

## Sweetwater Creek (0299A) Recreational Use Attainability Analysis Summary and Recommendation

A recreational use-attainability analysis (RUAA) was conducted on Sweetwater Creek (0299A) in the summer of 2013 to determine the appropriate recreational use and numeric criteria. Sweetwater Creek is an unclassified perennial water body that is approximately 69 miles in length. The creek is located in Gray and Wheeler counties. 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) 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, field staff did not observe any form of recreation occurring on the stream. Interviews with stakeholders and landowners indicated that PCR does occasionally occur on the creek in the spring, fall, and winter if there is sufficient water. There were 6 instances of personal use PCR, 4 instances of observed PCR, and 3 reports of heard of use. Sweetwater Creek first dried up in 1963 and according to interviewees the creek is often too dry or shallow to allow primary contact recreation. Sweetwater Creek had an average thalweg of 0.18 meters (7.06 inches) and had pools deeper than 1 meter. Stream flow was normal to dry during both surveys. The stream was experiencing extreme to moderate drought conditions during the time of the surveys. Public access is available at 10 of 33 survey sites via bridge crossings. There are no public parks on the creek. Access into the stream is moderately easy due to low banks and grassy vegetation.

Due to evidence collected during the RUAA determining that PCR is an existing use, the TCEQ recommends Sweetwater Creek retain its PCR use and corresponding geometric mean criteria of 126 colonies *E. coli*/100mL for the entire segment, from the Oklahoma State Line in Wheeler County to the upstream perennial portion of the stream northwest of Wheeler in Wheeler County (tributary of North Fork Red River). This recommendation is in accordance with §307.4 (j)(1) of the Texas Surface Water Quality Standards.