



# Save Barton Creek Association

[www.savebartoncreek.org](http://www.savebartoncreek.org)

## LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE ASSOCIATION

Volume 36, Issue 1

Summer/Fall 2015



Dear Association Members,

Thank you for standing up for the places we love! SBCA has a proud thirty-five year history of successful advocacy for Barton Creek. You are part of that!

We are working with other groups to create new service projects along the Greenbelt and to foster an enlarged vision embracing preservation of the entire forty miles of Barton Creek — all the way from the source to the Springs.

Along with these newest endeavors, we continue to support our various partners with funding, education, and outreach. Among them: Texas River School, Bill Oliver's Mother Earth Festival, Austin Youth River Watch, the upcoming Barton Springs University spearheaded by the SOS Alliance, Austin Tree Folks, Hill Country Conservancy, the Groundwater to Gulf teaching program, Living Springs, and too many others to name.

I am happy to report that SBCA adopted a new Strategic Plan this June, launching plans for new educational programs and community improvement projects in the Barton Springs Watershed. This year also marks a milestone in the history of the organization: the hiring of our first full-time staff member.

As SBCA enters a new era, there are many ways we can have an immediate positive effect on our natural environment and the greater community of Austin. We are currently in the process of applying for grant funding to improve educational resources at Goat Cave Karst Preserve, the only public karst preserve in Austin. This a golden opportunity to reach school groups and community members with education about a healthy aquifer system.

SBCA is also in the beginning stages of 'adopting' and building a trail on seventy acres of neglected Watershed Preserve land with partners Austin Ridge Riders and Austin Metro Trails and Greenways.

(See Building a Legacy, Pg. 6)

Although Barton Springs feels as if under constant threat, I believe there is hope (see "Are We Up the Creek?" page 3). For 35 years, Save Barton Creek Association has focused a keen eye on issues that affect our water resources. We continue to work with state and local government and our partners to educate and advocate for better practices.

I hope you will join us in a rededicated determination to carry forward the legacy of the Save Barton Creek Association to a new generation! Please, take the time to visit us, stay awhile, volunteer to work and play with us, at [www.savebartoncreek.org](http://www.savebartoncreek.org).

I hope you will join us in a rededicated determination to carry forward the legacy of the Save Barton Creek Association to a new generation! Please, take the time to visit us, stay awhile, volunteer to work and play with us, at [www.savebartoncreek.org](http://www.savebartoncreek.org).

Sincerely,  
Stephen K. Beers, President

## ARTICLES IN THIS ISSUE

- Barton Springs Aquifer District Expands ... Pg. 3
- Volunteers Clean Up Hidden Gem ... Pg. 4
- Are We "Up a Creek?" ... Pg. 5
- Building a Legacy on WQPL ... Pg. 6
- SBCA Board on City Commissions ... Pg. 7
- SBCA Welcomes New Staff ... Pg. 7
- Austin's Underground Frontier ... Pg. 8
- Girl Scouts March for the Climate ... Pg. 11
- Secrets of Goat Cave Karst Preserve ... Pg. 12
- Annual Awards Recap 2014 ... Pg. 14
- Living Springs Lives on Screen ... Pg. 15
- SBCA Partners Thrive in 2015 ... Pg. 15
- Thank You to our Sponsors ... Pg. 15
- SBCA Purpose Statement and Contact ... Pg. 16

# SAVE BARTON CREEK ASSOCIATION

Officers and Trustees  
2014-2015

**President:**  
Stephen Beers

**Vice President:**  
Jackie Goodman

**Secretary:**  
Pam Thompson

**Treasurer:**  
Kathy Smartt

**Treasurer Emeritus:**  
Shudde Fath

**Board Members:**  
Jack Goodman  
Dick Kallerman  
Mary Ann Neely  
Craig Smith  
Stefan Wray  
Roy Waley  
Clare Berry  
Jon Beall

Interested in serving on our  
board or on a committee?  
Call (512) 480-0055

## MEMBERSHIP

100% of your membership donation is tax-deductible and will directly  
fund programs that benefit Austin's watershed.

Your individual support, in the form of dues, helps us to further our  
mission, and helps us to successfully apply for essential grant funding.

<b>Lifetime Associate</b>	<b>\$1000</b>
Patrons	\$500
<b>Sustainers</b>	<b>\$250</b>
Friends:	\$100
<b>Family:</b>	<b>\$50</b>
Individual:	\$25
<b>Student/Retiree:</b>	<b>\$10</b>

Become a member or renew your membership today!

You can join online at [www.savebartoncreek.org](http://www.savebartoncreek.org) or send your dues to  
Save Barton Creek Association - PO Box 5923, Austin TX 78763

## GET SOCIAL WITH US!



@savebartoncreek

Are you ready to replace your old warped, rotting, or ugly  
windows with beautiful, new, energy-efficient ones?  
If so, don't wait any longer!



Contact Us to Schedule your Free In-Home Consultation!  
(512) 298-1886 OR [Events@thebestwindow.com](mailto:Events@thebestwindow.com)

Mention this ad before October 31, 2015  
and 5% of your purchase will be donated to  
the Save Barton Creek Association!

[Facebook.com/RBAofAustin](https://www.facebook.com/RBAofAustin)

## Barton Springs Aquifer District Expands

by Craig Smith

The Barton Springs Edwards Aquifer Conservation District (affectionately known as BSEACD or the District) was created in 1986 with the mission to conserve, preserve, protect, enhance recharge, and prevent waste of the groundwater resources in the District's territory. That territory closely matched the recharge zone of the aquifer for which the District was named and that provides the flow of water to Barton Springs. The District's management plan and regulatory activities focused on that aquifer, the sole or primary water supply for about 60,000 people, as well as the source of Austin's beloved recreational attraction.

But the District's jurisdiction was not limited to just the Edwards Aquifer. It also included the Trinity Aquifer beneath the Edwards in the layer cake of hydrological units that underlies Central Texas, although the Trinity was less prolific and generally of lower water quality due to dissolved minerals. Until the last few years, the wells that tapped the Trinity Aquifer were mainly individual household wells in the Hill Country where the Edwards limestone formations were eroded away or too thin to produce much water. More recently, thousands more people have been drawn to the Hill Country to live and have sunk wells into the Trinity, including several inside the District's original territory.

