



San Antonio Missions

World Heritage Site Annual Report

2024

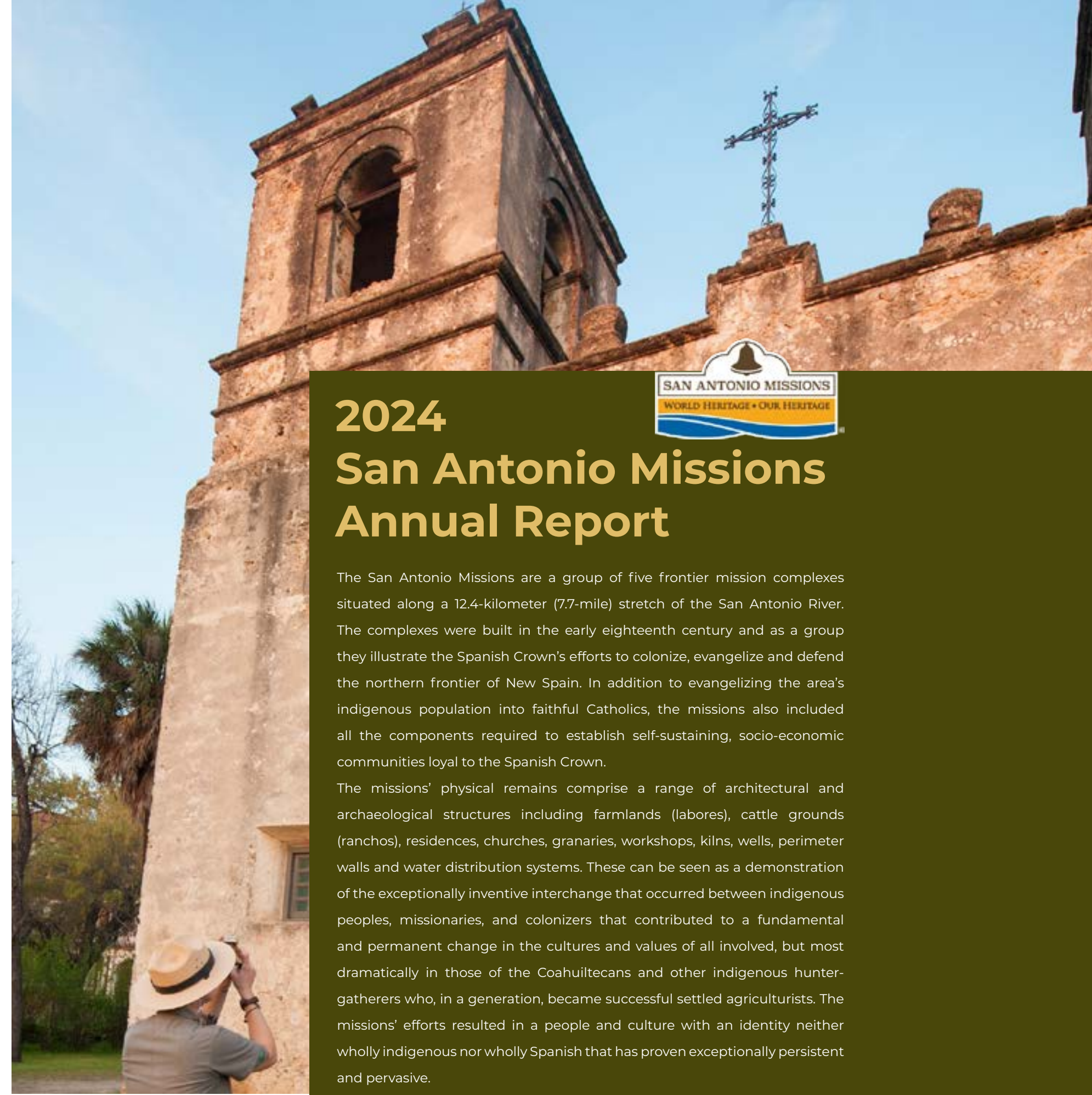
Mission San José's granary interior.

World Heritage Management Group



Primary Partners and Contributing Organizations





2024 San Antonio Missions Annual Report

The San Antonio Missions are a group of five frontier mission complexes situated along a 12.4-kilometer (7.7-mile) stretch of the San Antonio River. The complexes were built in the early eighteenth century and as a group they illustrate the Spanish Crown's efforts to colonize, evangelize and defend the northern frontier of New Spain. In addition to evangelizing the area's indigenous population into faithful Catholics, the missions also included all the components required to establish self-sustaining, socio-economic communities loyal to the Spanish Crown.

The missions' physical remains comprise a range of architectural and archaeological structures including farmlands (labores), cattle grounds (ranchos), residences, churches, granaries, workshops, kilns, wells, perimeter walls and water distribution systems. These can be seen as a demonstration of the exceptionally inventive interchange that occurred between indigenous peoples, missionaries, and colonizers that contributed to a fundamental and permanent change in the cultures and values of all involved, but most dramatically in those of the Coahuiltecan and other indigenous hunter-gatherers who, in a generation, became successful settled agriculturists. The missions' efforts resulted in a people and culture with an identity neither wholly indigenous nor wholly Spanish that has proven exceptionally persistent and pervasive.

Park ranger looking up at Mission Concepción's church facade.

About The World Heritage Management Group

The World Heritage Management Group (WHMG) for the San Antonio Missions consists of the landowners for the missions, including the National Park Service, the Archdiocese of San Antonio, San Antonio River Authority, the City of San Antonio, Bexar County, and the Texas General Land Office. In addition to the agencies represented on the WHMG, there are three primary partners dedicated to helping achieve World Heritage goals: Mission Heritage Partners, Visit San Antonio, and the San Antonio Conservation Society.

The World Heritage Management Group is an oversight body whose purpose is to continue the high level of coordination and partnering that was established as the World Heritage nomination was under preparation. This committee will assist management of the relevant authorities in reaching the goals stated in the next page and ensure that these cultural resources are protected in perpetuity. In 2023, the group, led by the National Park Service completed its first "periodic reporting" to UNESCO since the site's inscription in 2015. The report reaffirms the integrity of the site's globally significant resources and the dedication of this group.

World Heritage Management Plan Goals

The purpose of the World Heritage management plan is to preserve and protect the Outstanding Universal Value of the San Antonio Missions and all of the associated features (acequias, labores, rancho, etc.), and to work actively to ensure their continued relevance for Americans and for visitors from around the world.

- A** **Protect** and preserve finite cultural resources using the least invasive techniques possible.
- B** **Interpret** the entire cultural history of the missions and provide educational, spiritual and religious experiences that reflect the multiplicity of stories and continuing heritage of the missions in accordance with their Outstanding Universal Value.
- C** **Ensure** wayfinding so visitors can maneuver between the mission sites in a way that is understandable and that has the least impact on the cultural resources.
- D** **Increase** visitor capacity and improve visitor experiences while erring in favor of resource protection if necessary.
- E** **Explore** innovative ways to fund the protection and interpretation of the missions.
- F** **Encourage** academic research on the missions that will shed new light on the people, structures, and landscapes.
- G** **Market** the missions to the local community, the country, and the world to increase awareness of their Outstanding Universal Value and the value of their continued protection. Reach out to non-traditional segments of the population for heritage tourism and preservation.

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Preservation

Protect and preserve finite cultural resources using the least invasive techniques possible.



Park ranger in the field holding a Texas tortoise in their hands.



Ecosystem Preservation in the National Park

Two Texas tortoises, a state threatened species, were located at Rancho de las Cabras during a species inventory. San Antonio Missions National Historical Park works consistently to combat invasive vegetation like guinea grass and johnson grass to support the native ecosystem and help keystone species like this tortoise throughout the park sites.



Historic preservation crew works on the bell tower of Mission Concepción's church.



Mission Concepción Tower Floor Stabilization

In 2024, the tower floor of Mission Concepción required additional support and stabilization. This project ensures the stabilization of the roof, and the protection of the original mortar from birds and other animals.



Eagle Project 23 boy scouts working on a private camping area in the park.



