

Bexar Land Trust, Inc.

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South Side Chamber Workshop Brings Forth Multiple Committed Partners To Coordinate the Future of Applewhite

Councilwoman Bonnie Conner kicked off a grassroots community effort Wednesday, November 28 to establish a multifaceted educational, recreational, and ecotourism facility on the South Side of San Antonio, on 1640 acres of property acquired by SAWS for the voter rejected Applewhite Reservoir Project. Over 40 people were in attendance at a South Side Chamber Workshop held to identify partners in the formation of the Land Heritage Institute Foundation. The purpose of the Foundation is to hold and manage the Applewhite Properties, to oversee the restoration of the property and improvements, and to implement a variety of programs on the property. The Land Heritage Institute Project was the creation of the 1997 Medina River Charette lead by Bonnie Conner, and was thoroughly explored, researched, and documented by Texas A&M University over the course of the last seven years in the Assessment of Resources Available for the Development of A Land Heritage Institute of the Americas, completed in September 2000.



Organizations represented at the Workshop Included:

African American Historical & Genealogical Society
 American Indians - Texas at Spanish Colonial Missions
 American Institute of Architects
 Bexar Audubon Society
 Bexar Land Trust
 City of San Antonio Parks & Recreation Department
 Friends of Medina
 Institute of Texas Cultures
 Kids on the River
 Los Campadres
 Master Naturalists
 National Park Service
 Oak Island United Methodist Church
 Palo Alto College
 Saint Phillips College
 San Antonio Audubon Society
 African American Historical & Genealogical Society
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Oak Island United Methodist Church
Palo Alto College
Saint Phillips College
San Antonio Audubon Society
San Antonio City Council District 3, office of
Councilwoman Toni Moorhouse
San Antonio City Council District 8, office of
Councilwoman Bonnie Conner
San Antonio Office of the Mayor, Ed Garza
San Antonio Conservation Society
San Antonio Prop Busters
San Antonio River Authority
San Antonio Water System
South San Antonio Chamber of Commerce
Tap Pilam Coahuiltecan Nation
Texas A&M University
Texas A&M University System-Kingsville
Texas Parks & Wildlife
United States Congress, Office of Representative Ciro
Rodriquez
USDA - National Resources Conservation Service
Ximenes & Associates

Allison Elder, Director of the Bexar Land Trust, declared the workshop to be a significant step towards the implementation the Land Heritage Institute Foundation. "Every organization in attendance recognized the potential to expand their mission through the diverse programs that could occur at Applewhite." These programs include eco-tourism, habitat restoration and conservation, living history museums, summer day camps, hands on workshops, and on site archeological digs. "The presence of 10,000 years of archeological artifacts and 30,000 years of flood and flood plain development data captured in the soil of the Medina River banks have created a unique educational opportunity unmatched in the country. We intend to create a world class interactive teaching facility, similar to Colonial Williamsburg and Mystic Seaport."

Attendees at the workshop identified action plans to occur in the next 12 months in the areas of Foundation Governance, Program Implementation, Community

Involvement, Fundraising, Research and Education, and Conservation and Preservation. The partnering organizations will be working over the upcoming months to solidify the Land Heritage Institute Foundation, and to seek the donation of the Applewhite Properties from the San Antonio Water System.

Organizations interested in learning more can contact the Bexar Land Trust offices at 222-8430.

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