



Improving Water Quality in Peach Creek A TMDL Project for Bacteria

In Peach Creek (Segment 1803C) in the Guadalupe River Basin, TCEQ assessment found concentrations of bacteria often exceed the criteria established to protect water quality.

High concentrations of bacteria such as *E. coli* and fecal coliform, which are found in both human and animal waste, may indicate a health risk to people who swim or wade in the streams—activities called “contact recreation” in the state’s standards for water quality.

The TCEQ is conducting a total maximum daily load project to determine the measures necessary to restore water quality in these bayous. 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. The allowable load is then allocated among categories of sources within the watershed, and stakeholders work with the state to develop measures that reduce pollutant loads.

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

The Peach Creek Watershed

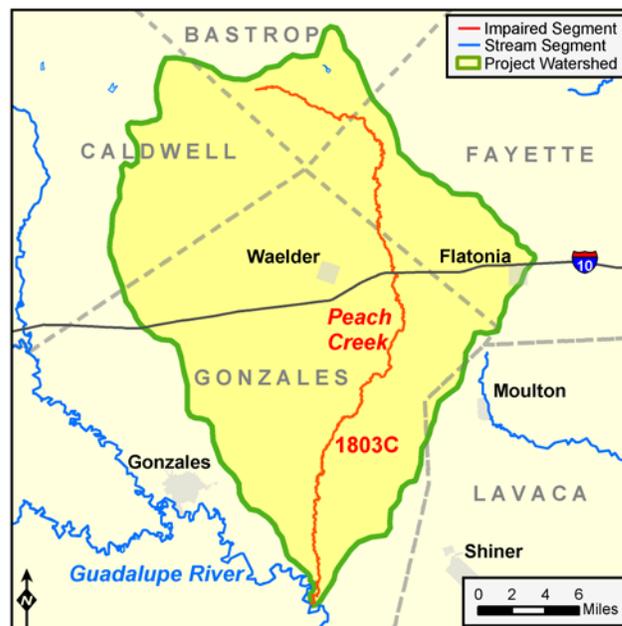
Peach Creek is located in the southern portion of the Guadalupe-Blanco River Basin. The creek flows north to south from its origin northeast of Waelder in Gonzales County to south of the city of Gonzales. Land use in the watershed is mostly mixed woods, rangeland, and agricultural.

Project Development

The TCEQ completed the TMDL report with technical support from James Miertschin and Associates Inc. The TCEQ submitted the report for public review and comment in April 2008. Project personnel held a public meeting to hear comments on April 15, 2008.

The TCEQ has postponed final adoption of this TMDL. Revisions to the water quality standards adopted in 2010 made it advisable to delay development. Prior to moving forward with the TMDL, the TCEQ will hold meetings with stakeholders to discuss options.

Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board (TSSWCB) personnel are working with regional stakeholder on early implementation activities.



Public Participation

In all its projects, the TCEQ seeks to gather opinion and information from all interested parties. An advisory group was formed to involve the public in development of the Peach Creek TMDL. The group includes stakeholders who represent government, permitted facilities, agriculture, business, environmental, and community interests. This voluntary committee provides advice and comment to the TCEQ on its project to improve water quality in Peach Creek.

Project staff held five public meetings with stakeholders in Gonzales, Gonzales County, between 2002 and 2007. All meetings were well attended. Over time, project personnel presented an overview of the project, its process and intention, assessed data, supplemental sampling plans, a review of historical data, bacteria source tracking results, modeling results, draft TMDL load reductions, and issues related to water quality standards, septic systems, and wildlife. Handouts provided to the public at all stakeholder meetings are posted on the TCEQ’s project Web page.

For More Information

Visit the project websites at:

<www.tceq.texas.gov/implementation/water/tmdl/34-peachcreekbacteria.html> and
<www.tsswcb.state.tx.us/watersheds#peachcreek>.

Or contact:

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TMDL Development Status

Start Date: August 2002

TCEQ Adoption:

TMDL: Percent Complete

	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100
Data Collection										
Assessment										
TMDL Development										
Stakeholder Review										
TCEQ Adoption										

Project Highlights

- The Gonzales County Soil and Water Conservation District has a full-time employee dedicated to providing technical assistance to cattle raisers along Peach Creek and throughout the watershed. The TSSWB is supporting these activities with money from its federal nonpoint source pollution management grant.
- Financial assistance programs are in place to help cattle raisers implement conservation practices such as alternative water sources, cross-fencing, and riparian buffers. The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service has established an Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) specifically for landowners in the watershed. The TSSWCB provides cost sharing for implementing conservation practices through its federal nonpoint source pollution management grant.
- The TCEQ completed the TMDL Report with technical support from James Miertschin and Associates Inc.
- The TCEQ has postponed final adoption of this TMDL. Revisions to the water quality standards adopted in 2010 made it advisable to delay development. Prior to moving forward with the TMDL, the TCEQ will hold meetings with stakeholders to discuss options.

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