Youth in Preservation

The National Park Service continues to be a place that teaches and fosters youth engagement in preservation. Working with organizations like Texas Conservation Corps, American Conservation Experience, Student Conservation Association, CorpsThat and more, 15 individual youth placements worked on masonry and cultural landscape maintenance, and 40 youth crew members working in preservation on acequias just this year. Additionally, 23 Boy Scouts volunteered 184 hours making improvements to the park's youth crew camping area to complete an Eagle Scout Project. Funds have been secured for 2025 to continue youth preservation work at San Antonio Missions National Historical Park.



NPS staff and interns in protective gear removing a large tree outside of Mission San José's walls.



Hazardous Tree Removal

The facilities team at San Antonio Missions National Historical Park removed several large hazard trees and five acres of overgrown vegetation around the national park. This important work was completed thanks to funding from the park's friends group, Mission Heritage Partners.



A group of people at the Texas Public Radio event discussing San Antonio Gastronomy.



Great SA Culinary Conversations

In collaboration with Texas Public Radio (TPR), the World Heritage Office successfully launched a series of culinary conversations that included topics about Asian-American & Pacific Islander Influence of South Texas cuisine, BBQ, local Craft Beer and food traditions along the Silk Road Cultural Heritage District. Each of these included scholars, authors, and local experts and chefs. The events were free and open to the public.



Stone walls that surround Mission San José.



Mission San José Indian Quarters Stabilization Project

This multi-year project began in 2024 to stabilize and repair the historic Indigenous Quarters at Mission San José. The walls require significant structural and accessibility upgrades to protect its history, improve visitor experiences, and meet modern safety standards. This preservation project will address both immediate structural needs and long-term conservation including: structural analysis & repairs, drainage system installation, foundation and wall stabilization, roofing, utility upgrades, and restroom renovations.



A group of feral hogs in a grassy field.



The church bell gable at Mission San Juan.



Removal of Feral Hogs in the Park

In partnership with the San Antonio River Authority, with funds from Mission Heritage Partners, San Antonio Missions National Historical Park removed 77 feral hogs from park lands. Through this partnership, we protect the natural and historical resources throughout park, and through this project, specifically Mission San Juan and Mission Espada.



San Juan Capistrano Bells

This year, Las Misiones funded the repair of the San Juan bells. The top bell of the campanile was removed as the mechanism that rings the bells was repaired. The three bells ring again at Mission San Juan.



This collaborative effort is not only preserving the San Antonio River Basin, but also addressing habitat degradation, invasive species, and the loss of native food resources along the river.



February 2024 – River Authority, Trinity University, and Microsoft partner for an Ecological Restoration Project

In Feb. 2024, the San Antonio River Authority, Trinity University, and Microsoft came together to plant 2,500 native plants as part of a 23-month ecological restoration project along the Mission Reach. With a grant from Microsoft, Trinity University aims to determine the best practices for controlling invasive Guinea grass in the area. The River Authority manages the 8-mile-long Mission Reach restoration project, focusing on increasing biodiversity and the recovery of native species. Trinity University, along with others, will collect data on suppression treatments and the establishment of native species.



The Alamo conservation team doing work on the front of the Alamo church.



Alamo Conservation Work

The Alamo conservation team made significant progress in preserving the Alamo Church, with special attention given to safeguarding its delicate Mission Era plaster and limestone features. A comprehensive annual assessment was conducted of the Alamo Church facade. Each stone underwent careful inspection, cleaning, and stabilization, addressing areas where delamination had occurred and where previous repairs were no longer keeping with today's best practices. In places with severe deterioration, stones were carefully removed, and all updates were meticulously documented with photographs for our conservation archives. This approach not only helps to prevent further deterioration but also ensures a sustainable strategy for the future. In the Baptismal, the southern room inside the Alamo Church, efforts focused on stabilizing the aging plaster and mortar of

the eastern wall, preserving these historically significant materials to ensure they endure for future generations to appreciate.



River Authority crews removing trees from the Mission Reach.



Planned Stem Density Removal Program

The operational priorities of the Mission Reach project as designated by the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) are: flood conveyance, restoration and recreation. Stems (trees) were removed from parts of the Mission Reach to meet the regulatory requirements of the USACE and FEMA. These areas were designed to be and are being restored to a native grassland prairie habitat that will contain minimal woody vegetation to ensure the proper conveyance of flood waters meeting the primary objective of the project.



Crew in safety gear deconstructing an old home.



Deconstruction of the Sisson House

The park collaborated with the City of San Antonio's Office of Historic Preservation to deconstruct the Sisson House near Mission San Juan. The house was removed to protect the integrity of the San Juan acequia and preserve the Mission San Juan cultural landscape. Deconstruction is a historic preservation practice that documents a structure as it is taken down and allows for materials from the home to be recycled and used in other historic preservation projects.



Four small varied species mussels in the palm of a hand.



Native Mussels Return to the San Antonio River in First-in-Texas Conservation Effort

2024 was the most successful year for the River Authority's Freshwater Mussel Reintroduction Project. In 2024, freshwater mussels were stocked in the Mission Reach with the first cohort of Pistolgrip, Pimpleback, Threeridge, and Yellow Sandshell mussels. In total, over 3,500 mussels were reintroduced into the Mission Reach, the first time for these species in many decades. This accomplishment is the first in the state of Texas and serves as a blueprint for other organizations throughout the state of Texas and the United States.



Fish captured in a clear box for research data working to restore native fish species in the San Antonio River.



Recolonization of Native Fish Species and Observation of the First Tadpole Madtom

The ecosystem restoration of the Upper San Antonio River and establishment of the Mission Reach has led to the recolonization of many native fish species. The River Authority's Mission Reach Intensive Nekton Survey has sought to track the re-establishment of fishes. Through this effort the River Authority has seen many new native species find their way back into the Upper San Antonio River, and, in 2024, Tadpole Madtom (*Noturus gyrinus*) were observed for the first time since the establishment of the Mission Reach.



The archway of Mission Concepción convento.

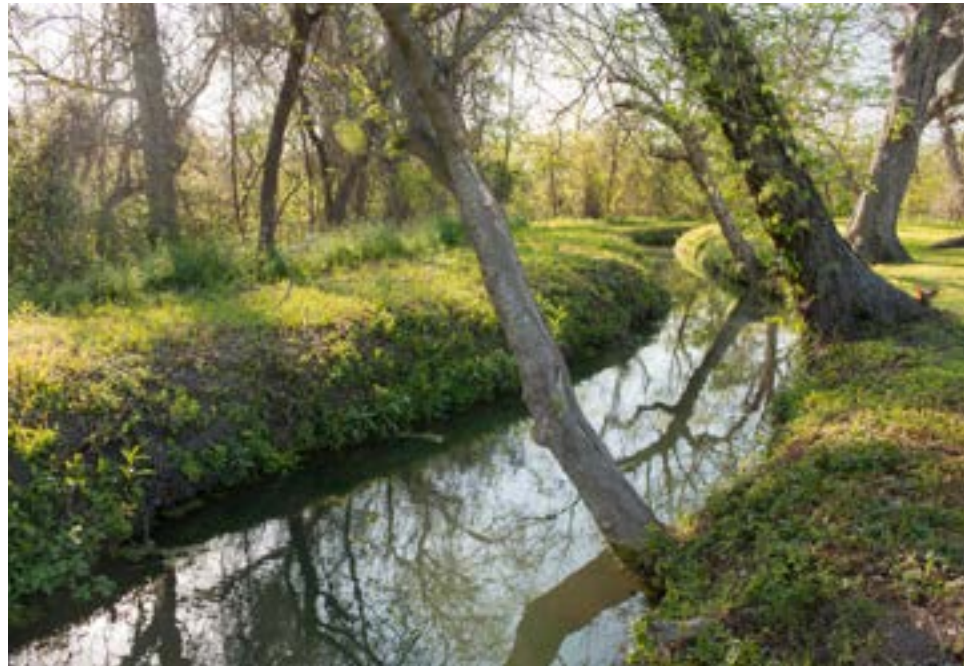


UTSA professor leads students and interns in ground-penetrating radar research at Mission Concepción.



Multiple Research Projects with the University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA)

The Integrated Resources Team has been proud to partner with the UTSA-Center for Cultural Sustainability in multiple research projects. These projects include a historic structure report for the Mission San José Indian Quarters, a historic structure report for the Mission San José Granary, and an environmental hazard vulnerability assessment for the convento at Mission Concepción. This year a contract was awarded for a new roof for the Mission Concepción convento.



