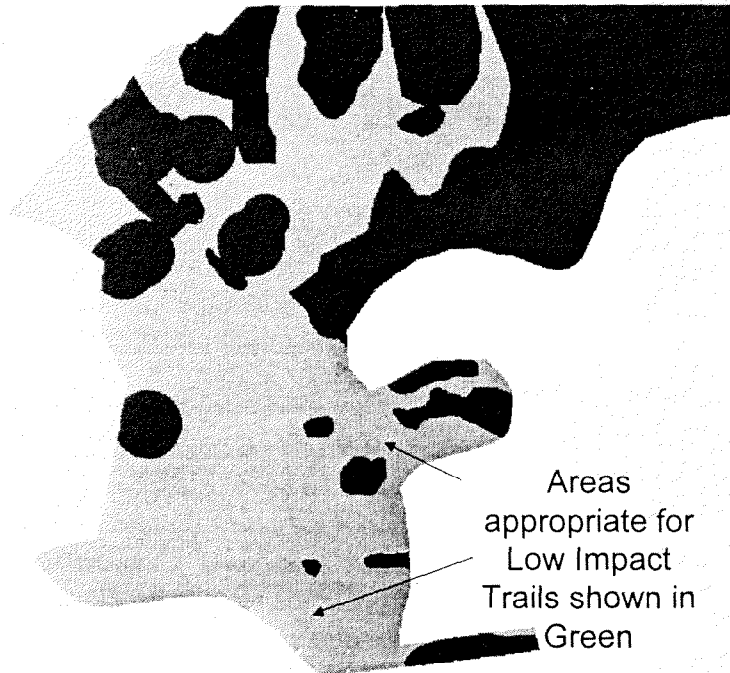
17

## For Example: Low Impact Trails

- *Geologic Feature Score: <8*
- *Soil Score <7*
- *Surface Water Score <10*
- *Species of Concern Score <30*
- *Wildlife Score <40*
- *Vegetation Score < 35*
- *Cultural Resource Score <9*

18

Example  
Output  
from the  
GIS  
Model



## Prepare the Final Land Use and Management Plan

- Prepare the plan for the site
  - *Appropriate Uses*
  - *Appropriate Improvements*
  - *Design*
  - *Budget*
  - *Schedule*

## **Plan Implementation**

- Obtain required approvals
- Follow Guidelines
- Monitor and re-evaluate the properties and the process

21

## **Public Opportunities**

- Encourage participation and input into future improvements
- Encourage Volunteer Programs
  - Stewardship and Resource Management
  - Education
  - Friends Group

22

## **Additional Information**



*San Antonio  
Parks and  
Recreation  
Department*

- The draft guidelines have been presented to:
  - Parks and Recreation Advisory Board
  - Open Space Advisory Board
  - Conservation Advisory Board
  - Quality of Life Committee
- Next Steps
  - Council consideration to adopt amended Parks and Recreation System Plan

23