

# STRATEGIC PLAN



'Champions for the Shoal Creek Watershed'

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# I. Our Mission & Vision

Shoal Creek Conservancy (SCC) champions Austin's 13-square-mile Shoal Creek watershed for a healthy and vibrant community. We restore Shoal Creek to be a healthy and resilient waterway, empower the public to understand and steward all lands in the watershed and champion on-the-ground improvements that make the Shoal Creek Trail more connected and accessible for all ages and abilities.

We envision a continuous network of green spaces stretching throughout the watershed, connected by hike-and-bike trails in a healthy habitat. Restored, enhanced, and celebrated, Shoal Creek will shine even more brightly as a central part of our city's cultural heritage.



“We champion the Shoal Creek watershed in order to create a healthy and vibrant community.”



## II. Our Programs

Shoal Creek Conservancy's programs fall in three main categories: Shoal Creek Trail Plan implementation, Shoal Creek Watershed Action Plan implementation and Community Engagement

The two plans mentioned here were developed between 2016-2020 alongside hundreds of community members, businesses, City of Austin representatives, and non-profit partners. They identify the most important improvements needed on the Shoal Creek Trail and the natural environment throughout the Shoal Creek Watershed, and they guide our team's day-to-day priorities. Additionally, Community Engagement is essential for the success of all improvements to the Shoal Creek Watershed, so we offer a variety of public, family-friendly events and volunteer opportunities to create informed and empowered partners in our community.

### Shoal Creek Trail Plan

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A trail for all ages and abilities

- Connected
- Accessible
- Comfortable
- Safe
- Family friendly
- Functional
- Peaceful

### Shoal Creek Watershed Action Plan

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A healthy and resilient creek

- Reduced pollutants
- Safe for recreation
- Biodiverse
- Healthy habitat
- Stable banks

### Community Engagement

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Empowered to enjoy and steward

- Free, monthly tours
- Weekly volunteer workdays
- Events
- Educational materials

# III. Our Unique Opportunity



Shoal Creek Conservancy was founded in 2013 as the culmination of a grassroots effort to secure a long term future for Shoal Creek and the Shoal Creek Trail. Community members, businesses, nonprofits and representatives of the City of Austin came together to identify the issues most pressing to Shoal Creek, such as poor water quality, trail connectivity, and accessibility of public green space in the Shoal Creek corridor. Shoal Creek Conservancy was established with the understanding that a dedicated organization would be the most sustainable and efficient way to tackle Shoal Creek’s many challenges. SCC’s watershed-wide scope makes us unique among Austin’s environmental organizations. Tackling Shoal Creek’s water quality issues requires a watershed-wide lens, since all water that falls within the 13-square-mile watershed ultimately drains to the creek.

SCC works closely with community members to develop our organization’s priorities in line with their diverse wants and needs. SCC has built strong relationships with residents, funders, council offices and city departments to effectively communicate the community’s wishes. This has resulted in wins for the Shoal Creek Trail and the surrounding environment that are widely supported, publicly funded and benefiting our entire community.



# Core Values

## **We believe that ...**

- accessible, healthy, well-maintained green spaces in urban areas are intrinsically part of our community's identity.
- a network of welcoming green spaces will improve the mental and physical health of all Austinites.
- having green space within walking distance of home and work enables people to be happier and healthier.
- restoring and caring for the diverse flora and fauna in our watershed are keys to the well-being of our natural and built community.
- serving as stewards of the environment is a community responsibility and privilege.
- working side by side with our neighbors—in the dirt and at city hall—builds community resilience.
- community-based activities engage and unite people throughout our city, developing connectivity and trust.
- creating opportunities to connect diverse populations to Shoal Creek and Austin's greenspaces to ensure equitable access to public spaces.
- it is important to understand and commemorate our history, enjoy the present, and plan for the future.
- an inclusive and welcoming community makes it easy to walk, bike, and roll to where people want to go.
- being active outdoors should be a fun, easy, and daily choice for people of all ages and abilities.
- people grow to love the places where they play, gather, and rest, and people protect what they love.
- recreation and conservation can go hand in hand.
- Shoal Creek is a community asset, and we must care for it together.