Functioning historic irrigation ditch/acequia in San Antonio Missions National Historical Park.



Acequia Maintenance

Consistent maintenance is required to keep the 13 miles of flowing historic mission acequias (irrigation ditches) in working order. This year, a tractor mounted boom mower attachment was purchased thanks to Mission Heritage Partners to improve acequia ditch bank maintenance in San Antonio Missions National Historical Park.



Dancer wearing cultural regalia with feathered arms dances during the City of San Antonio's Dia de los Muertos celebration.



Park Ranger poses with a costumed person featuring a painted calavera/decorative skull and monarch wings.



Dia de los Muertos - Celebrando las Misiones and Ofrendas in the Granary

The World Heritage Office presented its 7th annual Dia de los Muertos- Celebrando las Misiones event at Mission Marquee Plaza on Nov. 2 to share the stories, legacies and memories of our community. The event included partnerships with Mission Descendant families, local artists, businesses and vendors, and other community organizations. The event included a community altar and remembrance video presentation, spoken word performances, face painting, interactive art workshops, musical and dance performances. The event kicked off with an Indigenous blessing and a procession from Mission San José with the National Park Service (NPS). For more than a decade, the NPS has invited Mission Descendants to create their own family ofrenda to honor their family inside the Mission San José granary. A procession guided the event to its final location at Mission Marquee Plaza and concluded with a screening of "The Book of Life." Attendance: ~1,500



Colorful Dia de los Muertos altar inside the El Camino campus.



El Camino Campus celebrates Día de Los Muertos

Ofrendas from the four mission parish communities were displayed in the Margil Center at the El Camino Campus to honor, remember and celebrate their loved ones. The exhibit offered visitors the ability to learn more about the ofrenda symbols and meanings, and our beautiful culture.



Rehabilitation work on the historic roof of the Harris House.



Harris House Rehabilitation

The Ethel Wilson Harris House, located adjacent to Mission San José, is a historic structure listed on the National Register of Historic Places. A rehabilitation project for the building's exterior envelope began this year including masonry, siding, plaster, and a new roofing system. Other key architectural elements include window treatments, door systems, ventilation components, fascia, soffits, and gutters. Lastly, security improvements like storm window inserts and installation of cameras are included in the rehabilitation project.



Group of archeologist's work on a historic stone wall at the Alamo.



Alamo Archaeology

This year marked significant advancements in the Alamo's archaeological efforts with the intensive excavation of the exterior Long Barrack. Key discoveries during 2024 from the Long Barrack include artifacts from the Mission Era as well as the Battle of the Alamo. These findings will contribute to future exhibits in the Alamo Visitor Center and Museum, set to open in 2027, ensuring that the stories uncovered through archaeology are shared with the millions of visitors expected to walk through our doors. Alamo Archaeology collaborated with San Antonio College in their CURE initiative, a Course-based Undergraduate Research Experience in STEM. The CURE initiative is part of Project BUILD, a Title III, Hispanic Serving Institution STEM grant funded by the Department of Education. This collaboration provided a rare opportunity for archaeology students to receive hands-on experience in the field.

Interpretation & Education

In accordance with their Outstanding Universal Value interpret the entire cultural history of the missions and provide educational, spiritual and religious experiences that reflect the multiplicity of stories and continuing heritage of the missions.



Holiday Market Booth decorated with Lotería images.



Mission Marquee Plaza Holiday Market

The World Heritage Office hosted the end-of-season Holiday Market at Mission Marquee Plaza. Activities included tamale and chilli making classes, food demonstrations, ¡Qué Sabor! San Antonio™ Lotería (celebrating our UNESCO Creative City of Gastronomy designation), and holiday arts and crafts. The event included a tree adoption with over 300 trees distributed to the community. The holiday market had over 50 local artisans and vendors featuring handmade goods and specialty products. The program also featured a Zumba class and live music. Attendance: ~1,500



River Authority experts lead CYCL students on an ecological tour of Confluence Park and the Mission Reach Ecosystem Restoration Project.



Confluence of Young Conservation Leaders Career Exploration Field Trip

The Confluence of Young Conservation Leaders (CYCL) met this summer with fifty-seven students from 27 colleges across the U.S. They spent three days exploring careers in conservation and urban land stewardship while networking with professionals in the natural resource industry. The River Authority's Education and Engagement team, along with members of the Engineering Department supported in planning for the event, career mentoring sessions at Morgan's Camp, and hosting a field trip focusing on the important connection between land and water for the 35 of the attendees at Confluence Park.



Volunteers at Confluence Park retrieving trash along the bank of the San Antonio River.

San Antonio River Authority Trash Pick-ups on Land and Water

Over 400 volunteers with the River Authority participated in a total of 23 litter pick up events throughout the Mission Reach at Acequia Park, Confluence Park, and the Mission Reach Trail at Camino Coahuilteca. These litter pick up events are conducted on both land and water. Throughout 2024, volunteers and River Authority staff removed 91,958 pounds of trash from water and land. The River Authority engaged several corporate and community partners in these clean ups, including Microsoft, Toyota, JP Morgan, and more.



The #FilmSA contest winners being awarded a large check with their prize of \$1,000.

current challenges in our food system and how our community can get involved. A prize of \$1,000 was awarded to the highest-scoring entry in each category for the following age groups: 14 through 17 and 18 through 21. Each winning film was screened publicly at an Awards Ceremony held at Mission Marque Plaza.



Education Fellow guiding a Mission San José tour to kids.



Education Fellow

Mission Heritage Partners funded its first Education Fellow at San Antonio Missions National Historical Park. The position expanded interpretive education programs at the park and the fellow continued to develop and lead school tours throughout the park and create special programs for visitors of all ages. They helped launch “Harlandale Heritage Week”: a free, week-long education program serving schools within Harlandale ISD. Other programs initiated by the fellow included a commemoration museum exhibit series to highlight various historical topics.



Student Film Contest 2024

The City of San Antonio’s World Heritage Office and Arts and Culture Department worked in collaboration to organize and host the 2024 #FilmSA Contest.

Applicants submitted films in one of two categories: “Beyond the Plate: Exploring San Antonio’s Food System” and “Lights, Camera, Action, SA!” The “Beyond the Plate: Exploring San Antonio’s Food System” encouraged youth filmmakers to explore what is important to support our local food system, especially as a UNESCO Creative City of Gastronomy. The contest asked them to bring awareness of



Professor poses in front of Mission Concepción church.



Las Misiones welcomes Dr. Arnd Schneider of the University of Oslo

In June of 2024, Las Misiones welcomed Arnd Schneider, PhD, full professor of Anthropology at the University of Oslo to San Antonio. His goal was to explore the intersection of contemporary artistic expressions and the mission descendent groups in San Antonio. While here, he researched the *Árbol de la Vida* installation (by artist Margarita Cabrera) near Mission Espada, experienced the Mariachi Mass at Mission Concepción and interviewed members of Matachine groups.



A large group of small trees ready to be given away at a city event.



WORLD HERITAGE

Mission Marque Plaza Dia del Arbol

The World Heritage Office in partnership with San Antonio Parks and Recreation celebrated Día del Árbol in honor of Texas Arbor Day at Mission Marque Plaza. 1200 trees were available for adoption with forestry experts on hand to educate on proper tree planting and care. Other event highlights included interactive forestry demonstrations, nature-based play, art activities, Last Chance Forever bird demonstrations, and an outreach vendor zone designed to connect visitors with local sustainability programs and environmental education resources. A shuttle connected attendees with the Green Spaces Alliance’s Nature Fest event taking place that day at Mission County Park. Councilmember Phylis Viagran attended and read the proclamation and offered opening remarks to kick off the day’s activities. The program engaged local farmers, artisans, community partners, and businesses. Attendance: ~2,500



Park ranger leading a tour to a large group of school aged children at Mission San Juan.



Heritage Education Tours return to the Missions

The Conservation Society’s free Heritage Education Tours for local area 4th graders returned for the first time since 2019 thanks to the National Park Service and Professional Tour Guides Association, which made sure that each school group got an excellent tour of Mission San Juan. Future events promises to serve even more students.



The River Authority education team uses the San Antonio River Watershed model on collaborative field trips to show the relationship between the history of the missions and the river and how we can prevent pollution.



