Celebrating 40 Years for Austin Creeks
MISSION

Through education, outreach, and advocacy, Save Barton Creek Association is dedicated to protecting Barton Springs, the Onion and Barton Creek watersheds, and the Barton Springs Edwards Aquifer.

In addition, we support water quality protection in all Austin and Central Texas creeks.

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2019 was SBCA's 40th year! Appropriately, we gave our organization a fresh face, with a new website, programs and media geared toward younger audiences, and new educational materials like the Explorer's Guide to the Hill Country Oasis!

All of these efforts allow us to connect to more people and increase our impact protecting water resources.

But don't worry, we also continued our leadership in environmental advocacy that you expect from SBCA!

New Website!

Creek Crew Young Professionals Group Launched!

Explorer's Guide to the Hill Country Oasis

Effective Advocacy

We reached 1000 followers!
SBCA officially adopted Barton Creek from the Hwy 360 entrance to Spyglass Drive in the Summer of 2017. We organized six trash cleanups in 2019, exceeding our Adopt-a-Creek obligations!

We also steward the creek and trail through our Habitat Conservation Plan, approved by Austin’s Watershed Protection Department, which includes invasive species removal.

Find upcoming events at meetup.com/Save-Barton-Creek-Association

This year we helped reduce the population of a serious invasive, heavenly bamboo (Nandina domestica). Our biggest volunteer event (and first) of the year, January’s trash pick-up, had 26 volunteers participate! We are planning on starting strong again in 2020 and expanding our invasive removal work.

SBCA's Creek Crew was founded in 2019. This group of young professionals volunteer, get access to exclusive outings and trainings, and explore the outdoors!

Join by emailing sarah@savebartoncreek.org.
Recalling Our History

Help us catalog 40 years of SBCA!

2019 marks 40 years since SBCA was formed in 1979 to protect waterways from increased development. In April 2020, we’ll celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the first Earth Day!

This is an ideal time for our organization and the environmental movement to reflect on our history and accomplishments. Only through understanding our history can we best act to protect environmental resources under today's changed population and climate contexts.

Over the next year, SBCA will work to rediscover, catalogue, and share the history of our organization. If you have stories, photos, or other materials from SBCA’s past that you’d like to share, please reach out to us.
Hikes and more!

SBCA hosts guided hikes on a variety of topics throughout the year. Come join us to learn about local geology, flora, and fauna! We also host special events aimed at connecting people to our eco-region and mission. Let's hang out!

After feedback from the community, and to avoid confusion with our young professionals group (The Creek Crew), we have renamed our meetup.com group the “Save Barton Creek Association.” Most events are posted on facebook and meetup.com.

Through these meetups we have met some amazing folks, created connections, and had a lot of fun doing it!

Happy hours!

Every second Monday of the month, SBCA hosts a Happy Hour starting at 6:30 pm. In the next year we are hoping to secure a permanent location with space and accommodations for all of our guests. If you have any suggestions, please let us know! Guest speakers talk about water-related and environmental issues that pertain to us and our neighbors. The SBCA community comes together to make new friends, have a drink, and discuss current environmental issues.
In Central Texas, on the edge of the Edwards Plateau, there are places of sublime natural beauty. Over millennia, the forces of earth and water, wind and rain, have carved stories in the land waiting to be discovered by those who choose to look.

This print and online Guide will help you become the explorer you want to be. It highlights sites that tell the story of our eco-region, a beautiful oasis of land and water! The Guide is free. We hope that you will use and share it!

To help enrich your journey, each site page contains visitor information, interesting ecological and historical facts, and an explorer’s checklist.

So, go ahead; maroon yourself on this island of nature and find your own Hill Country Oasis.

Explore at savebartoncreek.org/explorersguide

Find a print version of the Guide at an event in 2020!

Calendar of events will be on the Guide website in January 2020.
NO DUMPING SEWAGE!

