

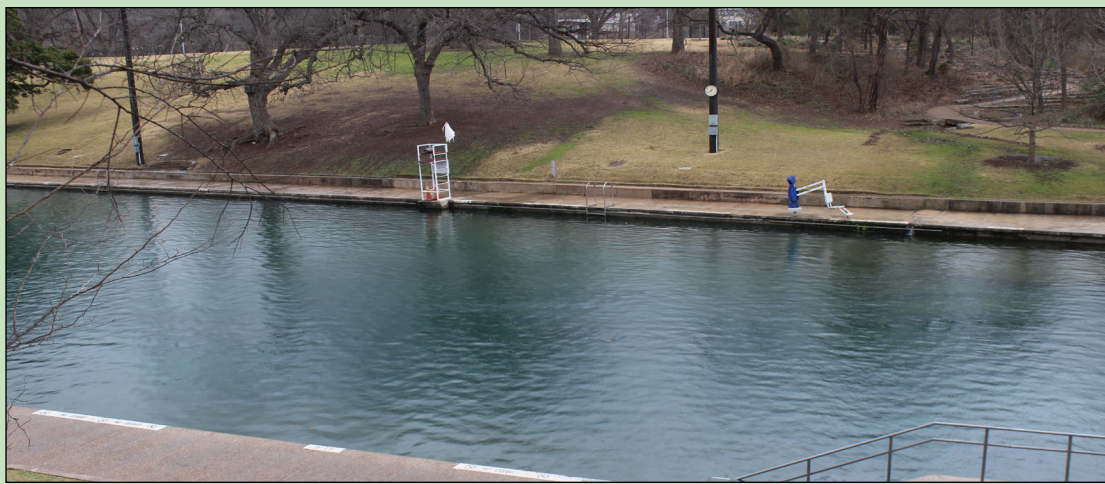


ALL ABOARD The Zilker Eagle mini train has made its rounds since 1961, pausing in 2019, but its expected to start again in 2022. The train is one of many features of Zilker Park, a major center for events and activities in the Austin area. photos by JC Ramirez Delgadillo

SHOWING ZEAL FOR ZILKER

Exploring the Wonders Austin's Most Loved Park Has to Offer

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DIVE IN Barton Springs is a place for people to take a swim during the summer with its warm water but is empty in the winter. photo by JC Ramirez Delgadillo



TAKE A STROLL Barton Spring's creek is by the Greenbelt Trail, serving as another alternative to the pool. photo by JC Ramirez Delgadillo

Zilker Park is referred to as the "Jewel in the heart of Austin," by Visit Austin. The park was founded in 1917, and has been claimed to be Austin's most-loved park, according to Austin Parks and Wildlife. Zilker has many recreational opportunities, including a botanical garden and the Barton Spring pool, drawing people to the park and making it one of the best places to spend time, also according to Visit Austin. It has held major annual events such as Austin City Limits and the Trail of Lights.

In 1917, Philanthropist Andrew Jackson Zilker donated the park's land to the city of Austin, and since then, a variety of different traditions have come to life. One of these traditions being a yearly kite festival that has been held every spring since 1936. There are many other attractions, including the Zilker Eagle, a miniature train that passes through a part of the park. The train has been closed down due to erosion in the tracks caused by rain, but is expected to return to the tracks early this year.

Students like junior Aileen Chow enjoy walking the trails that Zilker has to offer and swimming at Barton Springs Pool, but her favorite memory comes from summer camps she has attended at Zilker.

"My favorite memory of Zilker was when I attended several fun summer camps that were organized by the Austin Nature and Science Center," Chow said. "I would enjoy eating and playing games in the park, as well as hanging out with my friends."

Zilker has gone through many changes over the years and has expanded to contain a botanical and sculpture garden, a science center, a theater, and many other of Austin's gems, according to Visit Austin. The park began as 350 mostly undeveloped acres and has grown to house many of the city's favorite events. Many events have been held at Zilker for the past hundred years, and to this day traditions are flying high.



READING ROCK The Philosophers' Rock statue depicts the conversations three Austin authors would have by the springs. photos by JC Ramirez Delgadillo



FIELD DAY Near the Greenbelt field, empty grasslands can be used for activities such as picnics. photo by JC Ramirez Delgadillo



PARK'S HOME Zilker Caretaker's Cottage remains one of the oldest standing structures from the beautification that occurred in the '30s. The cottage now serves as Park Rangers headquarters. photo by JC Ramirez Delgadillo