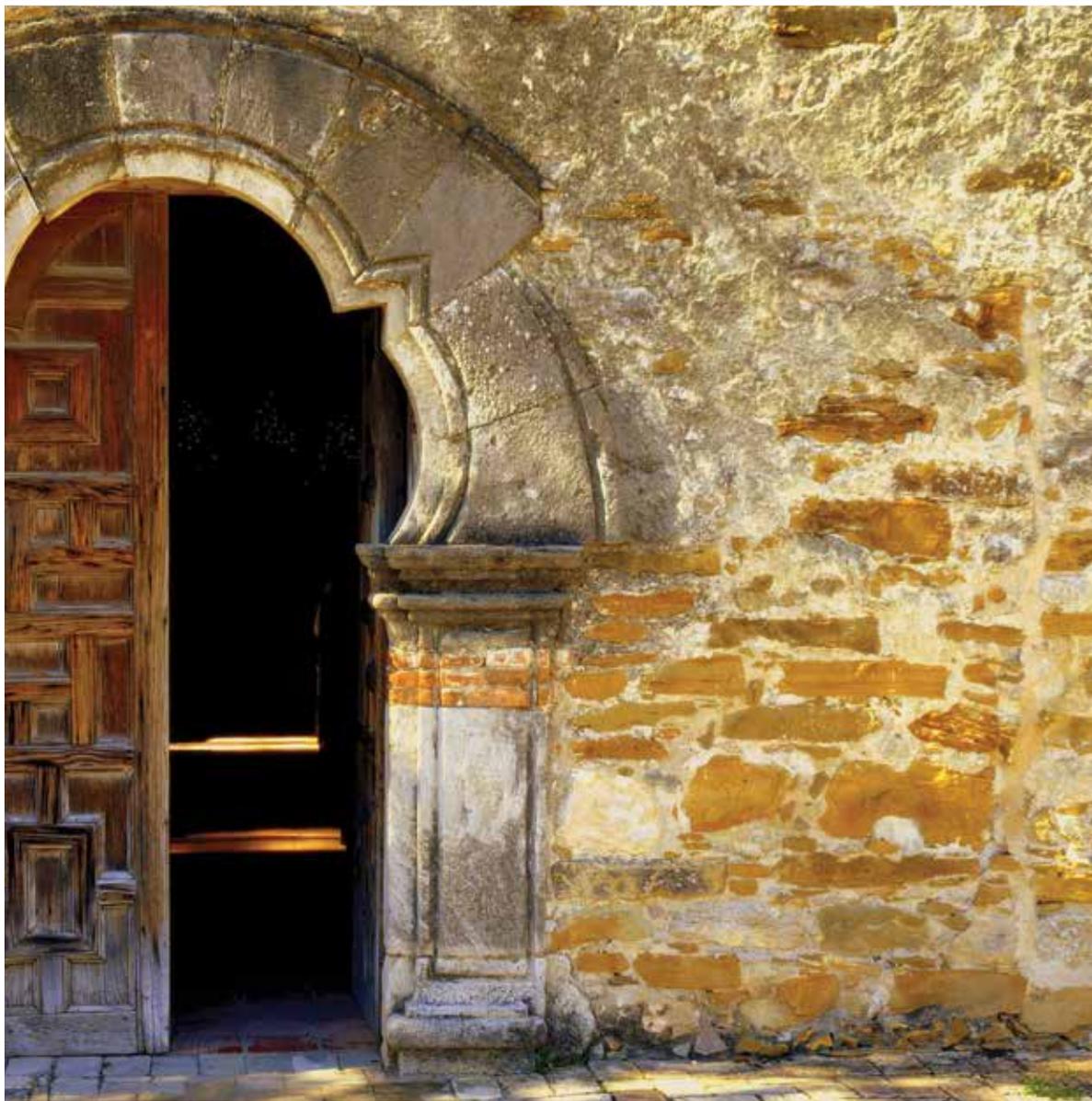


A Vision of Opportunities



Mission Espada to Rancho de las Cabras
*Identifying Spanish Colonial Routes and Recreational Connections
between Historical and Community Resources*



*Cover Photos: Mission Espada entrance, woman with binoculars, and a canoe on the San Antonio River. (Dominique McReynolds)
Bicyclists on the Mission Reach section of the San Antonio River Walk trail. (NPS)*

A Vision of Opportunities

Mission Espada to Rancho de las Cabras
*Identifying Spanish Colonial Routes and Recreational Connections
between Historical and Community Resources*

*A Feasibility Study conducted by the National Park Service,
in partnership with the San Antonio River Authority*

2013



PROJECT PARTNERS

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El Camino Real de los Tejas National Historic Trail
Rivers, Trails, & Conservation Assistance Program
San Antonio River Authority

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NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

The National Park Service (NPS) is a bureau of the U.S. Department of the Interior created in 1916 “to conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wild life therein and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations.”

Currently, NPS administers nearly 400 units of the National Park System, as well as helping to administer dozens of affiliated sites, the National Register of Historic Places, National Heritage Areas, National Wild and Scenic Rivers, National Historic Landmarks, and National Trails.

LIST OF ACRONYMS

ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act
CMAQ	Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality
CTTP	Connect Trails to Parks
CR	County Road
EDA	Economic Development Administration
ELTE	El Camino Real de los Tejas National Historical Trail
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
FLAP	Federal Lands Access Program
GIS	Geographic Information Systems
GLO	General Land Office
HUD	Housing and Urban Development
ICC	Interstate Commerce Commission
MAP 21	Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NHPA	National Historic Preservation Act
NHT	National Historic Trail
NPS	National Park Service
NTIR	National Trails Intermountain Region
RRTD	Rural Rail Transportation District
RTCA	Rivers, Trails, & Conservation Assistance
SA	San Antonio
SAAN	San Antonio Missions National Historical Park
SAFETEA-LU	Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act - A Legacy for Users
SARA	San Antonio River Authority
STB	Surface Transportation Board
STP-MM	Surface Transportation Program - Metropolitan Mobility
STRRTD	South Texas Rural Rail Transportation District
TCEQ	Texas Commission on Environmental Quality
THC	Texas Historical Commission
TPWD	Texas Parks and Wildlife Department
TxDOT	Texas Department of Transportation
U.S.C.	United States Code
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
USFWS	United State Fish and Wildlife Service

ABOUT THIS STUDY

This feasibility study was developed to identify opportunities for connecting sites and routes associated with El Camino Real de los Tejas National Historic Trail (El Camino Real NHT) to San Antonio Missions National Historical Park (San Antonio Missions NHP). It identifies existing community trail networks and recreational resources, as well as El Camino Real historic routes and related Spanish colonial historic resources, in order to identify opportunities where historical and recreational connections can be made.

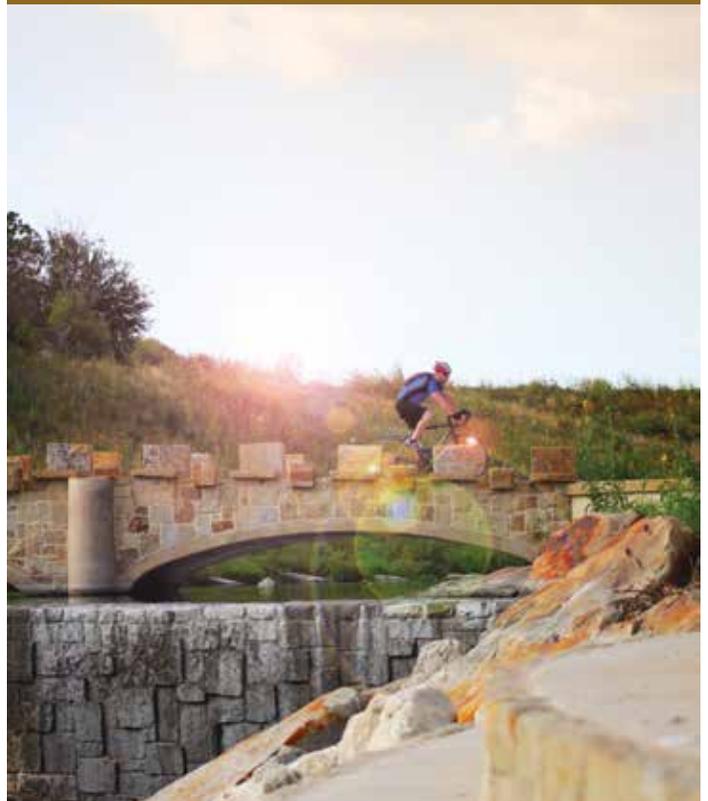
The intent of this study is to provide a living resource that envisions all types of enhanced historical and recreation connection opportunities – whether it be land or water routes, or driving routes, directional or educational signage, or other opportunities that may be well-suited to the area. Importantly, the study explores and outlines opportunities that will allow for a vivid experience of El Camino Real historic routes and Spanish colonial history. The identified opportunities highlight historic routes eligible for identification and branding as part of the National Historic Trail (NHT).

The study was developed by the National Park Service (NPS), in partnership with the San Antonio River Authority (SARA), and funded through the NPS Connect Trails to Parks (CTTP) program - which aims to connect National Trails to NPS units. The study results and opportunities identified herein were obtained through extensive consultation with subject matter experts, thorough research, and public input; and reflect currently available information.

Ultimately, the identified opportunities aim to enhance the protection and awareness of El Camino Real and Spanish colonial resources and enhance the social and economic benefits to the surrounding communities. We hope that the communities and community partners will find this document useful in envisioning what opportunities exist for making connections in the area and enhancing the historical and recreational experience.

The identified opportunities are intended to promote the National Trails System, the National Park Service, and the community resources. It is also intended to enhance:

- *Resource protection*
- *Interpretation*
- *Recreation*
- *Education*
- *Public health; and*
- *Youth engagement in the outdoors*



A cyclist riding on the Mission Reach section of the San Antonio River Walk trail. (San Antonio River Authority)

INTRODUCTION

This study was conducted through a collaboration between three separate program/park unit areas of the National Park Service to include the San Antonio Missions National Historical Park, El Camino Real de los Tejas National Historic Trail, and the Rivers, Trails, & Conservation Assistance Program, as well as in partnership with the San Antonio River Authority.

San Antonio Missions National Historical Park (SAAN)

Established on November 10, 1978 by an act of Congress (16 U.S.C. § 410ee) “to preserve, protect, restore, and interpret the Spanish colonial missions along with their historically associated areas, features, and values for the benefit and enjoyment of present and future generations...” (Public Law 95-629). SAAN currently encompasses 825.92 acres in Bexar and Wilson Counties along the San Antonio River in southern Texas.

El Camino Real de los Tejas National Historic Trail (ELTE)

Added to the National Trails System by an act of Congress on October 18, 2004 (16 U.S.C. § 1244(a)), the legislation authorizing ELTE identified approximately 2,580 miles of trail extending from the Río Grande near Eagle Pass and Laredo, Texas to Natchitoches, Louisiana. The trail designation commemorates significant historic routes extending from the United States - Mexico Border to the eastern boundary of the Spanish province of Texas. The period of historic significance for ELTE dates from 1680-1845. The National Historic Trail is administered by the NPS office National Trails Intermountain Region (NTIR). NTIR collaborates with partners to provide leadership and coordination in the planning, protection, development, and interpretation of ELTE and other national historic trails for public use and benefit.

Rivers, Trails, & Conservation Assistance Program (RTCA)

RTCA is the community assistance arm of the National Park Service that was developed to carry out the natural resource conservation and outdoor recreation mission of the NPS in communities across America. RTCA provides project management, planning, and facilitation in projects related to natural area preservation, rivers conservation and development of recreational trails and greenways in urban, suburban, and rural settings.

San Antonio River Authority (SARA)

SARA is the regional governmental agency that maintains stewardship over a large majority of the San Antonio River. Created in 1937, SARA is one of many active river authorities in the State of Texas. Its jurisdiction covers 3,658 square miles -- all of Bexar, Wilson, Karnes, and Goliad Counties. SARA is committed to the preservation, protection, and sustainability of the San Antonio River Watershed and to making the river safe, healthy, and enjoyable.



Visitors at Mission Espada, the San Antonio River, and RTCA staff with a project partner viewing a project site. (NPS)

STUDY AREA

This study focuses on an area incorporating nearly 287 square miles in both Bexar County and Wilson County. The study area was determined by creating a 5-mile buffer, using the San Antonio River as the center line, between Mission Espada and Rancho de las Cabras.

In addition, included within the study area, there are several Congressionally designated routes of El Camino Real NHT. The study area and the approximate route alignments are shown on the map below.



Figure 1. The study area, communities, NPS sites, and the El Camino Real NHT Congressionally designated line identified.

Communities

Bexar County

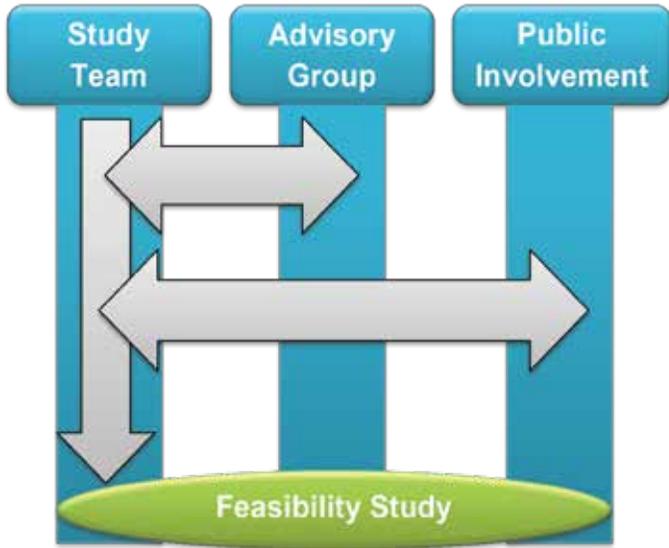
- San Antonio
- Southton
- Buena Vista
- Cassin
- Losoya

Wilson County

- Saspamco
- Graytown (Historic)
- Elmendorf
- Calaveras
- Cañada Verde
- Floresville

DEVELOPING THE STUDY

Beginning in 2011, a study team was formed to pursue development of this feasibility study. The basic formation details were defined by this team, including the vision, goals, and objectives. The team determined that this study would be developed collaboratively through a Study Team, an Advisory Group, and a Public Involvement process.



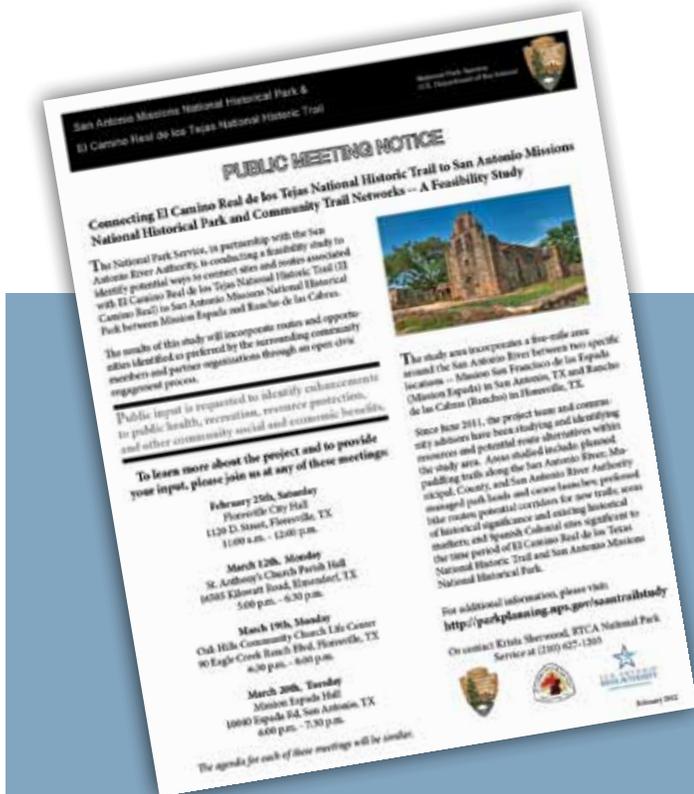
Obtaining multiple perspectives in the development of this study was important to ensure accurate and detailed results, as well as a comprehensive perspective.



Attendees participating in the Floresville public meeting. (NPS)

In late 2011, an Advisory Group was formed and periodic meetings were held bringing subject matter experts to the table. This group provided useful guidance on the study approach, resource identification, and subject matter expertise.

In early 2012, a series of public meetings were held to provide background information about the study, the study area, and the identified resources, as well as to obtain public input on community preference for potential opportunities to identify in the study. A summary of the public comments received at these public meetings are provided on page 26.



Ultimately, the goal was to ensure that the results of this study would reflect the values, preferences, needs, and desires of the local communities.

GOALS & OBJECTIVES

During the initial project development stage, the study team identified a series of goals and objectives to define how the study would be conducted and what the study would ultimately address and achieve. These are listed below:

1. Enhance the protection and awareness of El Camino Real de los Tejas National Historic Trail

- Document and identify remaining original sites and routes within the study area associated with El Camino Real NHT to ensure that any development does not impact their authentic historic fabric.
- Develop alternatives for retracement trail along the El Camino Real historic route, where feasible.
- Explore and outline long-term development or preservation opportunities that will allow for a vivid experience of El Camino Real historic routes, as well as any interpretive and educational media opportunities.

2. Connect El Camino Real de los Tejas National Historic Trail to San Antonio Missions National Historical Park

- Determine opportunities to connect El Camino Real NHT routes and its related historic sites with the Park at Mission Espada and at Rancho de las Cabras.
- Identify opportunities for utilizing existing routes or developing new trail alignments to make historic connections between the proposed retracement trail(s) and the identified historic sites.
- Utilize existing infrastructure and determine new trail alignments, where feasible, to connect with the NPS sites, historic resources, and other significant trail sites and segments in the surrounding cities, counties, and state park trail systems.



3. Identify a seamless and contiguous trail network between Mission Espada and the Rancho

- Identify recreational opportunities which connect the potential retracement trail(s) with surrounding community and state trail networks, significant resources, and community features.
- Identify connections to other trails along this route including the San Antonio River Authority (SARA) paddling trails.
- Determine feasible trail corridors and potential route alignments along with the preferred trail uses in the study area by considering land ownership, interpretation, preservation, and development opportunities.
- Present this information in text and graphics through drawings and properly layered GIS maps and use this information in developing alternatives and assessing the feasibility of trail development.

