

## **Press Release**

### **For Immediate Release**

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#### **Contact:**

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### **Organizations Announce Barton Springs Tree Stewards Program**

Key non-profit organizations announced today that they have combined their grassroots resources, talents, and volunteers towards a Barton Springs Tree Stewards Program. Representatives of five organizations have joined to support the plan, including the Austin Parks Foundation, Save Barton Creek Association, Friends of Barton Springs Pool, Tree Folks, and the Hill Country Conservancy.

They have formed an ad hoc workgroup, the Barton Springs Plan Coordinating Committee (BSPCC), to support the Tree Action Plan, short-term improvement projects at Barton Springs Pool, and the Barton Springs Pool Master Plan.

“The Barton Springs Tree Stewards Program is a great milestone toward a nurturing environment for the trees at Barton Springs Pool, one that we have been advocating for years,” declared Robin Cravey, chairman of BSPCC and president of Friends of Barton Springs Pool. “The creation of a Barton Springs Tree Stewards Program will include immediate action and a long-term collaboration through which we can watch over and care for the trees.”

Members of the BSPCC held a press conference at Barton Springs Pool at 12:00 p.m. on Monday, June 15, to lay out the foundation of the Barton Springs Tree Stewards Program. Elements of the plan will include: tree preservation, treatment, and planting; fundraising; and volunteer efforts.

The BSPCC, will initiate the following actions in support of Barton Springs Tree Stewards Program:

- Implement a comprehensive tree re-planting program that includes donated trees.
- Collaborate between city and volunteers on tree treatments, pruning, and mulching.
- Raise funds through the Austin Parks Foundation, placed in a special Barton Springs Tree Fund.
- Advocate for improved landscaping and grounds management that optimizes tree health.
- Engage volunteers towards a new stewardship in support of grounds, pool, and tree care.
- Refine a positive, problem-solving dialogue with city program experts to ensure public funding.

**The BSPCC is also taking immediate steps** to provide for public participation in the Tree Stewards Program. Austin Parks Foundation has created a fund dedicated to tree planting and tree care at the Pool. People who want to donate can do so online at <http://www.austinparks.org/>. In addition, Friends of Barton Springs Pool, working with city staff, has set two days for volunteers to assist with soil aeration and mulching around trees, June 25 and June 27. People who want to volunteer should send an email to [service@friendsofbartonspringspool.org](mailto:service@friendsofbartonspringspool.org).

**Members of the BSPCC** at the press conference included Ralph Webster of the Austin Parks Foundation, Mary Ann Neely of Tree Folks, Andrea Rado of Hill Country Conservancy, and Cravey. Jon Beall of Save Barton Creek Association was out of town.

The Austin Parks Foundation has on-the-ground fund raising capability and has established mechanisms for money transactions to the Austin Parks and Recreation Department. Ralph Webster of the foundation pointed out that “when an immediate need arises, we cannot rely completely on the city and public funds. Our collective organizations have the muscle to make a short term positive impact in this jewel of a park.”

TreeFolks grows the urban forest of Central Texas through tree planting, education, and community partnerships. Since its inception 1989, they have planted tens of thousand of trees in Austin and Central Texas at schools, parks, retirement homes, housing projects green spaces, and neighborhood all across the region.

Hill Country Conservancy, with the cities of Austin, Sunset Valley and other partners, are collaborating to create a 34-mile regional trail system from Lady Bird Lake into Hays County. HCC's involvement in the Barton Springs Plan Coordinating Committee will allow for a seamless connection between the trail and existing facilities in and around Barton Springs Pool and Zilker Park.

Friends of Barton Springs Pool (FBSP) was formed early in 2006 by a few regular Barton Springs Pool swimmers frustrated by the declining water quality and condition of the pool who decided to do something about it. FBSP volunteers work with pool staff to help clean the pool during the annual spring cleaning (which is usually in February) and then at least once a month from March through October. FBSP, a group dedicated to returning the pool to its rightful glory, advocated for improvements at the Pool that are being implemented through a series of short-term projects, and a vision that is set out in the Barton Springs Pool Master Plan.

Save Barton Creek Association is a nonprofit citizen group working to protect and conserve the six watersheds of the Barton Springs Edwards Aquifer (Barton, Bear, Little Bear, Onion, Slaughter and Williamson). SBCA incorporated in September 1979 in response to community concerns about the impact of urbanization on Barton Creek and Barton Springs. SBCA has been one of the lead conservation organizations for more than twenty years working to ensure that future generations may enjoy the cool, clean waters of Barton Springs.