

City of San Marcos - San Marcos River Litter Abatement

2022 TEEA Winner - Civic/Community



City of San Marcos staff had become overwhelmed with the amount of trash and litter throughout the San Marcos River park system. Visitors overflowed trash containers, loose litter blew into the parks and river, and wildlife pulled trash out of open top containers into the bushes and undergrowth. Faced with over 105 acres of parkland, 10 City of San Marcos parks along the river, and intense summer recreation and tourism, City of San Marcos Parks and Recreation Department (PARC) staff decided that a multi-pronged approach to the problem was needed.

PARC staff initiated the problem-solving process with a series of planning meetings with other city departments, community partners, and volunteers to tackle the issues at hand. Together with partners such as Texas State University, Keep San Marcos Beautiful, Resource Recovery, the San Marcos River Foundation, Easter Seals, and the Noon Lion's Club, PARC was able to implement a series of projects and initiatives. The goals were to create increased capacity for bagged trash and recycling, expand loose litter removal, address the wildlife issues with new trash and recycling containers, and educate the public to maximize litter removal before it gets into the local water system, where it then heads downstream to the Gulf of Mexico.

To date, the programs have resulted in over 117,000 volunteer hours, removing over 56,000 pounds of trash and recyclable materials. More than that, it has resulted in a cleaner, clearer San Marcos River that shines as the heart and soul of the community and the pride of the City of San Marcos.