



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

Sponsor: City of San Marcos

San Marcos River Ecosystem Restoration

Project Fact Sheet
Continuing
Authorities
Program (CAP)

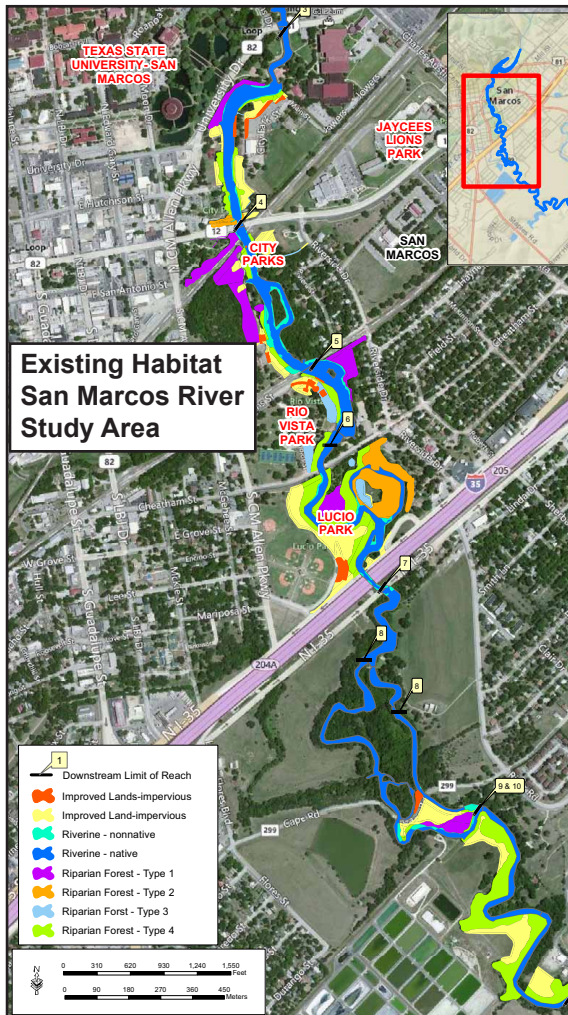
July 24, 2015

Type of Project: Section 206, Aquatic Ecosystem Restoration

Authorization: Water Resource Development Act of 1996

Status: Feasibility Phase complete

Background: The city of San Marcos is in Hays County, 30 miles south-southwest of Austin. The study area is along the San Marcos River, between the Spring Lake Dam and Cummings Dam, which is just downstream of the confluence with the Blanco River. This portion of the San Marcos River is fed by the second largest spring/aquifer system in Texas and supports a unique and nationally significant ecosystem. These diverse plants and animals include six listed under the Endangered Species Act, four of which the project could help (fountain darter, San Marcos gambusia, San Marcos salamander, and Texas wild-rice). The area has been impacted by an altered hydrology, urbanization of the watershed, establishment



and spread of exotic plants and animals, and recreational use. The mild climate and consistent flow of spring water create conditions suitable for multiple exotic plants and animals, which negatively affect the ecosystem. The Feasibility Study identified problems and opportunities to address the adverse impacts and follow these objectives: increase habitat quality of the riparian corridor, improve its functionality as a buffer against sediment and pollutants, increase aquatic habitat quality, reduce recreational impacts on habitat quality and endemic species, and improve habitat for endemic species.

The project would restore about 44 acres of riparian habitat, 1.2 acres of wetland habitat and 28 acres of aquatic habitat. Restoration of riparian habitat includes planting of riparian forest in areas currently supporting low-quality riparian habitat, parkland, sidewalks, parking lots or other impervious surfaces. Control exotic shrub and trees in about 27 acres of existing riparian forest. Restore aquatic habitat including removal of about 2.6 acres of exotic vegetation along the river banks and removal of sediments over about 25 acres of the river bed. The project would improve the riparian corridors' ability to function as a filter of stormwater runoff and substantially reduce the input of sediments in the river. Concurrently, the removal of sediments and elephant ear from approximately 3.5 miles of river channel would restore native substrates and local hydraulics.