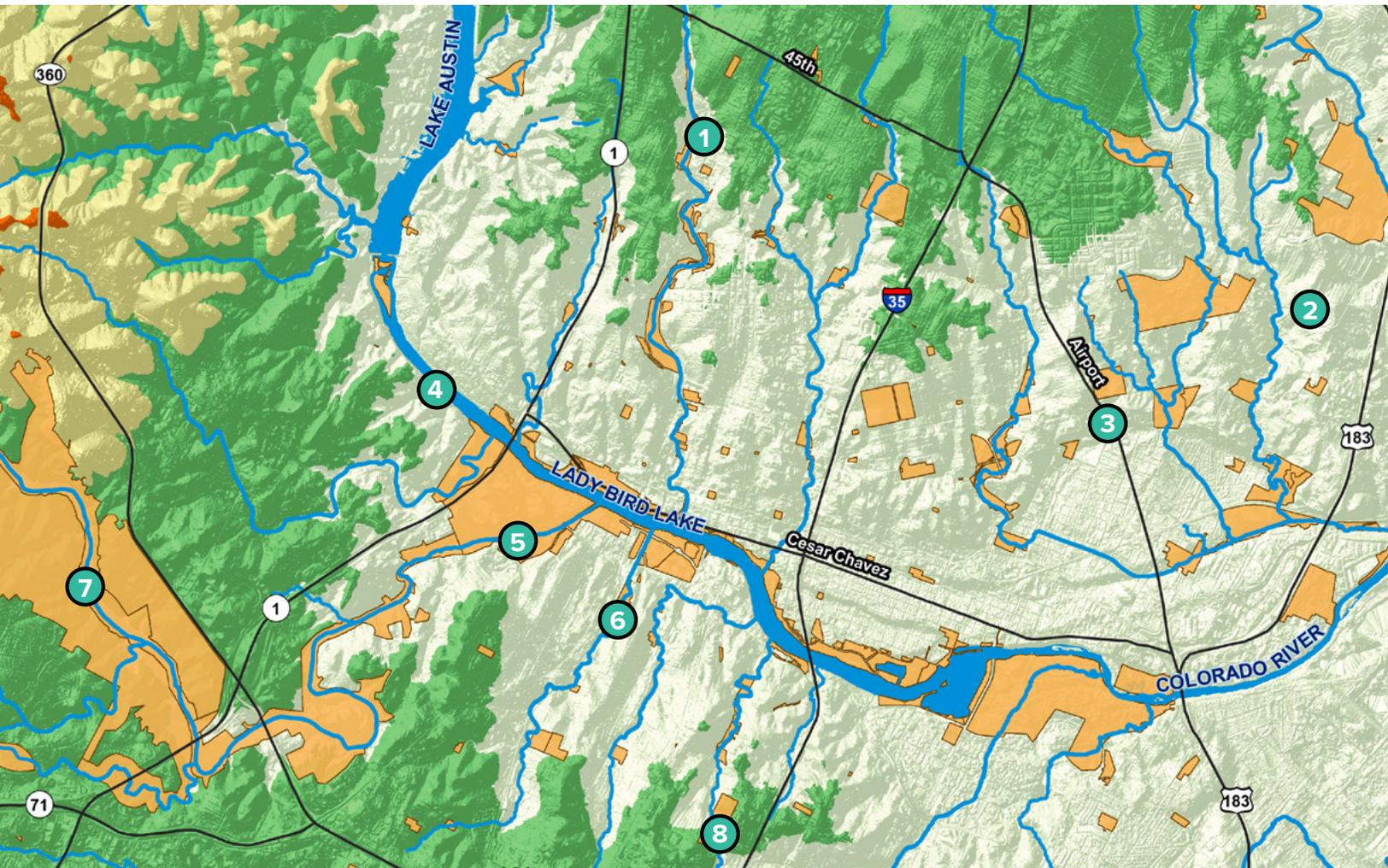


Walk or Paddle to Austin's Springs

Did you know that Austin is home to hundreds of natural springs?

Some of them flow year-round, and others only flow sometimes. Austin has two different kinds of springs that lie on either side of the Balcones Fault Zone along IH-35. West of the highway, spring water flows quickly to the earth's surface through cracks and holes in the Edwards Aquifer's karst limestone rock. On the east side of town, water flows slowly through shallow aquifers made of silt, sand, and gravel. Both spring types are very important for our local ecology, providing water to wildlife, plants, creeks, and the Colorado River. This guide includes several springs you can visit on foot, plus Cold Spring, which requires some paddling.

Happy exploring!



Legend

 Springs

 Creeks

 Parks & Greenbelts

Miles
0 0.5 1



Kids' Activities



Look for something in the area, big or small, that you think is cool or beautiful. Take a picture of it!



Sit silently with your eyes closed for one minute. Count how many different noises you hear.



Look for two different rocks or plants near the spring. Describe how they are similar and how they are different.



Make up a short story, poem, or song about a very thirsty animal that needs to find a drink of clean water.

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Water from urban springs is **NOT** safe to drink.

www.AustinTexas.gov/Springwater



Help protect springs! Respect the beauty and ecological function of these sites. Please do not move or throw rocks, pick the plants, or leave trash behind. Leave No Trace!

www.AustinTexas.gov/page/leave-no-trace

1 Seiders Springs flow out of a Buda Limestone rock ledge in a few places along this section of Shoal Creek. By the 1870s, this area had become a popular recreation spot with bathhouses, picnic tables, and a dance pavilion.