THE CAMPAIGN AGAINST SEWAGE POLLUTION IN THE HILL COUNTRY

In 2019, SBCA continued our work on the No Dumping Sewage Campaign, a collaboration between groups working to stop the pervasive problem of sewage pollution in Hill Country creeks. Our focus shifted to stopping a proposed discharge into a tributary of Barton Creek, while maintaining the broader campaign at nodumpingsewage.org.

Thanks to your generous support, as well as funding from Patagonia, and the Cynthia and George Mitchell Foundation we will be ramping up our efforts in 2020!

Learn more at nodumpingsewage.org

LONG BRANCH WASTEWATER PERMIT

SBCA has met with the applicant, nearby residents, and neighborhood associations about a discharge permit proposed into a tributary of Barton Creek. We are engaging in numerous strategies to stop the proposal by Sawyer-Cleveland Partnership, to discharge up to 92,000 gallons per day near U.S. Hwy 290 and Sawyer Ranch Road. This sewage effluent would flow through residential detention ponds, Long Branch, and then Barton Creek. City of Austin modeling has confirmed the ecological risks of this proposal well into the Barton Creek Greenbelt recreational area.

There are currently no direct discharge permits in the Barton Creek Watershed.

Thank you to everyone who has gotten involved so far either by writing to TCEQ and elected officials or by donating to our campaign.

Watch the "Keep the Sewage OUT of Barton Creek" video on Save Barton Creek Association's YouTube channel.
A long-time member of Fix290, SBCA has been advocating for a better outcome of the re-design at Highways 290 and 71 for decades. In 2019, our efforts increased as TxDOT approved their environmental impact statement and were posed to proceed with a poorly thought out proposal that lacked community and environmental context.

Water from Williamson Creek in the project area makes its way to Barton Springs in as little as a day.

**Problem**

The current TxDOT proposal is an overbuilt project that proposes **74 acres of new impervious cover** in the recharge and contributing zones of the Barton Springs Edwards Aquifer. It runs alongside and over Williamson Creek, **destroying riparian habitat** that it will not be able to replace. The project proposes **2.65 miles or 1,968,000 cu yards of excavation** over and adjacent to environmentally sensitive features. It would also take numerous **heritage trees** and obscure views of historic bluffs.

**Status**

SBCA and allies have tried numerous tactics to change the course of this project including:

- Working through official TxDOT public meetings and processes.
- Engaging with Austin City Council who approved funding and a memo of understanding for the project.
- Speaking at CAMPO, the regional planning organization that approved a change in its plans to authorize the project.
- Meeting with various levels of TxDOT officials and engineers.
- Engaging the public.
- Finally, after none of these strategies made significant changes to the project design, **SBCA and allied groups filed a lawsuit** against the project.
- **We still hope that TxDOT will listen to the community and make changes to the project design.**

The Livable Oak Hill Plan, a community-driven alternative can be found at saveoakhill.org.
TRUSTED ADVOCATES

The advocacy issues highlighted in this report are only the beginning. We hear concerns from concerned community members and take positions on a variety of issues.

The community can rely on us as a trusted resource for positions that are based in science and community values, have been thoroughly considered, and are protective of our water resources and the people that rely on them.

IMPROVING ENVIRONMENTAL OUTCOMES THROUGH A NEW LAND DEVELOPMENT CODE

Building on our previous advocacy efforts during the lengthy CodeNEXT process, when the effort to revise Austin's land development code began again, SBCA was ready to spring into action, advocating for policies that will bring us into a sustainable future.

We have had success making improvements to the code.

We continue to work so that Austin is a leader in sustainable land-use policies for the 21st century including:

- On-site water retention/beneficial reuse requirement
- Conservation subdivisions for greenfield developments
- Adequately addressing concerns about lot-to-lot flooding
- Water conservation and alternative water strategies
- Improved ecological function through landscape requirements

Learn More! Read our letter to Austin City Council at savebartoncreek.org/news)
Thank You!

We’re proud of our work this year and excited about our future. We couldn’t have done it without you!

We rely on your support! Donations can be made at savebartoncreek.org/donate