

Salt Creek (0810D) Recreational Use Attainability Analysis Summary and Recommendation

A recreational use attainability analysis (RUAA) was conducted on Salt Creek (0810D) in the summer of 2010 to determine the appropriate recreational use and numeric criteria. Salt Creek is an unclassified intermittent with pools water body in central Texas, approximately 11 miles in length. It is currently listed on the 2010 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 Salt 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, nor did they find any evidence. Three of seven sites were dry during the study. Only two of the sites with water present were accessible to the public. The two sites had average thalweg depths of 0.24 meters (9.45 in) and greater than 0.54 meters (> 21.26 in). The stream flows through a rural watershed and public access was only available at three of seven sites via bridge crossings.

Naturally low water levels and limited accessibility decrease the likelihood of PCR use. Salt Creek has few public road crossings and a shallow average depth, 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 Salt Creek, the eleven mile stretch of Salt Creek running upstream from the confluence with Garrett Creek, Wise 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 Salt 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.