

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

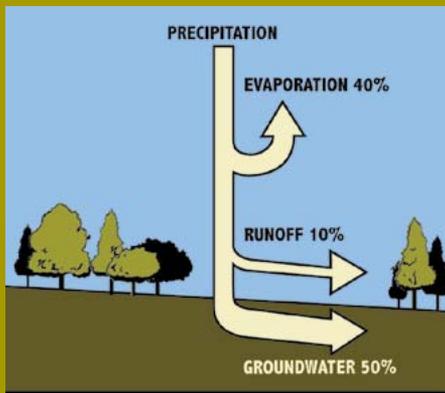


Report pollution spills to the 24 hour
Pollution Hotline at 512-974-2550

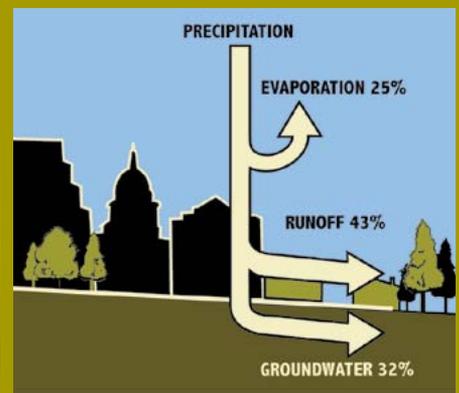
For more information, call 512-974-2550 or visit.
www.austintexas.gov/watershed

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, re-emerging 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



Developed 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.

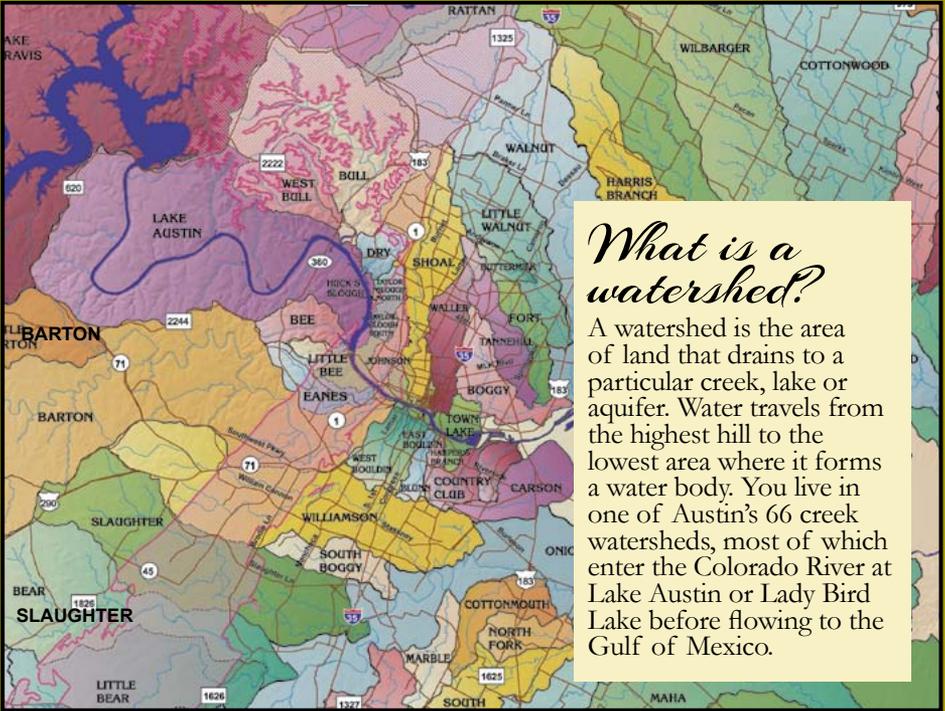


Hemphill Branch flooded



Hemphill Branch dry

Austin Watersheds



What is a watershed?

A watershed is the area of land that drains to a particular creek, lake or aquifer. Water travels from the highest hill to the lowest area where it forms a water body. You live in one of Austin's 66 creek watersheds, most of which enter the Colorado River at Lake Austin or Lady Bird Lake before flowing to the Gulf of Mexico.

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



 **WATERSHED
PROTECTION**