

West Bernard Creek (1302B) Recreational Use Attainability Analysis Summary and Recommendation

A recreational use-attainability analysis (RUAA) was conducted on West Bernard Creek (1302B) in the summer of 2011 to determine the appropriate recreational use and numeric criteria. West Bernard Creek is an unclassified perennial water body within Colorado and Wharton counties, approximately 40 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 that the presumed use of primary contact recreation (PCR) for West Bernard 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).

Primary contact recreation was not observed during field surveys. There were a total of five records of personal use of PCR (e.g. swimming, tubing, children wading) collected from interviews. Field staff observed one occurrence of fishing during the RUAA survey and there were thirteen records of personal use of secondary contact recreation (e.g. wading adults, boating, kayaking, fishing). Fishing tackle and foot prints were observed at several sites along West Bernard Creek. Access to the creek ranged from moderately easy to moderately difficult. Pool information was not available but 35% of sites had depths greater than one meter. The average thalweg depth on West Bernard Creek was 0.7 m (27.6 in) and the average flow was 28.8 cubic feet per second.

Based on evidence collected during the RUAA study, the TCEQ recommends that West Bernard Creek retain its primary contact recreation use and corresponding *E. coli* geometric mean criteria of 126 colonies/100mL for the entire segment, the 40 mile stretch of West Bernard Creek from the confluence with the San Bernard River Above Tidal downstream of US highway 59 to the headwaters approximately 40 miles upstream near FM 1093, in accordance with §307.4 (j) (1) of the Texas Surface Water Quality Standards.