



**US Army Corps
of Engineers®**
Fort Worth District

Sponsor: Texas State University
**Spring Lake Aquatic
Ecosystem Restoration, San Marcos**

Project Fact Sheet
Continuing
Authorities
Program (CAP)

July 15, 2015

Type of Project: Section 206, Aquatic Ecosystem Restoration

Authorization: Water Resource Development Act of 1996

Status: Construction of the \$3.7 million project was completed in 2014.

Background: The city of San Marcos is located in south-central Texas in Hays County, 30 miles south-southwest of Austin. The project site include the Aquarena Center (Springs) amusement park (shuttered since 1996), Spring Lake and a 9-hole Texas State University golf course. Valuable aquatic and floodplain habitats had been degraded by the construction, operation and existence of the amusement park. The delapidated facility raised public safety concerns. Runoff from it, the surrounding golf course and other urban developments impacted water quality. Invasive/non-native species (Chinese tallow tree, chinaberry, elodea, hydrilla, watermilfoil, west Indian hygrophila and elephant ear) displaced native riparian corridor species such as Texas wild-rice and other rooted macrophytes. Sedimentation of in-stream habitat degraded habitat for resident and migratory wildlife, including Federally listed species.



Workers remove the Submarine Theater from the long-closed Aquarena Center.



The restoration project helped restore and protect sensitive habitat for five Federally listed species. It removed Aquarena Center structures on the peninsula and submerged structures from Spring Lake. A grassland was restored to the peninsula and exotic vegetation removed. A riparian buffer zone was created between Spring Lake and the golf course. Minor recreational features were added, including a rest room facility, new and rehabilitated trails, picnic tables and benches.

Non-native elephant ear was removed. The donut-shaped carriage, which once rotated 360 degrees as it took visitors up the Aquarena Center's 220-foot observation tower, was one of dozens of structures taken away. The grounds were restored with native grassland species.