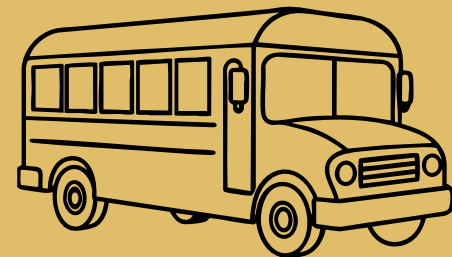
River Authority and National Park Service Educational Partnership

In 2024, the River Authority's Education team joined the San Antonio Missions National Historical Park staff to collaborate on a series of field trips. River Authority staff lent their expertise on the San Antonio River on field trips at Mission San Jose, Mission Concepción and Mission San Juan. National Park Service (NPS) rangers returned the favor on River Authority field trips at Confluence Park and a program at Floresville Elementary School in Wilson County. The River Authority and the NPS also teamed up to provide educational professionals at the 2024 PLT-WET-WILD National Conference with a combined tour of the San Antonio River Flood Tunnel, Confluence Park and San Antonio Missions. Together our teams have collaborated on 16 programs in 2024 serving over 1300 students and adults!



A large group of people posing for a photo in a field of grass and trees.

Additionally, National Park Service rangers hosted the San Antonio River Authority's Education and Engagement team and 16 River Warrior volunteers in April 2024 on a tour of Rancho de Las Cabras where volunteers used the opportunity to make observations in iNaturalist.



A park ranger talking to a group of children under a tree.



A park ranger demonstrating the atlatl tool to a student at Mission Espada.

San Antonio Missions National Historical Park's Education Program served 20,646 school children during the 2023-2024 academic school year.

Expanding National Park Education Programs

The education program at San Antonio Missions National Historical Park continues to grow by presenting in-park, in-school, and virtual programs to school aged children. Our ranger led field trips guide students from all over Texas to gain an immersive experience exploring the rich Spanish colonial history. The in-school education programming has been much closer to home, with a large emphasis on after school programming within our neighboring Harlandale ISD. Virtually, the park reached over 4,000 students. The park's Education Team is funded by Mission Heritage Partners and the National Park Foundation's Open Outdoors for Kids grant. This year, Mission Heritage Partners contributed an additional \$20,000 for the program expanding this year's seasonal education ranger team.



Ten teachers traveled to Mexico City for the international Alamo Summer Teacher Institute.



Alamo Education Program

Construction of the Texas Cavaliers Education Center continued this year. This interactive facility will feature an outdoor learning pavilion, an orientation theater and lecture hall, agricultural garden, multi-functional classrooms, distance learning studio, early learners hub, and a STEAM Lab and is scheduled to open at the end of 2025. Meanwhile, the Alamo Education Department moves forward in bringing Texas history to life through immersive and innovative programs, expanding its outreach to both students and educators. 178,000 school age children visited the Alamo, and 8,532 students benefited from Alamo History Trunks that travelled to 48 schools. This year the Alamo piloted two multi-day Alamo Teacher Institute professional development trips, a Texas Revolution Road Trip and an international Alamo Summer Teacher Institute in Mexico City. These opportunities were made possible by the Tres Grace Family Foundation.

1,415 hours of continuing education awarded to 393 teachers through Teach the Alamo Professional Development workshops



Showing a group around Mission Concepción.



El Camino de San Antonio Misiones Welcomes International Delegation from Vietnam

In November of 2024, El Camino de San Antonio Misiones was honored to host a delegation from Vietnam exploring Freedom of Religion and Belief through the International Visitor Leadership Program and the San Antonio Council for International Visitors. The delegation from Vietnam learned about the unique relationship between the Archdiocese of San Antonio, National Parks Service, and the City of San Antonio.



Students make observations during a field trip at Confluence Park along the Mission Reach.



San Antonio River Authority Education Programs

The River Authority Education Team conducts field trips, tours, and presentations with a fundamental emphasis on the vital role that the river played in the founding of San Antonio and the establishment of the missions. Students in grades K-12 as well as homeschoolers regularly attend field trips at River Authority parks along the Mission Reach of the San Antonio River. Adult audiences from organizations such as the Texas Children in Nature Network, Alamo Area Master Naturalists, Project WET/WILD/Learning Tree, Confluence of Young Conservation Leaders, H. E. Butt Foundation, the University of Texas at San Antonio, Our Lady of the Lake University, and teachers from many local school districts have also enjoyed field trips along the Mission Reach with River Authority educators. In 2024, the Education Team served over 2,500 individuals along the Mission Reach and over 20,400 total constituents throughout the San Antonio River Basin.

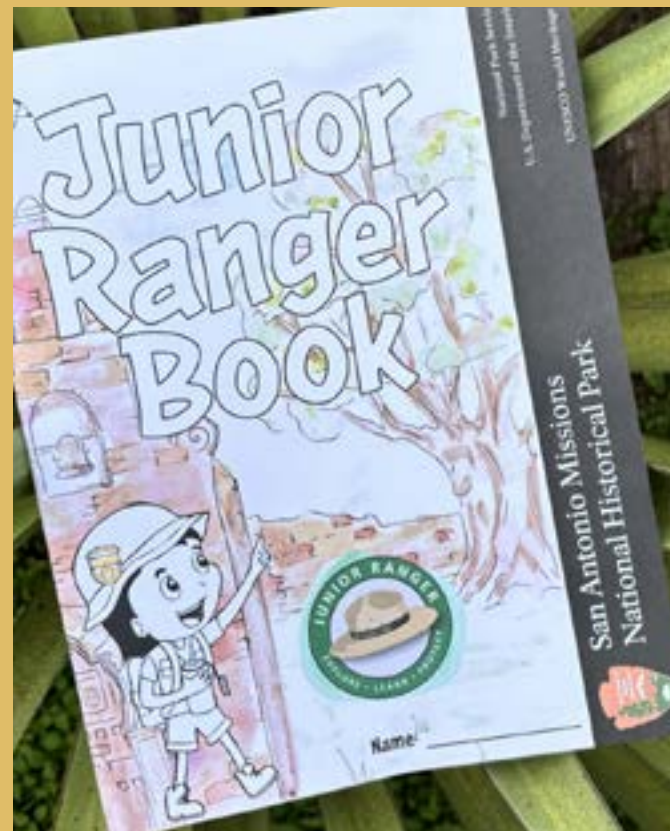


An art class attendee sits at a table smiling.



Mission Art Expressions

A 5-week course focused on creating encounters to connect all people to the rich cultural and faith heritage of San Antonio Missions. The objective of the art classes is for the learner to discover their inner artist and personal connection to the missions through mixed media, poetry and art expressions.



The cover of the San Antonio Missions Junior Ranger Book.



San Antonio Missions National Historical Park's New Junior Ranger Book

San Antonio Missions National Historical Park unveiled their new Junior Ranger Books this year featuring watercolor artwork and a pop-out postcard on the back cover! The new activity book is fun for all ages (not just for kids) and will help visitors explore and reflect on their visit to San Antonio Missions with themes of storytelling, traditions, nature, preservation, and reflections. Mission Heritage Partners helped fund the printing of the new books.

The Junior Ranger program is an activity-based educational program at the United States' National Park Service (NPS) sites¹. Children (and children-at-heart) complete workbooks and activities to be sworn in as Junior Rangers and earn a Junior Ranger badge. San Antonio Missions has two badges available, the San Antonio Missions Junior Ranger badge and the San Antonio Missions World Heritage Badge. Visit the park's Visitor Center at Mission San José to pick one up.



Group standing in front of Padre Margil Pilgrimage Center.



Mission Arts Workshop for Educators and Student Experience

A workshop for educators, youth group leaders, and mentors was held to discuss content for teaching about the faith and cultural heritage of the missions of San Antonio. In partnership with the Department of Catholic Schools of the Archdiocese of San Antonio and the University of the Incarnate Word it provided educational credit for teachers. Also in partnership with the University of the Incarnate Word and Artistic Bridges, students explored the missions as part of living history and acoustic experience. Visual art, music and poetry guided by mentors and youth leaders, captured the mission experience with student led work.



Group explores the convento at Mission Concepción.

Outreach

Market the missions to the local community, the country, and the world to increase awareness of their Outstanding Universal Value and the value of their continued protection. Reach out to non-traditional segments of the population for heritage tourism and preservation.