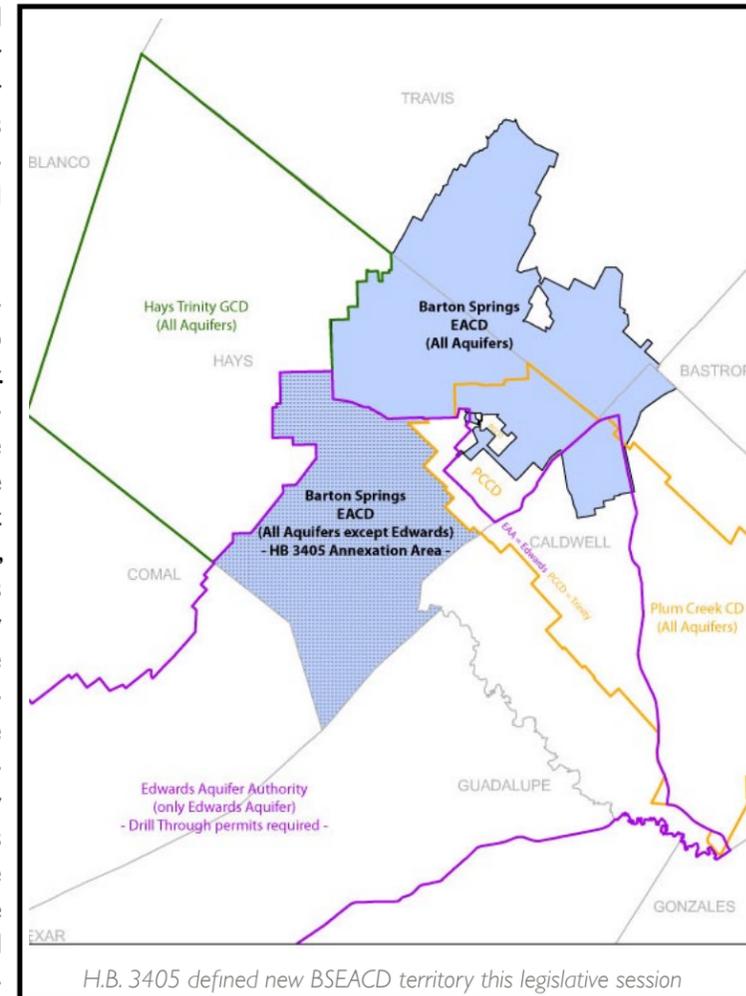
As the demand for water to serve the area's galloping population growth has continued to grow and the firm yield of the Edwards Aquifer has been capped by the District for the sake of sustainability and protection of the endangered species living in the Springs, the Trinity has become an attractive alternative source of supply.

A Houston-based company, Electro Purification, LLC, saw an opportunity in this situation and leased groundwater rights from a few landowners in Hays County near Wimberley outside the boundaries of any existing groundwater conservation district. Such a district is the only legal mechanism in Texas for regulating groundwater withdrawals by landowners or their lessees. Without publicity, Electro Purification made contracts with three major buyers of water in the IH-35 corridor, Goforth Water Supply Company, the City of Buda, and Clark Wilson Homes, the developer of the proposed Anthem subdivision, to sell up to 5.3 million gallons of water a day, an amount equal to all of the current pumping from the Trinity Aquifer in Hays County combined.

Electro Purification's seven test wells into the Trinity Aquifer were under the ancient "rule of capture" that allows unlimited withdrawal of groundwater without regard to the effect on other wells or the aquifer itself. Recognizing that there were no regulations that could prevent the depletion of their own wells by the new pumping, the neighboring residents reacted with alarm. Al-

though Electro Purification gave assurances that the existing wells would not be affected because the new wells would draw from a deeper formation, the residents demanded that groundwater regulation be extended to cover the so-called "white area" that was without legal protection. A citizens' group, the Trinity-Edwards Springs Protection Association (TESPA), was quickly formed and filed suit to block production from Electro Purification's wells.

The existence of the wells and contracts to sell the water first became known near the beginning of 2015, which was the opening of the legislative session. [continued on pg 11]



H.B. 3405 defined new BSEACD territory this legislative session

## SBCA Board, Volunteers, and Partners Clean Up Hidden Gem

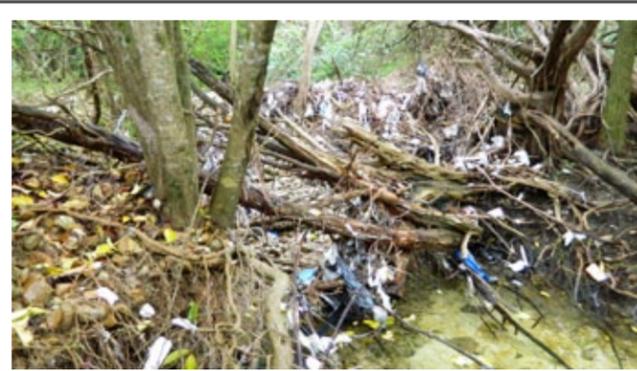
by Olivia Hayden

June 6, 2015. Save Barton Creek Association board members, staff, and over 35 volunteers celebrated Austin Parks Foundation's National Trails Day effort by removing almost 100 bags of trash from an oft-overlooked tract of land in South Austin. Keep Austin Beautiful and City Watershed Protection Department, Wildlands Division Staff helped to make the cleanup a great success.

The 77-acre Shudde Fath Tract, formerly known as the H.E. Brodie Tract, is part of the Water Quality Protection Lands of Austin (WQPL). Despite the best efforts of the city, trash and debris have built up from neighboring roadways and commercial spaces.

Nestled between Loop 360 and Hwy 290, Shudde's tract connects in part to the Barton Creek Wilderness Park. Its designation as WQPL, however, expressly forbids trespassing to access the Barton Creek Greenbelt trail. Despite the warnings, trespassing on the site is common on the tract and has led to the formation of unsustainable "social" trails and illegal campsites.

Illegal dumping, homeless camps, runoff from highways, and trash blowing from neighboring businesses all contribute to the trash that collects along the tributaries on the tract. Styrofoam, water bottles, and plastic bags were among the objects most commonly found at the site. The amount of trash was staggering and as one volunteer observed, was "a true reminder of how small individual actions, when combined, can collectively cause disaster."



Post-flood trash buildup and ongoing dumping are concerns for the 77-acre tract.

