

GARY PEREZ

Professional Diver

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In 1998, I had been managing algae bloom and bioload for years professionally as a scientific diver and was asked for my expertise to assist in dive cleaning of the Barton Springs Pool.

Nature had a stake in this. The city itself and its actions were causing incidental take (accidentally killing salamanders). Although less development along the Barton Creek Watershed meant fewer taxes for the City of Austin, they had to answer their responsibility to nature, not just the financial bottom line.

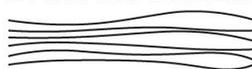
The creek and pool are of indigenous importance. They're part of an ancient pilgrimage route passing to the peyote garden. The Spring itself is analogous to a star in the sky, "Alkaid."

Unhealthy water means no salamander, no ceremony, and no star shining, reflecting out of the Barton pool. We call her Mother Water, the pool, along with four fountain springs of Texas. Mother Water has been represented for millennia as part of a grouping of stars in the 2,000 year-old cave art of the White Shaman in the Lower Pecos.

For a moment in time, I felt personally charged with representing my people to satisfy US Fish & Wildlife and the City of Austin with a means to protect the Barton Springs salamander, a little animal tied to everything else. American Natives were participatory in solving the problem. We show up with an answer for the problem. Without this opportunity I wouldn't have realized the importance of Barton Springs and its connections to our cosmological worldview, its place in the White Shaman rock art and its 2,000 year old living record, and those connections back to our ceremony. How precious the microcosm is and our ceremony to contain all of these wonderful things. Everything you want to know about Texas and the skies above it are held sacred in that ceremony.

That dive to clean the waters and protect the little salamander, connected me and our community to the timestream of White Shaman rock art, the 2,000 year-old rock art painting that is a map of the stars, of our ceremony, and a clock of our lives.

BARTON CREEK



TIME STREAM