

Paradise Creek (0230A) Recreational Use Attainability Analysis Summary and Recommendation

A recreational use-attainability analysis (RUAA) was conducted on Paradise Creek (0230A) in the summer of 2013 to determine the appropriate recreational use and numeric criteria. Paradise Creek is an unclassified intermittent with pools water body that is approximately 46 miles in length. The creek is located in Wilbarger and Foard counties. It was identified in the 2014 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 Paradise 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 form of recreation occurring on the stream. PCR was reported as an observed but infrequent use since water levels were rarely adequate for such activities. There were 4 instances of personal PCR and 1 instance each for both observed and heard of use of PCR. One interviewee reported that they had observed children and adults fishing prior to the creek drying up around 2007. Paradise Creek had an average thalweg of 0.03 meters (1.18 inches) and lacked pools deeper than 1 meter. No flow or dry conditions were encountered during both surveys. The stream was experiencing severe to moderate drought conditions during the time of the surveys. Public access is available at 18 of 27 survey sites via bridge crossings. There are no public parks on the creek. There are many public road crossings on the creek, but access is often impeded by private fences at or near the bridges.

Naturally low water levels decrease the likelihood of PCR use. Paradise Creek has a shallow average depth and no accounts 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 Paradise Creek, from the confluence of the Wichita River west of Wichita Falls in Wichita County to the upstream perennial portion of the stream east of Electra in Wichita County. 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 Paradise 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.