

Circle C Metro Park

6301 W. Slaughter Ln., Austin, TX 78749

ENVIRONMENTAL FEATURES HIKE

1. Midnight Cave
2. Slaughter Creek
3. Grassy Cove Cave

4. Riparian Zone
5. Wetland



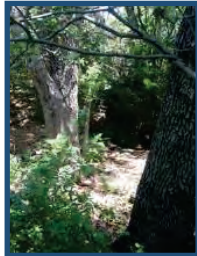
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ENVIRONMENTAL FEATURES HIKE

1. Midnight cave is a large cave that has a safety fence around the entrance to keep people and large animals from falling into the shaft.



From the southwest side of the fence, you can get a clear view of the large rocky entrance into the vertical shaft of the cave.



2. Slaughter Creek flows soon after a rain, but is normally dry during most of the year. Since the creek is located over the recharge zone, much of the water in the creek sinks into the ground through recharge features.



3. Recharge features such as **Grassy Cove Cave** are critical conduits that rapidly transfer water runoff into groundwater.



It is important for the stormwater that enters the cave to be clean. The wall around this cave reduces pollution from urban runoff from entering.



Stormwater channel upslope of the cave.

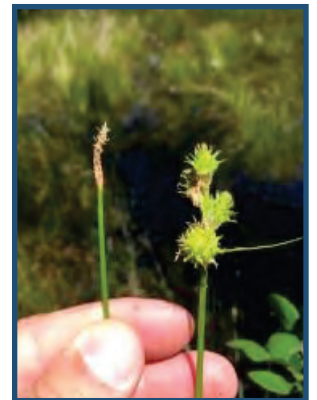
4. The land surrounding a creek (called **riparian corridor**) is very important to the water quality of the creek. It allows floodwater in some areas to spread out, which slows the water down and can reduce erosion. The riparian corridor also filters pollutants.



5. A wetland is an area that is saturated long enough for an adapted plant community and beneficial soils to develop. Wetlands are very productive. They process nutrients, isolate carbon dioxide and provide habitat for plants and animals.



The two wetland plants that dominate this wetland are Britton's Sedge (*Carex brittoniana*) (on the right) and Pale spikerush (*Eleocharis macrostachya*) (on the left).



Cave and Wetland Critical Environmental Features (initially defined in the *Comprehensive Watersheds Ordinance*) are found in the park. **Buffers for these features and Slaughter Creek help sustain baseflow and provide recreational opportunities, while also protecting our drinking water supply.**

In May 2016 we celebrated the 30th anniversary of the Comprehensive Watersheds Ordinance.

