

2014 Texas Integrated Report - Response to Public Comment

Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ)

These comments address the TCEQ's Draft 2014 Texas Integrated Report for Clean Water Act Sections 305(b) and 303(d) List and were submitted during the comment period beginning December 19, 2014 and ending February 2, 2015.

COMMENTOR: Brazos River Authority

<u>Segment ID</u>	<u>Water Body Name</u>	<u>Summary of Request or Comment</u>	<u>Summary of Action or Explanation</u>
1210A	<i>Navasota River above Lake Mexia (unclassified water body)</i>	In September of 2014, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) approved Contact Recreation standards revisions from Primary to Secondary 1. Reassessment with the revised standard would delist the water body. Please consider use of the TCEQ adopted and EPA approved criterion.	After the initial draft of the 2014 IR, EPA acted on numerous proposed revisions to the TSWQS. At that point, the IR had progressed to the point where TCEQ was unable to incorporate new methods or standards. As a result, approvals of water quality standards revisions included in the July 2013 and September 2014 EPA letters were not incorporated into the draft 2014 IR. However, when developing and preparing the draft 2016 IR, these changes will be incorporated and the water body assessed accordingly.
1212	<i>Somerville Lake</i>	Lake Somerville is listed for pH and has Concerns for chlorophyll a, dissolved oxygen, and total phosphorus. In recent research, it has been determined that internal nutrient cycling is the impairment driver. Since there is no significant current or historical source, we recommend the water body be placed in Category 4c (caused by pollution, not pollutant).	TCEQ recognizes issues related to water quality in aging reservoirs in Texas. Shallow conditions resulting from sedimentation can have a significant effect on eutrophication and nutrient cycling. Under these conditions it may not be possible to achieve attainment of water quality standards. Remediation efforts would be of limited effectiveness due to the number of potential controllable loading sources. Justification that conditions in Lake Somerville are the result of natural changes to reservoir morphology would need additional documentation that discounted impacts from nonpoint sources. Insufficient information was available for the 2014 IR and the category was not changed to 4C. This information could be compiled and submitted as part of the development of the 2016 IR and support a Category 4c designation.

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1212B	<i>East Yegua Creek (unclassified water body)</i>	In September of 2014, EPA approved Contact Recreation standards revisions from Primary to Secondary 1. Reassessment with the revised standard would delist the water body. Please consider use of the TCEQ adopted and EPA approved criterion.	After the initial draft of the 2014 IR, EPA acted on numerous proposed revisions to the TSWQS. At that point, the IR had progressed to the point where TCEQ was unable to incorporate new methods or standards. As a result, approvals of water quality standards revisions included in the July 2013 and September 2014 EPA letters were not incorporated into the draft 2014 IR. However, when developing and preparing the draft 2016 IR, these changes will be incorporated and the water body assessed accordingly.
1221F	<i>Walnut Creek (unclassified water body)</i>	In September of 2014, EPA approved Contact Recreation standards revisions from Primary to Secondary 2. Reassessment with the revised standard would delist the water body. Please consider use of the TCEQ adopted and EPA approved criterion.	After the initial draft of the 2014 IR, EPA acted on numerous proposed revisions to the TSWQS. At that point, the IR had progressed to the point where TCEQ was unable to incorporate new methods or standards. As a result, approvals of water quality standards revisions included in the July 2013 and September 2014 EPA letters were not incorporated into the draft 2014 IR. However, when developing and preparing the draft 2016 IR, these changes will be incorporated and the water body assessed accordingly.
1245C	<i>Bullhead Bayou (unclassified water body)</i>	In September of 2014, EPA approved Contact Recreation standards revisions from Primary to Secondary 1. Reassessment with the revised standard would delist the water body. Please consider use of the TCEQ adopted and EPA approved criterion.	After the initial draft of the 2014 IR, EPA acted on numerous proposed revisions to the TSWQS. At that point, the IR had progressed to the point where TCEQ was unable to incorporate new methods or standards. As a result, approvals of water quality standards revisions included in the July 2013 and September 2014 EPA letters were not incorporated into the draft 2014 IR. However, when developing and preparing the draft 2016 IR, these changes will be incorporated and the water body assessed accordingly.
1245D	<i>Unnamed Tributary of Bullhead Bayou (unclassified water body)</i>	In September of 2014, EPA approved Contact Recreation standards revisions from Primary to Secondary 1. Reassessment with the revised standard would delist the water body. Please consider use of the TCEQ adopted and EPA approved criterion.	After the initial draft of the 2014 IR, EPA acted on numerous proposed revisions to the TSWQS. At that point, the IR had progressed to the point where TCEQ was unable to incorporate new methods or standards. As a result, approvals of water quality standards revisions included in the July 2013 and September 2014 EPA letters were not incorporated into the draft 2014 IR. However, when developing and preparing the draft 2016 IR, these changes will be incorporated and the water body assessed accordingly.

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<u>Segment ID</u>	<u>Water Body Name</u>	<u>Summary of Request or Comment</u>	<u>Summary of Action or Explanation</u>
1255G	Woodhollow Branch (unclassified water body)	Woodhollow Branch is listed for bacteria using older fecal coliform data, but the parameter listed is E. coli. Limited E. coli data exists, therefore we recommend delisting until such time appropriate and sufficient data are available for assessment.	Fecal coliform (FC) was used in the past for assessment of the Contact Recreation Use. The water body was placed on the 303(d) List as a result of using the FC method. The bacteria indicator has since been changed to E.coli, which provides for better assessment of the Contact Recreation Use. The Woodhollow Branch nonsupport status will be carried forward until a sufficient E. coli dataset is collected. At that time TCEQ will have the ability to update the assessment and determine the Contact Recreation use attainment status.