Save Barton Creek Association has plans to return to the site periodically, as permitted by the City's Watershed Protection Department, to monitor the trash levels on the tract. We hope to see a decrease in plastic bag trash following the ordinance banning them in Austin.

We have also included a plan for the Shudde Fath Tract in the latest SBCA Strategic Plan. For more information on the project, see page 5.

For volunteer opportunities and events, please visit Save Barton Creek Association on Facebook, or on our website, [www.savebartoncreek.org](http://www.savebartoncreek.org).

We meet the 2nd and 4th Monday of every month from 7pm-9pm

@ **Opal Divine's Penn Field**  
3601 S Congress Ave,  
Austin, TX 78704

Join us for great conversation and the latest updates on Austin's water issues and SBCA events



Board President Steve Beers and Board Member Mary Ann Neely helping with the cleanup effort.

## Are We "Up a Creek?"

By Stephen Beers

This summer we celebrated the 25th anniversary of a "citizens uprising" sparked by an all-night Austin City Council hearing held on June 7, 1990. The resulting grassroots movement culminated in the passage of the Save Our Springs (SOS) Ordinance in a referendum held two years later on August 8th, 1992.

Since then, our citizens' ordinance withstood all legal challenges — only to be evaded too many times by 'grandfathered' and negotiated exceptions. The rules still apply only to Austin's jurisdiction, less than one-third the land area of the Barton Springs watersheds. Nevertheless, SOS 'moved the needle' on subsequent discussions and decisions, with every new development being compared to the standards of that ordinance. Other city and county authorities have produced water-protection measures of their own that can compare to Austin's.

Meanwhile, the City of Austin and other partners have done great work to acquire more parks and nature preserves in the area that feeds Barton Springs, including Barton Creek. As of this writing, more than 26,000 acres are protected from development that would harm the Springs. [See: <https://www.austintexas.gov/departments/water-quality-protection-land>]

So, are we out of the woods yet? Or are we up the creek without a paddle? [continued on pg. 10]

## Thank You to all of our Volunteers!



## Building a Legacy on Water Quality Protection Lands

by Olivia Hayden

There is a 77-acre piece of green space bordering Barton Creek that you may have never heard about.

It's called the Shudde Fath Tract, and you aren't even allowed to step foot inside unless you have been given express permission by the City of Austin.

Save Barton Creek Association wants to change that.

With the help of esteemed trailbuilder Britt Jones of the Austin Ridge Riders, and bicycle and trail enthusiast Hill Abell of Austin Metro Trails and Greenways (AMTG), SBCA is working to organize a master plan for the property: a plan that includes public access. The Ridge Riders and AMTG have a history of building recreational trails on Water Quality Protection Lands, and have the practical knowledge needed to see this project to completion.

SBCA and a final stakeholder group, will ultimately sign an agreement with the City of Austin's Watershed Protection Department and will work with city staff, the Parks and Recreation Department, and other officials to build a plan that considers all of the challenges the site presents.

Golden-cheeked warbler habitat, archaeological sites, sewer lines, and a TXDOT retention pond will all need to be considered as a proposal is crafted. The proposal will then go to the Water Quality Protection Land Stakeholder Committee and City of Austin for final approval.

This project is close to the hearts of the Save Barton Creek Association as it has borne the name of revered Austin activist and SBCA Board Treasurer Emeritus, Shudde Fath since 2005.

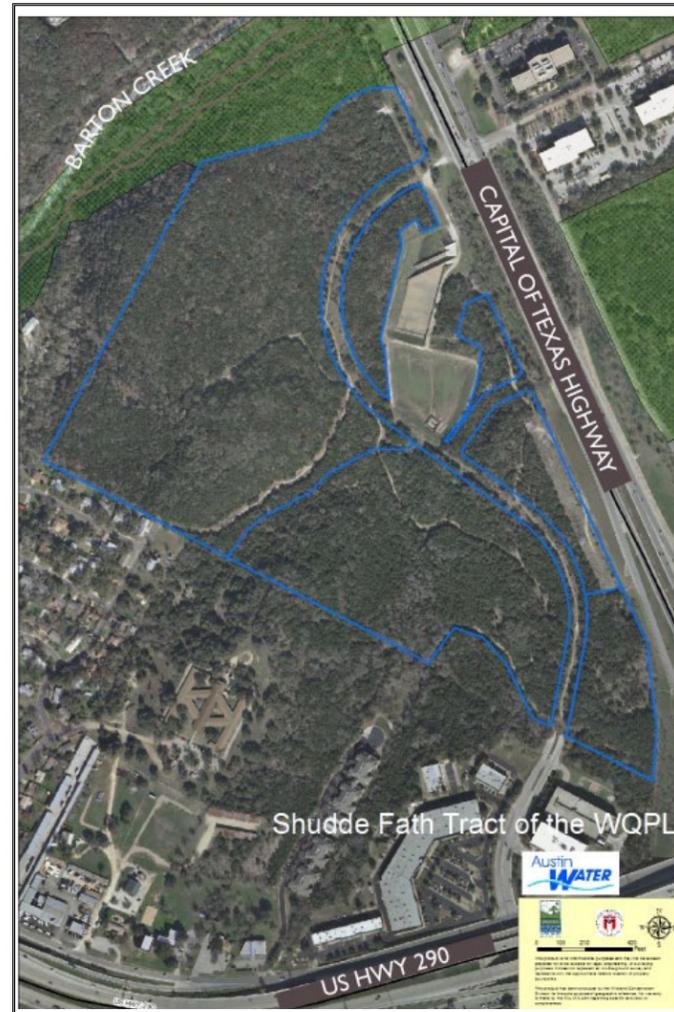


A Council Proclamation renamed the Brodie Tract for Fath. in 2005

Fath, who will turn 100 in January, expressed excitement at the idea of her tract being used for education and outreach for years to come.

"Outdoor recreation and environmental education are critically important components of the quality of life in Austin – especially in this period of rapid growth," explains George Cofer, Executive Director of Hill Country Conservancy. "Even though building a trail on the Shudde Fath Tract will be a very challenging undertaking, it's well worth it. We have learned a lot by going through similar processes on the Slaughter Preserve Trail and Violet Crown Trail, which will allow SBCA to build on the lessons we've learned. So far, the right experts, stakeholders, and partners are in place. The outcome will be nothing less than inspiring."