# Milestones

**2025** SCC publishes **Shoal Creek Trail Health and Safety Assets Report**

**2024** SCC creates **Creekside Neighbors Menu** highlighting a variety of actions community members in the watershed can take to positively contribute to a healthier Shoal Creek

**2023** SCC partners with the city's Urban Trails Program to install 125 **wayfinding signs** along 9.5 miles of Shoal Creek

**2022** SCC launches dual language **Shoal Creek Audio Walking Tour** highlighting historical locations and events along Shoal Creek

**2021** SCC launches **Creekside Neighbors** program

**2020** SCC launches **Creekside Neighbors** program

**2019** **1887 West 6th Street Bridge** over Shoal Creek listed as City of Austin **local historic landmark**

**2018** SCC, the City of Austin, and watershed stakeholders begin development of the **Shoal Creek Watershed Action Plan**

**2017** Multi-site **riparian restoration** efforts remove 7 truckloads of invasive elephant ear and giant cane and plant nearly 1,500 native plants and trees throughout the watershed

**2016** **1887 West 6th Street Bridge** over Shoal Creek **listed** in the **National Register of Historic Places** by the U.S. National Park Service

**2015** SCC, City of Austin, and community stakeholders begin development of the **Shoal Creek Trail Plan**

**2014** City of Austin dedicates **\$4 million for trail improvements** between 5th Street and West Avenue

**2013** Texas Conservation Corps removes invasive golden bamboo at 1-acre native **habitat restoration site** on the Shoal Creek Greenbelt

**SHOAL CREEK CONSERVANCY** Shoal Creek Conservancy **Launches**

More Milestones at [shoalcreekconservancy.org/about/milestones/](http://shoalcreekconservancy.org/about/milestones/)



# IV. Our Commitment

Shoal Creek Conservancy has seen many trail and creek improvements come to fruition since our founding, and we will continue to implement hands-on, custom programs and public advocacy to best support Shoal Creek and the Shoal Creek Trail. The following goals highlight some of the key priorities for the Conservancy in the coming years:

## Goal 1. Deliver Programs that strategically move toward our long-term vision

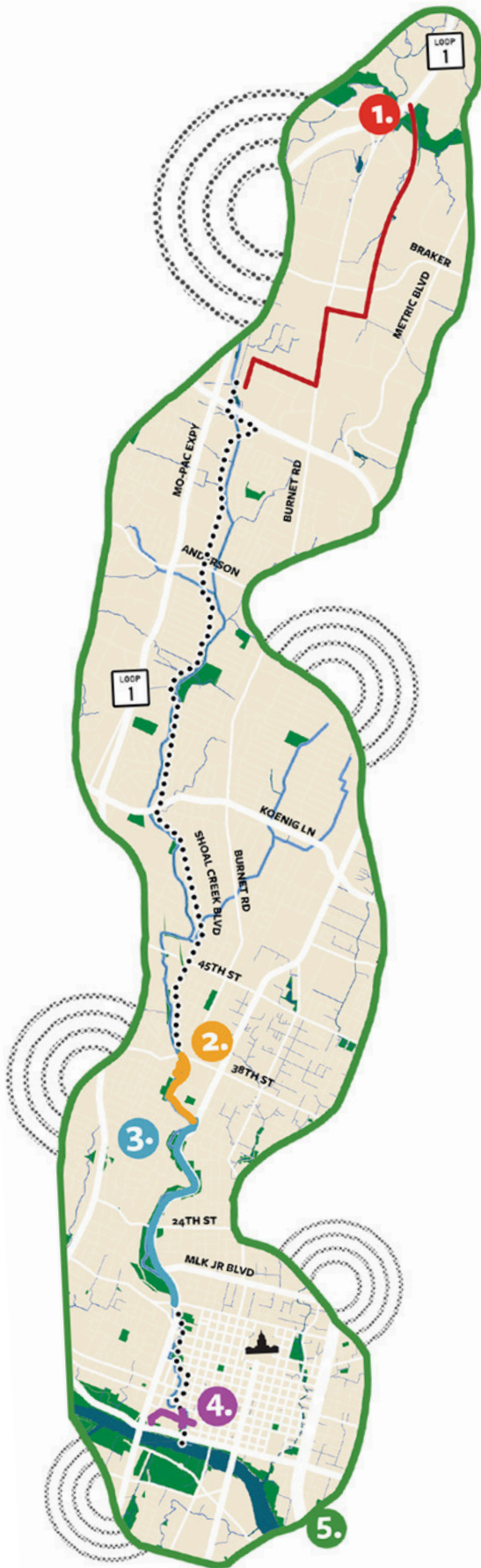
We envision a Shoal Creek Trail that is welcoming and accessible for people of all ages and abilities, and that connects to a citywide network of trails and green spaces. We envision a Shoal Creek that is healthy and resilient. We commit to implementing the community-identified initiatives in the **Shoal Creek Watershed Action Plan** and **Shoal Creek Trail Plan** to achieve these long-term visions.

## Goal 2. Cultivate stewards and ambassadors to implement the Shoal Creek Watershed Action Plan

Empower neighbors, non-profit partners, businesses and City of Austin partners to collectively improve the health of Shoal Creek, its tributaries and its watershed.



# Shoal Creek Trail Plan



## 1. NORTHERN TRAIL CONNECTIONS (+ BIG LOOP)

**PRIORITY:** Connect Shoal Creek Trail to the Northern Walnut Creek and Red Line Trails, ultimately connecting it to the planned 30-mile "Big Loop" of trails and bikeways traversing the city.

