

Barton Creek Greenbelt – Hill of Life

Self-Guided Packraft Tours

Hi Folks,

Thank you for your interest in our Barton Creek Greenbelt – Hill of Life Packraft Tour! We've shared our experience on Instagram to review what to expect. Additionally, we have done the full route so we can make sure you are aware of all obstacles, hazards, exits, etc. to the best of our ability.

This is a self-guided tour so this guide is for your knowledge on best practices but it is ultimately your decision on how to utilize it.

We've created this Self-Guided Tour beginning at the top of the Hill of Life Trail on the Greenbelt. You hike down from the top, head to the right once you've reached the bottom, in a few minutes you'll run into the Hill of Life Dam / Waterfall. This is where your adventure begins! This is where you'll inflate your gear and head North up Barton Creek essentially till you run out of deep enough water. We've done this tour quite a few times and we love it because it is inaccessible from the hiking trails and you'll explore areas of the Barton Creek Greenbelt that most have not had the opportunity to.

You'll have to get out of your boat only once or twice to go from creek to creek. There's about a mile of navigable water heading north. Once you run out, turn around and continue back. Once returning to the Hill of Life Dam, you will have the option to head down another half mile as the water dries up fast headed South. If not, wipe down your gear, pack up, and head back up the trail and that's the end of your self-guided tour.

Additionally, we put a list of important locations in our Google Maps we've shared with y'all with notes at each location. **Be sure to review.**

- <https://goo.gl/maps/XTVR4g3QTw6q8CKu7>

Hazards

- Slippery Rocks
- Hiking Trails
- Loose Rocks on the hike down and up the trail.
- Trees/Branches in and out of the water
- Walking with the Packraft and gear when the water ends to the next section of the river
- Hill of Life Trail
- Insects, bugs, lizards, snakes, algae, etc. (it's Texas in the wild, be mindful folks)
- Water temperatures reduce between October to March and may cause hypothermia (As of 11/17, water temps are 74 degrees). Your goal is to stay as dry as possible.
- Air temperatures (not recommended to go out in sub 50s temperature)
- All hazards are not listed but this is to get you thinking of the potential you may encounter. Be mindful you are headed to an unexplored area of Austin and it's wild.

Safety

- Dress accordingly based on air temperature and water temperature.
- GOAL is to stay DRY.
- Wear water shoes. Your feet will get wet. You will have to get in and out of the packraft. A majority of the tour is connected by water.
- Life-Jacket will be provided. We suggest you wear the entire time. The water is deep in the beginning of the tour after the first 5 minutes till you hit your first time getting out of the boat. Stick to the right side of the creek for easy transition to the next pool of water.
- Everything is slippery. Consider every rock to be slippery even if it is dry because your feet are wet. **BE MINDFUL.**
- All safety elements are not listed as this is adventures is ultimately on you and your decisions.
- Be sure to bring at least a large water bottle and maybe a backup. Our first tour our bottle hit a rock between the falls and spilled everywhere.

- This is an adventure in nature which is calm at times and a work-out. This tour can be strenuous at times.

The Tour:

1. Hill of Life Trail is a public entrance to the Barton Creek Greenbelt. Be aware this is a neighborhood and don't park in front of driveways. Parking at the end of road is the recommendation. Drive here: <https://rb.gy/gmid7t>
2. Take all your gear, while still in the backpack, down the trail towards the entrance of Hill of Life Entrance here: <https://rb.gy/aq70m1>
3. Hike down the Hill of Life trail. Stay to the right. Upon reaching the bottom stay on the trail to the right until you hit the Hill of Life Dam located here: <https://rb.gy/bmngwg>
4. At this point, unpack all your gear. Put all the pieces of the paddle together. Inflate the seat and packraft now with either the manual pump or automatic feather pump. If you have a feather pump, we suggest you utilize that to start until you cannot anymore. Finish off till 3-4 PSI with the manual pump if you have the XPD or Recon. If you have the Rogue-lite or Twain, inflate with the feather pump. Once the pump cannot inflate anymore, twist the valve inside and blow into the hole 4-5 times to maximize pressure. Here's a video we've made on how to setup your packraft: <https://youtu.be/uFgca-jWHD4>
5. Place the automatic feather pump in the dry bag after you are done.
6. Before you leave, make sure all your gear is in the packraft. We recommend you put on your life jacket last and then you are ready to launch.
7. Head north up the creek.
8. You will have to get out of the raft at the end of the first pool of water 300 yards down the creek and will have to bring it to the next pool.
9. The water can be deep at times and there are large rocks that appear within this section so look down as you paddle as to not hit them.
 - a. The packrafts are durable but do your best to paddle around hazards.
 - b. You can drag these packrafts across the small rocks when you get out.
 - c. When getting out between the falls, we suggest you carry all your gear between these sections.

10. Once in the second pool stay to the left near the end if you'd like to head towards the last pool as the water is a bit lower here.
11. In the last pool, the water will run very low and you'll be forced to turn around here: <https://rb.gy/4kccup>
12. After turning around, you can get out at the Hill of Life Dam and return to your car.
 - a. If so stow away all your gear and wipe it down.
 - b. Return the gear to the Shipping Container Kiosk where it was picked up and in the same locker you grabbed it from.
13. If you decide to go to the Last Get Out located here: <https://rb.gy/p9koex>
14. When you are finished, be sure to return the gear back to the shipping container kiosk and use the duration pin codes you previously used.