

South Lilly Creek (0409B) Recreational Use-Attainability Analysis Summary and Recommendation

A recreational use-attainability analysis (RUAA) was conducted on South Lilly Creek (0409B) in the summer of 2016 to determine the appropriate recreational use and numeric criteria. South Lilly Creek is an unclassified intermittent with perennial pools water body that is approximately 15 miles in length. The creek is located in Upshur, Wood, and Camp counties. 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 South Lilly 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. One interviewee of 11 reported personal use of PCR (swimming) approximately 30 years prior. Another interviewee reported they had heard of hunting on the creek. The Palmer Drought Severity Index indicated very wet to extremely wet conditions at the time of surveys. South Lilly Creek had an average thalweg of 0.48 meters (18.89 in) and no substantial pools deeper than 1 meter. Stream flow was normal to slightly high during the surveys. Public access was available at seven survey sites via bridge crossings and two sites were only accessible via private property. Access at the road crossings was limited by private property fencing upstream and downstream of the crossings. There are no public parks on the creek. Access from the stream bank was difficult in many locations due to slick banks, near vertical slopes, and dense vegetation.

Limited public access, steep banks and dense vegetation decrease the likelihood of PCR use. South Lilly Creek has several impediments to recreation and few accounts of PCR, 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 South Lilly Creek, from the confluence of Lilly Creek to approximately 2 miles west of Farm-to-Market (FM) 1647. This reclassification is appropriate due to “natural, ephemeral, intermittent or low flow conditions or water levels prevent the attainment of the use” in accordance with reasons specified in 40 CFR §131.10(g)(2).

Prior to changing the currently assigned recreational use of South Lilly 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.