

## Little Cypress Bayou (0501B) Recreational Use-Attainability Analysis Summary and Recommendation

A recreational use-attainability analysis (RUAA) was conducted on Little Cypress Bayou (0501B) in the summer of 2015 to determine the appropriate recreational use and numeric criteria. Little Cypress Bayou is an unclassified tidal stream that is approximately 9 miles in length. The creek is located in Orange County. It was identified in the 2018 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 Little Cypress Bayou should be revised to secondary contact recreation 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, field staff did not observe any type of recreation occurring on the stream. Eleven interviews were conducted with stakeholders and landowners. One reported that they had witnessed swimming. This was the only account of PCR on the water body. Fishing gear was the only evidence of recreation. Little Cypress Bayou had an average thalweg of 1.35 meters (53.12 in) and one substantial pool deeper than 1 meter. Stream flow was high to normal during the surveys, and dry at one site. The Palmer Drought Severity Index was moderately wet at the time of the surveys. The downstream section of Little Cypress Bayou flows through the Blue Elbow Swamp – Tony Houseman State Park and Wildlife Management Area. Activities in the WMA include canoeing, hunting, fishing, and hiking. There is a boat ramp in the WMA and one other public boat ramp. Access from the stream bank was moderately difficult in many locations due to slick banks and dense vegetation. Overall there is limited public access due to private property fences upstream and downstream of public road crossings.

Limited public access, steep banks and dense vegetation decrease the likelihood of PCR on Little Cypress Bayou. 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 Little Cypress Bayou, from the confluence of the Sabine River upstream to the headwater near the intersection of S Teal Rd and Dunromin Rd north of Orange. This reclassification is appropriate due to

“physical conditions related to the natural features of the water body” in accordance with reasons specified in 40 CFR §131.10(g)(5).

Prior to changing the currently assigned recreational use of Little Cypress Bayou 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.