COMMENTOR: San Antonio River Authority

<u>Segment ID</u>	<u>Water Body Name</u>	<u>Summary of Request or Comment</u>	<u>Summary of Action or Explanation</u>
1910	Salado Creek	In the TCEQ 2006 IR, Station 12868 Salado Creek at Rigby was identified as being in 1910_03 and was the original station where the benthic macroinvertebrate impairment was identified. As a result of the 2007 Salado Creek UAA, the AU locations/descriptions for Salado Creek were adjusted. For the Draft TCEQ 2014 IR, further refinement of the AUs was implemented. As a result, 12868 is now located in 1910_02. SARA believes the benthic macroinvertebrate and nekton data for 1910_02 and 1910_03 should be reassessed and the appropriate integrated level of support assigned.	TCEQ agrees with SARA's comment on the errors related to the aquatic life assessments in Segment 1910. As a result, Assessment Units (AU) 1910_02 and 1910_03 have been re-assessed for benthic macroinvertebrates and fish communities. The benthic macroinvertebrate Nonsupport (NS) was moved from AU 1910_03 to 1910_02. In 2004, there was a NS for fish identified in AU 1910_03. Similar to the benthic macroinvertebrate samples, the fish samples were collected at station 12868 and AU 1910_02 should have been assigned the same support status (NS) as the fish. However, subsequent fish samples were collected in AU 1910_02 (stations 12870 & 14029) and the AU was found to be fully supporting for fish. The 2014 IR was changed to reflect this re-assessment.

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COMMENTOR: Texas Parks and Wildlife Department

<u>Segment ID</u>	<u>Water Body Name</u>	<u>Summary of Request or Comment</u>	<u>Summary of Action or Explanation</u>
	<i>Various</i>	<p>The delisting report in the Draft 2014 IR includes several waterbodies where the Contact Recreation Use is now fully supporting though they had been considered impaired as part of the 2012 IR. The 2014 IR includes guidance that allows for the evaluation of drought impacts on use attainment status. This guidance should be used to consider the reduced frequency of runoff events. These events generally result in elevated bacteria levels. In these situations, the guidance should be implemented to justify the continued listing of these impairments.</p>	<p>For the 2014 IR, TCEQ proposed a method to evaluate the impacts of drought on ambient water quality. This method is intended to evaluate situations where changes in use attainment status are the result of limited precipitation caused by drought. TCEQ is continuing to develop this guidance and improve the ways that drought information can be compiled and included as a justification that supports a re-categorization due to drought. As part of the development of the 2016 IR, this justification will be further refined to improve evaluations of drought impacts. TCEQ recognizes that nonpoint source runoff can influence ambient water quality and in some cases result in high levels of contaminants, which may prevent the support of established uses. During periods of drought, runoff from the surrounding watershed is limited to reducing the effects of nonpoint source loadings. Attempting to develop estimates that consider the effects of drought on bacteria concentrations in a specific water body would be very challenging due to the fact that there is no way of quantifying a potential increase. This quantification is needed to justify a continued impairment during dry conditions. For the 2014 IR, the assessment methods used to evaluate the attainment status of the Contact Recreation Use in perennial streams includes provisions that limit the use of data when stream flows fall below an established level (7Q2). Based on an evaluation of the assessment data these conditions occurred at a relatively low frequency in the majority of the streams included in this comment. This would indicate that low flows due to drought may have had a minimal impact on the data used to assess recreational use attainment. TCEQ will continue to develop the guidance to include methods for determination of drought impacts. When draft drought methods are fully developed, stakeholders will have the opportunity to comment on them during the TCEQ Surface Water Quality Monitoring Guidance Advisory Work Group biennial meeting. The 2014 IR was not revised in response to this comment.</p>

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0304B	<i>Cowhorn Creek</i>	The delisting code for Cowhorn should be REVPROC (Revised Procedure) since the delisting was due to a change that allows listing of benthic or fish assemblages only if both are non-support.	Since finalizing the 2012 IR, EPA approved changes to the designated Aquatic Life Use on Cowhorn Creek. Since the attainment status was the result of an approved water quality standard, the reason for the delisting should be noted as revised procedure (reason code REVPROC). The delisting reason code in the 2014 IR was updated to reflect this change.

COMMENTOR: Upper Trinity Regional Water District

<u>Segment ID</u>	<u>Water Body Name</u>	<u>Summary of Request or Comment</u>	<u>Summary of Action or Explanation</u>
305	<i>North Sulphur River</i>	The Water Bodies Evaluated document mistakenly lists the North Sulphur flow status as "Perennial" instead of "Intermittent with Perennial Pools" and the Aquatic Life Use as "High" instead of "Intermediate" as revised in the Texas Surface Water Quality Standards (TSWQS).	During the development of the 2014 Integrated Report (IR), TCEQ inadvertently assigned a flow status of "Perennial" to the North Sulphur River. The flow status was corrected to "Intermittent with Perennial Pools" and the Aquatic Life Use was changed to "Intermediate" to reflect the revisions to the TSWQS.