National Park Service director shakes a woman's hand during the naturalization ceremony.



National Park Service Director Swears in New US Citizens During National Park Week

The National Park Service (NPS) and USCIS co-hosted a naturalization ceremony at Mission San José. During the ceremony, NPS Director Sams welcomed 60 new American citizens congratulating them and their families and celebrating how our diverse cultures make the nation stronger. Since 2006, USCIS and the NPS have welcomed thousands of new citizens at parks, connecting the next generation of American immigrants to the nation's most historic and precious places.



Family sits on the grass during the KLRN Kids Fall Festival at Mission Marquee Plaza.



Mission Marquee Plaza KLRN Kids Fall Festival

The World Heritage Office, in partnership with KLRN, hosted the KLRN Kids Fall Festival on Oct. 12, 2024. The free community event included PBS KIDS programming, a PBS KIDS costumed character meet and greet, hands-on educational activities, informational tables with over 40 community partners, and a trunk and treat. Youth fitness activities and over 200 healthy food bags, donated by the San Antonio Food Bank, were distributed to the community. The program is critical to serving the community and stakeholders involved. Attendance: ~4,000



Free outdoor fitness classes at Mission Marquee featuring a group participating in yoga.



Mission Marquee Plaza Community Fitness Classes

The World Heritage Office offered free community fitness classes before each Farmers & Artisans Market at Mission Marquee Plaza from April through November 2024. Mobile Om, a local Yoga business, hosted 8 yoga classes every first Saturday, Zumba classes were provided by certified Zumba Instructors who hosted 8 Zumba classes every third Saturday. Each class welcomed all fitness levels and provided an opportunity for the San Antonio community to gain access to professional fitness instruction, learn new workout techniques, and improve their overall wellness. The program provided the community free access to health and wellness classes. Attendance: ~800



The community gathering around tables of information for the 9th Annual World Heritage Open House at the Mission Branch Library.



World Heritage Office: World Heritage Open House

The City of San Antonio World Heritage Office hosted the 9th Annual World Heritage Open House at the Mission Branch Library. For education and outreach, the event was held in partnership with Harlandale Independent School District and the 46th Cultural Arts Fair and Parade which culminated at Mission Marquee Plaza. The Open House consisted of informational tables representing projects, programs, and organizations that have a direct impact on the community within the World Heritage area and partners who preserve and support World Heritage in San Antonio. Participating organizations included the San Antonio River Authority, Las Misiones, Mission Heritage Partners, Harvey E. Najim YMCA, San Antonio Indian Descendants, and multiple City Departments. Attendance: ~280



Archbishop Gustavo celebrates mass at Mission Espada.



Mission Espada Tabernacle Dedication and Art Expressions

In 2024, Mission Espada church celebrated their new tabernacle installation. It was a beautiful celebration with Mass with Archbishop Gustavo, Matachines (who pray as they dance), and a fiesta. The Tabernacle is a replica of the Portiuncula Chapel in Assisi, where the Franciscan order began.



Multiple kayakers paddle in a river during a Race the River event.



Race the River: Mission Reach

2024 marked the 3rd year of the competitive kayak and canoe race on the Mission Reach. Despite inclement weather, 26 of the most experienced paddlers raced from Roosevelt Park to Espada Park and completed the challenge. Their competitive spirit kicked off the Race the River series and introduced many to the recreation opportunities along the river.



A woman stands in front of a Bexar Heritage tent and table.



A group of people sit at a picnic table for the event Pints for Parks.



Historic Plaza Days

This cultural celebration allows our descendants of the founding families of Bexar County starting with the Spanish Colonial Period to share their history directly with the public. This initiative blends our UNESCO World Heritage Site and its partners, The Spanish Governors Palace, San Pedro Creek Culture Park, and Casa Navarro Historic State Site the opportunity to participate in this powerful storytelling alongside these descendant groups. The event offers a Native American blessing, hands on activities, music, food trucks, and prizes.



Pints for Parks

Mission Heritage Partners (MHP) launched the new 'Pints for Parks' membership event series in 2024. Pints for Parks is a public event to drive membership and raise funds for San Antonio Missions National Historical Park. In collaboration with a local brewery in San Antonio, MHP invited the community to enjoy a beverage, meet staff, and support our national park. Through this initiative, MHP has grown their membership base and revived its community outreach efforts. MHP is excited to host more Pints for Parks events throughout the incoming year to cultivate meaningful connections with the community and encourage support of the national park.



Chef showcasing a maiz-inspired dish at an outdoor event.



2024 Pueblos del Maiz

Four UNESCO Creative Cities of

Gastronomy cities collaborated on a project called Pueblos del Maíz celebrating the city's gastronomy, history, and food culture of maize. Participating cities included Tucson, Arizona; San Antonio, Texas; Mérida, Mexico; and Bergamo, Italy. San Antonio hosted events and provided opportunities for our community to explore, learn, and taste a variety of dishes with maiz as a key ingredient from our local and visiting chefs. This year, a local artist and the community completed a beautiful mural that is on exhibit at Mission Branch Library. 20 local restaurants participated in highlighting maiz-inspired dishes.



Group displays paella on platters during large event.



14th Annual Pacifico Paella Challenge at Mission County Park

As part of the UNESCO Creative Cities Network, San Antonio hosted Chef Millie Romawac from Baguio City (Philippines) to participate in the 14th Annual Pacifico Paella Challenge hosted by Chef Johnny Hernandez. Baguio City is a UNESCO Creative City of Crafts and Folk Art and a Sister City.



A turtle sunning itself on a rock in the San Antonio River.



UT Health Science Center Tours

Each semester students from the University of Texas Health Science Center School of Nursing join the River Authority for educational tours along the riverside trails. These tours help students connect to local communities as they learn about the history and culture of the area. Students also learn details of the Mission Reach Ecological Restoration Project and how outdoor recreation can positively impact the health and wellbeing of communities who access them.



An artist stands next to their painting at an outdoor event.

past poet laureate Andrea “Vocab” Sanderson, Dr. Carmen Tafolla, and Dr. Octavio Quintanilla, local poets Thomas Castillo and Anthony “The Poet.” The live paintings featured local artists Cruz Ortiz, Adriana Garcia, and Ashley Perez. The culinary component included Head Chefs John Tamez, Sofia Tejeda, Juan Carlos Bazan, and Tatu Herrera. Workshops included a poetry class, make-and-take art activities, and over 25 vendors. The paintings were exhibited at the Mission Branch Library from June through December. Attendance: ~2,800



A table full of fresh produce during a farmers market.



Mission Marquee Plaza Farmers and Artisans Markets

The World Heritage Office hosted monthly Farmers & Artisan Markets on every first and third Saturday from April through November. The markets offered access to fresh locally sourced food, nutritional resources, health services, art activities, and cultural programming representative of the community’s history and traditions. Three tree adoptions were held for a total distribution of over 1900 trees. The program engaged local farmers, artisans, community partners, and businesses in the World Heritage area. Attendance: ~8,000



Viva Poesia: Palabra, Musica, y Cultura Event

For National Poetry Month, Viva Poesía: Palabras, Música, y Cultura was held at Mission Marquee Plaza. The “Confluence of the Creative Arts” theme inspired the Surrealist exquisite corpse game. This technique fosters collaborative compositions of words/drawings, weaving together the talents of creative minds. The audience witnessed the making of four original poems and three visual art pieces, along with over 100 culinary tastings. The event featured San Antonio’s Poet Laureate Eddie Vega,



Franciscan priest, Fr. Dennis holding a clarinet.



“Unheard-of-Ensemble” play with Mission José Pastor, Fr. Dennis at Mission San José

On June 8th, Las Misiones sponsored a public concert at Mission San José by New York City-based contemporary music group “Unheard-of-Ensemble” consisting of clarinet, cello, violin, and keyboard. Unheard-of-Ensemble tours regularly, commissions large-scale multimedia projects, and runs its own summer workshop for emerging composers. The pastor of Mission San Jose, Fr. Dennis Schaffer OFM, A.Mus.D, began the program with a clarinet solo.



A young woman smiling with a fishing pole and bobber.



