

## San Bernard River Above Tidal (1302) Recreational Use Attainability Analysis Summary and Recommendation

A recreational use-attainability analysis (RUAA) was conducted on San Bernard River Above Tidal (1302) in the summer of 2011 to determine the appropriate recreational use and numeric criteria. San Bernard River Above Tidal is a classified perennial water body within Austin, Colorado, Wharton, Fort Bend, and Brazoria counties, approximately 107 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 that the presumed use of primary contact recreation (PCR) for San Bernard River Above Tidal 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).

Primary contact recreation was not observed during the field surveys, but several PCR activities were reported in the interviews (e.g. swimming, children wading, tubing, and water skiing). Evidence of PCR included rope swings and children's toys. There were 28 instances of personal use of PCR and 28 instances of observed PCR recorded in interviews. Recreation activities observed during field surveys included: kayaking, boating, and fishing. Other activities reported in interviews included adults wading, boating, kayaking, and fishing. Fishing tackle was recorded at several sites during the surveys. San Bernard River Above Tidal is a popular paddling destination. There is one public park that has access to the river but private property surrounds much of the water body. Located on the downstream end of the river there is a Boy Scout camp with riverfront access that offers water recreation activities. The San Bernard River Above Tidal had an average thalweg depth of 0.9 m (35.4 in), pools that were deeper than one meter, and an average flow of 8.5 cubic feet per second.

Based on evidence collected during the RUAA study, the TCEQ recommends that San Bernard River Above Tidal retain its primary contact recreation use and corresponding *E. coli* geometric mean criteria of 126 colonies/100mL for the entire segment, the 107 mile stretch of San Bernard River Above Tidal from a point 2.0 miles upstream of SH35 in Brazoria County to the county road southeast of New Ulm in Austin County, in accordance with §307.4 (j) (1) of the Texas Surface Water Quality Standards.