Location: In the Shoal Creek Greenbelt between 35th and 38th Streets. The springs are on the east side of the creek, near the pedestrian crossing.

2 Coleman Spring doesn't emerge from a defined outlet, so look for damp soil where the water seeps out of the ground and flows into a channel. Water is present during much of the year. The near-constant supply of water and its surrounding vegetation provides habitat for wildlife, like insects, crawfish, and frogs. The water flows to Fort Branch Creek.

Location: In Travis Audubon's Blair Woods Nature Preserve at 5401 E. Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard (Find more information: www.austintexas.gov/blog/east-austins-subtle-springs)

3 Oak Springs flow to a small tributary of Boggy Creek. These are some of many springs located in the ancient gravel and sediment deposits of the Colorado River. The river eroded deeper over time and naturally changed course, so these springs are now far from the existing river channel. In 2009, the City purchased the property. City staff added a stormwater pond and Grow Zones along the stream to create habitat and help protect the quality of the water flowing to the Colorado River. Due to its location in the urban core and proximity to a nearby closed landfill, water from these springs is highly likely to contain contaminants and is not suitable for recreation.

Location: In the Oak Springs Watershed Management Area at 3160 Oak Springs Drive. The springs are near the northwest corner of the property.

4 Cold Spring discharges directly into Lady Bird Lake. Ancient spring outlets can be seen in the cliff walls nearby. Smaller outlets upstream and downstream of this spring are the water sources for hanging gardens of maidenhair ferns. Like Barton Springs, Cold Spring flows from the Edwards Aquifer, and some of its outlets are submerged under the water in Lady Bird Lake.

Location: Paddle along the southern shoreline of Lady Bird Lake, between Mopac and Red Bud Isle.



Caution: Endangered salamanders live in this spring. Please do not stand on or move any rocks, pick the plants, or leave trash behind.

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5 Barton Springs is made up of four primary spring outlets in Zilker Park. The water source for all four springs is the Barton Springs Segment of the Edwards Aquifer, which extends 10 miles south to Onion Creek. Under drought conditions, water comes from the Blanco River.

Location: 2201 William Barton Drive (north side of the Pool) and 906 Azie Morton Road (south side of the Pool)

A) Parthenia/Main Barton, the main spring, discharges directly into Barton Springs Pool from a fault (crack in the rock).

Location: Underwater, in the south end of the Pool, just upstream of the diving board

B) Eliza Spring is closed to the public to protect the endangered Austin Blind and Barton Springs salamanders. However, the spring is visible, bubbling up through holes cut in the amphitheater floor. In the early 1900s, Elks Club members used this amphitheater for their meetings to cool off during the summer heat. Eliza Spring emerges from the same fault as Main Barton Spring and is the most geochemically similar to the Pool.

Location: On the north side of the Pool, near the Zilker Eagle miniature train station

C) Old Mill Spring, also called Sunken Garden or Zenobia Spring, is also closed to the public to protect salamanders. The spring and historic limestone walls are visible from above.

Location: On the south side of Barton Creek, downstream of the Pool. Turn south on Azie Morton from Barton Springs Road, then take the first right into parking areas for the Lady Bird Lake Trail and Wright Field.

D) Upper Barton Spring flows into Barton Creek. Upper Barton is the only spring in this complex that has not undergone construction by humans. As the highest spring in the complex, it stops flowing during drought conditions when the water table drops (approximately when the flow rate at Barton Springs falls below 40 cubic feet per second).

Location: Approximately 300 feet upstream of the Pool



Caution: Endangered salamanders live in these four springs. Please do not approach the springs closely, move or throw rocks, pick the plants, or leave trash behind. Additionally, do not walk on the rocks at Upper Barton Spring when water is flowing, as this can crush the salamanders.



Walk or Paddle to Austin's Springs

6 Treadwell Spring was originally reported by a community member as a suspected pipe leak. City staff determined that the water flow was, in fact, a natural spring influenced by urban water sources. The amount of flow is likely boosted by proximity to trenches dug for urban infrastructure, such as water pipes and fiber lines, which may provide flow paths for groundwater and increase the volume that reaches the spring.

Location: In the West Bouldin Greenbelt at 1200 South 6th Street

7 Backdoor Spring flows from the Barton Springs segment of the Edwards Aquifer, discharging water from two cracks in the rock. The nearby Backdoor Cave is likely an old spring outlet that offers a glimpse of the underground cave networks feeding water through the Edwards Aquifer.

Location: In the Barton Creek Greenbelt: From the MoPac overpass entrance at 3918 S. MoPac Expressway, follow the trail west approximately 1.5 miles toward the permanent pool at Sculpture Falls. Look for the trail that continues on the opposite (southwest) side of the creek. The spring emerges from low on a cliff, near the trail dead-end.



Caution: Endangered salamanders live in this spring. Please do not approach the area closely, move, throw, or step on rocks, pick the plants, or leave trash behind.

8 Blunn Spring helps provide a constant flow of water to Blunn Creek. The source of water from this spring likely includes the uplands near Travis High School, approximately one-half mile away.

Location: In the Blunn Creek Nature Preserve at 1200 St. Edwards Drive. Following the East Trail, the spring will be to the west, a bit south of the small east/west trail that crosses the creek.