We plan to kick off a capital campaign for the project in 2016. For more information and sponsorship opportunities, contact [olivia@savebartoncreek.org](mailto:olivia@savebartoncreek.org).



Map of Shudde Fath Tract Courtesy of the City of Austin

## SBCA Board Members Appointed to City Commissions

by Stefan Wray

Longtime SBCA board members Shudde Fath, Mary Ann Neely, Pam Thompson, Stefan Wray, and Jackie Goodman on July 1 began to serve terms on City commissions newly realigned to conform to Austin's 10-1 Council districts. Fath and Wray are now members of the Electric Utility Commission, while Neely and Thompson are members of Environmental Commission. Goodman will serve on the Zoning and Platting Commission.

Fath is the longest standing member of the Electric Utility Commission having served since 1977. She was re-appointed to a two-year term by District 2 Council Member Delia Garza. Goodman, former three-term Council Member, was also appointed by Garza. Neely is the second longest standing member of the Environmental Commission (previously the Environmental Board) having served since 2007. She was re-appointed to a four-year term by District 5 Council Member Ann Kitchen.

Both Thompson and Wray are new to serving on a City commission. District 3 Council Member Sabino Renteria appointed each to their respective commission. Both are serving four-year terms.

As it states on the City's website, the purpose of the EUC is "Review and analyze all policies and procedures of the electric utility including electricity rates, fuel costs and charges, customer services, capital investments, new generation facilities, selection of types of fuel, budget, strategic planning, regulatory compliance, billing procedures, and the transfer of electric utility revenues from the utility fund to the general fund."

The Zoning and Platting Commission "Perform[s] duties relating to land use and development, as prescribed by Title 25 (Land Development) of the City Code and other duties as assigned by the council." Whereas the Environmental Commission "act[s] in an advisory capacity on all projects and programs which affect the quality of life for the citizens of Austin. The commission also "make[s] recommendations for standards and recommends specific studies."

Of the three, the Environmental and Zoning Commissions address matters most directly related to Barton Creek, Barton Springs, and the aquifer's recharge and contributing zones. Yet from an overall perspective, all three commissions play an important role in shaping Austin environmental policy.

## SBCA Welcomes New Full-Time Staff Member

This February, the Save Barton Creek Association board welcomed their new Director of Development and Community Relations, Olivia Hayden.

Olivia comes to SBCA from Whole Foods Market, where she previously worked as a Marketing Team Leader in both Austin and California. You may have seen her on the FOX morning news, where she once made homemade hummus on live television.

An avid hiker, reader, and recent kayaker (yes, on Barton Creek!), she looks forward to working for a well-known and established environmental organization like SBCA.

"I have a background in marketing, but my passion has always been with the natural world and the arts, so this job is a dream come true." Olivia says of her new position with the Association. "I have already learned so much from the experts at SBCA and their partners, and I look forward to the opportunity to bring a new voice to the table. We have some great projects planned for the next year and beyond."

Olivia is most excited about the Shudde Fath Trail project, because she strongly believes that trail users, trail builders, conservationists, and activists can (and should!) work together to make a tangible difference for their environment.

When she's not hiking, reading, or working on SBCA business, you can find Olivia at home with her partner Hector, 100-pound Great Pyrenees Layla, and their two chickens. She enjoys refinishing furniture and antiquing in her spare time.





## Austin's Underground Frontier

by Nico Hauwert, Senior Environmental Scientist, City of Austin

Caves naturally and commonly occur across the roughly five-mile wide exposure of the Edwards Aquifer along the west side of the City of Austin. If they are not plugged, these caves and sinks can be major sources of recharge for the Edwards Aquifer. When European pioneers first settled in Central Texas, sediment erosion resulted from new practices such as livestock ranching, vegetation removal, and urban disturbance. This erosion led to the filling of many low-lying caves and sinkholes. Ranchers also filled caves in order to eliminate livestock hazards, to dispose of trash, and to create water-holding stock ponds for livestock. In the 1800s, a large sinkhole near the mouth of Halifax Creek on the Blanco River was intentionally plugged because it absorbed (recharged) river flow desired for a downstream mill near Kyle.

The widespread practice of filling caves with trash and debris continues to degrade the water quality of the Edwards

Maintaining cave recharge and reversing intentional cave plugging is important on a large scale to reduce downstream flooding and erosion.

For many years, caves have been covered or hidden from the public's view. When unprotected, caves often become targets of speleothem mining, graffiti, and other vandalism. Caves can also represent a public safety threat when entered without experienced cave guides and proper equipment.

Although caves were filled, trashed, or ignored for many years, cave biologists discovered rare cave species and petitioned for their federal listing in 1982. In 1988, a month after Austin's Earth First activists received nation-wide attention for a nine-day protest in favor of protection of caves, USFWS listed five cave species as endangered, some of which had only been found in a few caves.

In 1996, the City of Austin and Travis County created the Balcones Canyonland Conservation Plan (BCCP), which intended for the continued preservation of both listed and rare cave species not yet listed ("species of concern"). The Plan includes preservation of 62 caves and also protects habitat for listed endangered birds - the Black-Capped Vireo and Golden Cheeked Warbler.

During the 1990s and 2000s, the City of Austin and partners took steps to excavate filled caves and restore corresponding recharge. This process included cave cleanups, led by City of Austin Parks and Recreation biologist Mark Sanders (who now works for the City of Austin Water Utility Balcones Canyonland Preserve) and others, including William Russell, Justin Shaw, Peter Sprouse, Bowie High School Science teacher Jill Harding, and myself. *[continued on next page]*



Nico Hauwert teaches TCEQ members about Maple Run Cave this July



Volunteers from UT Grotto, Texas Cave Management Association, Texas Cave Conservancy, Bowie High School students, Wildflower Center staff, and other organizations participated in the restoration effort.

Wildflower Cave, located at the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center, was originally filled to the ceiling with trash and is now used by more than one thousand students per year in the Watershed Protection Department (WPD) Earth Camp Program. Cleanup of trash from Midnight Cave was the most extensive volunteer cleanup, led by Mark Sanders from 1993 to 1999. After restoration, the film *The Unforseen* featured the pristine beauty of Midnight Cave.

