

DONNA TIEMANN



Community Advocate and Public Servant

Austin City Council, Policy Advisor &
Chief of Staff 2012-Present

HAROLD DANIEL



Community Advocate

Save Barton Creek Association
2002-2012

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We both care deeply about the environment and recognize how special it is to have Barton Springs pool in the city. We were both drawn to Austin for its natural beauty, energy, and strong commitment to protect the environment. It was so cool to walk down to the creek from our home and go swim in the summer in Barton Creek along the greenbelt.”

Harold and I met during the efforts to stop the Longhorn/Kinder Morgan Pipeline and the securing of the Fath Tract at a Save Barton Creek Association (SBCA) meeting. Harold was working with Marguerite Jones on the pipeline issue, running an information website, and I was working on the tract of land next to my neighborhood from being sold off and developed. It later became memorialized as the Fath Tract, after long-time environmental activist, Shudde Fath. I worked with my neighborhood and at Austin Neighborhoods Council (ANC) and as a SBCA and Sierra Club member. The pipeline went through, but not before having additional requirements to line the trench with shotcrete to help capture any spills should the pipeline leak. Tim Jones, a longtime environmental activist, dogged the trench to make sure the lining was done properly and adequately. It was extremely contentious given it was big oil and gas in the Big Oil and Gas state.

Harold and I ran the “NoAquiferBigBox Coalition,” a website and petition drive against a Walmart Superstore locating over the recharge zone in southwest Austin. We also used t-shirts to raise awareness with the logo “Cheap Underwear or Clean Water—you decide”. Steve Beers, long-time Save Barton Creek Association member came up with that one. It was a wildly successful campaign that engaged the whole community and resulted in an adopted ordinance that prohibited the construction of Big Box Stores over the Aquifer.

TIEMANN AND DANIEL CONT'D



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In the MoveAMD.com campaign, we worked to dissuade AMD from relocating their headquarters from east Austin (where they had originally been persuaded to locate so as to avoid the environmental conflict) to southwest Austin. Public awareness was raised and political pressure laid, but AMD seemed determined to locate in the hill country of southwest Austin. It was disappointing they chose to locate a major employer over the aquifer after having been successfully located in a less environmentally-sensitive location. It breaks the City's good policy streak, of dissuading development-generating employment headquarters, from locating in the city's most environmentally sensitive areas.

Harold had great tech skills building websites and protest petitions, and I was a good organizer and bridge between neighborhoods and environmental groups. We were both Sierra Club members too. Most of our work we did through the website AustinAction.org. We began to help coordinate and bridge these groups by going to meetings and updating the groups on efforts underway and engaging them in mutually beneficial work. The Save Barton Creek Association is a phenomenal group. We both learned so much working with SBCA members. So much talent and dedication. Back then the group met every Monday night without fail and we planned campaigns, interactions with council, petitions, public outreach, whatever it took to keep an issue in the news and talked about. Members we learned from include Shudde Fath, Jon Beall, Jackie & Jack Goodman, Steve Beers, Susan Bright, Wayne Gronquist, Mary Ann Neely and Craig Smith, George Coffey, Kathy Smartt, Marguerite Jones, Tim Jones, Ron Beall, and Roy Waley.

We also worked with the Save our Springs Alliance, Bill Bunch, Sarah Faust, Colin Clark in the bridging work to help coordinate and knit the various environmental groups together. It was bumpy sometimes, but we managed to get a lot done!

It's a gift to have wildlands in an urban setting. And that it is part of a water network that includes underground caves, caverns, aquifer, and springs—and that it demonstrates with a beautiful blue-green spring-fed pool that offers a cool, crisp respite from the hottest of summer days. It reminds us all how important our care is to these special places. I hope next generations step in and continue to protect.