



## Evaluating the Fish Consumption Use A Risk Assessment for Lower Leon Creek

In 2003, the Department of State Health Services (DSHS) advised people not to eat any fish from a portion of Lower Leon Creek (segment 1906). The advisory covers the area of the creek from the State Highway 90 bridge downstream to the Interstate Loop 410 Bridge.

High levels of polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) make it unsafe to eat fish from the creek. The term PCBs is used to describe 209 toxic and environmentally persistent compounds. See the Environmental Protection Agency's fact sheet about PCBs and fish consumption advisories at [epa.gov/waterscience/fish/pcbs.pdf](http://epa.gov/waterscience/fish/pcbs.pdf)

Learn more about consumption advisories by visiting the DSHS website at [www.dshs.state.tx.us/seafood/survey.shtm](http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/seafood/survey.shtm) or on the EPA website at [water.epa.gov/scitech/swguidance/fishshellfish/fishadvisories/index.cfm](http://water.epa.gov/scitech/swguidance/fishshellfish/fishadvisories/index.cfm).

Learn more about water quality standards, monitoring, and TMDLs by reading *Preserving and Improving Water Quality*, available on our website at [www.tceq.texas.gov/goto/tmdl/](http://www.tceq.texas.gov/goto/tmdl/).

### Watershed Description

Lower Leon Creek, Segment 1906, drains an area of 228 square miles and has a total continuous length of 57 miles. It originates as a spring-fed stream in the Edwards Plateau region of south central Texas. The creek runs from its headwaters in northern Bexar County to its confluence with the Medina River. It generally flows south and enters the main portion of the former Kelly Air Force Base from the northwest, near the intersection of Billy Mitchell Road and Westover Road.

Leon Creek drains a highly urbanized residential area and the Kelly and Lackland Air Force bases. Water quality in Leon Creek is affected by industrial and municipal wastewater discharges and stormwater. The project watershed includes the cities of San Antonio, Cross Mountain, Helotes, and Leon Valley.

### Project Development

The TMDL Program began this project to verify the extent of the fish consumption impairment and determine the need to develop a TMDL. Several organizations worked concurrently to collect environmental data, including the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), San Antonio River Authority (SARA), San Antonio Metropolitan Health District (CoSA) Public Center for Envi-



ronmental Health (PCEH), and administrators of the former Kelly Air Force Base.

The TCEQ contracted with DSHS to collect and analyze additional fish at five stations along Lower Leon Creek. DSHS reassessed the consumption risk based on the results of this expanded sampling and issued a new fish consumption advisory (ADV-42), which expanded the geographic extent of the original advisory (ADV-26).

Local interest in the fish consumption impairment also spurred a survey and characterization of PCBs in sediments. This survey was a collaborative effort of USGS, SARA, and CoSA PCEH. Monitoring at the former Kelly Air Force Base has also yielded PCB data.

The TCEQ will evaluate all existing data prior to formal initiation of a TMDL project.

### Public Participation

In all its projects, the TCEQ seeks to gather opinion and information from people who represent government, permitted facilities, agriculture, business, environmental, community, and private interests.

The public will be informed about the status of this project through the Basin Steering Committee of the San Antonio River Authority.

### For More Information

Contact one of the people listed, or visit the project website at:

<[www.tceq.texas.gov/waterquality/tmdl/73-leoncreekpcbs.html](http://www.tceq.texas.gov/waterquality/tmdl/73-leoncreekpcbs.html)>

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### Project Status

Data Collection completed: Fall 2007

Data Analysis completed: 2008 - 2009

Risk Characterization completed: June 2010

### Project Highlights

- The DSHS issued Fish Consumption Advisory ADV-42 on June 29, 2010. The advisory extended ADV-26 (2003) from Military Drive downstream to Interstate Loop 410.
- The final report from USGS characterizing PCB levels in sediments from Lower Leon Creek and other streams in the San Antonio River basin was published in 2011. *Assessment of Selected Contaminants in Streambed- and Suspended-Sediment Samples Collected in Bexar County, Texas, 2007–09*, Scientific Investigations Report 2011–5097 is available on the web at <http://pubs.usgs.gov/sir/2011/5097/pdf/sir2011-5097.pdf>

Visit our website at: <[www.tceq.texas.gov/goto/tmdl/](http://www.tceq.texas.gov/goto/tmdl/)>