



Improving Water Quality in Grace Creek and the Sabine River

Assessing Water Quality

In Grace Creek and a portion of the Sabine River, high concentrations of bacteria were documented in the streams beginning in 2000. These bacteria, which are found in both human and animal waste, may indicate a health risk to people who swim or waded in the streams. These activities are referred to as “contact recreation” in the state’s standards for surface water quality.

In response to these conditions, the Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) Team managed a study to collect additional water quality data to support determination of an appropriate management strategy for the creek.

Learn more about water quality standards, monitoring, and TMDLs by reading [Preserving and Improving Water Quality](#)¹, available on our website and in print.

Project Watershed

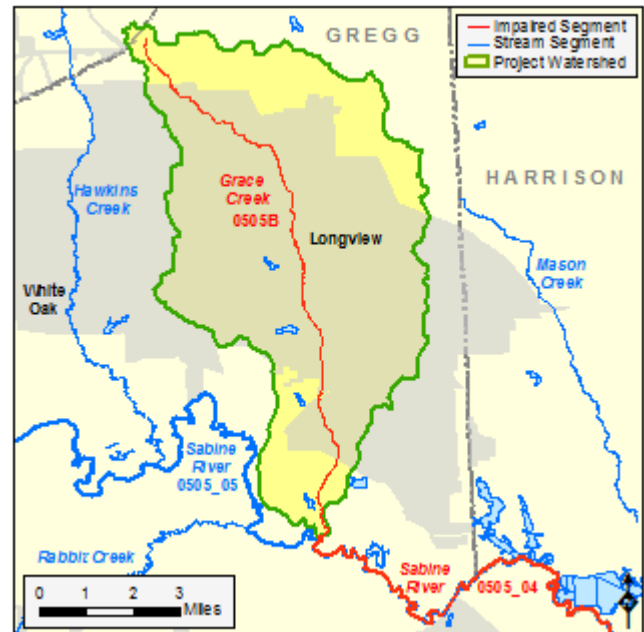
The project watershed was located in and around Longview, Texas, and included the entire drainage area of Grace Creek (Segment 0505B) and a portion of the drainage area of Sabine River above Toledo Bend Reservoir (Segment 0505_04). This portion of the Sabine River includes the area from Grace Creek downstream to Hatley’s Creek in Gregg County. Grace Creek flows through the city of Longview.

The project watershed, at about 116 square miles, is in the Sabine River Basin and the South-Central Plains ecoregion. A popular hike and bike trail runs beside Grace Creek in Longview. To varying degrees, storm-water runoff from agricultural, industrial, and urban areas affects water quality in the segments.

Project Development

Preliminary planning for this project began in April 2012. The Texas Institute for Applied Environmental Research (TIAER) began working on the project under contract in September 2012. TIAER collected data under an approved quality assurance project plan from January 2013 through August 2014. The data were added to TCEQ’s Surface Water Quality Information System (SWQMIS) for use in future assessment of Grace Creek.

Based on the data collected, TCEQ opted to conduct a recreational use attainability analysis (RUAA). The Standards Team recommended a change in the contact recreation standard for the creek, which was included



in the 2018 revisions to the Texas Surface Water Quality Standards along with those of several other streams in the Sabine River Basin. Revision of the revised standard is pending EPA approval. See the recommendations, current approval status of the revision, and other reports on our webpage [Sabine River Basin Recreational Use Attainability Analysis 2](#)².

Public Participation

In all its projects, TCEQ seeks opinions and information from people who represent government, permitted facilities, agriculture, business, environmental, and community and private interests in the watershed. TIAER coordinated public involvement in this project.

For More Information

Visit the project webpage at:

www.tceq.texas.gov/waterquality/tmdl/99-grace-creek-bacteria.html

Send us an email at tmdl@tceq.texas.gov or call us at 512-239-6682.

¹ <https://www.tceq.texas.gov/publications/gi/gi-351>

² <https://www.tceq.texas.gov/waterquality/standards/ruaas/multisabine05>

Project Dates

Start Date: April 2012

End Date: August 2014

Project Highlights

- At the April 24, 2012 meeting of the Sabine River Authority Basin Steering Committee, TCEQ staff discussed issues related to Grace Creek and the need to initiate this project.
- TIAER and TCEQ hosted a public meeting about the project on September 20, 2012, at the Longview Public Library. Project staff explained its purpose and asked stakeholders for feedback and for advice on appropriate monitoring locations.
- A project update was provided to stakeholders on April 8, 2014, at the Sabine River Basin Steering Committee meeting in Longview, Texas.
- The data collected for this project were added to TCEQ's SWQMIS for use in future assessment of Grace Creek.

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