Family, Fishing, and Friends with Fin Addict

Throughout the year, hundreds of children were introduced to the sport of fishing through angler education clinics hosted by the San Antonio River Authority and Fin Addict Angler Foundation. These interactive workshops teach aspiring anglers the skills and best practices of fishing that can be applied to waterways all over Texas. Alongside their parents, the kids experienced the fun of catching their first fish at Acequia Park.



Group walking outside of Mission Concepción's church at night.



Posadas – A Journey of Faith

Posadas are a long-standing Christmas tradition at the missions. Every December each mission church commemorates the journey Joseph and Mary made from Nazareth to Bethlehem in search of a safe place to stay. Parishioners and the public participate in the procession. Mission Espada, Mission San José, Mission San Juan, and Mission Concepción continued this tradition at their annual parish posadas, held the week prior to Christmas. Hundreds of parish and community members participated in these events.



Double Solar Illumination Event inside the church at Mission Concepción.



Double Solar Illumination at Mission Concepción

Mission Concepción hosted over 200 people to see the double solar illumination, visible annually on August 15, the Feast of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary. The church was intentionally constructed to honor the Virgin Mary, its namesake, in a distinct way. During sundown light travels through the ocular and dome windows to create a double illumination falling on a painting of Mary Immaculate and in front of the Altar. When constructed, the light would have illuminated a large statue of the Virgin Mary according to Franciscan records of the time. After the event, a reception was held on the El Camino de San Antonio campus.



Matachines dance inside Mission Concepción church as a form of prayer honoring the Virgin of Guadalupe.



Matachine Pilgrimage and Festival Honor the Virgin of Guadalupe

The Virgin of Guadalupe is not only a sacred figure but a cultural icon for San Antonio. Her feast day of Dec. 12th has been celebrated at the missions for centuries. In 1787, a mission priest recorded the tradition of Matachines dancers at Mission Concepción in December. Originating in medieval Spain, Matachines dance is a form of prayer honoring the Virgin of Guadalupe and was adapted in the Americas with Indigenous music and dance. On Dec. 7th and 8th, El Camino de San Antonio Missions and Las Misiones sponsored two Matachines events: the Annual Pilgrimage of Juan Diego which included Matachines at Mission San José and the Matachine Festival at Mission Concepción where hundreds of Matachines danced from Mission Concepción to the San Antonio River and into the church of Mission Concepción. Food, music, crafts and dancing celebrated and honored the Virgin of Guadalupe.



Crowds at the Mission Marquee Plaza Outdoor Family Film Series event.

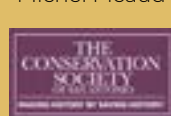


Outdoor Family Film Series

The World Heritage Office hosted Outdoor Family Film Series movie nights at Mission Marquee Plaza every 1st and 3rd Saturday, and every 3rd Thursday of each month, from May through November. The film series served as a family-friendly gathering space that offered free programming to the local community and visitors. The film series featured a variety of pre-entertainment such as live music and dance performances, costume character meets and greets, car shows, interactive make-and-take art tables, and give-aways. The program supported local community organizations, businesses, artisans, and food vendors in the World Heritage area and is critical to serving the community and stakeholders involved. Attendance: 31,500



Michel Picaud stands in front of the Alamo.



100th birthday of San Antonio Conservation Society

In March, 2024, the Conservation Society marked its 100th birthday with a celebration featuring Michel Picaud of Friends of Notre Dame de Paris. The Conservation Society has been working to preserve the San Antonio Missions since 1926 and initiated the World Heritage nomination in 2006. Mr. Picaud was given an exclusive tour of the Alamo and San Antonio Missions as part of the 100th anniversary celebration.



CorpsTHAT intern giving a tour of Mission San José in American Sign Language.



ASL Day at Mission San José

Two interns worked with us through CorpsTHAT and Texas Conservation Corps (TXCC) this year. These Deaf and Hard of Hearing individuals planned and hosted ASL (American Sign Language) Day at Mission San José. During the event two tours of Mission San José were led in ASL (American Sign Language). Interpreters were provided throughout the programs making the information accessible to those that speak either ASL or English.



National Park Service volunteer leading a tour outside.



Volunteers In Parks Grows

The Volunteer-in-Parks (VIPs) program at San Antonio Missions National Historical Park achieved significant milestones this year, reflecting a commitment to enhancing visitor engagement and park stewardship. Key accomplishments included: program expansion by onboarding new recurring volunteers, and all VIPs received specialized training on informal interpretation techniques to help visitors find more meaning in their visit. In total, the national park recorded 7,159.5 hours of volunteer service in 2024, showcasing the dedication and impact of the VIP program.



9th Annual World Heritage Festival

The World Heritage Festival was held on September 4 - 8, 2024. The festival helps to promote and create awareness for the historic San Antonio Missions while connecting the missions to the river, community, and other cultural and historical assets. The multi-day celebration took place throughout the five San Antonio Missions and the surrounding area. 2024's festival included several National Park Service events like Mission Descendant Tours and Junior Ranger Day; A Vision of History Tour at The Alamo, Music and Movie Under the Stars with a tribute to the military; the annual Tour de Las Misiones bike ride/walk/run; and Caring for Creation Mass at Mission Espada along with a procession to Mission San Juan. The festival engaged community organizations, stakeholders, and community members. The events cultivated collaboration with multiple entities with a variety of focuses such as arts and culture, outdoor fitness, active-duty military, veteran support and outreach, and religion.

Estimated attendance: 3,000



A park ranger demonstrates limestone mortar at a Junior Ranger Day event at Mission San Juan.



Handmade decorative shield with a coral snake image and man with a feathered headdress dances for a blessing during a World Heritage Festival Event.



Two Mission Descendants talk to National Park Service park visitors during co-led tours of Mission San José with a park ranger.



Archbishop celebrating mass in celebration of the World Heritage Festival.

Tour de Las Misiones Bike Ride/Walk/Run



Tour de Las Misiones Bike Ride/walk/run participants hold up their medals. The event was hosted at Mission County Park and the festival was sponsored by Bexar County.



Caring for Creation Mass held outdoors at Missions San Juan.

Las Misiones hosts the Caring for Creation 2024 Mass and Pilgrimage

The Caring for Creation Mass and Pilgrimage encourages all to celebrate the gift of creation and work together for our common home. The 6th annual event, an outdoor Mass at Mission Espada and pilgrimage to Mission San Juan had over 300 attendees.



Cyclists cross a finish line during the Tour de Las Misiones event.



National Park Service tour co-led tour with American Indians of Texas (AIT) at Mission San Juan featuring Grandma Coyote singing.



Nopal Y Tu Tour at Mission San Juan in partnership with the San Antonio Food Bank highlighting the Nopal field.

“As I enter into any of the missions, I feel a connection to my ancestors who walked and lived their lives on these same grounds and more than 200 years ago. [...] And to think that my Coahuiltecan Indian ancestors built the missions, one stone at a time, and created the magnificent structures that we see today. They’re still standing after 300 years. It’s a testimony to their determination.” - Estella Kierce



Park Ranger issues a Military Lifetime Pass at a Veterans event.



Outreach in Military City USA®

San Antonio is home to one of the largest concentrations of military bases in the United States and is officially Military City, USA. This year our park rangers have led several military groups on guided tours of the park and attended multiple outreach events at military bases to invite the community to their national park and to distribute the free lifetime and active duty Military Passes for those eligible.



Choir group sings inside Mission Concepción's church.



Mission Descendant Family poses for a photo.



History and Genealogy Day

San Antonio Missions National Historical Park hosted its annual event History and Genealogy Day at Mission San José. This community event invites families with ties to the missions to interact and share their history with the visitors of the national park. Various historical societies and genealogical institutions were also present with information and research tools.



Sacred Singing in the mission churches

Choirs can often be found practicing at Mission San José and Mission Concepción because of the beautiful setting and acoustics. The San Antonio Youth Chorale, Harker Heights High School, and Jersey Village High School were some of the youth choirs that performed at the missions.



Large group of people gathered for a photo at the 17th World Congress of the Organization of World Heritage Cities.



Organization of World Heritage Cities 17th World Congress

In September 2024, the City of San Antonio participated in the 17th World Congress of the Organization of World Heritage Cities (OWHC), in Cordoba, Spain. Created in 1993, the Organization of World Heritage Cities (OWHC) is headquartered in Quebec City, Canada. The OWHC is an international, non-profit, non-governmental organization of mayors of cities inscribed on UNESCO's World Heritage List. San Antonio has been a member of the OWHC since 2015 and Mayor Ron Nirenberg was elected to serve on the Organization of World Heritage Cities Board of Directors for 2025 - 2026. The OWHC Board of Directors is comprised of eight Mayors from member cities elected by the General Assembly every two years at the OWHC World Congresses.



