

## Allen's Creek (1202H) Recreational Use Attainability Analysis Summary and Recommendation

A recreational use attainability analysis (RUAA) was conducted on Allen's Creek (1202H) in the summer of 2009 to determine the appropriate recreational use and numeric criteria. Allen's Creek is an unclassified intermittent with pools water body in Austin County, TX, approximately 16 miles in length. It is currently listed on the 2012 Texas Clean Water Act Section 303(d) List of Impaired Water Bodies due to elevated bacteria levels. It was initially listed in 2002.

The RUAA identified that the presumed use of primary contact recreation (PCR) for Allen's Creek should be revised to secondary contact recreation 1 (SCR 1). SCR applies to water bodies where water recreation can occur, but the nature of the recreation does not involve a significant risk of ingestion. SCR 1 applies to intermittent and perennial freshwaters where site-specific information demonstrates that primary contact recreation has little to no likelihood of occurring due to physical characteristics of the water body such as shallow depths or lack of pools.

During the field surveys, field staff did not observe any type of recreation occurring on the stream. A local resident interviewed as a part of the RUAA identified secondary contact recreation, fishing, as occurring in the past on Allen's Creek but has stopped since the wastewater treatment plant started discharging effluent into the stream. All others interviewed for the study stated that primary or secondary contact recreation activities did not occur on the stream. A box of children's toys was located under a bridge crossing along the stream. Physical characteristics of the stream include an average thalweg of 0.26 meters (10.24 in), no pools greater than one meter deep and an average flow of 3.4 cubic feet per second, although only in the lower half of the stream possibly from the wastewater treatment plant. Public access in the headwaters is not limited as the stream begins in the City of Sealy and flows adjacent to a sports field and a residential area. The remainder of the stream flows through a rural area surrounded by private property.

Naturally low water levels decrease the likelihood of PCR use. Allen's Creek has a shallow average depth and no evidence of PCR, supporting reclassification to SCR1. In accordance with §307.4 (j)(3)(C) of the Texas Surface Water Quality Standards, the TCEQ recommends a reclassification from PCR to SCR1 with the corresponding geometric mean of 630 colonies *E. coli*/100mL for all of Allen's Creek, from the confluence with the Brazos River, two miles northeast of Wallis, to the headwaters one mile north of IH 10 in Austin County. This reclassification is appropriate due to "natural, ephemeral, intermittent low flow conditions or water levels" in accordance with reasons specified in 40 CFR §131.10(g)(2).

Prior to changing the currently assigned recreational use of Allen's Creek in the Texas Surface Water Quality Standards, the TCEQ would provide additional public notice and opportunity for public comment. In addition, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency would review this proposed change under the provisions of the federal Clean Water Act.