4. Enhance resource protection, interpretation, recreation, education, public health, and youth engagement opportunities in the outdoors

- Offer options for trail signing, interpretation, auto tour routes, biking & hiking routes, trail heads, parking and access areas, water paddling routes, and equestrian & multi-use routes.
- Include interpretive education options and identify opportunities for outdoor classroom and other educational type facilities.
- Suggest potential sites for interpretation and concepts for off-site interpretive media.
- Encourage growth in the number and length of trails constructed in the state that will connect to the National Trail System and NPS units.
- Include both land and water components in the resulting trail network.
- Explore and outline ways to meet local public objectives, as well as current state and federal strategic initiatives.

GOALS & OBJECTIVES *(continued)*

5. Provide a strategic action plan to guide future implementation activities within the study area

- Synthesize existing surveys, plans, and studies related to cultural history and documentation of the historic trail routes and sites, as well as recreation, transportation, and rivers/watershed management within the study area.
- Promote the National Trails System, the NPS, and the surrounding community trail networks and resources.
- Identify key interpretive themes and propose design templates for signs and kiosks, building on existing themes and logos (i.e., the NHT system guidelines and existing themes for El Camino Real NHT, the NPS Arrowhead logo, etc.).

6. Expand civic and community partnerships

- Identify potential partners and opportunities for on-the-ground trail development.
- Solicit public input through a collaborative process and incorporate public ideas and suggestions in determining opportunities that align with local values, priorities, and state and federal strategic initiatives.

7. Aim at providing economic and social improvements to the communities within and surrounding the study area

- Identify alternative transportation and recreation opportunities to connect inner-city San Antonio at Mission Espada to Rancho de las Cabras in Wilson County.
- Encourage efforts that will bring more visitors and community members to the area for recreation opportunities and experiencing the historic heritage of the area.



NATIONAL PARK SERVICE HISTORICAL RESOURCES

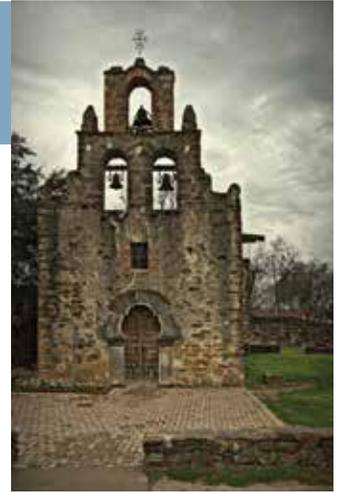
The National Park Service (NPS) cares for special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage. This section identifies the Spanish colonial historical resources, within the defined study area, that are associated with the NPS areas of San Antonio Missions NHP and El Camino Real NHT.

A summary description of each resource is provided below:

San Antonio Missions National Historical Park

Mission San Francisco de la Espada (Mission Espada) *Spanish Mission • Time Period: 1731-1824*

Originally located in east Texas, the mission was re-established in 1731 at its final site on the San Antonio River and was renamed Mission San Francisco de la Espada. The NPS manages and operates the mission compound through a cooperative agreement with the Archdiocese of San Antonio. The NPS owns the headquarters of the mission's ranch, Rancho de las Cabras, which is located in Wilson County over 20 miles south of the mission compound. Some of the mission's surrounding labores and most of its acequia system are preserved within the National Park, but more than half of the labores and portions of the acequia system are not currently protected as part of the National Park.



(Dominique McReynolds)

Espada Acequía *Irrigation Structure • Time Period: 1700's*

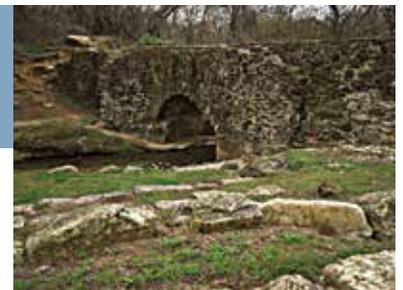
The Espada acequía irrigated the Spanish colonial farm fields of Mission Espada through lateral ditches running the length of each suerte, an allotted piece of farm land granted to the mission neophytes. The acequía is still in use today and the tree-lined lateral ditches help communicate the general layout of the historic cultural landscape associated with Spanish period farming operations. Some segments of the Espada acequía are outside of the NPS's boundary.



(NPS)

Espada Aqueduct *Irrigation Structure • Time Period: 1745 - 1824*

A National Historic Landmark, the Espada Aqueduct was constructed in 1745 by Franciscans to serve the mission farm lands of Espada. It is the only remaining Spanish aqueduct in the United States.



(Dominique McReynolds)

San Antonio Missions National Historical Park (continued)

Espada Labores

Spanish Colonial Farm Field • Time Period: 1700's

The Espada labores represent one of the most well-preserved cultural landscapes of Spanish colonial farm fields in San Antonio. The landscape has changed very little since colonial times. The labores include the intact Espada acequia, a historic road alignment, and possibly a river crossing dating from the Spanish colonial period.



(Dominique McReynolds)

Most of the land tracts in this area are identical to the colonial suertes – the lands that were allotted to mission neophytes in the mission's labores. The suertes, from the Spanish word for luck, were granted through a lottery system (Almaráz 1989). Suertes were long and narrow, so that each tract could have access to the acequia and/or the river on one side and the road on the other. This ensured that each suerte had irrigable land and that each landowner had access to their land via the Spanish road.

Rancho de las Cabras

Spanish Colonial Ranch • Time Period: 1731-1794

This was the ranch of Mission San Francisco de la Espada, which originally included fortifications and a chapel, but now only architectural ruins remain. Missionaries and Indians raised livestock at the ranch from 1731-1794.



(Dominique McReynolds)

Located on the west bank of the San Antonio River, the ranch is believed to have been bordered on the west by the Lower Presidio Road, which may have served as a boundary between El Atascosa and Rancho de las Cabras. The lands are managed by the NPS.

Routes of El Camino Real de los Tejas National Historic Trail

El Camino Real de los Tejas was not a single trail; instead, it was a network of regional routes that included El Camino Pita, the Upper Presidio Road, the Lower Presidio Road, El Camino de en Medio, El Camino Arriba, the San Antonio–Nacogdoches Road, La Bahía Road, El Camino Carretera, among other routes. Trail experts note, quite accurately, that throughout its long history, the trail's route alignments moved to allow travelers to avoid flooded rivers or American Indians. Even though the routes shifted with the season of the year or with time, most destinations remained constant. However, often Spanish settlements proved ephemeral. Several missions, presidios, and villages were short-lived, a testimony to the obstacles that Spain faced in colonizing such a large and harsh territory.

As identified in the *El Camino Real National Historic Trail Comprehensive Management Plan/Environmental Assessment* (2011), there are three El Camino Real NHT routes within the study area that linked the Rio Grande to San Antonio. These include the Lower Presidio Road, the San Antonio-Laredo Road, and one that was used for travel between San Antonio and Los Adaes, the Lower Road. Although these route alignments may not represent everything that may be known about Spanish colonial routes in the area, these routes were defined by the information that was available at the time the trail was being studied, prior to designation in 2004.

Lower Presidío Road

The Lower Presidío Road, used primarily from 1750 to 1800, went almost directly east from Paso de Francia, before turning north to San Antonio. This route was also known as El Camino de en Medio because it was between two other roads: El Camino Pita to the north and, on the south, another main road to San Antonio that ran east from the Laredo crossing of the Río Grande.

San Antonio-Laredo Road

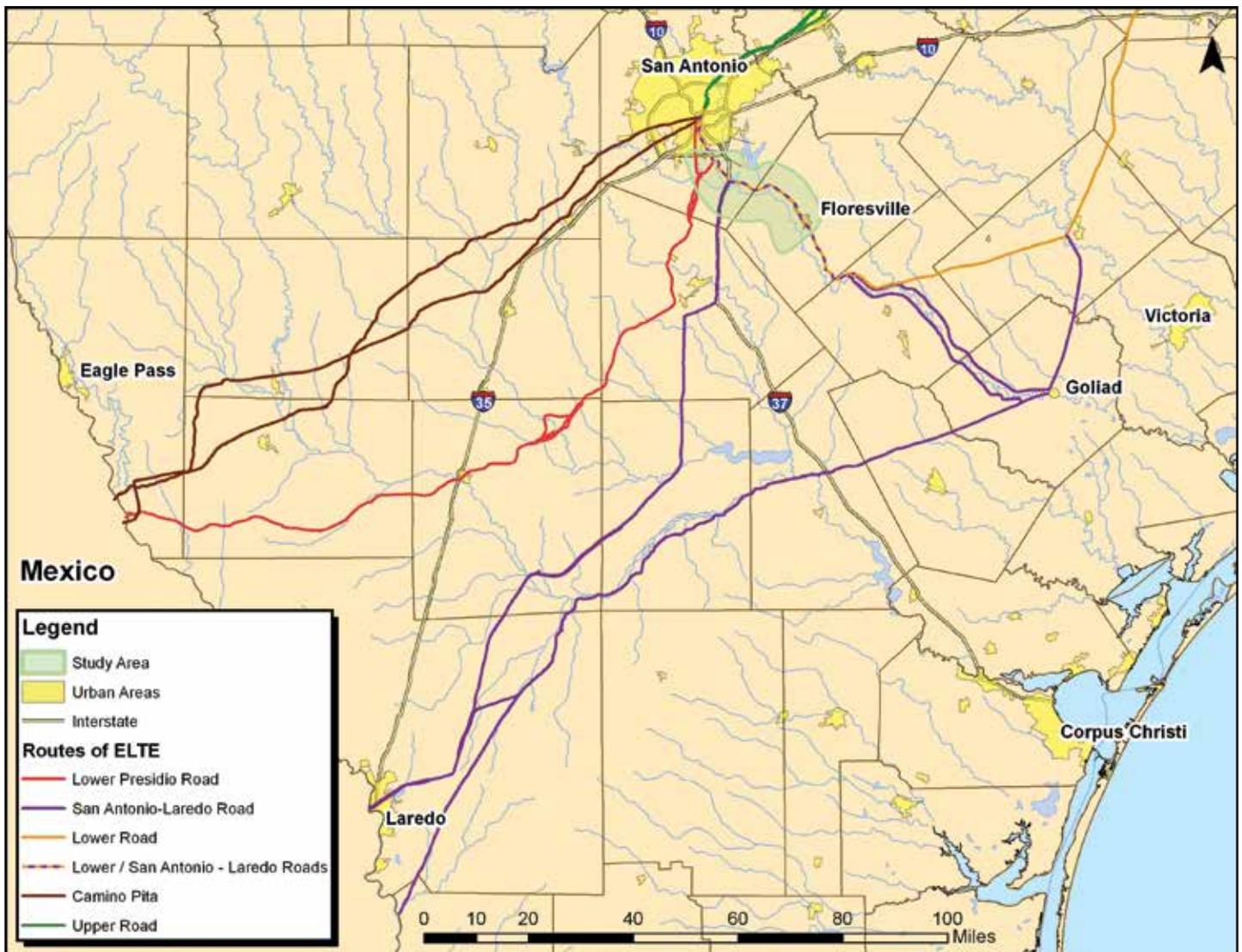
Routes from the Laredo area, also called the San Antonio-Laredo Road, came into use with the founding of Villa Dolores and Laredo in the 1750's. A spur from the San Antonio Road (1750- 1830) went directly north-northeast from Laredo. A second route from Laredo to San Antonio (1750-1830) ran east-northeast to La Bahía near present-day Goliad. The route then turned back to the northwest, following the San Antonio River to San Antonio.

Lower Road (circa 1720's-1790's)

During the 1720's, the road east from San Antonio shifted south following the San Antonio River downstream then it turned east to cross the Guadalupe River near present-day Cuero, crossing the Colorado River, just north of La Grange, and crossing the Brazos near the mouth of the Little Brazos River, near Hearne. After the presidío and mission at La Bahía were moved to present day Goliad in 1749, the road was extended to La Bahía, where it intersected with the Laredo Road after 1755. The Lower Road joined the northern route before their common crossing of the Trinity River. Most traffic, and especially official expeditions, followed the Lower Road between 1727 and the closing of Los Adaes in 1773.

The Lower Road and an overlapping segment of the San Antonio-Laredo Roads are often also referred to as "La Bahía". La Bahía Road is a post-1749 name for essentially the same route or routes that were used by earlier expeditions to the east as part of the Lower Road.

Figure 2. The routes of El Camino Real NHT and the study area.

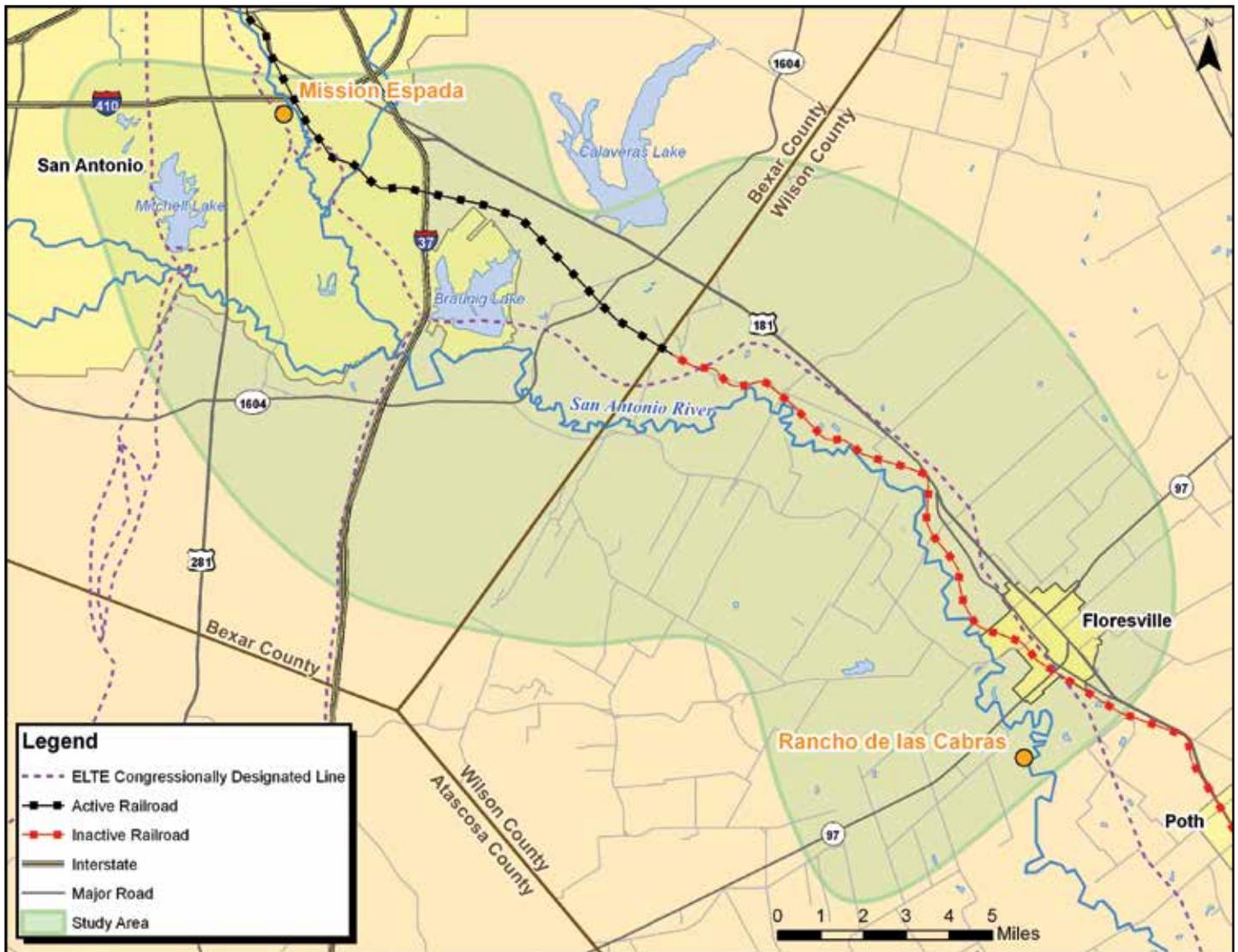


IDENTIFIED RESOURCES

Through the collaborative study team meetings and public involvement process, a variety of historical and community resources were identified to be considered in this study as potential connection opportunities. The next section highlights these resources by locality within the categories:

- Historic Designations of National Significance
- Transportation & Trails
- Recreation & Park Areas
- Texas Historical Markers
- Spanish Colonial Sites & Other Historic Resources

Figure 3. The study area with the NPS sites and El Camino Real NHT Congressionally designated line.



NOTE: Locations of sites identified in the maps may only reflect the vicinity in which the site is thought to be located. Further reconnaissance may be necessary to determine exact location.

