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Shoal Creek Flooding: Conservancy Urges Safety & Calls for Flood Solutions

AUSTIN, TEXAS – This week’s heavy rains are causing Shoal Creek waters to rise once again, threatening property and lives. “The rapidly rising waters are an eerie reminder of the devastating 2015 Memorial Day Flood and the imminent threat of Shoal Creek flooding in the heart of downtown Austin,” said **Joanna Wolaver, Executive Director of Shoal Creek Conservancy**. With more rains forecasted, Shoal Creek Conservancy urges Austinites to stay safe and underscores the need for flood mitigation solutions on Shoal Creek.

Stay Safe During Floods: “One of the best things you can do to protect your family and home is stay informed during heavy rains. We encourage anyone who lives or works along Shoal Creek to sign up for **ATXFloods Alerts** at atxfloods.com. You will receive a text, email or call to alert you when water is rapidly rising near your home or business,” said Wolaver.

Wolaver also urged Austinites to avoid driving on flooded roadways. “If you see water on the road, **turn around, don’t drown**. Few people realize the vast majority of flood fatalities in Texas occur in vehicles. Help spread the word that it takes just six inches of water to cause tires to lose traction and begin to slide.” For real-time updates on road closures, **visit atxfloods.com**. “Austinites should keep an eye on low water crossings at 9th Street and Lamar Boulevard in downtown near Shoal Creek,” she added.

Ted Siff, Shoal Creek Conservancy Board President, shared an additional safety advisory, “The sidewalk above Shoal Creek between 5th Street and West Avenue has been closed due to flood damage. Residents of the Monarch and Gables West apartments and downtown frequently use this sidewalk and should be advised to avoid the area.” Due to the heavy rains, the bank along Shoal Creek above the new greenbelt trail improvements experienced significant damage, compromising the stability of the sidewalk.

A Call for Flood Solutions: “This week’s flooding is a reminder of the threat Shoal Creek poses to life and property, particularly in the downtown area, and underscores, once again, the need for both short-term and long-term solutions to reduce the flood risk,” stated Wolaver.

Wolaver further explained that, “The Conservancy is working collaboratively and cooperatively with the City to identify flood mitigation solutions for Shoal Creek as a component of the **comprehensive plan** currently being developed by the Conservancy, the City and the Meadows Center for Water and the Environment at Texas State University. This plan will address the creek’s **flooding, water quality, erosion, habitat and spring flow challenges**.”

The Conservancy is also working to identify immediate, short-term creek maintenance activities that could result in a measurable decrease in flood risk and an overall positive impact on creek health. “With the blessing of the City, we have hired engineering firm Alan Plummer Associates to survey the stretch of Shoal Creek from Lady Bird Lake to 15th Street to determine the potential flood reduction benefits of managing debris, gravel and in-creek vegetation. The engineering study will establish the measurable impact of specific steps – such as the removal of vegetation or sediment in a particular location – on flood risk, while considering impacts on water quality, erosion and habitat,” added Siff.

The Shoal Creek Conservancy is a non-profit organization dedicated to improving Shoal Creek for all Austinites – present and future. To learn and support the work of the Conservancy, visit www.shoalcreekconservancy.org.