# AUSTIN TEXAS **A WATERSHED COMMUNITY**

Clean water is a gift from generation to generation – neighbor to neighbor. Pass it on.

# YOUR YARD FLOWS TO YOUR CREEK...

Most pollutants that are on the land (car fluids, yard chemicals, trash and debris) come from us. These pollutants are picked up by rainwater and carried to our creeks.

# MAKE GOOD CHOICES FOR WATER QUALITY

### **KEEP WATER ON YOUR LAND**

- Direct gutter downspouts to vegetated areas rather than pavement
- Irrigate efficiently to avoid runoff from your yard
- Minimize pavement to allow water to soak into the ground

### **USE EARTH-WISE GARDENING SOLUTIONS**

### (see www.growgreen.org)

- Use certified organic or natural fertilizers if necessary
- Reduce fertilizer application rates to half as much, half as often as recommended on the bag
- Use pesticides as a last resort
- Never use lawn chemicals before rain is expected
- · Plant or mulch bare spots to prevent erosion

### **REDUCE CHEMICAL SPILLS**

- Store chemicals properly
- Maintain your car to prevent leaks
- Recycle used motor oil at gas stations
- Drop off excess chemicals at the Household Hazardous Waste facility (974-4343 )

### **KEEP AUSTIN BEAUTIFUL!**

- Avoid littering
- Don't put yard waste or trash in a gutter or stormdrain
- · Clean up after your pet to reduce bacteria in our creeks

## Report pollution spills to the 24 hour Pollution Hotline at **512-974-2550**

For more information, call **512-974-2550** or visit. www.austintexas.gov/watershed

# HOW DOES DEVELOPMENT AFFECT CREEK FLOWS?

In an undeveloped watershed, about 50% of rainfall is absorbed by the land. Vegetation and soil filter pollutants from the water as it moves slowly downward into the groundwater. Groundwater travels below the surface, reemerging at the seeps and springs that feed our creeks. This process provides baseflow, the constant source of water that supports aquatic life, and creates flowing streams for people to enjoy.



Undeveloped Watershed



In our developed watersheds, roadways, parking lots and rooftops cover much of the land. Rainwater that previously infiltrated to the groundwater quickly runs off these hard surfaces. Baseflow in the creeks is reduced while the chances of flooding and streambank erosion are increased. In old Austin, many creeks have excessive flow during heavy rains and dry up shortly afterwards. New developments are required to build ponds to reduce flooding and erosion.



Hemphill Branch flooded



Hemphill Branch dry

# **AUSTIN WATERSHEDS**



Everyone lives in a watershed

### HOW DOES WATER TRAVEL TO AUSTIN'S CREEKS?

In old Austin, most rain water runs off the land, down the street to a storm drain, picking up pollutants as it travels. It then flows through underground pipes which lead directly to creeks. New developments are required to install water treatment ponds to capture some runoff, and remove a portion of the pollutants before they reach the creek.



Storm drain leads to creek