Historic Designations of National Significance



El Camino Real NHT identification signs. (NPS)

Wilson County Courthouse and Espada Aqueduct. (Dominique McReynolds)

National Register of Historic Places

- Mission San Francisco de la Espada
- Wilson County Courthouse & Jail
- Rancho de las Cabras
- San Antonio Missions NHP
- Mission Parkway District

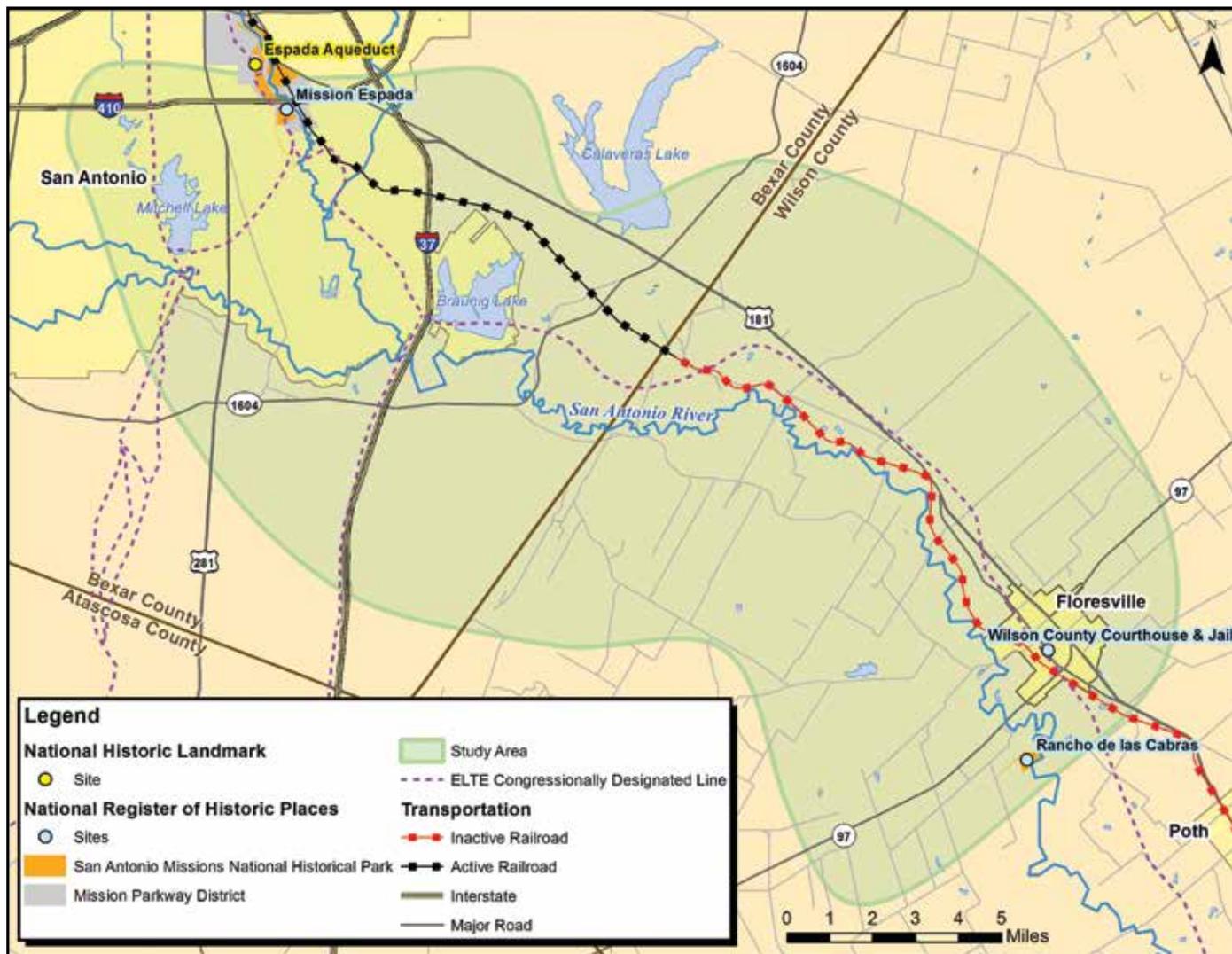
National Historic Trail

- El Camino Real de los Tejas NHT

National Historic Landmark

- Espada Aqueduct

Figure 4. Historic designations of national significance identified within the study area.





Train depot and Floresville Hike & Bike Trail, road sign, a trail bridge in Floresville, and the inactive railroad corridor. (Dominique McReynolds) Design feature of San Antonio Mission Trails. (NPS)

Bexar County

- San Antonio Mission Trails
- Mission Reach of the San Antonio River Walk Trail
- Medina River Greenway - National Recreation Trail
- VIA Public Transit Bus Stops
- Proposed Medina River Greenway Extension
- Carpool Lot

Wilson County

- Inactive Railroad Corridor - San Antonio & Aransas Pass Railroad
- Floresville Hike & Bike Trail

Both Counties

- Existing Roadways
- Texas Independence Trail Route
- Paddling Trails
- Preferred & Designated Bicycle Routes (not shown on map)

Many of the roads within the study area are used as preferred routes for bicyclists (for recreational and alternative transportation use).

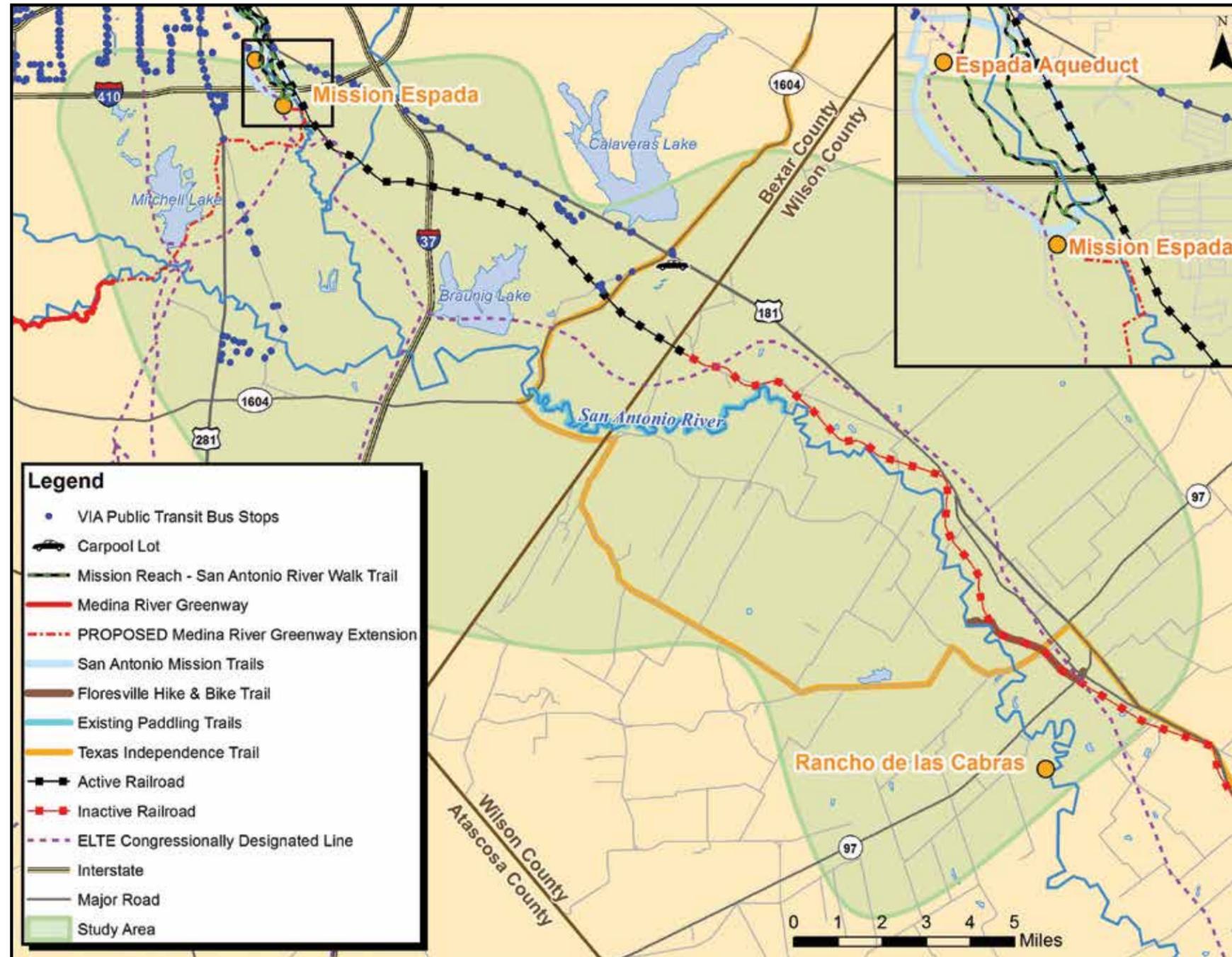


Figure 5. Transportation & trail resources identified within the study area.



Victor Braunig Lake. (NPS)
Saspmco River access sign, Canta Rana Park entrance, and Floresville Pecan Park. (Dominique McReynolds)

Bexar County

- Kingsborough Park
- Villa Coronado Park
- Mitchell Lake Wetlands
- Victor Braunig Lake Park
- Calaveras Lake Park
- Elmendorf City Park
- Loop 1604 River Access Site (Saspmco Paddling Trail)

Wilson County

- CR 125 River Access Site (Saspmco Paddling Trail)
- Helton - San Antonio River Nature Park
- Floresville River Park
- American Legion City Tennis Park
- Masonic Youth Park
- Pecan Park
- Canta Rana Neighborhood Park



Figure 6.
Recreation & park areas
identified within the study area.



Lodi Ferry, White House Cafe & Saloon, De la Zerda Cemetery, Old Town Lodi, and Flores de Abrego Family Historical Markers. (Dominique McReynolds)

Bexar County

- Mission Espada
- Espada Aqueduct
- El Carmen Cemetery
- Enrique Esparza
- The Battle of Medina

Other Historical Markers

- Old San Antonio Road Markers
- Historic Monuments
 - The Battle of Medina
 - El Carmen Cemetery

Wilson County

- Yndo Ranch
- Old Town Lodi
- Lodi Ferry
- Floresville United Methodist Church
- Captain Will L. Wright, Texas Ranger
- Wilson County Courthouse & Jail
- First Baptist Church of Floresville
- Flores de Abrego Family
- White House Cafe & Saloon
- James Charles Wilson
- Casa Blanca
- De la Zerda Cemetery
- Garza-Valadez Cemetery
- Canary Islander Cemetery
- Rancho de las Cabras

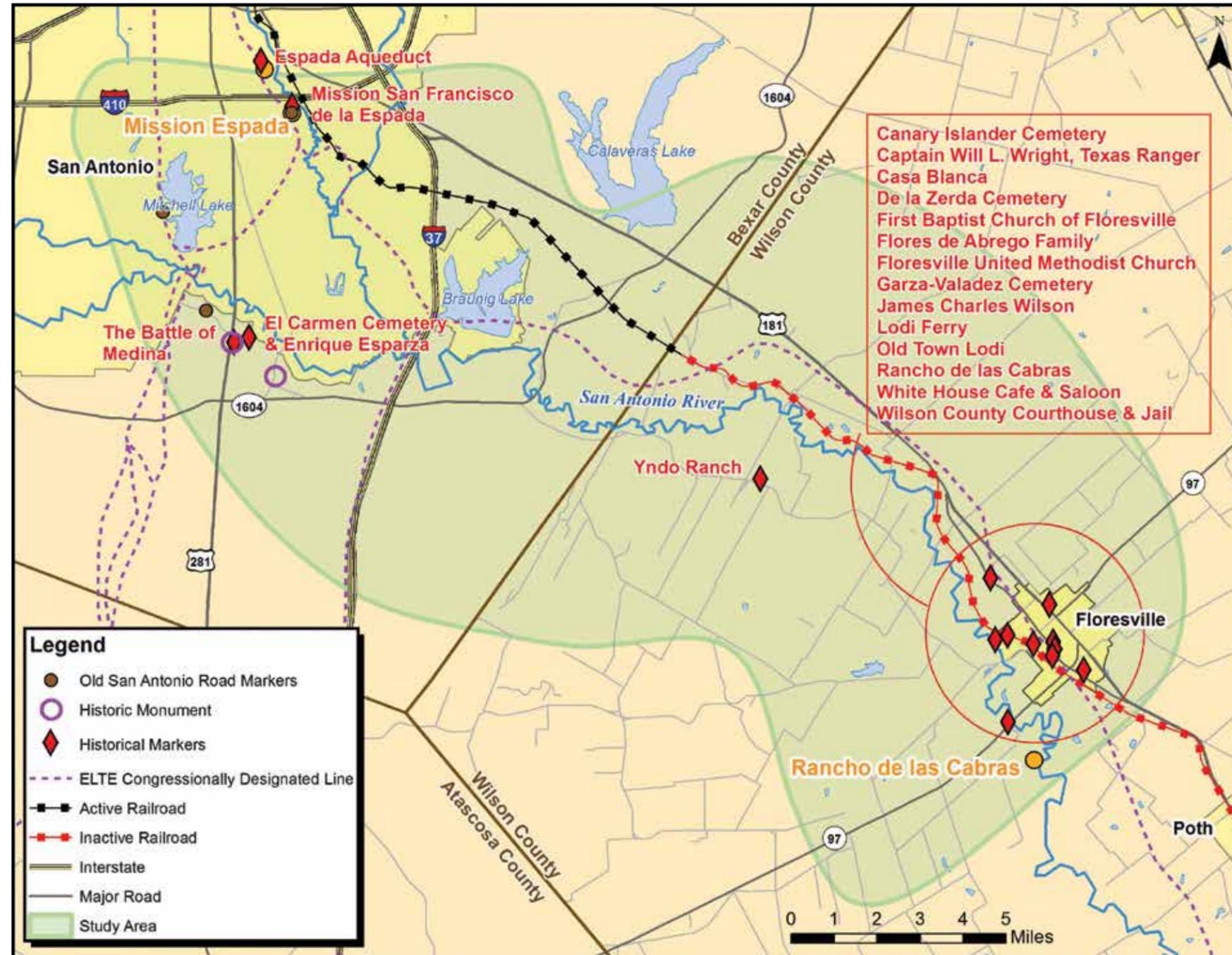


Figure 7. Historical markers & monuments identified within the study area.



Old Town Lodi historical marker, ruins at Rancho de las Cabras, historic site sign at Rancho de las Cabras, and potential site of Paso de las Mujeres along the San Antonio River. (Dominique McReynolds)

Bexar County

- Mission Espada
- Espada Acequia (not shown on map)
- Espada Aqueduct
- Espada Labores (not shown on map)
- Paso de las Calabazas River Crossing
- Salado Creek River Crossing
- Cassin River Crossing
- Losoya River Crossing
- Truehart Ranch / de la Garza Land Grant
- Las Islitas
- El Camino Real NHT

Wilson County

- Calaveras River Crossing/El Aguila Campsite
- Seguin Ranch
- Lodi Ferry
- Paso de las Mujeres
- Townsite of Lodi
- Rancho Pataguilla Area (Ranch of Mission San Juan)
- Rancho de las Cabras (Ranch of Mission Espada)

Both

- Historic Route of El Camino Real de los Tejas

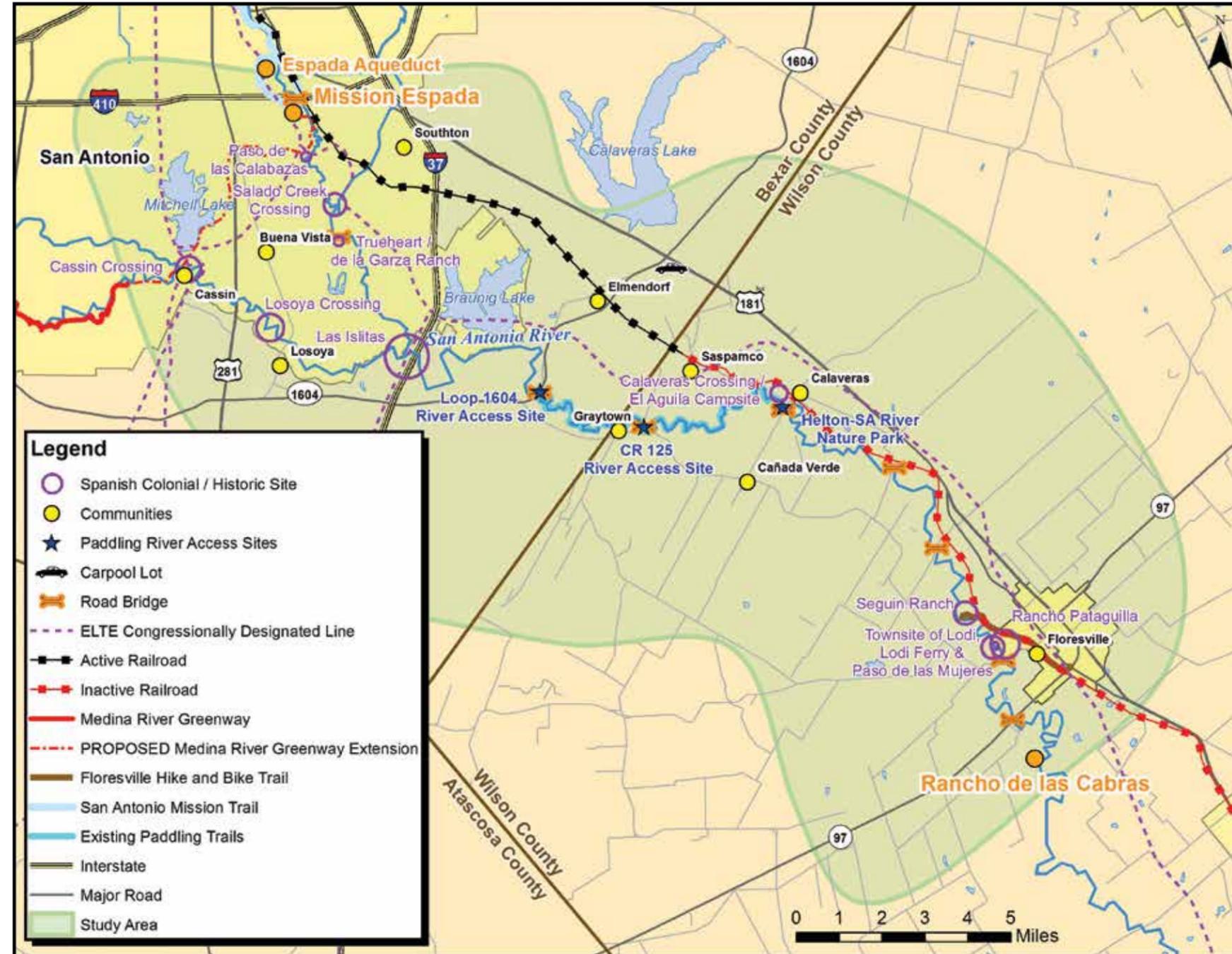


Figure 8. Spanish colonial sites & related historic resources identified within the study area. Note: Historic site locations are approximate. Larger circles indicate larger areas of approximation.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

In early 2012, a series of public meetings were held in the communities of Floresville, Elmendorf, and San Antonio. At each public meeting, questions were posed in various formats offering a chance for group and individual feedback. Participants were welcomed to contribute in writing on comment forms and questionnaires, by expressing ideas through sketching on maps in mapping exercises, or by group discussion and verbal public comment sessions. The desired outcome of these meetings was to allow the residents an opportunity to express their vision, concerns, and preferences for making connections between resources within the study.

Public Comments & Analysis

Overall, many comments and ideas for the study were provided at these public meetings. For example, ideas on historical interpretation, route and trail suggestions, and much more were provided. More specifically, the community was interested in linking existing trails and parks to create a network of on-street and off-street routes. There was interest in utilizing the inactive rail corridor, and incorporating hike, bike, and paddling route options.

Comments and questions related to the economic impact of potential enhancements, concerns about public safety on new trails and in parks, respect for private property rights, and potential liability of neighboring private lands were also provided.

All of these comments help provide understanding of the needs and desires of the local community. A summary of the comments received are provided below:

Recreational Land Trails

- Develop more recreational land and paddling trails.
- “Utilize [the inactive] railroad tracks as trails.”
- Extend Medina River Greenway to the San Antonio River.
- Develop a trail parallel with the railroad corridor between Villamain/Espada Road area near Mission Espada, south to the Elmendorf area.
- Develop a “rail-to-trail” between Elmendorf to Floresville (where the inactive railroad exists).
- Extend the Mission Reach section of the San Antonio River Walk trail further south.
- Extend the Floresville Riverside Trail to connect with other trail systems.

