

THE
FUTURE
OF
AMERICA'S
NATIONAL
PARKS

First Annual
Centennial Strategy for

**San Antonio Missions
National Historical Park**

August 2007

CENTENNIAL INITIATIVE



Site: SAAN

Year: 2007

Vision Statement

San Antonio Missions National Historical Park was established in 1978 to protect the four historic missions which are significant reminders of the Spanish missionary presence on the frontier of 1700s New Spain. Through the blending of Spanish and native cultures, the missions helped to shape the uniquely south Texas culture of today. The park includes four missions and associated structures and facilities that cumulatively are widely accepted as the finest, most complete collection of Spanish resources in North America and which remain active Catholic parishes. The 835 acre park is managed in partnership with the Archdiocese of San Antonio, City of San Antonio and the San Antonio River Authority.

The park is situated within the city limits of San Antonio, Texas, the 8th largest city in the nation and is surrounded by dense urban population around Mission San Jose and Concepcion. Missions San Juan and Espada are in much more rural areas, but are experiencing rapid urbanization on their borders as San Antonio's population surges. The park is affected by increased stormwater runoff, air pollution, traffic and other impacts as it finds itself increasingly hemmed in by neighborhoods.

The missions were the birthplace of the community and thus honor nearly 300 years of Hispanic influence.

Staffing in the park has never equaled that envisioned at its founding, yet the park acreage has nearly doubled in size and visitation now exceeds 1 million visitors annually. Over the past 10 years, staffing has decreased approximately 20 percent while visitor expectations and that of the community continue to climb. The park looks to the Centennial Initiative as an opportunity to reverse this downward trend and at the same time provide new resources to address the plethora of ideas an innovative staff produces and a progressive community demands.

Park/ Superintendent/ Program Manager

Stephen E. Whitesell

Site: SAAN

STEWARDSHIP

Provide inspiring, safe, and accessible places for people to enjoy - the standard to which all other park systems aspire.

Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

San Antonio Missions will work with its partners to further the status of the missions within the community and the nation as a world class visitor destination. Key to this effort is the preservation of park cultural and natural resources and sufficient human resources to provide a far-reaching education effort.

With the help of our partners, we hope to develop sufficient facilities and staffing to open Rancho de las Cabras, the only extant mission ranch in Texas, to routine visitor operations. To accomplish this, we propose exposing and stabilizing the ranch headquarters ruins; developing site infrastructure sufficient to provide trails, restrooms and office space; and to increase staffing to support seven day per week operations.

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: SAAN

STEWARDSHIP

Improve the condition of park resources and assets.

Rehabilitate high-priority historic buildings to good condition, and help communities to preserve their history through programs like Preserve America.

The park contains a total of 46 historic buildings of which seventeen are currently in less than good condition. We will work with our partners to assure the preservation of those buildings already in good condition and to seek sufficient funds to bring those facilities in less than good condition up to standard.

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Restore native habitats by controlling invasive species and reintroducing key plant and animal species.

Working with our partners, we will continue efforts started some 10 years ago to eradicate chinaberries and ligustrum, the park's two most serious invasive species. 400 acres have already been controlled and an additional 210 still need initial treatment.

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Improve high-priority assets to acceptable condition, as measured by the Facility Condition Index.

Seek funding to support additional skilled craft position necessary to maintain and improve the condition of park assets.

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Improve the natural resources in parks, as measured by the vital signs developed under the Natural Resource Challenge.

Complete baseline insect inventory, baseline noise monitoring, and baseline air quality monitoring.

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Complete all cultural resource inventories for designated priority resources.

Undertake parkwide archeological inventory
Promote the need for cultural landscape reports for Missions San Juan and Espada

Site: SAAN

STEWARDSHIP

Improve the condition of park resources and assets.

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: SAAN

STEWARDSHIP

Set the standard of excellence in urban park landscape design and maintenance.

Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

Work with other national park managers in urban areas to develop a comprehensive urban park initiative.

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: SAAN

STEWARDSHIP

Assure that no compelling chapter in the American heritage experience remains untold and that strategically important landscapes are acquired, as authorized by Congress.

Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

Work with partners and the community to purchase remaining priority inholdings.

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: SAAN

STEWARDSHIP

Serve as the Preeminent resource laboratory by applying excellence in science and scholarship to understand and respond to environmental changes.

Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

The park has never been a particularly popular venue for scholars yet possesses numerous opportunities for scholarly research. A detailed history of Mission San Juan has been completed but the other missions need more detailed research. A detailed historic structure report has been completed for the Tufa House at Mission San Juan, but other structures need a detailed report. There are at least three major archeological excavations that have never had a final complete analytical report done, one for Mission San Juan, one for Mission Espada and one for Rancho de las Cabras.

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: SAAN

ENVIRONMENT

Reduce environmental impacts of park operations.

Reduce the environmental impacts of park operations on air and water quality.

Replace all park vehicles and motorized equipment with alternative energy fueled vehicles will require availability of alternative energy vehicles and sufficient funding from Regional Equipment Replacement Fund to replace equipment and vehicles.

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: SAAN

ENVIRONMENT

Inspire an environmental conscience in Americans.

Establish programs to showcase exemplary environmental practices and increase visitor awareness of how the practices apply to their daily lives, as measured by surveys.

Work with the City of San Antonio and the San Antonio Water System to establish a constructed wetland on property abutting the park in order to demonstrate alternative storm water management practices.

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Site: SAAN

ENVIRONMENT

Engage partners, communities, and visitors in shared environmental stewardship.

Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

Working with our partners and community, we will return water flow to the San Juan Acequia thus protecting the oldest water right in Texas and provide water to mission farm fields.

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: SAAN

RECREATION

Encourage collaboration among and assist park and recreation systems at every level—federal, regional, state, local—to help build an outdoor recreation network accessible to all Americans.

Rehabilitate over 2,000 miles of trails within or connected to national parks, including trails accessible to those with disabilities.

We will work with partners to complete maps and interpretive guide to the Mission Trail. We also plan to develop Graham and San Juan Acequia Trails in partnership with Los Compadres and the City of San Antonio thus expanding the park and city's interconnected trail network.

We plan to develop programs consistent with Healthy Parks Initiative.

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: SAAN

RECREATION

Establish "volun-tourism" excursions to national parks for volunteers to help achieve natural and cultural resource protection goals.

Increase annual volunteer hours by 100 percent, from 5.2 million hours to 10.4 million hours.

Working with our friends group, we will develop an RV campground for volunteers at Mission San Juan suitable for supporting up to ten recreational vehicles. RV'ers have traditionally provided 3,744 hours annually thus ten sites will hopefully generate 8,736 additional hours of service annually.

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: SAAN

RECREATION

Expand partnerships with schools and boys and girls associations to show how national park experiences can improve children's lives.

Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

Develop working relationship with San Antonio Boys and Girls Club, San Antonio Parks and Recreation Department, Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts to promote appropriate recreational use of park resources.

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: SAAN

EDUCATION

Cooperate with educators to provide curriculum materials, high-quality programs, and park-based and online learning.

Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

Work with partners to reopen the Park Discovery Education Center in order to provide service to school groups visiting the park.

Develop the San Juan Demonstration Farm as a demonstration of Spanish Colonial farming techniques and sustainable agricultural practices.

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: SAAN

EDUCATION

Introduce young people and their families to national parks by using exciting media and technology.

Increase the number of web hits through the introduction of advanced, interactive features that attract young people to national parks.

Update the park website with an eye toward improved youth contact.

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: SAAN

EDUCATION

Promote life-long learning to connect generations through park experiences.

Enroll an additional two million children in the Junior Ranger program.

Increase the number of children who complete the Junior Ranger program to 1000.

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: SAAN

EDUCATION

Impart to every American a sense of their citizen ownership of their national parks.

Increase visitors' satisfaction, understanding, and appreciation of the parks they visit.

Strive to attain a visitor understanding rate of 93% with the assistance of seasonals added in FY08.
Increase the number of facilitated programs for school groups by 25% from 630 to 788.

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: SAAN

PROFESSIONALISM

Be one of the top 10 places to work in America.

Meet 100 percent of diversity recruitment goals by employing people who reflect the face of America.

Increase recruitment efforts to develop a diverse workforce. Concentrate on under representation of African Americans, American Indians and Asian and Pacific Islanders.

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: SAAN

PROFESSIONALISM

Promote a safety and health culture for all employees and visitors.

Reduce the number of employee lost-time incidents and serious visitor injuries by 20 percent.

Continue dedicated efforts to reduce injuries by working with adjacent parks to establish a full-time safety professional position.

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: SAAN

PROFESSIONALISM

Model what it means to work in partnership.

Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

Continue to champion partnership efforts with Archdiocese of San Antonio, parish churches, State of Texas, City of San Antonio, San Antonio River Authority, and other partners.

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS