

Sweetwater Creek (1222E) Recreational Use Attainability Analysis Summary and Recommendation

A recreational use-attainability analysis (RUAA) was conducted on Sweetwater Creek (1222E) in the summer of 2009 to determine the appropriate recreational use and numeric criteria. Sweetwater Creek is an unclassified intermittent water body in central Texas, approximately 24 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 evidence indicating the designated use of primary contact recreation (PCR) for Sweetwater Creek is appropriate. PCR 1 is defined in §307.3 (a) of the Texas Surface Water Quality Standards as activities that are presumed to involve a significant risk of ingestion of water (e.g. wading by children, swimming, water skiing, diving, tubing, surfing, and the following whitewater activities: kayaking, canoeing, and rafting).

During the field surveys one out of five individuals interviewed for the study identified PCR as a personal use and two had observed swimming and wading by children on the stream. In addition, one landowner had heard of PCR on the creek. Physical characteristics of the stream include an average thalweg of 0.22 meters (8.66 in) and presence of pools greater than one meter deep. Public access is described as very limited with five bridge crossings on the stream as it flows through a rural watershed.

Due to evidence collected during the RUAA determining that PCR is an existing use, the TCEQ recommends the Sweetwater Creek retain its PCR use and corresponding geometric mean criteria of 126 colonies *E. coli*/100mL for the entire segment, from its confluence with Copperas Creek, upstream to its headwaters, 6.3 miles west of Comanche in Comanche County. This recommendation is in accordance with §307.4 (j)(1) of the Texas Surface Water Quality Standards.