Historic Routes

- Identify the historic route which follows a northeastern route between the northeast side of Espada, and crosses Salado Creek before heading south to connect with other parts of the historic trail.
- Focus historical research along the Medina River to identify significant Spanish colonial era historical resources (i.e., the Dolores Perez crossing and Texas State Highway 16).

Paddling Trails

- Provide river and paddling access somewhere near Espada Road.
- Provide paddling access at Gillette Road crossing of San Antonio River, Helton-San Antonio River Nature Park, Maverick Golf Course, Lodi Ferry site, and Rancho de las Cabras.
- Develop a paddling trail from near Espada Road to near the Texas State Highway Loop 1604 river access site (SARA river access site).

Trail Amenities

- Add a small number of vendors or refreshments in natural or historical areas.

On-Road Options

- Enhance bicycle and pedestrian facilities along existing road right-of-ways between Mission Espada to Rancho de las Cabras (i.e., Southton Road, Streich Road, Donop Road, and Old Corpus Christi Road).
- Create connections between River City Park, Rancho de las Cabras and the City of Floresville.

Interpretation

- Promote historical reenactment to make history come alive.
- Replicate the experience of being on El Camino Real (i.e., real wagon trail and wagons, equestrian area, etc.).
- Identify interpretation opportunities for connections to historic sites which are not directly on the river.
- Provide more interpretation about the Lodi Ferry site.
- Develop a short educational film about the historical significance of the area.
- Develop educational programs with the local schools.

Other

- Link the resources and opportunities with the Land Heritage Institute (LHI), Medina River Greenway, Mission Espada, Mission Del Lago Golf Course, and Mitchell Lake.
- Provide wayfinding/interpretive signage and maps for routes.
- Provide trailhead access to area lakes.
- Provide a commuter rail service between San Antonio and Elmendorf.
- Identify economic impact of potential opportunities.
- Identify grant and other opportunities for funding.

Local Community Concerns were Related to:

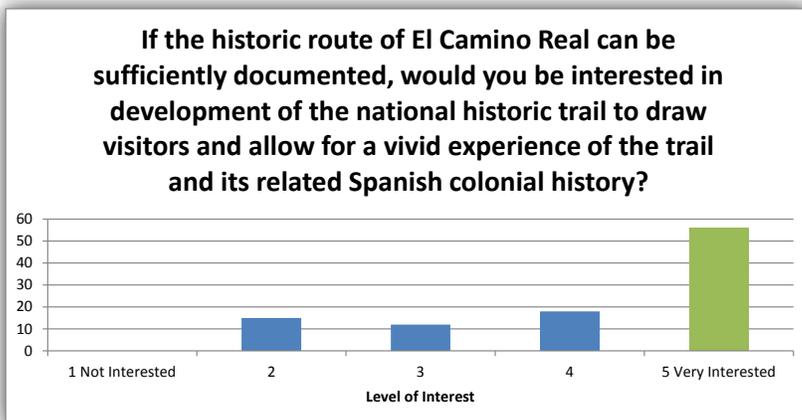
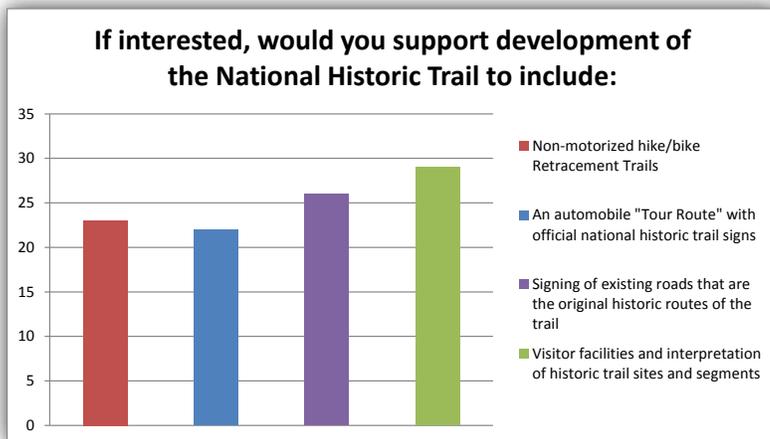
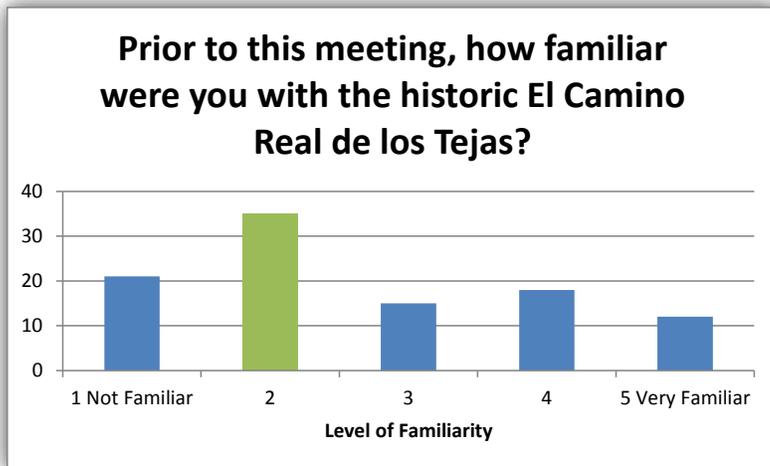
- Increase in taxes.
- Increased use of the resources might cause environmental deterioration (i.e., river bank erosion, litter, etc.).
- Respect of neighboring private property by recreational users.
- Liability issues (i.e., damaged private property, potential injury while trespassing, etc.).
- Ability to provide for emergency response in more rural areas.
- Need for flood awareness along trails in flood prone areas.
- Options for controlled access and need for limited-use in certain areas. Are there legal instruments available to control this?
- Need for physical barrier solutions. What are the options (i.e., bollards, gates, signage, etc.)?
- How to pay for the identified opportunities.
- Concern over a particular county road that has been abandoned (one individual with neighboring property).
- Ensuring ADA compliance on trail segments where allowable.

“I would like to see equestrian trails, hike and bike/walking trails, and general park areas created or enhanced within the study area for greater connections between the identified resources”

- Resident

El Camino Real de los Tejas National Historic Trail Questions

Survey results below are shown as a percentage of the total respondents (vertical axis):



“I would like to see a segment of the Camino Real that accurately re-creates what it was like to travel on the Camino Real 200+ years ago... Even if it were only a few miles, it would be great to be able to ...experience the challenges that the original Spanish settlers faced.”

- Community Member

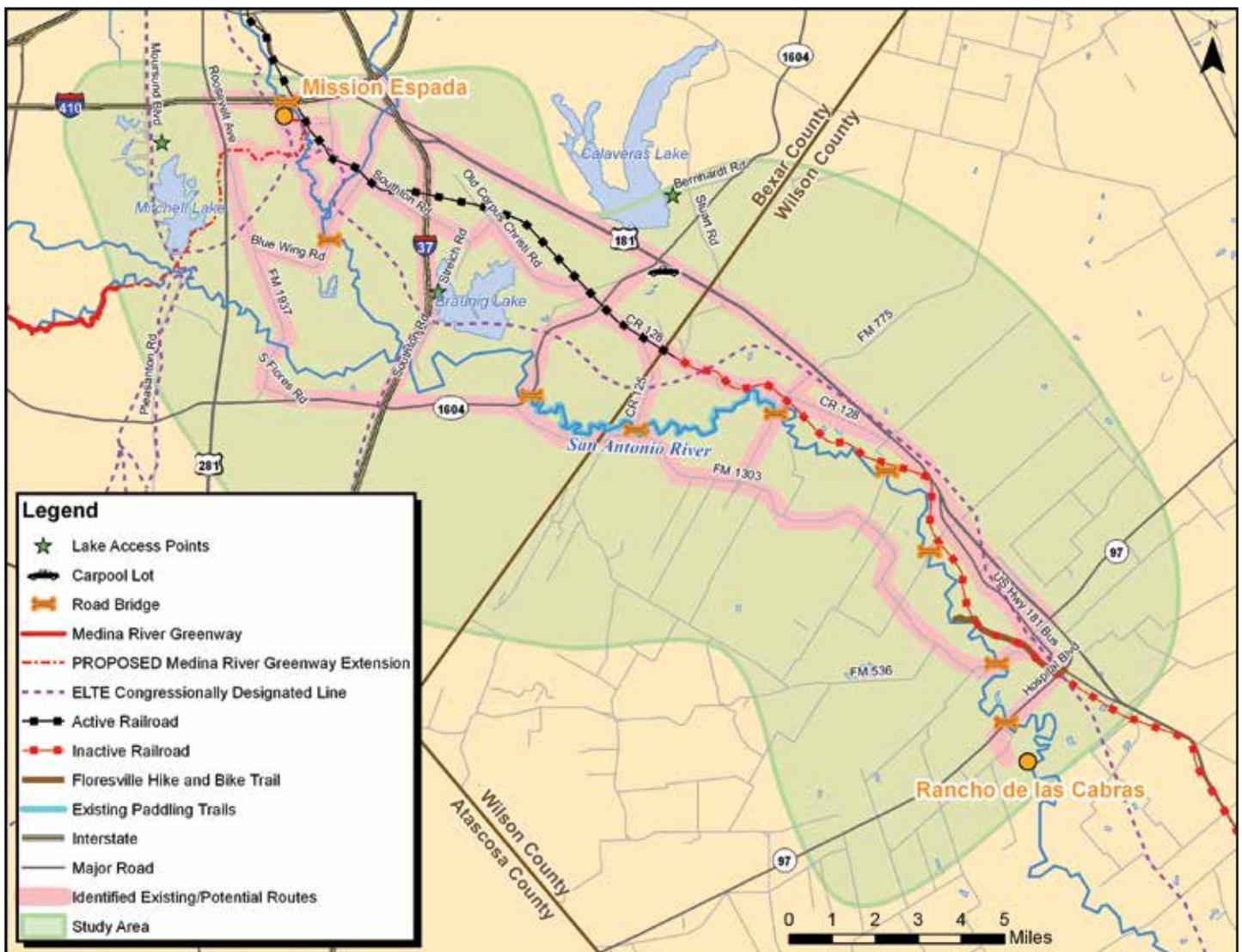


POTENTIAL OPPORTUNITIES

Aligning with the vision, goals, and objectives of the study, as well as the provided public comments, the following pages and maps detail information on potential recreation, historic, and other related opportunities for developing a contiguous multi-modal route between Mission Espada and Rancho de las Cabras. These routes and opportunities aim to create an enriching travel and recreational experience, while promoting the historical heritage of the area. Each identified opportunity is located within the defined study area and can be pursued separately, collectively, or as implementation opportunities become available.

While only two routes within the study area were identified as the original historic route of El Camino Real de los Tejas, preserving these corridors would be a significant step toward ensuring the protection of the NHT resources in the area. In addition to historic preservation and interpretation, appropriately incorporating recreational opportunities along these routes would enhance the trail visitor/user experience. The auxiliary routes identified, although less historic in nature, provide connections between the NPS sites, as well as to the historical El Camino Real de los Tejas routes, and to associated historical sites along the way.

Figure 9. An overall view of the preferred existing and proposed routes between Mission Espada and Rancho de las Cabras.



Opportunity 1



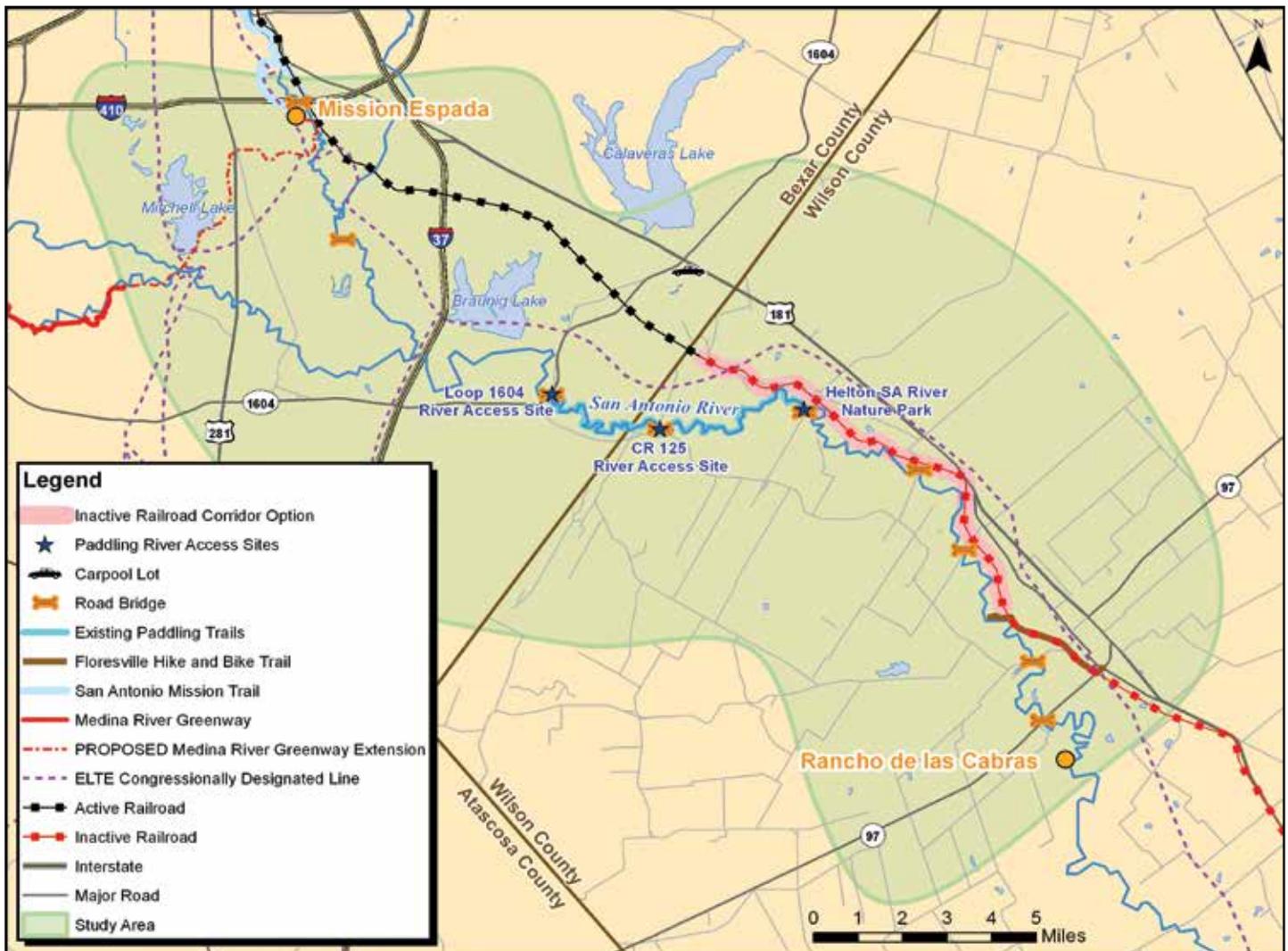
Develop a El Camino Real NHT retracement and a non-motorized recreation trail utilizing the inactive railroad corridor (San Antonio & Aransas Pass).

San Antonio & Aransas Pass inactive railroad corridor in Wilson County. (Dominique McReynolds)

Details

- Develop a nearly 12-mile non-motorized recreation trail for walking, hiking, biking, equestrians, utilizing an inactive railroad corridor between Saspamco and Floresville. Trail could connect with the existing 3-mile Floresville Hike & Bike Trail and provide multiple connections to the many historical, recreational, and community resources along the way.
- Where appropriate, brand as El Camino Real NHT, pursue enhanced preservation effort of this historical resource, and interpret it accordingly.
- Provide interpretation opportunities along the trail to include Spanish colonial history, San Antonio & Aransas Pass Railroad history, and natural resource education.

Figure 10. Area of inactive railroad corridor highlighted.



Opportunity 1 (continued)

Description

The San Antonio & Aransas Pass (SA&AP) Railroad was aptly named for where it began to where the line terminated. The corridor was surveyed in 1884 and construction of the railroad began in 1885. By 1886, 30 miles of the rail between San Antonio and Floresville were complete. Rail passenger service to Floresville ended in 1950 and freight along the line continued for another 40 years. In 1994, no longer needed for rail use, the line between Elmendorf and Kenedy was officially abandoned. Although the railroad line has been abandoned, the corridor still exists and is owned by Union Pacific. The nearly 12 mile portion of the line between Elmendorf and Floresville is the focus of this identified opportunity.

In addition, this corridor has been identified as similar or identical to a segment of the historic La Bahía Road, a route of El Camino Real NHT (see page 41). As such, it is an important opportunity for development of retracement trail.

Potential Next Steps

- Coordinate with the South Texas Rural Railroad Transportation District (STRRTD), Union Pacific, and the land owners with property adjacent to the corridor.
- Determine if the STRRTD can be utilized as a public entity for the rail corridor's use as a trail.
- Continue public outreach and pursue educational opportunities for further support of the opportunities.
- Acquire corridor easements from Union Pacific, as available.
- Collaborate with the National Trails Intermountain Region (NTIR) office to determine necessary next steps for branding and ensuring historic preservation of resources.
- Develop a trail design incorporating parking and trail head options.
- Identify funding for implementation.

NHT Development

- Coordinate with local jurisdictions to determine interest in pursuing NHT branding and signage.
- Coordinate with the NTIR office to develop a sign plan and ensure necessary archaeological research and protection of the historic resources.

Potential Partners

- Community Residents
- National Park Service
- San Antonio River Authority
- City of Floresville
- City of Saspamco
- City of Elmendorf
- Wilson County
- Social/Community/Church Groups
- Nearby Schools

Cost Considerations

- Land/easement acquisition
- Design/plan development
- Trail (8' to 12' width) and trailhead development
- Surface type
- Any necessary bridge/structure repair - adaptation for trail use
- Signage
- Trail amenities



Cyclists riding along a roadway. (NPS)

Incorporate Bicycle and Pedestrian Accommodations along Existing Roadways & Incorporate NHT Signage where Appropriate.