In 2012, five large sinkholes, Sinky Dinky, Winter Woods, Brownlee, Williams Well, and Wyoka, on the sensitive Blowing Sink Research Management Area began collapsing large loads of sediment. While Brownlee Cave became plugged, others were left with gaping, up to 80 feet deep shafts, creating a public safety issue. Beginning that same year, the City of Austin initiated several projects to excavate ranch fill and trash to enhance the caves as preserves for rare species. Some of these caves are also intended for public access on guided tours to facilitate aquifer education. The WPD temporarily hired a team of professional cave specialists associated with UT Grotto to restore caves for specific projects.

While Zara Environmental excavated four of the sinkholes and constructed concrete support shafts beginning in November 2013, the Watershed Protection Department (WPD) cave team manually excavated sediment fill from the caves.

WPD Field Operations conducted landscape restoration of Sinky Dinky while Austin Water Utility Balcones Canyonland staff assisted in the restoration of Brownlee Sink. From 2012 to 2015, the WPD also removed ranch and construction fill and debris from LaCrosse Cave at the University of Texas Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center, Bowie High School Cave under Bowie High School, Hideout and Wade Caves at the Goat Cave Preserve, and Grassy Cove Cave in the Slaughter Creek Greenbelt for the purposes of utilizing the caves for education.

Caves and their ecosystems are part of the natural heritage of our area. The excitement of exploring wild caves should be available to all, without the risk of damaging the caves and their delicate ecosystems.

If you are interested in exploring local caves that are already open to the public visit <http://utgrotto.org/> and [www.austintexas.gov/page/ansc-programs-exhibits](http://www.austintexas.gov/page/ansc-programs-exhibits).



Central Texas Educators learn about travertine at the SBCA-Sponsored Groundwater to the Gulf Program at Westcave Discovery Center.

["Are We Up A Creek?" Continued from pg. 5] Despite the good work that we and our partners undertake on a daily basis, I am worried that the latter proposition may be all too true.

Dripping Springs plans a new sewage plant that would discharge directly into Onion Creek, source of half the water for Barton Springs. With proper treatment, viruses and fecal bacteria might stay out of the creek. But the stream course could easily become overloaded with nutrients that cause algae blooms and oxygen depletion impairing Onion Creek, and ultimately, Barton Springs.



We need to work with everybody downstream and around to prevent this catastrophe from occurring. Such a facility is not needed to assure growth. Far from helping, it imperils health for both residents and nearby streams.

Paired with this concern is a proposed mass importation of fresh water. There are three proposed pipelines that would bring in supply from other aquifers east of Austin or the Highland Lakes to create a series of new Round Rock style suburbs between Dripping Springs, Buda, Kyle, and Wimberley.

'Robbing Peter to pay Paul' is an unsustainable model for our region's future water demands. To treat water up to drinking standards in a distant location and then ship it hundreds of miles so we can flush toilets and water lawns is madness.

We are draining our abundant aquifers, fragile springs, and beautiful streams while simultaneously fouling pristine waters with our wastes. That simply can't be the best practice for 21st century Texas. We can do better.

We need rainwater capture and graywater harvesting in all water management plans. We need to carefully consider how each new development does occur, so it won't leave us "up s\*\*\* creek"!

Another highly unfortunate scheme is a proposed concrete batch manufacturing plant near Onion Creek, positioned such that lime and concrete dust will blow into Barton Creek. More than seventy percent of the Springs' flow comes from just those two creek basins. Please see <http://stopdrippingconcrete.com/> for what you can do.

Barton Creek. More than seventy percent of the Springs' flow comes from just those two creek basins. Please see <http://stopdrippingconcrete.com/> for what you can do.

A further installment of the "paving Paradise" melodrama are four, count 'em, *four* State toll road projects all moving forward in the Barton Springs zone -- the infamous SH 45 Southwest; South Mopac "express" tolled lanes; new bridges over Mopac packaged as a separate project; and turning the Oak Hill "Y" at US 290/SH 71 into a massive tolled elevated highway.

Again, some people have different ideas, offering alternative roadway designs and project locations that can still move and meet existing traffic needs while preserving the streams and springs. These tollroads aren't

built yet, and community groups are entering the environmental permitting process, so there is still hope here.

See <http://www.keepmopaclocal.org/> on SH 45 and Mopac related projects. For different aspects of the Oak Hill project that would devastate that community, as well as hurt the aquifer, see <http://www.fix290.org/> and <http://www.saveoakhill.org/>.

As for whether we're "up the creek without a paddle," I would like to think we can be "up the creek" in a different way. We can advance the cause of a Barton Creek whose uses -- mundane and practical, as well as fun, sentimental and romantic -- are safe and secure for all time, and for all people to enjoy.

Our website has a

## NEW LOOK!

[www.savebartoncreek.org](http://www.savebartoncreek.org)



We're happy to be one of the best resources on the web for Barton Springs and Edwards Aquifer information. Visit us online today.

## Girl Scouts March for the Climate!

Jackie Goodman, Vice President

Junior Girl Scout Troop 471 of South Austin (also known as the Lightning Bolts), chose a mighty undertaking for their Bronze Award Project: to organize a Children's Climate Change March.

With the help of their tireless Troop Leader, Marty McDougal, these intrepid eleven-year olds figured out the theme, the needs, and the logistics of carrying out such an event.

They enlisted the help and support of Council Member Kitchen & Council Member Garza (yes, they were Girl Scouts!), CM Kitchen's Policy Aide Donna Tiemann (yes, a Save Barton Creek-er & Girl Scout!), SBCA (yes, Girl Scouts here, too!), as well as the Sierra Club, (for some of the grown up issues, like street permits & APD) and Senator Watson to reserve the South Capitol Steps (no, he was never a Girl Scout, but nobody's perfect).

The theme they chose was Santa's Elves, because ... North Pole. Santa joined them of course, wearing appropriate duds for a hot Spring Saturday in Austin.

They chose a song for their cause, coincidentally the same song that was sung by the folks who walked from the West Coast all the way to the East Coast in the Great March for Climate Action. This Great March of 7,000,000 steps took eight months to complete.

The girls received a inspirational letter of encouragement from one of those Marchers, Miriam Kashia from Iowa.

They were posted about in the Marchers' news blogs by Ed Fallon (who first conceived the Great March), were cheered on by a Great Marcher who'd become a recent Austin resident, Lala Palazzolo, and were even joined here in Austin that day by Great Marchers who came to congratulate, celebrate & videotape.

The Lightning Bolts used their cookie-sale money to make tons of flyers (SBCA's staff member Olivia helped design it; and since a zillion copies costs a lot of money, SBCA & Sierra Club helped out), they practiced their public speaking, made signs, were interviewed by EcoNews, sang their song at the Earth Day Festival, sang at City Hall, received a Proclamation(!), put up a Facebook event page, took flyers to schools & businesses, recruited Bill Oliver to be the Music of their Children's March, decorated little green wagons for floats, had prizes for floats & signs, and sang - sang - sang !

Ultimately calling all kids to any event depends a lot on parents' transportation (plus it was Eeyore's Birthday, too) so not all the kids who wanted to be there were able to be, but it was a great day and a memorable march. They were speaking out to the folks in the Capitol and made their points well.

They started something. That day, the Saturday following Earth Day, other Girl Scout troops were already talking about taking this up and building on it.

When SBCA became involved in helping Troop 471 with this project, we learned a lot about how much is going on out there in the world of children & climate disruption, spontaneously, around the country & around the world. We learned, for instance, about the children-initiated summer Earth Camps in Great Britain, about the Earth Guardians - a children-led movement out of Colorado, who use Hip Hop to get the message out to others and will soon be taking their message to the summit in Paris.

They're bright, they're connected, and they're determined. They see what's happening and they understand that the world they're getting - to try to grow up and survive in - is not the same world their parents and grandparents came into.

As with the Lightning Bolts, one of the two brothers who leads Earth Guardians is a fifth grader (well, sixth grader, now). So when, on occasion, someone somewhere may say they don't "believe" in climate change, or that you don't need to be 'smarter than a fifth grader' to know it's a hoax - junk science...we do know some fifth graders who would be happy to come explain.



## Secrets of Goat Cave Karst Preserve

by Nico Hauwert, Senior Environmental Scientist, City of Austin

Goat Cave Karst Preserve is the only city-owned preserve designed for the public to see caves and sinkholes and learn about underground ecosystems. Its progression into a cave preserve is a fairly typical representation of how caves have been historically treated. The Preserve contains many karst features, including Goat Cave, Wade Cave, and Maple Run Cave. Today, City of Austin staff and nonprofit partners are working diligently to improve the site for educational and research purposes.

Cavers first mapped Goat Cave's extensive 20-foot-tall room first in 1961 and again in 1973. The cave was located on a goat ranch southeast of Austin, and cavers were once asked to rescue a live goat that had fallen down the 20 feet entrance drop, providing the cave its name. At the time, Goat Cave supported a large bat population. Wade Cave, also located on the Goat Cave Karst Preserve, was filled with ranch debris including dirt, glass, cans, and rolls of fencing, probably in part to keep livestock from falling in. The 1984 plans for the subdivision Street and Drainage Improvements show the placement of a proposed water quality detention pond directly over an unknown "sinkhole", and adjacent to another "sinkhole" that is Maple Run Cave. The pond as constructed actually overlies the majority of Maple Run Cave. Soon after the Maple Run neighborhood was constructed, a group of youths entered Maple Run Cave with a single flashlight that failed and necessitated a cave rescue. The incident received nationwide attention and Goat Cave was immediately gated, which eliminated the native bat population.



Goat Cave. Photo Credit :Jean Krejca

In 2012, Public Works contracted Zara Environmental and requested assistance from Watershed Protection Department to study potential impacts of roadway runoff to three federal permit preserve caves, Goat Cave, Maple Run, and Blowing Sink.

Tracers were poured during rain to several sites on either side of Davis Lane and it was discovered that Davis Lane runoff has been infiltrating a drainage channel and reaching drips in Goat Cave and Maple Run. Surprisingly tracers injected in Wade and Hideout caves traveled 3,000 feet south to drips in Blowing Sink Cave on the opposite side of Davis Lane. In fact tracers injected at the Wildflower center, one mile southwest of Blowing Sink Cave near Mopac South, also arrived in the cave stream. Based on the study results, Public Works made modifications to the drainage of Davis Lane that are anticipated to improve water quality to the caves and aquifer by correcting poorly planned infrastructure from the 1980's. The Davis Lane realignment eliminated roadside parking that was historically used by the public to access Goat Cave Karst Preserve, but efforts are being made to seek new parking access.

Excavation and preparation of caves and sinks at Goat Cave Karst Preserve are still underway. These are major steps toward making the underground frontier more accessible to the public.

Save Barton Creek Association is currently trying to raise \$5000 toward an Austin Parks Foundation Grant to restore the kiosk and educational signage on the karst features at Goat Cave Preserve. To contribute to this effort, visit [www.savebartoncreek.org](http://www.savebartoncreek.org) and click "donate" or mail a check with "Goat Cave" in the memo line to P.O. Box 5923, Austin, TX 78763.

Goat Cave Karst Preserve is located at 3900 Deer Ln, Austin, TX 78749. The City's Parks and Recreation Department is offering underground photography classes at Goat Cave in Goat Cave Karst Preserve on August 25. Learn more and register at [www.austintexas.gov/departments/events/288](http://www.austintexas.gov/departments/events/288).

The undeveloped strip of land containing the caves was dedicated to the City of Austin Parks and Recreation Department and in the early 1990s became Goat Cave Karst Preserve. Just prior to the gating of Maple Run Cave in July 1996, two vandals mined formations from the cave. This vandalism required an 18-month restoration project, undertaken by Justin Shaw, Mark Sanders, and Jay Kane. Under the direction of speleothem restoration expert Jim Werker, 70% of the damaged formations were recovered and glued back into place. In partnership with Bat Conservation International, the cave gate was removed from Goat Cave in 2002 and has been replaced with a perimeter fence that is more "bat friendly," although unfortunately, as of 2015 the traditional bat roost has not returned.

The City of Austin Public Works planned and initiated a project to realign Davis Lane to facilitate traffic at the Brodie Lane intersection, and adjacent to Goat Cave and Blowing Sink preserves.

[Barton Springs Aquifer District Expands, continued from pg. 3] State Rep. Jason Isaac of Dripping Springs, whose district included both the Electro Purification wells and most of the intended consumers of the water, filed several bills intended to regulate the groundwater production or block the pipeline that would carry the water. One of these bills, H.B. 3405, would annex all of the Trinity Aquifer in Hays County to the BSEACD, including Electro Purification's wells. It became the most contentious water bill of the session and was the one that survived the legislative ordeal, even being raised from parliamentary death by the intervention of the Lieutenant Governor. It passed both houses and took effect on June 19, 2015.

