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# Flood Risk Management

## POSITION STATEMENT

The San Antonio River Authority (SARA) promotes programs and activities that proactively inform residents and property owners of their potential risk for flooding. By providing the most accurate and up-to-date information on flood risk, SARA enhances the ability for governments, businesses and individuals to make informed decisions to manage flood risk and protect life, property and infrastructure from flooding.

## IMPORTANCE TO THE SAN ANTONIO RIVER WATERSHED

The San Antonio River Watershed is approximately 4,180 square miles and is extremely diverse from steep slopes with flash flooding in urbanized sub-watersheds to rural flat areas with slow moving water. Flooding can have devastating impacts to people, homes, property, infrastructure, transportation, the economy and the environment. The impacts can have long lasting affects to infrastructure and the quality of life.

## SUMMARY

All locations within a given watershed have a level of flood risk associated with them. Flood risks can increase or diminish based on proximity to creeks and rivers, changes in development, implementation of capital improvement projects, weather patterns and other factors. Minimizing loss of life, assisting emergency responders during flooding events and reducing property damages will always be the priorities of Flood Risk Management. As technical leaders and communicators, SARA's resources are directed toward creating and maintaining state-of-the art tools that most accurately model and map dynamic floodplains and flow patterns to ensure that communities throughout the basin have the best information possible to minimize flood risk and increase the flood disaster resiliency of the community. SARA also develops and implements communications programs to share this information publicly.

SARA is a Cooperating Technical Partner (CTP) for the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), and as a CTP, is promoting several Flood Risk Management initiatives. SARA is committed to providing the communities we serve with the most current information and technology available. By using this information, multiple Holistic Watershed Master Planning efforts are underway to identify flood risk by each watershed. These master plans identify structures (e.g. homes, businesses, roads, or other built infrastructure) in the floodplain using the latest modeling software and data, such as aerial imagery and Light Detection and Ranging (LiDAR) technology for better resolution of topography to increase accuracy and better determine risk (see Watershed Management position paper for more information on Holistic Watershed Master Plans).

### HEADQUARTERS:

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To further inform property owners of their potential risk for flooding, SARA, as a CTP, is embarking on a monumental effort to bring RiskMAP to every watershed in the basin. RiskMAP is FEMA's new approach to Flood Risk Management, with an emphasis on watershed scale analysis. The current watershed master planning efforts by SARA are also based on watersheds and can be either incorporated or expanded to meet RiskMAP requirements.

SARA produced updated, digital floodplain maps and hydraulic and hydrology models for the San Antonio River Watershed and has the responsibility to keep the maps and models updated to reflect changes in the watershed. SARA is a FEMA Letter of Map Revision (LOMR) Delegate, which will assure that all modeling standards are followed when proposed changes to Special Flood Hazard Areas are submitted to the community. These changes can impact the level of risk of structures near the floodplains. As the LOMR Delegate, SARA will account for this risk based on the best available data.

To aid emergency responders, SARA is developing flood warning and response systems based on real time data that will assist emergency managers in the decision-making process during flood events. These systems are utilizing the latest technology to predict where flooding will occur to ensure early response by emergency managers. After the event, these systems can assist communities in assessing the extent of flooding for disaster declarations.

*SARA Executive Committee Approved on August 12, 2012*

**FOR MORE INFORMATION:**

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