Primary Route

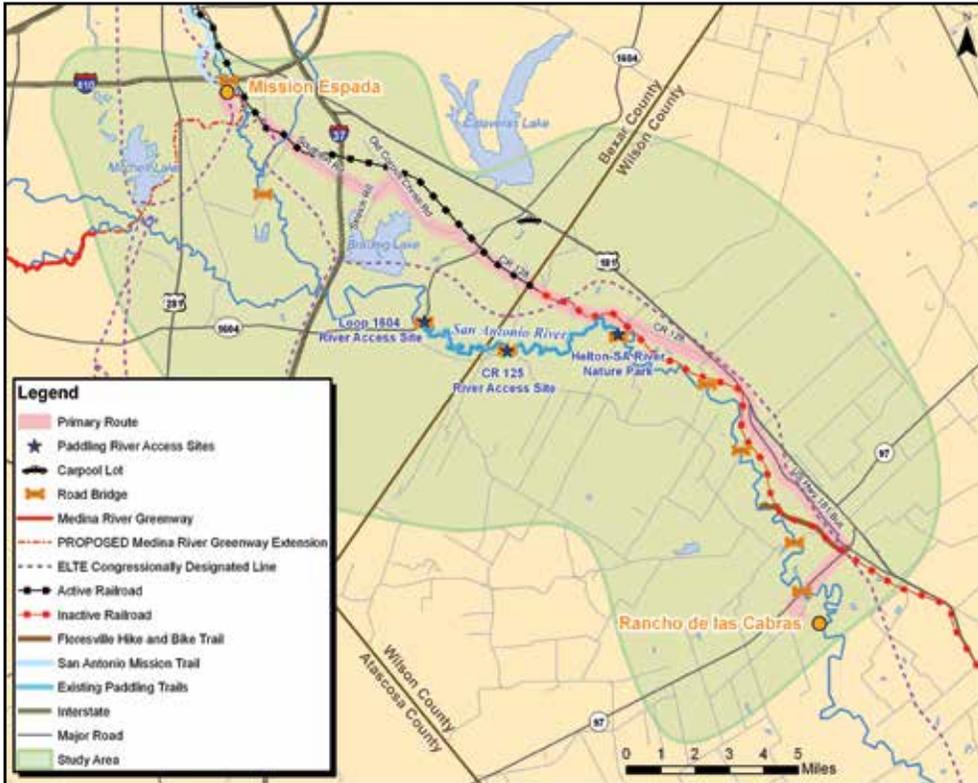


Figure 11. Primary roadway route between Mission Espada and Rancho de las Cabras.

Secondary Route

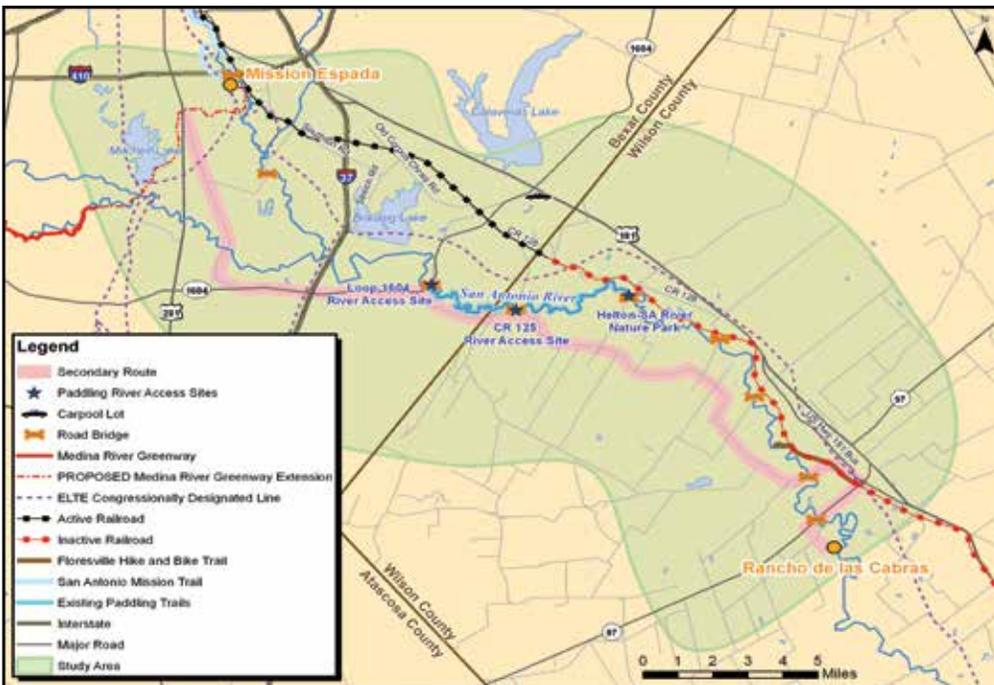


Figure 12. Secondary roadway route between Mission Espada and Rancho de las Cabras.

Opportunity 2 (continued)

Details

- Provide sidewalks, bike lanes, etc. along existing road right-of-ways for improved non-motorized transportation access between historical, cultural, and community sites (Complete Streets). In addition, ensure or provide service/support facilities along the proposed routes.
- Incorporate, where applicable, El Camino Real NHT interpretive and wayfinding signage to identify historic routes and provide historic information.

Description

Many of the existing road corridors between Mission Espada and Rancho de las Cabras can safely be used to accommodate both vehicles, bicycles, and pedestrians by implementing bike lanes and/or sidewalks within the road right-of-way allowances. In addition, several of the roadways may align with the historic La Bahía route (also identified as the San Antonio - Laredo Road and a segment of the Lower Road) of El Camino Real NHT and would be eligible for identification and branding as the original route of El Camino Real (i.e., Espada Road - see page 42).

A primary route and a secondary route for both of these opportunities are identified. The primary route was selected due to the availability of historical maps from the period of historical significance of the National Historic Trail where the historic route could be identified. At the time when this study was developed, there were no identified historical maps available identifying historic routes for the majority of the route on the west bank of the river between the time period of 1680 to 1845. Therefore, this route is identified as the secondary route. Further research would be needed in order to identify and relate a historic route west of the San Antonio River to the NHT.

Potential Next Steps

- Coordinate with the local transportation planning entities (i.e., city/county planning, Regional/Rural Metropolitan Planning Organization, etc.) to identify opportunities for incorporating pedestrian and bicycle improvements along priority roadways.
- Continue public outreach and pursue educational opportunities for further support of the opportunities.
- Identify opportunities to incorporate transportation enhancements into upcoming scheduled road improvement projects.
- Identify funding for implementation.

NHT Development

- Coordinate with local jurisdictions to determine interests in pursuing NHT branding and signage.
- Coordinate with the NTIR office to develop a sign plan and ensure necessary archaeological research and protection of the historic resources.

Potential Partners

- Local jurisdictions (city/community/county)
- Texas Department of Transportation
- Local businesses (support facilities)
- National Park Service

Cost Considerations

- Plan/engineering design
- Transportation enhancements
- Roadway challenges (i.e., intersections, bridges, limited right-of-way, etc.)
- Signage (wayfinding and interpretation)
- Mapping and outreach materials

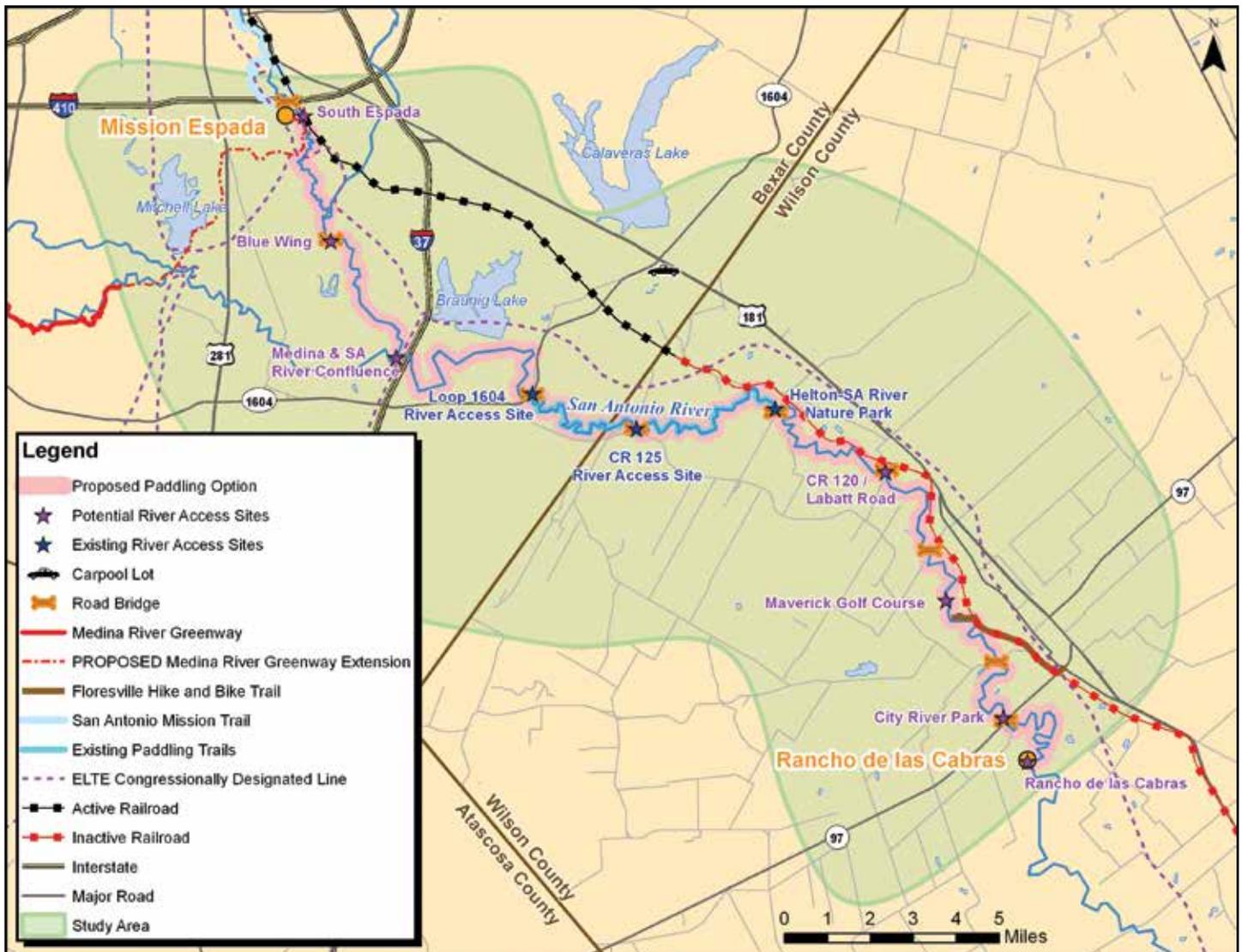
Opportunity 3



Develop Additional River Access Sites along the San Antonio River for More Paddling Trails

Canoes at the CR 125 San Antonio River access site. (Dominique McReynolds)

Figure 13. Proposed new and existing San Antonio River access sites.



Opportunity 3 (continued)

Details

- Incorporate additional river access sites within the study area, to include:
 - South Espada
 - Blue Wing Road Crossing
 - US 37 Crossing near the Medina River and SA River Confluence
 - CR 120 / Labatt Road Crossing
 - City River Park*
 - Rancho de las Cabras (pending the opening of Rancho) * *The City River Park currently has an access site, however enhancements are needed for improved access.*
- Provide an ideal average distance between access sites of 5-6 river miles. Total paddling trail mileage from the proposed South Espada location to the Rancho location would be approximately 50 river miles.
- Incorporate where applicable El Camino Real interpretive signage to identify historic sites and provide historic information along the paddling trail or at access points. Although not eligible for branding as a NHT, a paddling trail may be eligible for designation as a National Water Trail, also administered through the NPS.

Description

While Spanish colonial era travellers did not use the river for transportation, it was a major defining feature of travel in that area. Modern recreational use of the river - to pass through comparatively unchanged riparian landscapes and near historical river/trail crossing areas - may provide a vicarious experience, despite not following the literal land route of the historic trail route.

Along with the new paddling trails on the Mission Reach section of the river in south San Antonio, the San Antonio River Authority (SARA) has developed three public river access sites within the study area. These access sites provide for nearly 12 miles of a paddling trail in a serene and remote area of the river in both Bexar and Wilson Counties. By developing additional river access sites along the entire portion of the river from south San Antonio to Floresville, recreationists could comfortably paddle from Mission Espada to Rancho de las Cabras, or to any public access site in between, providing for a multi-day paddling experience.

Potential Next Steps

- Coordinate with SARA for steps in pursuing river access site development.
- Continue public outreach and pursue educational opportunities.
- Identify funding for implementation.

NHT Development

(Identified Spanish Colonial Crossing Sites)

- Coordinate with local jurisdictions to determine interests in pursuing NHT branding and signage at historic sites.
- Coordinate with the NTIR office to develop a sign plan and ensure necessary archaeological research and protection of historic resources.

Potential Partners

- San Antonio River Authority
- Local jurisdictions (city/community/county)
- Paddling groups
- Environmental education and recreation organizations
- National Park Service
- Landowners

Cost Considerations

- Land/easement acquisition (if necessary)
- Plan/design/engineering development
- River access site development & amenities
- Signage (wayfinding and interpretation)

Opportunity 4



Provide Bicycle and Pedestrian Enhancements between Espada Road and Southton Road.

Bicyclists riding on the Mission Reach section of the San Antonio River Walk trail. (Dominique McReynolds)

Route A • Details

- In coordination with private landowners, develop a less than one mile non-motorized hike & bike trail between the San Antonio River (tying into the future Medina River Greenway trail) and Southton Road. This route would allow for utilization of an existing at-grade railroad crossing site.
- Incorporate bicycle & pedestrian enhancements (i.e., bike lanes, sidewalks, etc.) along the existing road right-of-ways of Southton Road, Streich Road, and Old Corpus Christi Road (Complete Streets).
- Incorporate, where applicable, El Camino Real NHT interpretive and wayfinding signage to identify historic routes and waterway crossings, and provide historic information.

Figure 14. Espada Road and the proposed connection to Southton Road.



Opportunity 4 (continued)

Route B • Details

- Develop an approximately two mile non-motorized hike & bike trail south along the San Antonio River beginning at the Future Medina River Greenway trail (red line), continuing south to the Salado Creek confluence.
- Develop an approximately one mile non-motorized hike & bike trail along the Salado Creek beginning at the San Antonio River (connecting to the above proposed trail) to the southwest and connecting to Southton Road.

- Incorporate, where applicable, El Camino Real NHT interpretive and wayfinding signage to identify historic routes and waterway crossings, and provide historic information.

Additional Connection

- Develop a 6-7 mile non-motorized hike & bike trail along the Salado Creek beginning at the San Antonio River to the southwest (connecting to the above proposed trail) and continuing north to the City of San Antonio's Howard W. Peak Greenway Trail System endpoint at Southeast Military Drive.

Figure 15. Potential trail connection opportunities along the San Antonio River and Salado Creek.



Opportunity 4 (continued)

Description

- Currently, there is no direct connection between Espada Road, south of Mission Espada, and Southton Road east of the river. The historic La Bahía Road once travelled through this area and included two low water crossing sites at both the San Antonio River and Salado Creek. With the exception of Espada Road, this historic route is located on private property.

Potential Next Steps

- Continue public outreach and pursue educational opportunities.
- Coordinate with property landowner(s) - public and private.
- Coordinate with the San Antonio River Authority and the City of San Antonio for trail development along the river and/or creek.
- Coordinate with the local jurisdictions and surrounding entities for trail connections.
- Collaborate with the NTIR office to determine necessary next steps for ensuring historic preservation of resources (i.e., archeological research, particularly at the river crossing sites).

Road Right-of-Way Bike/Pedestrian Accommodations

- Coordinate with the local transportation planning entity (i.e., city/county planning, Regional/Rural Metropolitan Planning Organization, etc.) to identify opportunities to incorporate pedestrian and bicycle improvements along priority roadways.
- Identify opportunities to incorporate transportation enhancements into upcoming scheduled road improvement projects.
- Identify funding for implementation.

NHT Development

- Coordinate with local jurisdictions to determine interests in pursuing NHT branding and signage.
- Coordinate with the NTIR office to develop a sign plan and ensure necessary archaeological research and protection of the historic resources.

Potential Partners

- San Antonio River Authority
- City of San Antonio
- National Park Service
- Local jurisdictions (city/community/county)
- Private entity
- Landowners

Cost Considerations

- Land/easement acquisition, if necessary
- Plan/design/engineering development
- Trail and site development
- Transportation Enhancements
- Roadway challenges (intersections, bridges, limited right-of-way, railroad crossing, etc.)
- Signage (wayfinding and interpretation)
- Historical/environmental compliance and/or research



Private tour bus arriving at the National Park. (NPS)

Other Potential Opportunities

Additional opportunities may be pursued within the study area for promoting heritage tourism, historic preservation, and recreation. These opportunities may include:

State/National Designations

- National Water Trails Designation
- U.S. Bicycle Route System Designation
- National Recreation Trail Designation



Interpretation

Modern Technology

- Cell phone/hand-held technology devices (i.e., mobile tours, virtual trails)
- Online Web-based Information Resource

Displays/Panels

- Signage (i.e., informational, directional, and trail identification marking)
- “Then” and “Now” comparisons

Printed Materials

- Maps (should be consistent and easy to read)

Identify:

- Access points
 - Area amenities
 - Points or routes of interests
 - Environmental/ecological/landscape changes
 - Potential hazards
- Brochures (should be beautiful and entice visitors to the area)

Personal Services

- Provide Bilingual Interpretation
- Hands-on Activities
- Guided Tours
- Living History experiences
- Oral History
- Docents
- Education Programs
- Passport Program

Events

- Various Community Events (i.e., Heritage, Recreation, etc.)
- Organized Bicycle Ride Events

Public/Private Ventures

- Auto/Tour Bus Access
- Concessions (i.e., food, paddle boat rentals, lodging, bicycle rentals, etc.)

An NPS Park Ranger providing an interpretive program for park visitors. (NPS)



NATIONAL HISTORIC TRAIL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

El Camino Real de los Tejas National Historic Trail

The El Camino Real de los Tejas National Historic Trail (El Camino Real NHT) period of significance extends from 1680, the date of the first Spanish expedition into Texas, to 1845, Texas statehood. Individual routes within the El Camino Real NHT system, however, may have been active over shorter periods within this overall time frame. As displayed on the map below, multiple historic routes of the trail converged in what we know today as San Antonio, TX. One of these roads, La Bahía (also identified as the San Antonio - Laredo Road and the Lower Road), was used for travelling between Mission Espada and its Ranch located in present day Floresville, TX.