Cheerleaders at the Harlandale Cultural Arts Fair



Mission Marquee Plaza 45th Annual Cultural Arts Festival

The 45th annual Harlandale Cultural Arts Fair provided the community a chance to reconnect with their culture and enjoy a day filled with activities that promoted students' education and success. The event kicked off with a Descendants ceremony at Mission San José, followed by a parade from Harlandale Memorial Stadium to Mission Marquee Plaza and showcased the student's sports, fine arts, and school pride. Attendance: ~1,500



The group collected 32 full bags of trash, two tires, a mattress, and a large sofa cushion for a total of 1,225 pounds of litter along Six- Mile Creek



Corporate Collaborations and Volunteerism

The River Authority's Engagement Team has forged a meaningful partnership with the Toyota TERRA BPG Group, a group committed to promoting sustainability and volunteer service. This collaboration aims to foster engagement from Toyota staff and environmental stewardship through various volunteer opportunities hosted by the River Authority. As part of this partnership, the Engagement Team organized two tabling days, which allowed staff to engage directly with representatives from the River Authority and learn about their waterways, how they can get involved, and more. Alongside these events, the River Authority provided two separate Speaker's Bureaus for Toyota Staff for a collective total of 70 attendees. A highlight of this partnership was the large-scale clean up event for National Public Land's Day at Six Mile Creek, where River Warrior volunteers and the Toyota TERRA BPG group came together to take action in preserving the local environment.

Visitor Access & Experience

Ensure that visitors can maneuver between the mission sites in an understandable way and that has the least impact on the cultural resources. Increase visitor capacity and improve visitor experiences while erring in favor of resource protection if necessary.



El Camino pilgrimage participant at Mission Esapda.



Begin Spain's El Camino in San Antonio

In 2024, 720 pilgrims participated

in the Camino program walking along the El Camino de San Antonio Missions pilgrimage route. San Antonio is the only place in the Americas where one can officially begin walking the famed El Camino de Santiago. El Camino de San Antonio Missions has a partnership with Spain's El Camino de Santiago de Compostela whereby pilgrims who obtain an El Camino de San Antonio Missions Compostela can receive 30 kilometers credit towards the El Camino de Santiago Compostela on the Camino Ingles (English route) to Santiago. The Santiago Compostela received notes that their Santiago pilgrimage began in "San Antonio, Texas."



Ribbon butting of the Mission Gate & Lunette exhibit.



Mission Gate & Lunette

The newest outdoor interpretation at the Alamo, the Mission Gate &

Lunette presented by the Joan and Herb Kelleher Charitable Foundation and brought to life with the expertise of local San Antonio artist Carlos Cortés represents the historical main entrance. This outdoor exhibit stands as a vivid reminder of the past, blending artistry with historical interpretation to enhance the educational experience at the Alamo and helps with a key goal of the Alamo Plan – to allow visitors to better understand the original Spanish colonial mission site and battlefield footprint.



Young boy with a cowboy hat listens to the Alamo audio tour.



Relaunching of Victory or Death Audio Tour™ and Augmented Experience

The Victory or Death Audio Tour™ relaunched in FY24 featuring all-new narration by country music singer, songwriter, actor, and nine-time GRAMMY® Award Winner, Ray Benson from Asleep at the Wheel. This audio tour won first place in the Digital Media category of the 2024 National Association for Interpretation Media Awards. The Interpretation Media Awards promote excellence in the delivery of natural, cultural, and historical nonpersonal interpretive services.

The Alamo's newest experience allows guests to travel through time with Surrounded! The Alamo Augmented Experience, presented by Frost, the Official Bank of the Alamo. Through the use of a handheld tablet, guests can peek into six experiential portals with interactive characters, immersive clips, and 360-degree animations that bring the history of the Alamo to life.



Large group of people pose in front of the church at Mission San Juan.



The Monthly Community Camino is Established

This year, El Camino de San Antonio Missions began a monthly walk to encourage pilgrimage to the San Antonio Missions called the Community Camino. Pilgrims, young and old gathered on the second Saturday of every month to walk along the mission reach of the riverwalk trails, beginning and ending at one of the San Antonio Missions. The Community Camino drew hundreds of pilgrims.



New brown sign for Mission San José and it's Visitor Center location.



New national park educational sign showing the park map.



80+ New San Antonio Missions National Historical Park Educational and Wayfinding Signs

Both new wayfinding signs and educational panels were installed this year throughout the park's four mission sites, trails, dam and aqueduct. More than 80 interpretive signs were replaced plus many new sign locations were added. Interpretive waysides are the storytelling, educational exhibits throughout the park to help visitors learn about the story of the park. The National Park Service collaborated with the mission descendant community on the content and language in several stages of this large project. These new signs expand park narratives and deepen the meaning of the park for current visitors and for future generations.



A large group of people walk into Mission Concepción's church at night.



El Camino de San Antonio Missions Offers Prayer Service with the Franciscan Friars

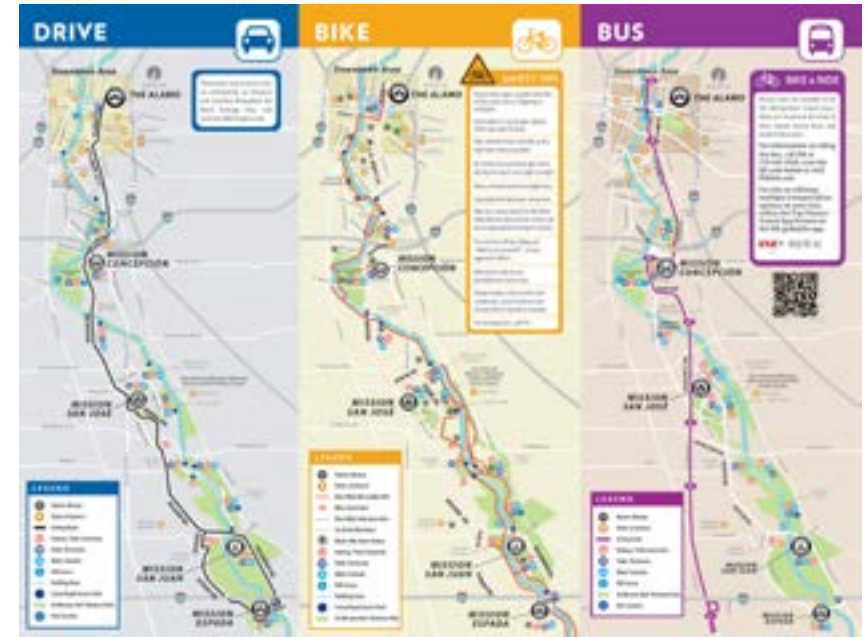
El Camino de San Antonio Missions hosted a prayer service with the Franciscan Friars of San Antonio. The Franciscan order, the order that established the San Antonio Missions, led the over 100 attendees in prayer and procession to Mission Concepción at the event titled "Pathway to Grace".



WORLD HERITAGE

San Antonio Missions - Drive, Bike, and Bus Brochure

During 2024, The City of San Antonio World Heritage Office produced and distributed the San Antonio Missions – Drive, Bike, and Bus brochures at various visitor centers throughout Texas. Distribution area included San Antonio, Austin, Kerrville, I-10 W (Houston to Seguin), Corpus Christi, and the Rio Grande Valley. Effective distribution and strategic placement of brochures at these locations are vital in promoting the historic San Antonio Missions, encouraging travelers to visit the only World Heritage Site in Texas. The brochure is also available for download on the WorldHeritageSA.com website.



City of San Antonio World Heritage Office's Drive, Bike, and Bus map and brochure of San Antonio Missions.



Group of people walk along the Mission San Juan's Acequia Trail during a park ranger led nature hike.



