

Navasota River Above Lake Mexia (1210A) Recreational Use Attainability Analysis Summary and Recommendation

A recreational use-attainability analysis (RUAA) was conducted on the Navasota River Above Lake Mexia (1210A) in the summer of 2010 to determine the appropriate recreational use and numeric criteria. The Navasota River Above Lake Mexia is an unclassified intermittent water body in central Texas, approximately 25 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, and was initially listed in 2002.

The RUAA identified that the presumed use of primary contact recreation (PCR) for the Navasota River Above Lake Mexia should be revised to secondary contact 1 (SCR 1). SCR 1 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 contractors did not observe any type of recreation occurring on the stream. Interviews of landowners conducted during the study identified one landowner as using the stream for picnicking and the stream bed for hunting arrowheads when the stream is dry. Another landowner has witnessed fishing on the stream but no other recreational activities. There were no indications of human use at any of the sampling sites and no surrounding conditions that promote primary or secondary contact recreation activities. Physical characteristics of the river include an average thalweg of 0.5 meters (19.69 in), pools greater than one meter deep and had an average flow of 2.3 cubic feet per second. The stream flows through a rural watershed and is accessible to the general public via 3 bridge crossings with no public parks or trails.

Natural water levels and limited accessibility decrease the likelihood of primary contact recreation use. There are few public road crossings and a lack of evidence of primary contact recreation, supporting reclassification to SCR1. Secondary Contact Recreation 2 is not justified, given the average thalweg depth of the stream and the presence of pools greater than one meter deep. In accordance with §307.4 (j) (3)(C) of the Texas Surface Water Quality Standards the TCEQ recommends a reclassification of the contact recreation use to secondary contact recreation 1 and a corresponding geometric mean of 630 colonies/100mL for all of the Navasota River Above Lake Mexia from the confluence with the headwaters of Lake Mexia in Limestone County to a point 1.25 miles upstream of SH 31 in Hill County 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 the Navasota River Above Lake Mexia in the Texas Surface Water Quality Standards, TCEQ would provide additional public notice and opportunity for public comment; and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency would review this proposed change under the provisions of the federal Clean Water Act.