



Improving Water Quality in the Lavaca River Above Tidal and Rocky Creek

A Project to Protect Recreational Uses

High levels of bacteria have been found since 2008 in the Lavaca River Above Tidal (Segment 1602) and since 2014 in Rocky Creek (Segment 1602B). High concentrations of bacteria, which are found in both human and animal waste, may indicate a health risk to people who swim or wade in the water body—activities called “contact recreation” in the state’s standards for water quality.

In response to these conditions, people who have a stake in the watershed worked with the TCEQ to develop a total maximum daily load (TMDL) and a plan to implement it. A TMDL is like a budget—it determines the amount (or load) of bacteria that the creek can receive and still support safe recreation. The allowable load is then allocated among categories of sources within the watershed. The implementation plan (I-Plan) outlines the measures that will be used to reduce pollution.

Learn more about water quality standards, monitoring, and TMDLs by reading *Preserving and Improving Water Quality*, available on our website at www.tceq.texas.gov/goto/tmdl/.

Project Watershed

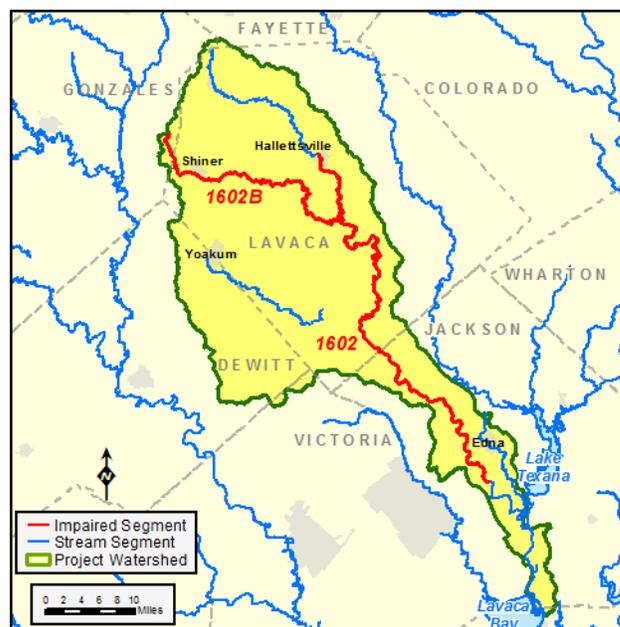
The Lavaca River Above Tidal (Segment 1602) and Rocky Creek (Segment 1602B) are located on the Texas Gulf Coast. The watershed of the combined segments lies primarily in Lavaca and Jackson counties. The above-tidal portion of the Lavaca River is a perennial (always flowing) stream. Rocky Creek, a tributary of the Lavaca River, is also perennial, and joins the Lavaca River just below the city of Hallettsville.

Rocky Creek arises in northwest Lavaca County west of State Highway 95 near Shiner. It flows 23.5 miles through Lavaca County and ends at its confluence with the Lavaca River. The Lavaca River Above Tidal flows from a point 5.3 miles downstream of US 59 in Jackson County to a point 3.4 miles upstream of SH 95 in Lavaca County.

Project Development

The TCEQ began this project in 2016. The Texas Water Resources Institute (TWRI) provided support for the technical work as well as stakeholder engagement.

The tasks of TWRI personnel included compiling and analyzing all available bacteria data and considering sources of the bacteria and their relative contributions, along with stakeholder outreach and development.



TWRI staff completed a technical report of their investigations, as well as a draft TMDL document. The stakeholders and TWRI also developed the I-Plan. In addition, the stakeholders developed a Watershed Protection Plan (WPP) for the streams, which was approved by the EPA in April 2018.

Public Participation

In all its TMDL projects, the TCEQ gathers opinions and information from people who represent government, permitted facilities, agriculture, business, environmental, and community and private interests in the watershed.

TWRI coordinated public participation in this project, including public meetings, which began in October 2016 and continued throughout the project duration. They helped form a stakeholder group to guide the decision-making process for the project.

The TWRI will continue working with stakeholders to track implementation of the WPP and I-Plan.

For More Information

Contact one of the people listed following, or visit the project website at:

www.tceq.texas.gov/waterquality/tmdl/nav/lavaca-rocky/lavaca-rocky-bacteria

TCEQ Project Manager

Jazmyn Milford, TMDL Program
512-239-1524
Jazmyn.Milford@tceq.texas.gov

Texas Water Resources Institute

Michael Schramm, Research Associate
979-458-9191
Michael.Schramm@ag.tamu.edu

TMDL Dates

Start Date: 2016

TCEQ Adoption: August 14, 2019

EPA Region 6 Approval: October 25, 2019

I-Plan Dates

Start Date: 2016

TCEQ Approval: August 14, 2019

Project Highlights

- Public meetings began in 2016.
- The TWRI completed a technical report on their investigations, as well as a draft TMDL document.
- The TWRI formed a stakeholder group to develop an I-Plan for the water bodies. The stakeholders completed an I-Plan with assistance from TWRI.
- The TCEQ accepted public comments on the draft TMDLs and I-Plan from February 1 through March 5, 2019.
- The commission adopted the TMDLs and approved the I-Plan on August 14, 2019. The EPA approved the TMDLs on October 25, 2019.

Visit our website at: <www.tceq.texas.gov/goto/tmdl/>