Green Loop Project Progress/Alamo Area Metropolitan Planning Organization

The Alamo Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (AAMPO) selected Mission Heritage Partners to be included in the Brooks Green Loop project for the 2025-2028 Transportation Improvement Program. In 2023, MHP partnered with Brooks in a successful grant application to AAMPO to include the park's Acequia Trail in the Green Loop project. This project will connect the Mission Reach Trail System, specifically the San Juan Acequia Trail, with the Brooks campus and Salado Creek Greenway. The goal of AAMPO'S Transportation and Improvement Program for 2025-2028 is to create safe and accessible alternative modes of transportation for local residents, while improving air quality in the south San Antonio area. Other benefits of the project include reduction of maintenance; creation of a safer trail surface; increasing accessibility for users with mobility issues; creation of a better pathway for people who use it daily to walk to travel to work, to shop, to recreate and exercise; and building more opportunities for locals and visitors from around the world to enjoy San Antonio Missions National Historical Park and other Southside assets.

Research & Funding

Explore innovative ways to fund the protection and interpretation of the missions & encourage academic research on the missions that will shed new light on the people, structures, and landscapes.



National Park Service Director, Chuck Sams, and park Superintendent, Christine Jacobs stand amongst a large group of people from the San Antonio African American Community Archive and Museum and a Franciscan Friar.

Mission San José gains designation as a Network to Freedom Site

In partnership with the San Antonio African American Community Archive and Museum, the park secured a Network to Freedom designation for Mission San Jose. This means that there is verifiable documentation of freedom seeking activity at Mission San Jose and the site is one of the sites to be part of the National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom Program. Former National Park Director, Chuck Sams announced the designation during his visit to the park in April.



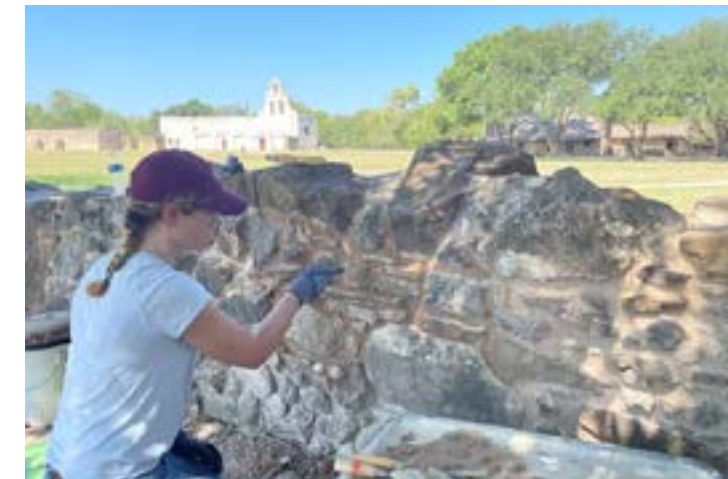
National Park Service Director shakes hands with a member of San Antonio African American Community Archive and Museum.



Legislation titled the National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom Act of 1998 was passed and created the Network to Freedom program which honors, preserves and promotes the history of resistance to enslavement through escape and flight.



Precious Mubiana smiles for a photo at the San Antonio River.



Christl Hansen works on masonry at Mission San Juan.



World Heritage USA/US ICOMOS IEP Interns – Precious Mubiana and Christl Hansen

Precious Mubiana and Christl Høj Hansen were the 2024 World Heritage USA interns.

Precious travelled over 8,000 miles to Texas from Lusaka, Zambia. During her time with the City of San Antonio's World Heritage Office, Precious shared inspiring museum and gallery practice skills and experience in curatorial work, exhibition design, and public programming. Precious left behind an informational and purposeful blueprint for educational programming that will guide future programming at the World Heritage Center. Christl worked alongside National Park Service staff to learn important job skills and address cultural resources projects such as collections management, integrated pest management, museum housekeeping, and research during her time at San Antonio Missions National Historical Park.



1st Place Nationwide in the City Nature Challenge with 65,084 observations of 3,767 species



San Antonio River Authority iNaturalist Citizen Scientist Make Bio-diversity Observations along the Mission Reach

The River Authority hosted their first San Antonio River Basin

Bioblitz to invite River Warriors and Texas Master Naturalists to one of the unopened parks near the Mission Reach to gather baseline data on species in that area. Over 5 days, 39 participants on iNaturalist made 420 observations and 225 species were identified. For the City Nature Challenge 2024 in April, volunteers contributed 65,084 observations of 3,767 species, placing the San Antonio metro area at 1st place not only in Texas, but nationwide, and 3rd place globally!



Citizen scientists participate in a nature-walk documenting wild species on iNaturalist along the Mission Reach.

The River Warrior iNaturalist citizen scientists contributed 1,435 observations of 450 species in the National Recreation and Park Association-Parks for Pollinators Bioblitz in September 2024. The River Authority Engagement Team hosted two bioblitz events in September for volunteers to make observations, one was in collaboration with the San Antonio Zoo and their teen volunteer group – the Wildlife Allies.



2023 Cultural Landscape Apprentices celebrate their year ending



San Antonio Missions Receives National Park Foundation Grant

San Antonio Missions National Historical Park received a grant from the National Park Foundation to continue preservation work through the Cultural Landscape Apprentice Program. This youth program in partnership with the Student Conservation Association engages young adults in cultural landscape preservation service within the national park beginning in the Fall of 2024 through Summer of 2025. The 2024 apprentices are Saul Ponce and Laura Hoyt.



Aerial photo of Mission Concepción's church.



Las Misiones Awarded Grant from Texas Preservation Trust Fund

The Texas Preservation Trust Fund awarded a grant (\$50,000) for the Mission Concepción Project. The goal of the first phase of this project is to slow the rate of deterioration and stabilize and conserve as much of the surviving historic exterior finishes as possible. The grant will aid in the development of architectural drawings and plans for the project.



Hundreds of people sit at tables at the 2024 Make it Your Mission Gala at Mission San José at sunset.



2024 Make it Your Mission Gala

Mission Heritage Partners (MHP) celebrated 40 years as the official friends' group of San Antonio Missions National Historical Park at the annual Make it Your Mission Gala. MHP welcomed over 500 guests on the grounds of Mission San José for an unforgettable evening of celebration and gratitude for 40 years of partnership to preserve, promote, and protect San Antonio Missions National Historical Park. Tom and Maryanne Guido, longtime supporters of MHP, served as the 2024 Gala Chairs. Tom and Maryanne's deep love for our mission sites and the continuous work of the National Park Service amplified the impact of our gala; with their help, MHP raised \$472,000. Additionally, Mission Heritage Partners introduced a "Fund-a-Need" paddle raise in which they raised nearly \$50,000 for the education program at the park.

Currently there are 26 World Heritage Sites within the United States

- Carlsbad Caverns National Park
- Cahokia Mounds State Historic Site
- Chaco Culture
- Everglades National Park
- The 20th Century Architecture of Frank Lloyd Wright
- Glacier National Park
- Grand Canyon National Park
- Great Smoky Mountains National Park
- Hawaii Volcanoes National Park
- Hopewell Ceremonial Earthworks
- Independence Hall
- Mammoth Cave
- Mesa Verde National Park
- Monticello & the University of Virginia
- Olympic National Park
- Papahānumokuākea Marine National Monument
- Poverty Point
- Redwood National Park and State Parks
- La Fortaleza and San Juan National Historic Site
- San Antonio Missions
- The Statue of Liberty
- Taos Pueblo
- Kluane/Wrangell-St. Elias/Glacier Bay/Tatsheshini-Atkasut National Park
- Yellowstone National Park
- Yosemite National Park

World Heritage Sites in the United States

The 1972 Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage recognizes that certain places on Earth are of "outstanding universal value" and should form part of the common heritage of humankind.

Online Map of Sites Around the World

<https://whc.unesco.org/en/wh-gis/>





Functioning historic irrigation ditch/acequia in San Antonio Missions National Historical Park.

San Antonio Missions

World Heritage Site Annual Report 2024

**World Heritage
Management Group**

[San Antonio Missions
National Historical Park](#)

[Archdiocese of San Antonio](#)

[San Antonio River
Authority](#)

[City of San Antonio World
Heritage Office](#)

[Bexar County](#)

[Alamo Trust, Inc.](#)

**Primary partners and
Contributing Organizations**

[Mission Heritage Partners](#)

[Visit San Antonio](#)

[San Antonio Conservation
Society](#)

[Las Misiones](#)

[El Camino de San Antonio
Missions](#)