Within the study area, the Lower Road was the first route to parallel the San Antonio River and was used for travel from San Antonio to Los Adaes from the 1720's to the 1790's. The San Antonio-Laredo Road used approximately the same route for travel to and from the Rio Grande by way of Goliad but did not become active until the 1750's. This approximate route, later also called La Bahía Road, is known to have been used at least through the end of the overall El Camino Real NHT period of significance for travel between San Antonio and Goliad.

Over the years, land development and changes in the landscape have occurred -- making it difficult, if not impossible, to locate these historic routes 'on the ground'. El Camino Real NHT routes have been identified at a high-level and are Congressionally designated through the National Trails Act (Public Law 90-543), however



much research is still needed to identify and brand trail retracement opportunities.

In order to develop identified routes and brand them as part of the NHT, the National Trails Act provides certain parameters to follow. For instance, the physical on-the-ground trail must follow the historic route “to the extent practicable” and directs the NPS to “protect the historic route and its artifacts and remnants for public use and enjoyment.”



Figure 17. Map depicts the entire Congressionally designated line for El Camino Real NHT.

The following pages detail the identified potential historic trail retracement and branding opportunities within the study area and outline some established options for developing the trail, including standard signage, on-site interpretation, trail construction, and inclusion in other interpretive media. Although some sites and segments shown may lie on private property, this does not imply any level of NPS or government jurisdiction over those resources. Participation in NHT development by any land owning or managing organization or individual is entirely voluntary.

Figure 16. Map depicts the Congressionally designated line for El Camino Real NHT within the study area.

Identified National Historic Trail Segments

For the basis of this study, historic maps from after the Mexican independence were used to identify locations of historic sites or trail segments in more detail. While maps that were drawn after 1845 may also provide helpful clues in attempting to locate historic routes of El Camino Real de los Tejas, they alone are insufficient proof of where routes or sites were in the time period of the trail. By analyzing the available historic documentation, several sites or segments within the project area have been identified as high priority areas for NHT interpretation or development. Information on these sites are provided on the following pages.

Inactive Railroad Corridor (San Antonio & Aransas Pass) *Between Sasпамco and Pajarito Creek in Floresville*

As outlined earlier in this document, this inactive railroad corridor has the potential to be utilized as a historic route retracement and non-motorized recreational trail, with various connection and interpretation opportunities. The City of Floresville is already utilizing the portion of the corridor within the city boundaries as a hike & bike trail, through an agreement with Union Pacific. Extending the trail on either side of the existing hike & bike trail would offer multiple benefits to the communities within the area.

In addition, research has found that this railroad corridor, particularly between the community of Sasпамco to Pajarito Creek in Floresville, aligns closely with the historic route of La Bahía Road. An integral part of developing this corridor into a non-motorized recreation trail would be identification of this trail as part of El Camino Real NHT through signing and interpretation. This segment of the historic

La Bahía Road is shown in most detail on the 1834 Simón and Juan Arocha land grant map (see Figure 19), when a part of the former ranch of Mission San Juan (Rancho Pataguilla) was deeded to the Arocha family. Georeferencing of the Arocha grant map to the Original Texas Land Survey GIS shapefile (Figure 18) shows La Bahía Road to closely follow the corridor of the former San Antonio & Aransas Pass railroad, now an unused right-of-way. This historic route is also described in various other formats by Spanish explorers and inspectors travelling to and from the missions of east Texas. These early Spanish explorers also mentioned, by name, locations within this corridor, including Las Calaveras and Los Pajaritos, El Águila camp site, and Chayopines Crossing.

Figure 18. Arocha land grant map georeferenced to a contemporary map.

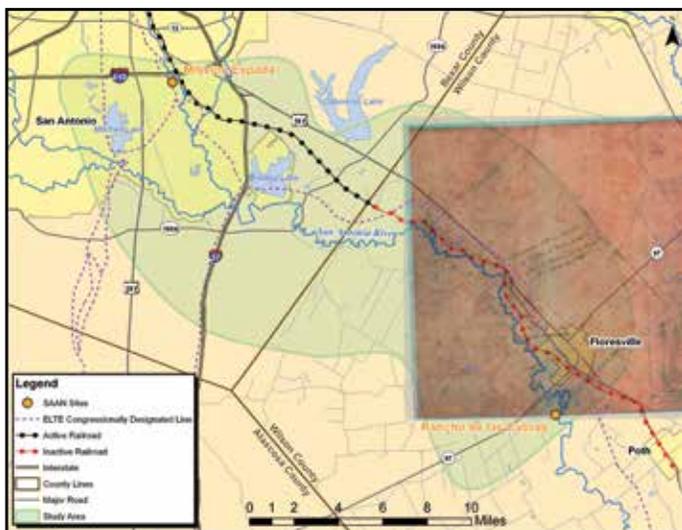


Figure 19. 1834 Arocha land grant map.



Identified National Historic Trail Segments (continued)

Espada Road

Location: Beginning near Mission Espada continuing south for 1/2 mile toward Paso de las Calabazas

The Espada Road segment, south of Mission Espada, is well-documented as a historic route and is supported by the current form of the landscape. The long narrow land parcels along this road are arranged such that each includes both frontage on Espada Road and a connection either to the Espada Acequia (to the west) or the San Antonio River (to the east), a style of land division seen throughout Spanish-settled areas of the Americas.

- At least one historic map (Figure 21) indicates the road originally curved to the east to cross the San Antonio River at a point called Paso de las Calabazas. The modern day road curves to the west and is gated partway along its length, where it enters a large privately owned parcel. Marking the Espada Road as an original route of El Camino Real de los Tejas, with or without through access to Paso de las Calabazas and beyond, would be an important step in NHT development and recognition in the Mission Espada area.

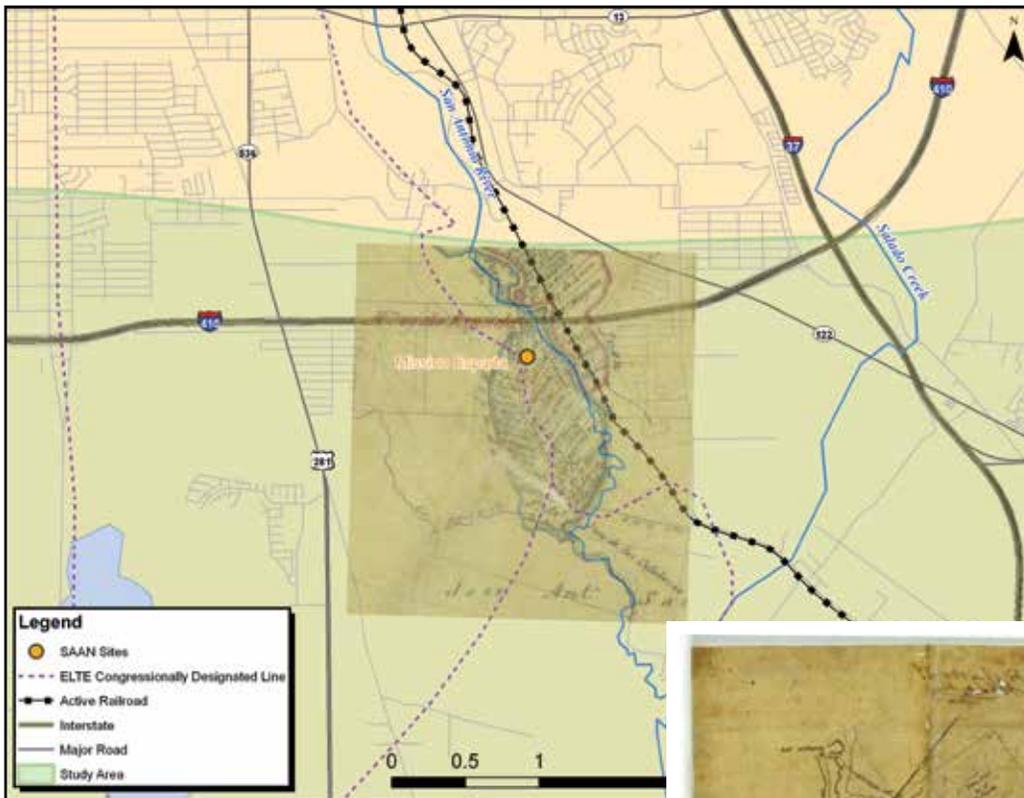


Figure 20. The Espada section of the 1874 François map georeferenced to a contemporary map.



Figure 21. 1874 Giraud, François historic map from Spanish and Mexican sources showing the landscape and irrigable land claimants in the Mission Espada Labores.

Potential National Historic Trail Sites

The scope of El Camino Real de los Tejas as a National Historic Trail also includes significant and related Spanish colonial historic sites along the route. The following pages detail the sites that have been identified based on available information. It is important to note that, at this time, there are varying levels of information and confidence about the exact location and/or connection to El Camino Real de los Tejas history for these sites. These sites may not be ready for direct development at present, but rather they may be priorities for future research.

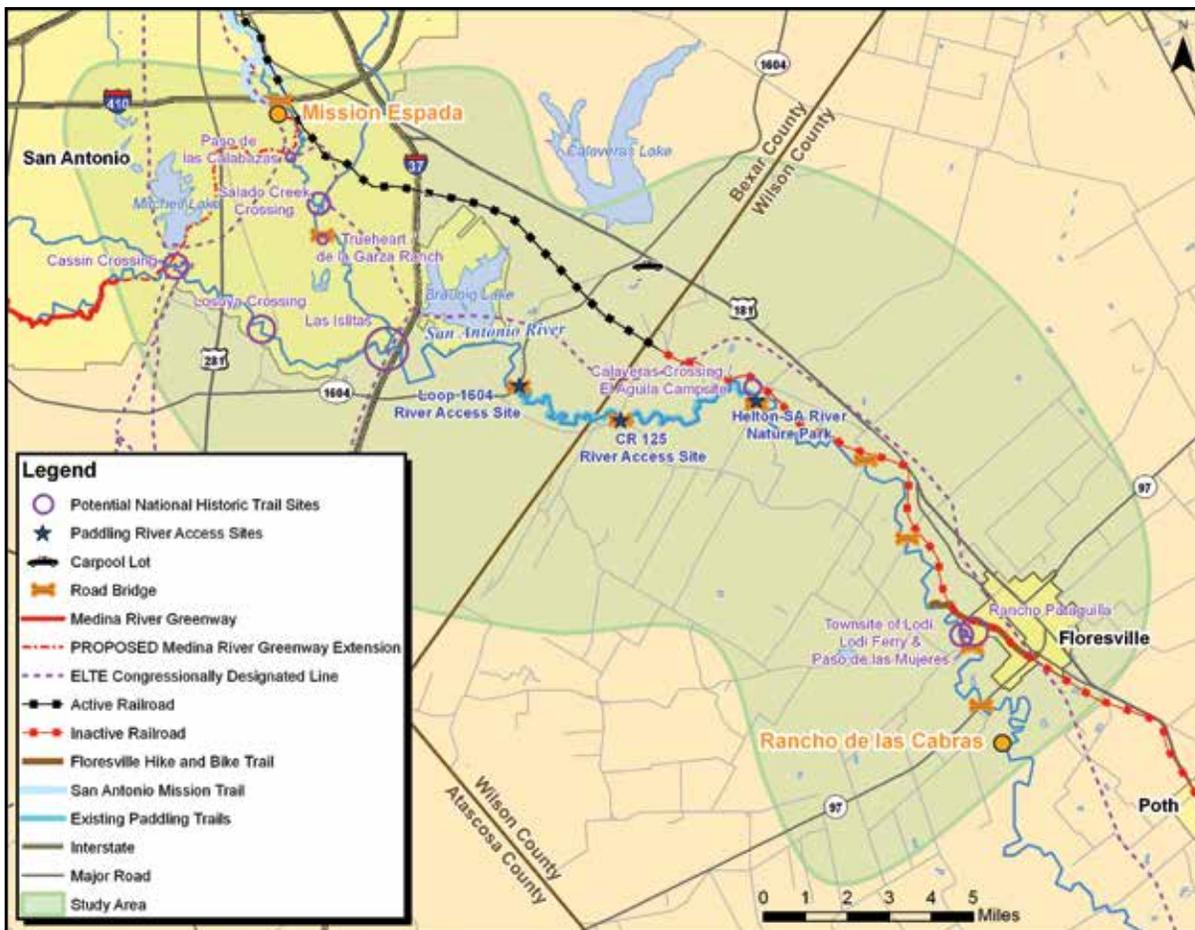
Many of these identified sites are on private property and cannot be accessed by the public, unless the landowners have an interest in allowing access on some level. Assistance with planning for limited public use can be provided by the NTIR if the landowner wishes, but any level of participation in NHT development or programming is always voluntary.

Some of these inaccessible or spatially unconfirmed sites may be interpreted at nearby publicly accessible sites if the affiliation with the trail is strong and the distinction

between the site of the interpretation and the actual historic location is made clear. An example of how this may be accomplished can be seen in the sample sign plan for the Helton-San Antonio River Nature Park (see pages 52 & 53). The historic El Aguila/Calaveras Crossing campsite, while not yet precisely located, is known to be in the vicinity of the Helton - San Antonio River Nature Park, along Calaveras Creek. As an established park with a strong connection to the river (including access to paddling trails), the Helton - San Antonio River Nature Park is a strong candidate for interpretation of the Calaveras Crossing even if the precise historic location of the site cannot be determined.

Not listed on the following pages, but very significant for El Camino Real NHT and the Spanish colonial history of the area, are Mission Espada and its associated resources (acequia, aqueduct, etc.) and Rancho de las Cabras. These sites are not included here because they are already under federal protection and publicly accessible as part of San Antonio Missions NHP and have already been established as important sites for this study.

Figure 22. Spanish colonial historic sites within the study area.



Potential National Historic Trail Sites (continued)

Paso de las Calabazas

River Crossing • Time Period: 1700's

Historically, Espada Road led to a crossing of the San Antonio River called Paso de las Calabazas, from which the colonial road continued south to Spanish ranch lands in Wilson County.

Present day aerial views of the river in this area show the river relatively unchanged when compared to historic maps. An intact gravel bed exists along the river in the area where historic maps indicate that the Paso de las Calabazas was located. Therefore, it is likely still an intact ford in the river, which is rare in Bexar County. These gravel beds often form “beach-like” areas that are ideal for recreation.

Further ground reconnaissance of this crossing is recommended for future studies.

Salado Creek Crossing

River Crossing • Time Period: 1700's

Mentioned frequently in Spanish diaries, Salado Creek was a landmark along the journey south from the San Antonio mission area toward La Bahía missions and ultimately the coast, the Río Grande, or the missions of east Texas. Many later maps (1840's-1860's) show La Bahía Road crossing the Salado well-upstream from the San Antonio River, near where Highway 181 crosses the stream today. This would be approximately at the point one would meet the Salado Creek if one were travelling in a direct line from the Mission San Antonio or Presidio area towards Calaveras Crossing.

Further ground reconnaissance of this crossing is recommended for future studies.

Trueheart Ranch / de la Garza Land Grant

Spanish Public Lands / Land Grant • Time Period: 1700's – 1800's

In 1851, James Trueheart inherited this land from his father-in-law, José Antonio de la Garza. De la Garza received the grant from Mexico in 1824. In the 1824 land grant, the land is referred to as “fondos [sic] publicos” meaning it was part of an area of public lands.

According to historic maps, this land grant had two colonial roads running through it. One was the Lower Presidio Road which passed through the westernmost section of the original land grant (GLO Map No. 10919). The other road, the San Antonio - Laredo Road (La Bahía Road), ran from Mission San Juan Capistrano to a crossing of the San Antonio River at Salado Creek then continued south to multiple Spanish colonial ranches and the missions and presidio in present-day Goliad County. This route is shown on a Spanish colonial map circa 1780 (Cabello) that was probably created or commissioned by Governor Domingo Cabello (Jackson 2003). In 1767-1768, Fray Solís probably followed this route as he notes the ease with which he crossed the San Antonio River at Salado Creek.

Since the exact location of the road is not known, it is difficult to assess its integrity. Further research would be needed to determine if remnants of a segment of one of the routes could be found. A stone bridge across a drainage located on this property has exceptional integrity, with original limestone mortar and plaster. The bridge would have been on a pathway parallel to the river, which is also the expected location/alignment of the Spanish colonial road. However, it is not known at this time if the bridge is aligned with the Spanish colonial road or whether it actually dates from the Spanish colonial period.

Further research would be needed to determine the association between the bridge and La Bahía Road, as well as to determine the location of La Bahía Road in this vicinity and its relationship to the historic bridge.

Potential National Historic Trail Sites (continued)

Calaveras Crossing / El Aguila Campsite

River Crossing/Spanish Colonial Site • Time Period: 1700's - 1800's

The location of the Calaveras Creek crossing on the east side of the San Antonio River is well-documented on various historic maps. It also appears to have remained in approximately the same location from the 1720's onward, possibly due in part to the physical characteristics of the area. The relatively short distance between the river bank and the joining of Eagle Creek and Calaveras Creek leaves a limited amount of feasible crossing area. The area is mentioned by name in the later journals, either as El Águila or as Las Calaveras. It is also important to note that the San Antonio River Authority (SARA) owns a parcel along the river here through which both Calaveras Creek and the San Antonio & Aransas Pass inactive railroad segment run. Although some archeological work has been done on-site, it is still unclear if there are significant period remains on the SARA parcel.

Further research and ground reconnaissance is necessary to identify the location of this site.

Other Significant Spanish Colonial Historic Sites

Rancho Pataguilla Area (Ranch of Mission San Juan)

Historic Ranch • Time Period: 1758

This ranch belonged to Mission San Juan Capistrano. In 1768, Solis visited the ranch headquarters which was located on the east bank of the San Antonio River. The Rancho Pataguilla site has not been confirmed archaeologically, but historic maps place it near the historic townsite of Lodi, possibly near either the crossing known as "Paso de las Mujeres" or the "Caballo Crossing". The ranch was deeded to Simón de Arocha in 1791.

Further research and ground reconnaissance is necessary to confirm the location of this ranch site.

