

**Programs are scheduled through  
Austin Nature & Science Center**

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## On-Your-Own Tour

It's FREE as an on-your-own tour

A water fountain and restrooms are just outside our entrance

The Zilker Playscape and picnic tables are close by

Please note that the site is small and can only accommodate one class at a time comfortably



# On-your-own Tour Discussion Points for the Splash! Exhibit

## Introduction

Define “aquifer” for your group—an underground storage place for water. Since the exhibit is designed to look like an actual limestone cave, challenge younger students to imagine that they are a drop of water entering into the aquifer. For older students, point out the “Aquifer Recharge Zone” sign at the entrance of the exhibit and ask if they have seen these signs around Austin. Explain that sign alerts people that they are entering a sensitive recharge area for the Edwards Aquifer.



## Theater

On the touchscreen menu, choose the heading “Science” and the video “Carved in Stone.” This 4-minute movie illustrates the geologic processes that formed the aquifer and Barton Springs. Discuss the large span in geologic time and how Austin used to look.

## Strata Cave

This passageway shows the rock layers of the aquifer that exist below us in Central Texas. Encourage students to touch and describe the differences between each layer. How does the physical make-up of each rock layer impact the movement of water through the aquifer?

## Watershed Model

How does water enter the aquifer? Each button and corresponding animation show the journey water must take to enter the Edwards Aquifer. Have students take turns pressing each button from left to right.

## Aquaria

Each of the 4 aquaria represents a different part of the local watershed; upper Barton Creek, Barton Springs Pool, lower Barton Creek and the Colorado River. What differences do students note between each aquarium?



## Pollution Tubes

These tubes represent the different kinds of impacts human actions can have upon waterways. Discuss with students causes and effects of each type of pollution, especially in regard to the aquatic critters that live in Austin's creeks.

## Water Science Room

Allow students 5-10 minutes to explore the interactive games and models. Challenge them to: enter the name of their school to find their school's watershed, test Barton Creek's water with light to measure for nitrates, use a dichotomous key to identify an aquatic insect and determine if storm water flows faster over pavement or parkland.