

## Hart Creek (0404C) Recreational Use Attainability Analysis Summary and Recommendation

A recreational use attainability analysis (RUAA) was conducted on Hart Creek (0404C) in the summer of 2010 to determine the appropriate recreational use and numeric criteria. Hart Creek is an unclassified perennial water body running through Titus County. The creek is approximately 12 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 2006.

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 or secondary contact recreation occurring on the stream. Interviews indicated that no PCR or SCR occurs on the creek. Stakeholders prefer nearby lakes for primary contact recreation rather than Hart Creek. There were no parks, playgrounds, or boat ramps at any of the sites. Public access to Hart Creek is limited because much of the creek is on private property that generally has barbed wire fences along the property line. Entering the creek was moderately difficult due to steep slopes, thick vegetation, and deep mud. Hart Creek had an average thalweg depth of 0.4 m (15.7 in) and three sites with pools deeper than one meter.

Limited public access and shallow average depths decrease the likelihood of PCR use in the stream. 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 Hart Creek, from north of Mount Pleasant to its confluence with Big Cypress Creek. 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 Hart 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.