



Improving Water Quality in Salado Creek

One TMDL for Dissolved Oxygen

Water Quality in Salado Creek

The state of Texas requires the water quality in Salado Creek (Segment 1910) to be suitable for swimming, wading, fishing, drinking (with treatment), and a healthy aquatic ecosystem. However, water quality tests found that low oxygen concentrations in Salado Creek may occasionally harm the fish community and other aquatic life. In response to these conditions, a total maximum daily load (TMDL) project was initiated to determine the measures necessary to restore water quality in Salado Creek.

Oxygen, which dissolves in water, is essential for the survival of aquatic life. While the amount of dissolved oxygen in water fluctuates naturally, various human activities can cause unusually or chronically low dissolved oxygen levels, which may harm fish and other aquatic organisms.

The goal of a TMDL is to determine the amount (or load) of a pollutant that a body of water can receive and still support its designated uses. This allowable load is allocated among all the controllable sources of pollution within the watershed. Measures to reduce pollutant loads are then developed as necessary.

Learn more about water quality standards and monitoring by reading *Clean Water for Texas: Working Together for Water Quality*. For general information about how TMDL projects are structured, read *The TMDL Process in Texas: What You Need to Know*. Both documents are available on the Web at www.tceq.org/goto/tmdl/.

Description of Salado Creek

Salado Creek is located in the upper portion of the San Antonio River Basin, with its headwaters in north central Bexar County. Salado Creek runs north to south for 35 miles along the north and east sides of the city of San Antonio, through the San Antonio International Airport and Fort Sam Houston. Salado Creek joins the San Antonio River south of the city between Losoya and Elmendorf. The Salado Creek watershed is 218 square miles in size. The upper portion of the watershed is largely undeveloped. The terrain is characterized by limestone hills and sparse vegetation typical of the Texas Hill Country. Dense urban development is located in the lower portion of the watershed. The upper portion of Salado Creek is normally dry except during rain events when it provides



recharge to the Edwards Aquifer. Many people use the well-maintained parks along the lower reaches of the creek. Salado Creek is the most natural water course flowing through San Antonio, and has been proposed for maintenance as a permanent greenbelt.

Public Participation Process

Participants in the Salado Creek TMDL Project include representatives of the following organizations:

- San Antonio River Authority
- San Antonio Water System
- San Antonio Health Department
- City of Karnes City
- Cibolo Creek Municipal Authority
- Southwestern Bell Telephone
- Union Stockyards
- Texas Commission on Environmental Quality
- Texas Parks and Wildlife Department
- Texas Railroad Commission

For More Information

For more information on upcoming meetings and documents available for review, contact one of the following individuals.

TCEQ Contact:

Arthur Talley, TMDL Program,
(512) 239-4546, atalley@tceq.state.tx.us

Regional Coordinator:

Mike Gonzales, San Antonio River Authority,
(210) 227-1373

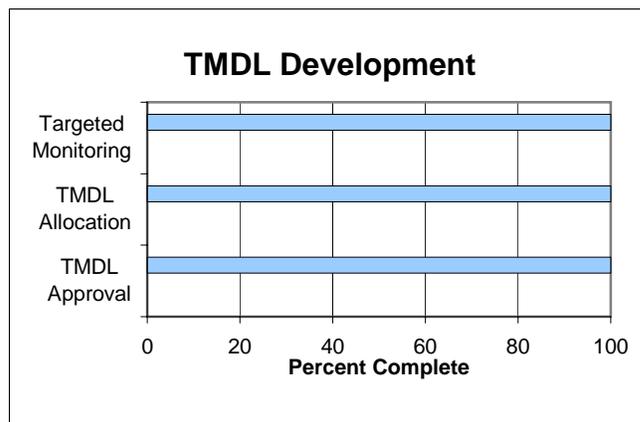
TMDL Development Status

Start Date: April 1998

TCEQ Adoption: October 12, 2001

Submitted to EPA Region 6: October 29, 2001

EPA Region 6 Approval: August 8, 2003



TMDL Project Highlights

- The TMDL determined that there was additional capacity in Salado Creek to assimilate oxygen-demanding materials.
- Since existing loadings of oxygen-demanding materials do not exceed the assimilative capacity of the creek, and therefore do not cause a violation of state water quality standards, a TMDL Implementation Plan approved by the TCEQ is not necessary.
- Actions are being undertaken at the local level to preserve and enhance water quality in Salado Creek. Measures include the introduction of re-use water to supplement the base flow in the stream, the rehabilitation of the sewage collection system in the watershed, the establishment of additional park areas along the creek, public education, and continued water quality monitoring.