Townsite of Lodi / Lodi Ferry

Village/Town • Time Period: 1700's

This site is located along the San Antonio River in the northwest area of Floresville. The Lodi townsite historical marker is located near the old train depot next to the hike & bike trail. The Lodi Ferry historical marker is located further north at the end of a road about a mile from the river and describes a ferry that was supposedly used to cross the river in the 1870's. Another historical marker, De La Zerda, is located at the opposite end of the road closer to the river and adjacent to a mid-1800's historic cemetery. This site was recorded as an Anglo site with stone ruins. It is possible that the site was inhabited earlier than the ferry markers indicate. The Lodi townsite marker refers to the site being inhabited in the 1700's, which would likely have been the Mission San Juan ranch of Pataguilla. Local historians say the ferry location was the same as the river crossing that is known locally as "Paso de los Mujeres".

Further research and ground reconnaissance is necessary in order to confirm the location of this site.

Paso de las Mujeres

River Crossing • Time Period: 1700's

This river crossing was a ford across the San Antonio River between the east bank route of La Bahía Road and a possible parallel route on the west bank. The name "El Paso de los Mujeres" is referenced in land grants and depicted on a historic map as near a ranch headquarters (likely Rancho Pataguilla).

Further research is necessary to confirm the location of the river crossing.

Other Significant Spanish Colonial Historic Sites

Cassin Crossing

River Crossing • Time Period: 1700's

The names Cassin and Cassin Siding appear on maps on either side of the Medina river, near the historic town of Earle. Cassin crossing would have been a site for travelers along the historic Atascosa route to the Río Grande in order to cross the Medina River. The name itself describes the area as a boggy barrier to travel so a wide right-of-way may have been necessary to ensure the two roads could be passable under extreme wet weather conditions.

Further research and ground reconnaissance is necessary to link this site with the designated NHT.

Losoya Crossing

River Crossing • Time Period: 1700's – 1800's

This crossing of the Medina River was identified by Stephen F. Austin as one league west of the confluence of the Medina and the San Antonio Rivers near the area of Losoya.

Further research and ground reconnaissance is necessary to link this site with the designated NHT.

Las Islitas

Historic Settlement • Time Period: 1700's

This settlement is thought to be located near the confluence of the Medina and San Antonio Rivers. According to the Texas State Historical Association, “The mixed Spanish, mestizo, and Indian population supported itself with farming and ranching. After the battle of the Alamo Las Islitas suffered from Indian attacks that drove many of its inhabitants to Mexico; other settlers moved to Graytown. By the 1870's only ruins of the old homesteads were visible.”

Further research and ground reconnaissance is necessary to link this site with the designated NHT.

Note: Additional Spanish colonial sites such as the Dolores Applewhite Crossing of the Medina River or the Perez Rancho and Cemetery, while outside the project area of this study, do fall within or near the right-of-way for the Medina River Greenway. While these sites, and possibly others, are not covered in detail in this document, their locations strengthen the case from a NHT development perspective for the future non-motorized connection from the Medina River Greenway to the Espada area, the Mission Reach section of the San Antonio River Walk trail, and southbound multi-modal opportunities outlined in this document.

Sample National Historic Trail Sign Development Plans

The following pages provide sample NHT Sign Development Plans for three areas within the study area. Each of these sample plans provide examples for the varying types of signage or interpretation that can be applied to NHT sites and segments. Specifically, these types and sites include:

- **Road Signing** – Standard NHT road signs are used both to mark segments of a modern roadway as the original historic route of the trail and to direct visitors to publicly accessible historic sites connected with El Camino Real NHT history.
 - SAMPLE SIGN PLAN LOCATION: Espada Road
 - DESCRIPTION: NHT family of road signs
- **Pedestrian Signing** - Standard national historic trail pedestrian signs are used to identify segments of a hiking trail that either follows the original route of El Camino Real NHT, or approximate its alignment

where a hiking trail along the exact original route is not feasible.

- SAMPLE SIGN PLAN LOCATION: Floresville Hike & Bike Trail
- DESCRIPTION: Wayside/orientation panels at one or more trailheads
- **Site Identification** - Development of El Camino Real NHT as a public resource often includes installation of site elements, such as wayside interpretive exhibits or site identification signs, to highlight trail related places in the landscape and to clearly link them to the national historic trail through common branding.
 - SAMPLE SIGN PLAN LOCATION: Helton-San Antonio River Nature Park
 - DESCRIPTION: Site entrance sign, directional pedestrian signs, wayside exhibit at approximate crossing location on Calaveras Creek

For more information about El Camino Real NHT signing and to design your own sign plan, please visit:

<http://www.nps.gov/elte/parkmgmt/how-to-create-your-signplan.htm>

Or contact the National Trails Intermountain Region Office at:

National Trails Intermountain Region (NTIR)
National Park Service
PO Box 728
Santa Fe, NM 87504-0728

BRANCH OFFICE
1100 Old Santa Fe Trail, Santa Fe, New Mexico 87505
Phone: 505-988-6098
Fax: 505-986-5214

324 South State Street, Suite 200, Salt Lake City, Utah 84111
Phone: 801-741-1012
Fax: 801-741-1102





Original Route sign plan: Espada Road

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National Trails Intermountain Region has developed a family of standard National Historic Trail road signs which, with NPS and road jurisdiction approval, may be used to mark sites and segments of the trail where they overlap with public roadways. A conceptual sign plan for the segment of Espada Road that runs adjacent to Mission Espada—known to be the historic route of El Camino Real, and passing through some remaining Spanish Colonial agricultural allotments—is shown here as one example of how the sign family may be used to highlight the historic significance of a modern roadway. Road signing is usually completed in partnership with local community or historical organizations and the responsible road jurisdiction or jurisdictions. For more information about ELTE road signing, please see: <http://www.nps.gov/elte/parkmgmt/how-to-create-your-sign-plan.htm>



Figure 1: South end of Espada Road looking north away from gate, October 2011.

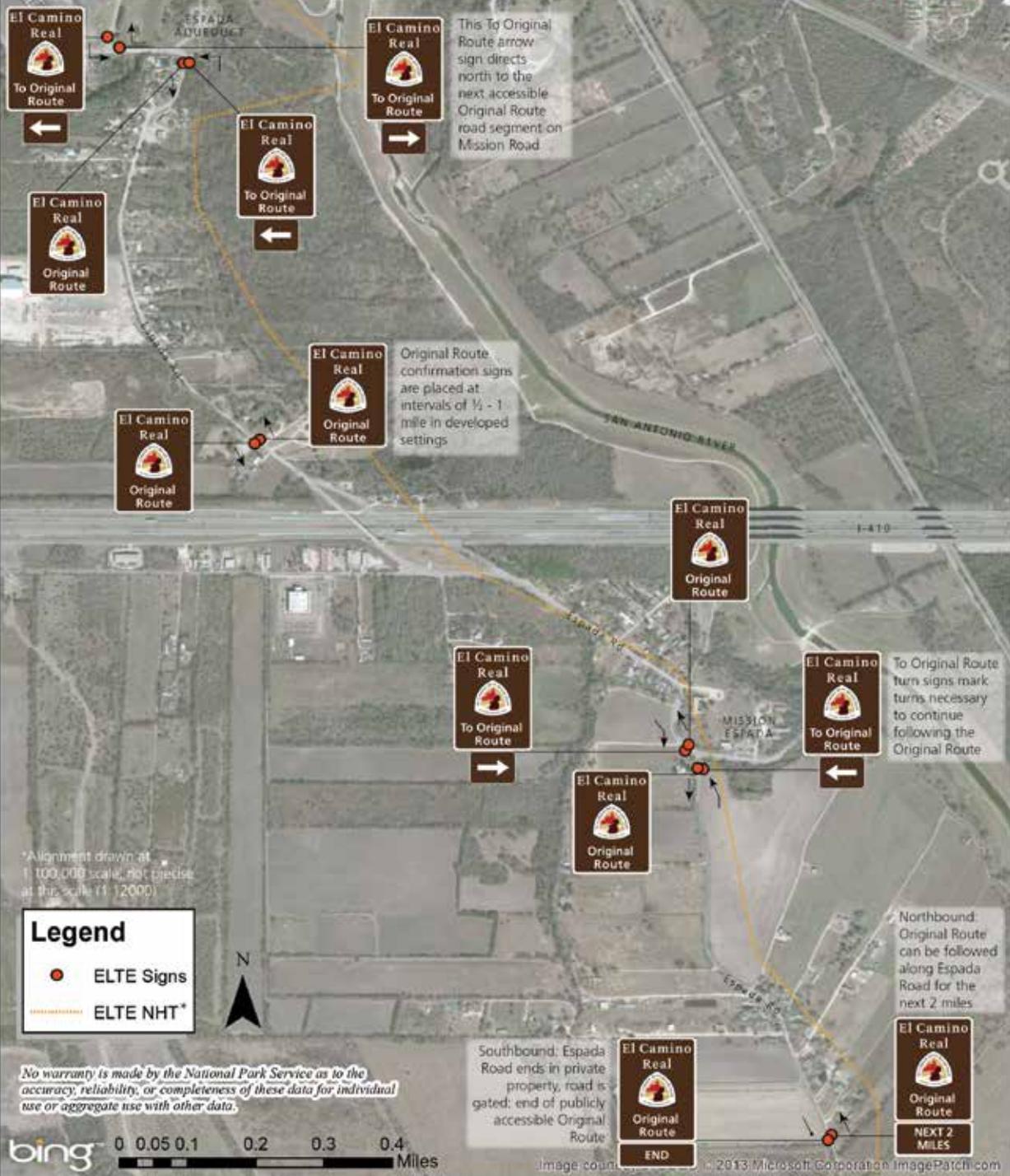
Figure 2: Proposed sign to mark road as Original Route of El Camino Real de los TejasNHT.

Figure 23. Sample National Historic Trail “road” sign plan for Espada Road.



Original Route sign plan: Espada Road

DRAFT



Produced by National Trails Intermountain Region

26 March 2013

FILE: Espada_area_signing_detail

Data Sources: NPS, ESRI

Figure 24. Sample National Historic Trail “road” sign plan map detailing signage along Espada Road.



Pedestrian signage: Floresville Hike and Bike Trail

DRAFT

NTIR also has developed a family of pedestrian signs—based on the standard road sign model—for marking segments of hiking trail that either follow the original route of El Camino Real NHT, or approximate its alignment where hiking trail along the exact original route is not feasible. A conceptual pedestrian sign plan for the existing 2 mile Floresville Hike and Bike Trail—a recreational trail along the abandoned San Antonio and Aransas Pass railroad line, which roughly follows the historic route of ELTE—is shown here to demonstrate the use of pedestrian signage. For more information on the pedestrian signing program or to propose an existing recreational trail which may meet the criteria for identification as part of ELTE, please contact NTIR.



Frequently, an upright orientation panel like the one shown here is used on national historic trails to provide visitors with access and background information about the immediate resource. However, they also may provide information about other NHT sites and segments which can be visited in the area. If used at the Floresville Depot Trailhead, the panel or panels would preferably meet both of these needs, informing visitors of the opportunity to retrace ELTE along the Floresville Trail, and identifying nearby historic trail sites such as Rancho de las Cabras.



Figure 1: the north end of the Floresville Trail, facing south. Figure 2: a ELTE Hiking Trail Next 2 Miles pedestrian sign as it would appear in place. Figure 3: at the Floresville RR Depot trailhead, facing north. Figure 4: an upright orientation panel as it might appear in place.

Figure 25. Sample National Historic Trail “pedestrian” sign plan for the Floresville Hike & Bike Trail.



Pedestrian signage: Floresville Hike and Bike Trail

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Produced by National Trails Intermountain Region

26 March 2013

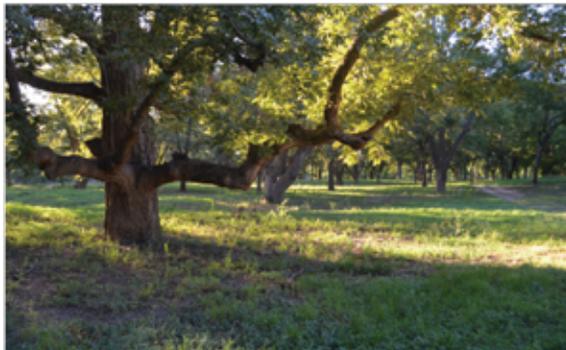
FILE: Floresville_Trail_detail

Data Sources: NPS, ESRI



Interpretive elements: Helton-S. A. River Nature Park **DRAFT**

Development of ELTE as a public resource often includes installation of site elements to highlight trail related places in the landscape. The basic suite of elements—wayside exhibits, pedestrian signage, and site identification or entrance signs—are designed to be affordable, relatively easy to integrate even where a site as a whole is not strictly historical or cultural in nature, and match the branding that also identifies the NHT on roads or trails. Shown here as an example is a conceptual plan for NHT identification and interpretive elements as they might be used in SARA’s Helton-San Antonio River Nature Park to recognize the historic Calaveras Crossing, which is known to lie within or near the park. Some trail sites—particularly those with complex historic significance or challenging existing conditions—may require more extensive site design and development beyond the elements shown here. For additional information on ELTE site development opportunities, please contact NTIR.



National historic trail site entrance signs can be ▲
 customized to fit existing sizes and shapes of
 entrance signs, as shown in this example from
 the El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro NHT in
 New Mexico. In this case, directional ELTE road
 signs could also be used to identify Helton Park as
 affiliated with the national historic trail, but have
 not been shown in this conceptual plan because
 they are beyond the scope of on-site development.
 Road signing for an individual site would typically be
 implemented as part of a larger sign plan identifying
 various ELTE sites and segments in the area.

A wayside exhibit ideally relates to a resource ▲
 visible from its location. For this reason, the
 preferred placement for a wayside in Helton Park
 is just above the flood line of Calaveras Creek,
 looking down on a modern ford of the creek. This
 is as close to the historic location of the crossing as
 can be determined from current knowledge. Also,
 the site is surrounded by heritage pecan trees and
 riparian vegetation, so the setting is appropriate to
 interpret a historic creek crossing. The wayside could
 address the historic record of the use of this area as a
 campsite, or the significance of the crossing for ELTE
 travelers of different eras.

Figure 1: The pecan grove in Helton Park, along the route of the planned pedestrian path to Calaveras Creek.
 Figure 2: The modern crossing of Calaveras Creek, below the proposed wayside site.

Figure 27. Sample National Historic Trail “site identification” sign plan for the Helton-San Antonio River Nature Park.



Interpretive elements: Helton-San Antonio River Park **DRAFT**



Figure 28. Sample National Historic Trail "site identification" sign plan map detailing signage for the Helton-San Antonio River Nature Park.

SAN ANTONIO & ARANSAS PASS RAILROAD

In order to determine the feasibility of utilizing the inactive railroad corridor as a potential opportunity for a hike & bike trail, as well as to incorporate NHT branding and signage, research was conducted to determine the integrity of the corridor ownership. This section details the summary findings of the current status of this corridor.

Background Information

The San Antonio & Aransas Pass (SA&AP) railroad, aptly named for where the line began to where the line terminated, was surveyed in 1884 and construction of the line began in 1885. The line was owned and serviced by Southern Pacific rail company. By 1886, 30 miles of the rail between San Antonio and Floresville were complete. Rail passenger service began to Floresville and would proceed until 1950. Freight travel along the line continued for another 40 years.

In 1996, Southern Pacific merged with Union Pacific. As the Elmendorf to Kenedy segment of this rail line was no longer needed for rail use, the line was officially abandoned within the merger agreement through the Interstate Commerce Commission (ICC) process, now

known as the Surface Transportation Board (STB).

It is important to note that the abandonment process results in a final ruling that only removes federal oversight and jurisdiction over a corridor when interstate commerce is no longer provided along the line. This allows for the rails and ties to be removed from the corridor. An official abandonment, through the STB process, does not remove the railroad company's interest in the rights to the corridor unless a "release of interest" is executed by the railroad company and is included within the ruling.

The nearly 12-mile segment of the inactive railroad corridor between Elmendorf and Floresville is the focus for this study.

Rural Rail Transportation District

In order to prevent the loss of rail lines through abandonment, the Texas Department of Transportation created regional governmental bodies granted specific powers by the Texas State Legislature in order to encourage rehabilitation of existing rail corridors or implementation of new rail transportation facilities for uses that promote economic development. These powers include the ability to enact eminent domain, own property and assets, and raise funds. The 67th Texas Legislature first authorized formation of Rural Rail Transportation Districts (RRTDs) in 1981 following passage of the Staggers Rail Act by the U.S. Congress the previous year. The legislation stated that "in the interest of citizens and the state.... rail systems be maintained for the most efficient and economical movement of essential agricultural products from the areas of production to the local, national, and export markets;" and provided for districts to "... help develop, maintain, and diversify the economy of the state, eliminate unemployment or underemployment, foster the growth of enterprises based on agriculture, and serve to develop and expand transportation and commerce within the state..."

Each RRTD boundary incorporates one or more counties, depending upon the specific need in areas with upcoming or already abandoned rail lines. Each district has varying characteristics, all with the same powers as a subdivision of the state. In addition, each RRTD had varying reasons for formation and have had varying levels of activity. However, since formation, only a few have had real successes.

For the SA&AP corridor, specifically, the South Texas RRTD, consisting of Bexar, Wilson, and Karnes County, was formed in the early 1990's during the time when the SA&AP line was being considered for abandonment. The Board considered various options for the corridor, however the line was abandoned and the rails and ties were removed and sold for their value prior to the RRTD's ability to preserve them. After which, various other uses for the corridor were considered, including trail use, a water pipeline corridor, and roadway expansion. The South Texas RRTD Board has not met for many years and is currently 'inactive'.

