

## Big Cypress Creek Below Lake Bob Sandlin (0404) Recreational Use Attainability Analysis Summary and Recommendation

A recreational use attainability analysis (RUAA) was conducted on Big Cypress Creek Below Lake Bob Sandlin (0404) in the summer of 2010 to determine the appropriate recreational use and numeric criteria. Big Cypress Creek Below Lake Bob Sandlin is a classified perennial water body running through Camp, Morris, Titus, and Upshur counties. The creek is approximately 33 miles in length. It was identified in 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 evidence indicating the designated use of primary contact recreation (PCR) 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 surveys, field staff did not observe any primary contact recreation occurring on the stream. One interviewee stated that they had witnessed someone swimming several years ago but most interviewees indicated that people prefer to swim and fish at nearby lakes. Field staff recorded three people fishing from a boat at one site and fishing tackle at several sites. A local Texas Parks and Wildlife game warden reported that the downstream portion of the creek is used for boating and fishing but that it is highly unlikely that any swimming occurs in the segment. The most downstream portion of the creek is accessible from boat launches on Lake O' the Pines and at Sand Crossing Road (station BCC4). There were no parks or playgrounds at any of the sites. Three of seven sites were accessible from public roads; however, entering the creek was moderately difficult due to steep slopes, thick vegetation, deep mud, and some barbed wire fences across the creek. Despite extreme drought conditions, all of the sites on this creek had substantial pools deeper than one meter. The average thalweg depth was 0.95 m (37.4 in).

Limited public access, deep mud, channel obstructions, and thick vegetation decrease the likelihood of PCR use. 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 Big Cypress Creek Below Lake Bob Sandlin, from the Fort Sherman Dam to Lake O' the Pines. This reclassification is appropriate due to "physical conditions related to the natural features of the water body" in accordance with reasons specified in 40 CFR §131.10(g)(5).

Prior to changing the currently assigned recreational use of Big Cypress Creek Below Lake Bob Sandlin 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.