As finally passed, the bill provides regulation for the Trinity Aquifer, but it incorporates several compromises that will affect how the District can regulate the annexed area, in which it will share jurisdiction with the Edwards Aquifer Authority (EAA) that is based in San Antonio. The EAA will regulate the Edwards Aquifer in the shared territory, while the BSEACD will regulate the Trinity. A special provision applies to existing wells or those with existing contracts at the time the bill took effect, including the Electro Purification wells. The owners of those wells can apply within three months after the effective date for a temporary permit for the full production capacity of the well, and the District will be required to issue such a temporary permit in the amount requested. The temporary permit will allow well completion activities and production of the full amount of water until the District has completed its regular hydrological investigation and permitting process and issues a regular permit under the District's rules.

The regular permit can reduce the amount of the temporary permit only if the District finds that production in the amount of the temporary permit would (1) cause a failure to achieve the "desired future condition" for the Trinity Aquifer, the 50-year target water level that is currently set as no more than 25 feet lower than the present average, or (2) cause "unreasonable interference with existing wells," a condition that is not defined in the act. If an owner disagrees with the redaction of a temporary permit, the District's action can be appealed to an administrative law judge of the State Office of Hearings Examiners.

The owner assumes the risk that the permit amount could be reduced and has the burden of proof to show that the District's findings were wrong. Other compromises in the bill include a District fee cap of \$0.17 per 1,000 gallons on pumping in the shared territory, lower than for new conditional permits for Edwards Aquifer water, and a cap of \$1 million on the City of Austin's annual financial contribution to the District.

The BSEACD has already begun to implement the annexation, which will expand its territory as far south as San Marcos. It is expected that Electro Purification will soon submit an application for the full production capacity of its test wells, which may be an amount that some others think is unsustainable.

The District has already begun its hydrological investigation of the Trinity Aquifer, including enlisting several nearby well owners to allow their wells to be used as monitors during a "pump test" in which one of the Electro Purification wells will be pumped at a high volume. The District intends to be guided by science, not politics, in determining how much water can be produced without unreasonably harming other owners of the groundwater or the long-term sustainability of the Trinity Aquifer as a regional water supply.

Craig Smith has been the director for Precinct No. 5 of the Barton Springs Edwards Aquifer Conservation District since 1998, and SBCA board member since 1991.

### Who Builds Our City?

Recently, observers of Austin city government were surprised to hear that most applications to develop land typically don't get seen by the public, boards or commissions, or city council. Instead, they are approved by the bureaucracy out of public view.

At the August 5th meeting of the Environmental Commission, Sue Barnett, head of development review, noted that of 5,280 cases processed since December 2013, all but 25 were handled administratively. In the past, variances to rules seemed more numerous and controversial. Nowadays, most development appears to routinely pass through without needing a public hearing.

Since 'rule-built' projects often don't need discretionary approvals, the content of rules becomes even more crucial to achieving the community goals. The City of Austin is currently attempting to rewrite the Land Development Code (LDC) in a large overhaul effort called "CodeNext."

While citizens might be tempted to ignore the sometimes highly technical LDC, it governs everything from water quality in our creeks, to heritage trees, to preventing disastrous floods like the devastating Onion Creek disaster.

While building on property is an individual's legal prerogative, one has to respect other people's rights and protect the natural environment shared by our community.

To find out more about what these changes might mean for you and the community, and how your voice can be heard, please visit the CodeNext page at [savebartoncreek.org](http://savebartoncreek.org).

**SBCA Remembers, Gears Up  
For Next Annual Awards Dinner**

We held our Save Barton Creek Association Annual Meeting & Awards Dinner on the traditional date in 2014 (the Monday before Thanksgiving), at the Zilker Clubhouse. Dinner was a delicious traditional Thanksgiving Dinner from the Salt Lick.

We instituted the Save Barton Creek Hall of Fame Awards in 2014, inducting the first of an array of iconic movers & shakers who were key in shaping & framing Austin's community commitment to environmental protection, particularly water quality for the Edwards Aquifer & its creeks.

Celebrating notable young movers & shakers, we also awarded Rising Star Awards for remarkable efforts & achievements.

We hope you'll join us at this year's Annual Awards Dinner, set to be held on Monday, November 23, 2015 at the Zilker Clubhouse. For more information and award recipient bios, please visit [www.savebartoncreek.org/sbca-annual-awards-dinner](http://www.savebartoncreek.org/sbca-annual-awards-dinner).

**Save Barton Creek Association Hall of Fame 2014:**

- Dorothy Richter
- Phyllis Brinkley
- Shudde Fath
- Joe Riddell
- Mayor Frank Cooksey
- Hon. Jack Goodman
- Bill Oliver
- Travis County Commissioner Ron Davis
- Senator Gonzalo Barrientos
- Pam Thompson
- Bill Bunch
- Mayor Gus Garcia
- Congressman Lloyd Doggett

><

**Special Honor**  
George Cofer

><

**Save Barton Creek Association Rising Stars 2014**

- Jeannie DeFrese
- Brandi Clark Burton
- Sharlene Leurig

**Living Springs Project  
Lives on Screen at the Pool**

The Save Barton Creek Association has been pleased to partner with U.T. faculty member Karen Kocher on a number of projects that enhance our educational mission. The latest is Living Springs, a documentary series about the history, science, and culture of Barton Springs. This collection of videos has recently been installed at the Splash! Into the Edwards Aquifer exhibit at Barton Springs that the Save Barton Creek Association helped fund back in 1997. Living Springs' extensive array of videos relating to Barton Springs will greatly enhance the offerings to the over 90,000 visitors that attend Splash! each year.

In addition to the installation, Karen has been hosting outdoor screenings over the last three years. The most recent July 31st screening drew a large and enthusiastic crowd. The next screening will be held on Saturday, September 26th at 8:30 pm at Barton Springs on the south side of the pool. In addition, all of the videos as they are completed can be viewed on the Living Springs website at [www.livingspringsaustin.org](http://www.livingspringsaustin.org). As its name implies, Living Springs is an ongoing series. Your support is always welcome.



