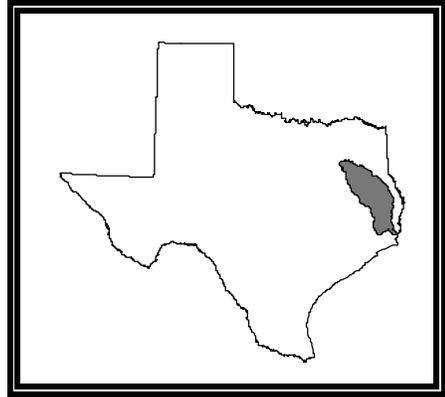


Basin 06

Neches River



Neches River Basin Narrative Summary

The Neches River originates in Van Zandt County and flows through the Pine Woods of East Texas before entering a highly industrialized area in Orange and Jefferson counties. The tidal portion of the river has been dredged to accommodate seagoing vessels. The northeastern one-third of the basin is drained by the Angelina River, while the remaining two-thirds of the 10,011 square-mile area are drained by the Neches River, Pine Island Bayou, and Village Creek. The river empties into the Sabine Lake estuary.

The economy in the extreme lower portion of the basin is based on chemical and petrochemical manufacturing, shipping activities, and commercial and recreational fishing. The economy in the upper and middle portions of the basin consists primarily of timber and wood products industry, agriculture, manufacturing, and oil, gas, and mineral production.

The Neches River Basin has been divided into 16 classified segments, including nine stream segments encompassing 710.1 stream miles and six reservoirs encompassing 163,515 acres. In addition, 30 unclassified streams (718 miles) and 4 unclassified reservoirs (6,370 acres) were evaluated for the year 2002 assessment. There are 133 active monitoring stations in the Neches River Basin.

Elevated fecal coliform densities in ten small unclassified streams is the most prominent water problem in the basin. Bacterial contamination was also found in the Angelina River upstream of Sam Rayburn Reservoir (Segment 0611). Aquatic life uses are not supported in two unclassified streams and Pine Island Bayou (Segment 0607) due to depressed dissolved oxygen concentrations. Poor buffering capacity contributes to low pH levels in the Neches River (Segment 0606) and Village Creek (Segment 0608). Elevated dissolved metals concentrations in water cause non-support of aquatic life uses in the Segments 0604 and 0606 of the Neches River (lead and zinc, respectively) and The Texas Department of Health has issued fish consumption advisories for two classified segments (B.A. Steinhagen Lake and Sam Rayburn Reservoir) and two unclassified water bodies (Lakes Kimball and Ratcliff), due to elevated mercury concentrations in fish tissue. Concerns exist for nutrients in four classified segments (0605,0606,0610, and 0615) and eight unclassified water bodies and for color and odor in Papermill Creek and the Angelina River immediately downstream of the Papermill Creek confluence (Segment 0615).