Corridor Description (Within the Study Area)

Location: *Elmendorf in Bexar County to Floresville in Wilson County*

Distance: *Approximately 12 miles*

Width: *100 feet*

Parcels: *83 parcels conveyed in the late 1800's. 94 parcels exist today in the tax records.*

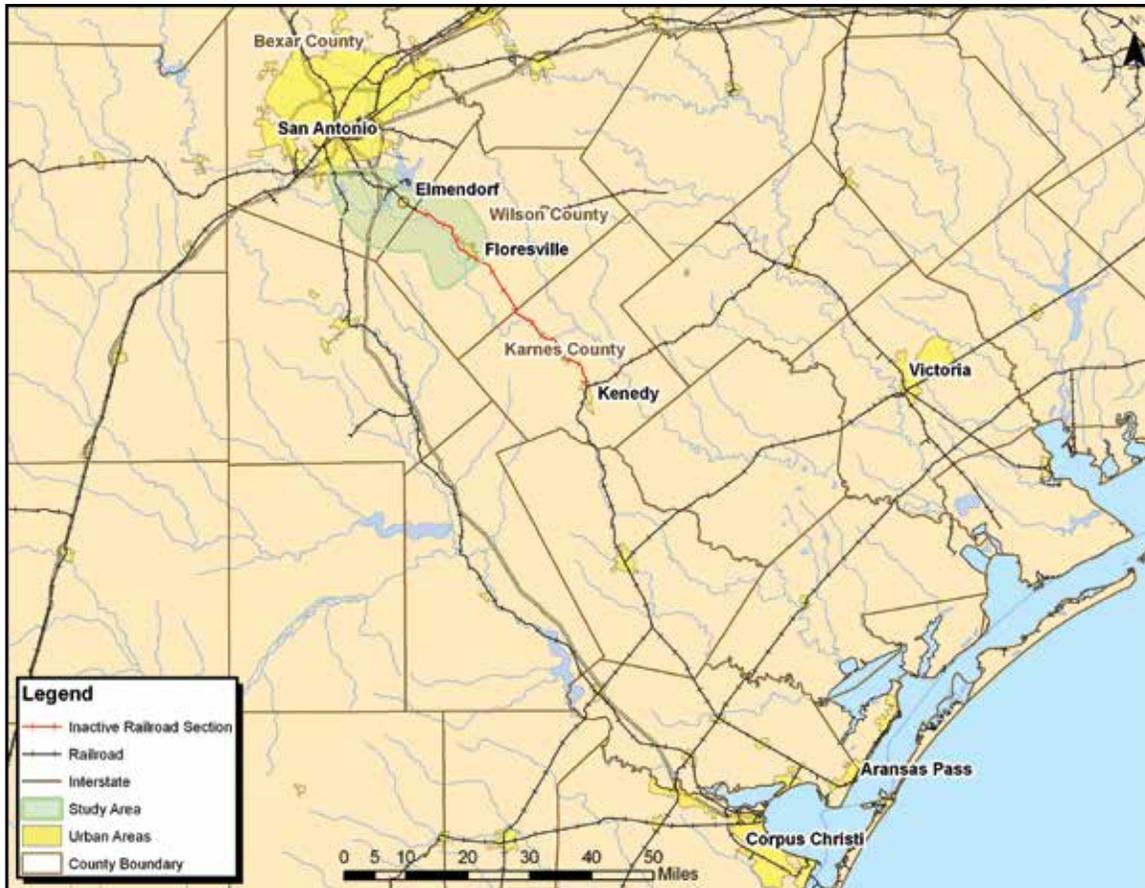


Figure 29. Map depicts the San Antonio & Aransas Pass railroad, identified communities, and the study area.

History and Existing Condition (Within the Study Area)

- In the late 19th century, the railroad company was granted a “railroad easement” for the corridor. A railroad easement is different from a typical easement in the sense that railroads needed a property interest that was more substantial than a regular ingress/egress type of easement. This easement included exclusive control over the land, fencing, tunneling and drainage, ditches, alteration of the elevation, and modification of the subgrade. The expansive nature of railroad easements makes them close to fee simple possession.
- Based on examination of the deed records, applicable case law, federal and state statutes, and current activity, it is the conclusion that Union Pacific still owns an easement interest in the abandoned SA&AP rail corridor, specifically from Elmendorf to the northern city limits of Floresville, subject to any contrary findings after further analysis of the abandonment proceedings.
- In 2001, the City of Floresville signed a “Grant of Easement” with Union Pacific for surface-use of the corridor within the Floresville city limits to use the corridor as a non-motorized recreational trail.
- In early 2013, Union Pacific reinstated approximately 1-mile of the inactive rail corridor near Elmendorf to the Wilson County line in order to service a new industrial ‘Mission Rail Park’ development that was spurred to support the nearby Eagle Ford Shale oil and gas boom.
- Union Pacific has expressed an interest to sell the available inactive rail corridor (between Elmendorf and Kenedy).

Challenges

The following are the identified challenges related to utilizing the inactive railroad corridor as an identified opportunity for a hike & bike trail and a NHT. These challenges include:

- Fences** - Given the timeframe since abandonment, some property owners adjacent to the inactive rail corridor have absorbed the easement into their own property with fences. These individuals may question the validity of the railroad's interest should the railroad or a subsequent entity seek to re-activate the corridor for rail or other public uses. A legal process may be required in order to reestablish proper ownership.
- Development on the Corridor** - The River Bend Golf Course on the north side of Floresville is a 400+ acre golf and residential community. Rights for development over the inactive rail corridor was provided through a Grant of Easement agreement between Union Pacific and the City of Floresville with the condition that the City would identify and provide for a suitable "replacement corridor". Negotiations for determining this alternate corridor have not yet occurred.
- Eagle Ford Shale** - The nearby Eagle Ford Shale oil and gas activity has led to the development of a large industrial rail hub in the Elmendorf and Sasparamco area. Approximately one mile of the inactive railroad corridor from the City of Elmendorf to the Wilson County line has been reactivated in order to provide service to this facility. This rail line re-activation is an example of Union Pacific's ownership interests remaining intact.
- Ownership Determination** - During the abandonment process, the line was not "railbanked" under the National Trails System Act, but that may or may not impact the status of the railroad's interest depending on the outcome of further review of the abandonment proceedings. In order to make the final determination for ownership along the corridor, it is recommended that a complete title opinion be commissioned in order to have the abandonment/merger documents analyzed, as well as any relevant federal and state statutes and associated regulations related to abandoned rail corridors.

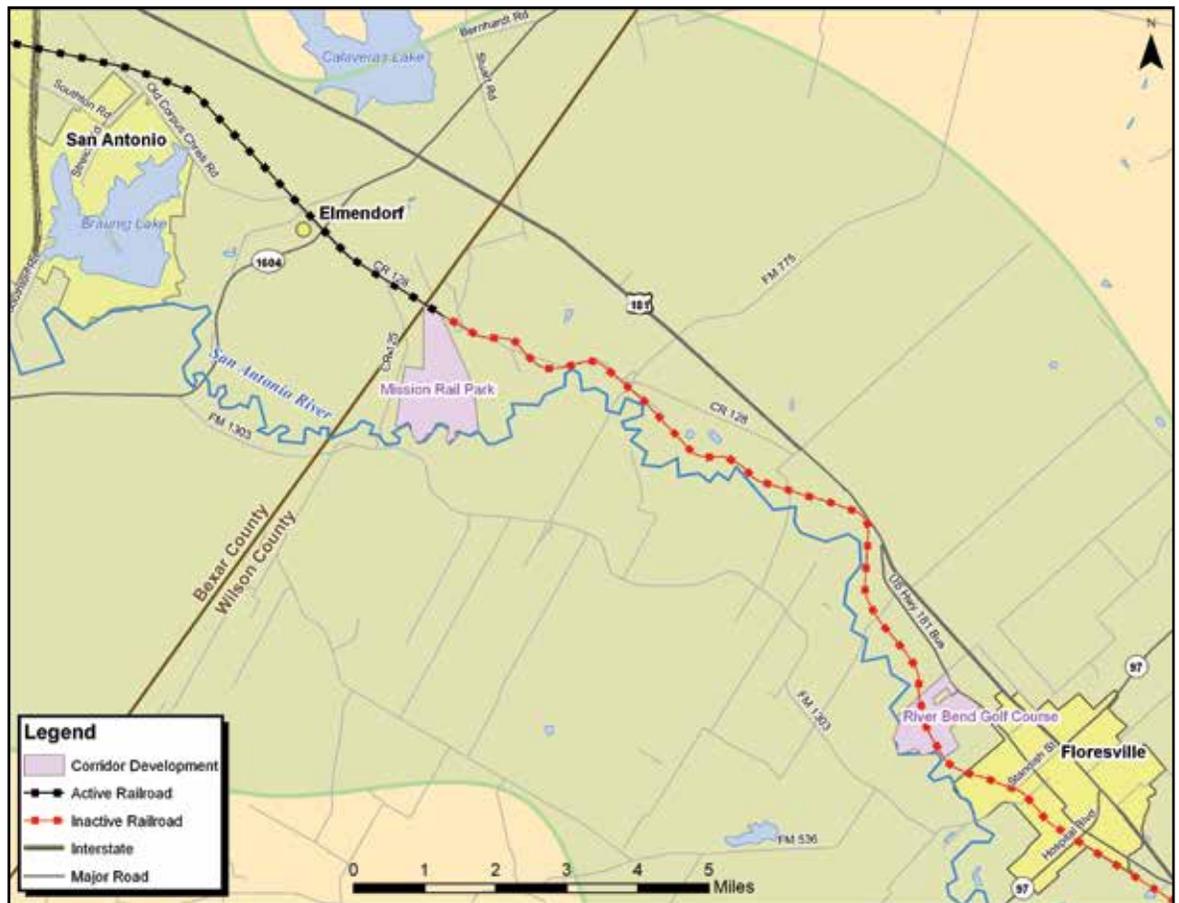


Figure 30. Map depicts the San Antonio & Aransas Pass railroad and identified development areas within the study area.

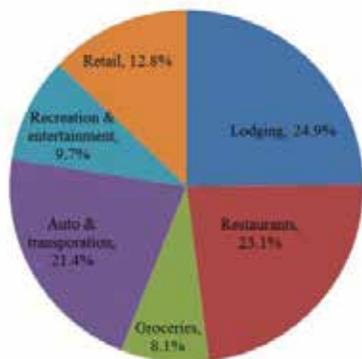
ECONOMIC & SOCIAL IMPACTS

There are multiple economic and social benefits provided to communities through recreation trails and heritage tourism. Outdoor non-motorized recreation enhances fitness and promotes healthy environments. Heritage tourism draws visitors to destinations and promotes cultural and historic preservation and stewardship. Outdoor recreation and heritage tourism are also economic drivers by attracting visitors to destinations, bringing dollars to the community and supporting local businesses.

NPS sites, NHT resources, and surrounding community resources together can provide opportunities to support outdoor recreation and cultural and heritage tourism.

Outdoor Recreation

Visitor Spending by Category



Source: 2011 NPS Report

Nationally, Americans spend approximately \$646 billion each year on outdoor recreation, according to a study by the Outdoor Industry Association (Outdoor Industry Association 2012). For every one dollar spent on recreation equipment and gear (i.e., footwear, accessories and services, etc.), four dollars is spent on travel and related expenses, such as food, fuel, and lodging. In addition, the outdoor recreation industry is one of the top industries for supporting employment in the U.S. In Texas alone, \$28.7 billion is spent on outdoor recreation which directly supports 277,000 jobs and \$8.9 billion spent on wages and salaries. Approximately \$1.9 billion of this provides state and local tax revenue.

NPS sites are a factor in this positive social and economic impact. In 2012, there were over 280 million recreation visits to NPS sites nationwide. This contributed to over \$30 billion in sales to the national economy (Cui, et al., 2013). Nearly \$13 billion of this was spent in communities that are within 60 miles of an NPS site. The chart above displays the spending of NPS visitors by category distribution.

Locally, a recent economic impact study funded by the National Parks Conservation Association found that the Rancho de las Cabras NPS site in Floresville is projected

to generate \$4.8 million annually in local economic activity, as well as provide for 56 local jobs when the site is fully opened by 2016 (Archie & Terry, 2011). Based only on the result of direct spending impacts, as money is further circulated into the local economies additional economic benefits and job creation will result.

Cultural and Heritage Tourism

Cultural and heritage tourism is a significant part of U.S. leisure travel and has been steadily increasing in popularity. Focusing on this type of tourism is an opportunity for communities to create experiences that showcase the culture and heritage of the area while boosting local economy and improving quality of life.

According to a 2009 U.S. travel industry study, it is estimated that over 80% of adults who pursue personal travel for a distance greater than 50 miles from their home are typically cultural/heritage travellers. Over 30% of these travellers do so with a specific cultural/heritage event or activity in mind. This type of tourism can involve a place, an event, an activity or all of the above. Also, the cultural/heritage traveller typically spends more money while travelling than do other types of travellers - roughly \$623 versus \$457, excluding the cost of transportation expenses (Mandala Research, 2009).

“Texas heritage travelers spend more per day, stay longer, and have a higher household income than the average traveler.”

*- Historic Preservation at Work
for the Texas Economy*

Summary

The area of focus for this study has many resources that would provide for both increased outdoor recreation and cultural and heritage tourism opportunities. By providing a network of trail and resource connections, as well as promoting the cultural and historical resources, the surrounding communities will enjoy the economic and social benefits of being a destination for healthy outdoor recreation and tourism.

MOVING FORWARD

Provided in this section are a few key resources to help in identifying and pursuing an implementation strategy.

Steps

When pursuing an identified opportunity, there are a few general steps to consider in order to move the process forward. These steps, which may be accomplished succinctly or contemporaneously, include:

- Identify and develop the planning & design;
- Consider operation & maintenance needs;
- Identify and pursue sources of funding;
- Coordinate with local community efforts;
- Develop partnerships with interested groups & entities;
- Foster awareness and appreciation;
- Engage the community;
- Promote the area as a destination; and
- Pursue endorsements & project support.

Partnerships

Partnerships are critical to the success of a project and can also leverage funding and resources. This section provides a list of the categories of entities to consider when identifying potential partners to involve in a project effort.

Federal

- Engineering, Environmental, Health, Land, and Wildlife Management Agencies

State

- Agriculture, Natural Resources, Parks, and Transportation Departments; Historical Commissions; Elected Representatives

Regional

- Colleges and Universities; Council of Governments; Media

County

- Elected Officials (i.e., Commissioners); Community Development Department; Planning Department

City

- Community Development Department; Elected Officials (i.e., City Council, City Manager, Mayor); Parks & Recreation Department; Planning Department

Local

- Businesses; Chamber of Commerce; Churches; Neighborhood Associations; Property Owners; Schools; and Individuals

Other Assistance

Additional assistance can be provided by utilizing the support provided from:

- Civic Groups
- Friends Groups
- Historical Societies
- Technical Assistance Entities

FUNDING

Funding may be pursued through different sources and at various times throughout the year. Funding is dependent upon the availability of the source and/or the federally or state designated appropriations. It is important to note that it may be possible to leverage funding by increasing the collaboration between projects and efforts. The sources listed below are only a sample of possible funding sources to consider.

Potential Funding Sources

Federal and State

- **Transportation Funding (i.e., MAP 21, SAFETEA-LU, etc.)**

Congress authorizes transportation funding for both federal and state levels through a transportation funding bill. Such relevant funding programs include the Highway Safety Improvement Program, the Texas Recreational Trail Grant Program (administered through the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department), the Surface Transportation Program - Metropolitan Mobility (STP-MM), Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ), Federal Lands Access Program (FLAP), and many others.

- **U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)**

Community Development Block Grants

- **U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)**

Rural Economic Development Loan and Grant Program

- **Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ)**

Texas Non-point Source Management Program

- **U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service (NPS)**

Land and Water Conservation Fund

- **U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)**

Landscape Conservation Stewardship Program

- **U.S. Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration (EDA)**

Public Works and Development Facilities Program

Private/Non-Profit Level

- **The American Hiking Society**

National Trails Fund

- **Bikes Belong Coalition**

Community Partnership Grants

- **Corporate Funding**

(i.e., Recreational Equipment, Inc.; The Coca-Cola Foundation; Toyota Motor Sales, USA, Inc.; Performance Bikes, etc.)

Other

- Local Bonds

- Leasing Sub-Surface Utility Rights

- Private Fundraising

LEGISLATION & LEGAL MANDATES

The following are a list of important legislation and legal mandates necessary to consider in pursuing the opportunities identified within the study.

The National Trails System Act of 1968 (Public Law 90-543)

Authorized the creation of a national trail system, “to provide for the ever-increasing outdoor recreation needs of an expanding population and to promote the preservation of, public access to, travel within, and enjoyment and appreciation of the open air, outdoor areas and historic resources of the Nation.”

The Act created three trail designations:

- National Recreation Trails;
- National Scenic Trails; and
- National Historic Trails (added by amendment in 1978).

El Camino Real de los Tejas National Historic Trail (Public Law 108-342)

The authorizing legislation identifying “approximately 2,580 miles of trail extending from the Río Grande near Eagle Pass and Laredo, Texas, to Natchitoches, Louisiana” to commemorate significant historic routes used by Spanish settlers from 1680 to 1845. El Camino Real de los Tejas National Historic Trail became a part of the National Trails System on October 18, 2004.

National Historic Preservation Act (Public Law 89-665, October 15, 1966; 16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.)

Authorized on October 25, 1966 and amended 22 times since, the NHPA involves a partnership involving federal, tribal, state and local governments, and the private sector. The Act provides legal protection for cultural resources on federal and state-owned lands or other resources utilizing federal funding. The Act established the National Register of Historic Places and through the National Registry, provides federal recognition to properties of state and local, as well as national, significance. It also created the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation and authorized matching grants (Historic Preservation Fund) for states, Certified Local Governments, and Indian Tribes for historic preservation surveys, plans, and projects.

National Environmental Policy Act (Public Law 91-190)

Authorized by Congress in 1969 and implemented in 1970, this legislation established environmental policies

with the goal of achieving productive harmony between human beings and the physical environment for present and future generations. The Act mandates that for every project funded through federal dollars, an in-depth study of the impacts of “major federal actions having a significant effect on the environment” and alternatives to those actions be completed and that each agency make that information an integral part of its decisions. NEPA also requires that agencies make a diligent effort to involve the interested and affected public before they make decisions affecting the environment.

The Americans with Disabilities Act and ADA Amendments Act of 2008 (42 U.S.C. 12207)

Authorized in 1990 and amended in 2008, the Act protects the rights of individuals with disabilities in employment, transportation, education, and other public service opportunities and environments, as well as sets standards for publicly accessible places to ensure equal access.

Rural Rail Transportation Districts (Texas Transportation Code Title 5 Subtitle I Chapter 172)

The Texas enabling legislation authorizing the development of Rural Rail Transportation Districts as a political subdivision of the state. Initially authorized by the 67th Texas Legislature in 1981 to prevent the loss of rural rail corridors through abandonment by rail companies or to manage the corridor for future transportation uses.

Local Planning Ordinances and Regulations

In addition to the federal legislation described above, there are local ordinances and land-use codes to comply with and incorporate into the planning and implementation process. These local considerations may include:

- City/Community Master Plan
- Long-Range Transportation Plan
- Bike/Pedestrian Master Plan
- Floodplain Development Restrictions
- Land-use Zoning
- Water Quality Protection
- State Historic Preservation Compliance

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For More Information

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The National Park Service's Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program works with communities across America to create a network of protected rivers, trails, and open spaces that enrich life by linking people to their natural and cultural heritage. Visit our website at:

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*Bridge along the Floresville Hike & Bike Trail.
(Dominique McReynolds)*