**GOAL:** Complete Big Loop

## 2. 31st STREET - 38th STREET

**PRIORITY:** Improve trail safety in Seiders Springs Park

**GOAL:** AAAA connection from 31st-38th Street

## 3. 15th STREET - 31st STREET

**PRIORITY:** Plan new urban trail to restore connectivity through landslide site at 24th-29th Streets

**GOAL:** Urban trail from 15th-31st

## 4. CYPRESS & SHOAL CREEK

**PRIORITY:** Create connective route between Pfluger Pedestrian Bridge and Shoal Creek Trail

**GOAL:** Implement C&S capital improvements

## 5. TRAIL-WIDE AMENITIES

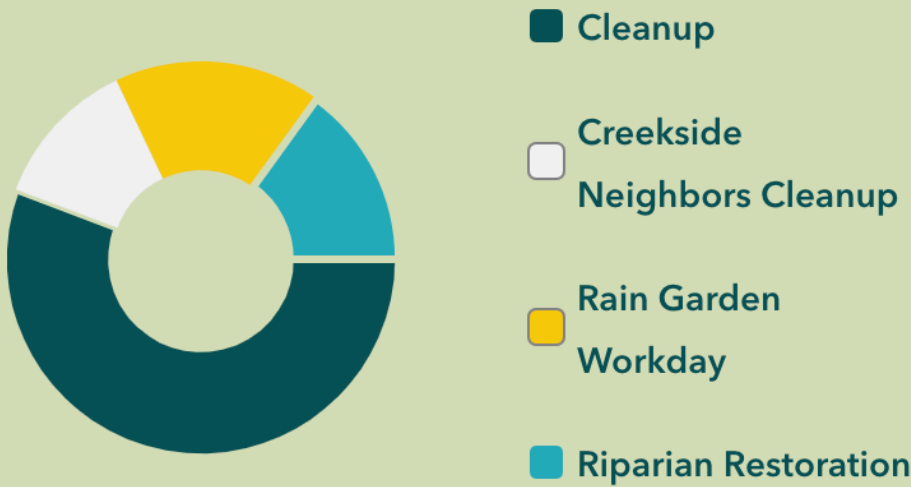
**PRIORITY:** Add trash cans, pet waste stations, and bridge lighting trail-wide

**GOAL:** Install basic amenities trail-wide, including bathrooms, water fountains, trash cans, pet waste stations, bridge lighting, shade

# Shoal Creek Watershed Action Plan

## Implementation since 2020:

### events by type



**totals**

**253**  
volunteer events

**5,596**  
hours volunteered

**81,249**  
pounds of litter removed from Shoal Creek

**6,979**  
seedballs dispersed

**3,516**  
native plants planted



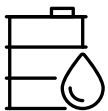
Four new rain gardens added to Shoal Creek Blvd.



Six new pet waste stations installed along Shoal Creek



Three annual Shopping Cart Corral events to remove carts from Shoal Creek



Two annual Waterwise Landscapes Tours highlighting water-conscious yards across the Shoal Creek Watershed



Completion of many educational resources, including the Creek Lessons video series, a Shoal Creek plant guide and coloring book, a Shoal Creek Wildlife Guide, a Creekside Neighbors Menu of ways to protect water quality on private property and more!



### Goal 3. Share our story

Tell the story of Shoal Creek and Shoal Creek Conservancy in a clear and approachable way to engage a wide variety of Austinites in stewardship of Shoal Creek.



### Goal 4. Operate Sustainably

Plan and prepare for the sustainable operations that will allow Shoal Creek Conservancy to see our long-term visions to fruition.

### Goal 5. Cultivate strong leadership

Board of Directors will be nominated and considered based on relevant expertise, affiliation with the watershed, needed skill sets and enthusiasm to make meaningful change in our community.

# Get Involved

We look forward to working with our community to achieve the goals in this Strategic Plan. Anyone interested in participating in Shoal Creek Conservancy's programs is encouraged to reach out. We welcome you!

**Contact:** [info@ShoalCreekConervancy.org](mailto:info@ShoalCreekConervancy.org)

**Register:** [ShoalCreekConervancy.org/Events](https://ShoalCreekConervancy.org/Events)



# Staff & Board Members

## Staff

Ivey Kaiser, Executive Director  
Maria Darr, Programs Director  
Emily Myers, Finance and Office Administrator  
Sierra DaSilva, Watershed Manager  
Daniel Kavelman, Projects & Policy Manager  
Krista Kelly, Volunteer Coordinator  
Ada Forbes, Development Coordinator

## Board Members

Michelle Slattery  
RJ Endsley  
Tim Wittrock  
Amy Wanamaker  
Steve Davis  
Lauren Taylor  
Jeffrey Richard  
Diana Wheeler  
Darcy Nuffer  
Mike Kobe  
Caitlin Gary



