



Guadalupe-Blanco River Authority
933 E. Court Street, Seguin, TX 78155
www.gbra.org

GBRA, Gorge Preservation Society and Halff Associates receive national Excellence in Planning Award for the Canyon Lake Gorge Master Plan

For More Information

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Tammy Beutnagel, GBRA, [830] 379-5822 or email tbeutnagel@gbra.org

Sharell Weeams, Halff Associates, Inc., [214] 346-6216 or email sweeams@halff.com

New Braunfels, TX - The National Association of Recreation Resource Planners (NARRP) has awarded its 2008 "Excellence in Planning Award" to the Guadalupe Blanco River Authority (GBRA), Halff Associates Inc., and the Gorge Preservation Society for the Canyon Lake Gorge Master Plan. This national award, presented in May at the organization's annual meeting, is awarded annually to not more than four eligible recipients, including not more than two individuals and two agencies or organizations, public or private. It is awarded primarily for professional achievement in the field of parks and recreation planning. The determining factor is the degree of sustained proficiency or excellence made by the nominated entity, and is given to achievements that further recreation planning.

The Master Plan, developed by Halff Associates in conjunction with the Guadalupe Blanco River Authority (GBRA) and the Gorge Preservation Society Board, established goals for the gorge, strategies for preservation, and cost estimates for features needed to enhance visits to the Gorge.

The plan proposed low impact steps and cable guide railings to assist with guided tours along the bottom of the Gorge, and a series of rocky "overlooks" along the rim for unguided tours. Each overlook received a "name" to describe its unique characteristics. In essence, the plan was crafted around the notion of doing as little as possible to impact the beauty of the Gorge.

"We understood the significance of the wonders unveiled in the gorge from the beginning and wanted very much to be apart of its preservation and development," William "Bill" E. West, Jr., GBRA general manager said. "GBRA appreciates the care and consideration that Halff Associates took in understanding the issues, as well as their skills in developing an appropriate and environmentally suitable design for the gorge," West added.

"This kind of project requires as much heart as it does technical expertise," said Tommie Streeter-Rhoad, GBRA economic development manager, who enlisted Jim Carrillo of Halff Associates to submit a proposal on the gorge. Rhoad said, "Jim and his colleagues at Halff Associates brought all of those things to the table and delivered a stellar development plan for the Canyon Lake Gorge."

The Canyon Lake Gorge, located below the Canyon Lake Spillway, was created over a two day period during record breaking floods in July 2002. The GBRA, which oversees operations along the Guadalupe River which feeds into and out of Canyon Lake, immediately recognized the importance of the newly formed gorge as an incredibly unique geologic resource, and has been working since to consider how best to preserve the Gorge and yet allow access to its one-of-a-kind scenery.

NARRP is a nationwide organization comprised of outdoor recreation professionals and others interested in recreation resource planning. The mission of the Association is to advance the recreation resource planning profession.

The Guadalupe-Blanco River Authority is a recognized leader in managing water resources that benefit both people and the environment. GBRA provides stewardship for the water resources in its 10-county statutory district includes Kendall, Comal, Hays, Caldwell, Guadalupe, Gonzales, DeWitt, Victoria, Calhoun and Refugio counties.

Halff Associates is a Texas-based design firm with area offices in San Antonio and Austin, and the firm's team was lead by San Marcos resident Jim Carrillo, a park planner and landscape architect.