**Thank You For Your Support in 2015!  
SBCA Sponsors and Partners**

- Keep Austin Beautiful
- Austin Parks Foundation
- City of Austin
- Renewal by Andersen
- Hill Country Conservancy
- Whole Foods Market
- Randalls
- EarthShare of Texas

**SBCA Grantees Thrive in 2015**

Year after year, Save Barton Creek Association supports nonprofit partners and worthy individuals with small but meaningful grants that touch SBCA's mission. This year, SBCA proudly sponsored events like Austin Earth Day Festival, the Girl Scout Climate March, and Bill Oliver's Mother Earth Day, and the upcoming Barton Springs University (to be held on September 18th this year).

We continue to support UT Professor and Filmmaker Karen Kocher's work on the Living Springs Project. This year we proudly watched as the documentary was installed in the Splash! Exhibit at Barton Springs. Visit [www.livingspringsaustin.org](http://www.livingspringsaustin.org) to view the interactive film project.

One deserving organization supported by SBCA's generous grant program is Austin Youth River Watch. AYRW encourages high school students to graduate through a unique combination of community-building, water quality testing, and outdoor recreation. With the help of our grant and other support, AYRW hopes to expand their program to include 240 students per year and to serve Manor and Del Valle ISD. For more information, visit [www.ayrw.org](http://www.ayrw.org).

SBCA is also happy to support the Texas River School. TRS designed "River Sense," a water safety course for rivers and waterways. They teach the course to diverse groups of young people on day-long programs, half-day excursions, and camping trips. Their "Discover the Source" Program takes kids on a first-hand trip to the Springs that feed the Barton Springs Pool. For more information visit: [www.texasriverschool.org](http://www.texasriverschool.org).

This month, we celebrated the ribbon cutting of the first segment of the Violet Crown Trail, Hill Country Conservancy's regional trail project. When complete, the VCT will stretch almost 30 miles, from Barton Springs Pool to Hays County. Visit [hillcountryconservancy.org](http://hillcountryconservancy.org) to read more.



**Animal Tees are back!**  
\$12 from every purchase goes to support our programs and projects.

Men's and women's sizes available. To purchase, visit, [www.teespring.com/save-barton-creek](http://www.teespring.com/save-barton-creek)

Another nonprofit partner, TreeFolks, recently celebrated their one millionth tree planting this year. SBCA has supported TreeFolks in their efforts to plant trees in the contributing and recharge zones of the Edwards Aquifer. To learn more, visit [www.treefolks.org](http://www.treefolks.org).

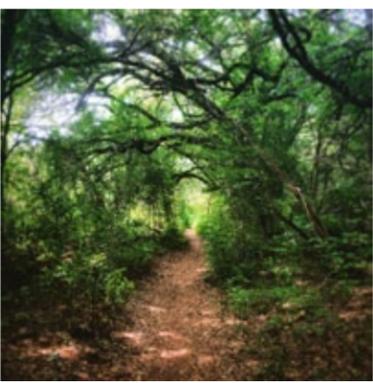
SBCA supported the 10th annual Groundwater to the Gulf Summer Institute, led by Keep Austin Beautiful and the City of Austin. Groundwater to the Gulf provides education about our Aquifer and groundwater to Central Texas teachers. This year, educators visited Barton Springs Pool, the Splash! Exhibit, West Cave Discovery Center, and more. They learned about water quality testing, riparian ecology, and biology.

In 2016 and beyond, you can trust that Save Barton Creek Association will continue to focus on its mission: keeping waters cool and clear in Austin for future generations to enjoy. It is now more important than ever to support small community initiatives and partner with other nonprofit organizations to further our mission. We accept grant applications on a quarterly basis. For grant application and guidelines, please write to [olivia@savebartoncreek.org](mailto:olivia@savebartoncreek.org).

The path doesn't end here.

Your legacy gift can speak for the water of Austin for years to come.

*We'll make sure of it.*



To request more information about planned giving, call our Development Officer at (512) 480-0055



Clip out the card and take it with you to the store as your reminder of our organization's Good Neighbor Program. Account number to fill in on your Remarkable card application.

<p>October 24 - 10am-6pm MyCreek ATX Hackathon Coders, Designers, Creek experts needed! Sign up at <a href="http://mycreekatx.com">mycreekatx.com</a> 50 spots available</p>	<p>November 23 - 6:30pm-10pm SBCA Annual Awards Banquet Zillker Clubhouse Live music, food, and more. Save the date!</p>	<p>September 26 - 9am-12pm National Public Lands Day Spyglass Entrance, Barton Creek Greenbelt Register for our project at <a href="http://www.austinparks.org">www.austinparks.org</a></p>
<p>September 26 - 8:30pm Living Springs Full Moon Screening and free swim South Side of Barton Springs</p>	<p>September 26 - 8:30pm Living Springs Full Moon Screening and free swim South Side of Barton Springs</p>	<p>September 26 - 8:30pm Living Springs Full Moon Screening and free swim South Side of Barton Springs</p>

UPCOMING EVENTS

To educate the public about the natural history of the Barton Creek Watershed, including but not limited to: ecology, biology (flora and fauna) geology, hydrology, archaeology, climatology, ornithology, and the history of urban development in the watershed; and

To provide the public with information regarding environmentally sound urban and conservation development plans for the Barton Creek Watershed. Such plans will recognize the interaction of the hydrogeologic system (Barton Creek, the Edwards Aquifer Recharge Zone, and Barton Springs) with the complete ecological system of the Barton Creek Watershed. Plans will emphasize the aesthetic and environmental values of the watershed.

To encourage the acquisition or designation of land in the Barton Springs watersheds for public use. Such acquired or designated land could be used as additions to the Barton Creek Greenbelt in order to provide further public access to Barton Creek for recreational, educational, and conservation purposes. Such land would be maintained as close as possible to its original natural state.

To determine which land use plan is most compatible with the conservation of Barton Creek and Barton Springs;  
To research alternative land uses for the Barton Creek Watershed in order to protect the quality of the water flowing into Barton Creek and Barton Springs Pool in an effort to restore and preserve the purity and crystal clear quality of the water;  
Specifically, the Association has the following objectives:  
Watershed and Zillker Park.  
The purpose of the Association, which was incorporated in Texas in 1979, is the preservation of Barton Springs and the unique environment of the Barton Creek Watershed and Zillker Park.

SBCA PURPOSE STATEMENT

**Save Barton Creek Association**  
THE NEWSLETTER OF THE ASSOCIATION  
P.O. Box 5923, Austin, TX 78763