If you live along a creek or lake, rainwater or irrigation runoff will flow from your land directly into the water. This runoff carries excess chemicals, loose dirt and trash with it.

**How Can You Help?**

**Keep Water on the Land:**
- Replace turf with native and adapted trees, shrubs and groundcovers to create a 10’ buffer zone along the water. This will:
  - reduce runoff
  - filter pollutants
  - prevent erosion
  - increase water penetration into the soil
  - provide shade which benefits aquatic life
- Build terraces or a retaining wall uphill from the waterway to stabilize steep slopes
- Till vegetable rows across a slope rather than up and down
- Use permeable surfaces like mulch or wood decking for pathways and patios to allow rain to soak into the ground

Organize a creek cleanup. Contact Keep Austin Beautiful at 512-391-0617 for cleanup supplies.
Reduce Landscaping Chemicals:

- Don’t bag your grass clippings in order to return nutrients and beneficial organic matter to the soil naturally – this allows you to use half as much fertilizer, half as often as listed on the bag.
- Choose natural or organic fertilizers – they leach less nutrients to our groundwater than chemical fertilizers.
- Avoid using synthetic weed and feed products:
  - The best time to use a fertilizer is NOT usually the best time to apply a weed killer.
  - Spreading an herbicide over the entire lawn is generally excessive.
- Use pesticides as a last resort, and only after you have identified the problem correctly.
- Never apply chemicals before a rain – rainwater can wash pollutants straight into the waterway.

Trash and Chemicals

- Clean up trash along the creek – it can harm habitats for aquatic life.
- Store chemicals in cool, secure, dry areas away from the creek.

Bacteria

- Scoop the Poop to prevent bacteria from entering the water.
- If you own a septic tank, inspect it annually.