

Armstrong Creek (1223A) Recreational Use Attainability Analysis Summary and Recommendation

A recreational use-attainability analysis (RUAA) was conducted on Armstrong Creek (1223A) in the summer of 2009 to determine the appropriate recreational use and numeric criteria.

Armstrong Creek is an unclassified intermittent water body in north central Texas, approximately 17 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 2006.

The RUAA identified that the presumed use of primary contact recreation (PCR) for Armstrong Creek should be revised to secondary contact recreation 2 (SCR 2). 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 2 applies to water bodies where water recreation activities do not involve a significant risk of ingestion and where activities occur less frequently than for secondary contact recreation 1 due to physical characteristics of the water body or limited public access.

During the field surveys, field staff did not observe any PCR occurring on the stream, nor did they find any evidence of PCR. A landowner interviewed stated they did not use the creek for PCR, nor had they ever seen or heard of anyone using it for PCR. Physical characteristics of the stream include an average thalweg of 0.10 meters (3.94 in) and no pools greater than one meter deep. Public access is very limited. There are three bridge crossings and the stream flows predominately through private lands.

Naturally low water levels and limited accessibility decrease the likelihood of PCR use. Armstrong Creek is extremely shallow and has very little public access, supporting reclassification to SCR 2. In accordance with §307.4 (j)(3)(C) of the Texas Surface Water Quality Standards, the TCEQ recommends a reclassification from PCR to SCR 2 with the corresponding geometric mean of 1030 colonies *E. coli*/100mL for all of Armstrong Creek, from its confluence with the Leon River downstream of Leon Reservoir, upstream to its headwaters in Erath County 6.2 miles east of State Hwy 16. 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 Armstrong 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.