

Thompson Creek (1242D) Recreational Use Attainability Analysis Summary and Recommendation

A recreational use attainability analysis (RUAA) was conducted on the Thompson Creek (1242D) in the summer of 2009 to determine the appropriate recreational use and numeric criteria. Thompson Creek is an unclassified intermittent with pools water body in Brazos County, TX, approximately 18 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 Thompson 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. Interviews with water resource professionals familiar with the watershed could not confirm any type of recreation that occurs on the stream. The report states that fishing tackle and a children's toy was found on the stream but the only thing revealed in the pictures that might fit that category was an old bicycle. Physical characteristics of the stream include an average thalweg of 0.44 meters (17.32 in), no pools greater than one meter deep and an average flow of 5.0 cubic feet per second, although much of that was at the last study site. Public access is described as very limited with the stream flowing through private land in a rural area with the only access being seven bridge crossings.

Naturally low water levels decrease the likelihood of PCR use. Thompson 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 Thompson Creek, from the confluence with the Brazos River upstream to the confluence of Thompson's Branch, north of FM 1687. 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 Thompson 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.