



Improving Water Quality in Oso Bay

A Project to Protect Recreational Uses

Water quality testing found that concentrations of bacteria are sometimes elevated in Oso Bay (Segment 2485). Bacteria from human and animal waste may indicate the presence of disease-causing microorganisms that pose a threat to people who swim or wade in the creek and bay—activities called “contact recreation” in the state’s standards for water quality.

In response to these conditions, TCEQ developed a total maximum daily load (TMDL) for Oso Bay. The goal of a TMDL is to determine the amount (or load) of a pollutant that a body of water can receive and still support its beneficial uses. The allowable load is then allocated among categories of sources within the watershed.

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/.

Oso Bay Watershed

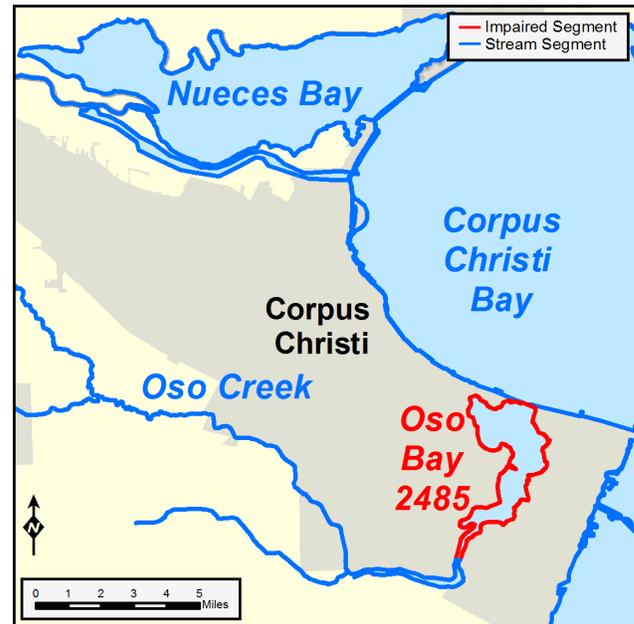
The Oso Bay watershed drains an area of approximately 255 square miles and is located in the northern-most portion of the Nueces-Rio Grande Coastal Basin. The watershed is wholly contained within Nueces County. The bay is an enclosed, shallow body of water situated along the southern shore of Corpus Christi Bay, with a surface area of approximately seven square miles.

Oso Bay receives fresh water from Oso Creek, a stream whose flow is dominated by permitted discharges. Oso Bay exchanges saltwater with Corpus Christi Bay. Ecologically, Oso Bay provides habitat for many plants and animals, and plays an influential role in water purification and storm protection.

Corpus Christi is the only major metropolitan area that lies within the watershed’s boundaries. The only other large community within the watershed is Robstown. Economic activities in and around the bay include oil and gas refining and production, agriculture, manufacturing, and tourism.

Project Development

TCEQ initiated the TMDL project for Oso Bay in September 2004. The Center for Coastal Studies at Texas A&M University–Corpus Christi did most of the technical studies that supported development of the TMDL. Their work included collecting additional data,



analyzing microbial data, developing a model for bacteria loading to the bay, and completing a technical report of their observations and conclusions.

In a separate but related project, TCEQ also developed a TMDL for bacteria concentrations in Oso Creek. Stakeholders are working with TCEQ to develop a plan to implement both the Oso Creek and Oso Bay TMDLs (I-Plan). An I-Plan explains the measures that will be used to reduce bacteria in the streams.

Public Participation

In all its projects, TCEQ gathers opinion and information from people who represent government, permitted facilities, agriculture, business, environmental, and community and private interests in the watershed. Staff from the Center for Coastal Studies at Texas A&M University–Corpus Christi are facilitating stakeholder participation in the I-Plan.

For More Information

Contact the project manager, or visit the project website at:

<www.tceq.texas.gov/waterquality/tmdl/67-osobaybacteria.html>

TCEQ Project Manager

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Oso Bay TMDL Dates

TCEQ Adoption: August 22, 2007

EPA Region 6 Approval: June 6, 2008

I-Plan Date

Start Date: September 1, 2013

Projected TCEQ Approval: 2022

Highlights

- The Commission adopted the Oso Bay TMDL on August 22, 2007. EPA approved it on June 6, 2008.
- In summer 2014, the Center for Coastal Studies at Texas A&M University–Corpus Christi began leading the stakeholder effort to develop an I-Plan for Oso Bay and Oso Creek.

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