Texas Commission on Environmental Quality
San Jacinto River Basin
Best Management Practices Rule Making for APOs
November 10, 2020

Jill Boullion, Executive Director
We preserve land along streams for flood control, clean water, and wildlife.
Conservation Focus Area

Lake Houston (Upper San Jacinto River) Watershed

85% of Metro Houston’s drinking water

Population centers are downstream and impacted by flooding
Area of Floodplain Examined:
17,742 acres
1995

Impact: 7.38%
1,308 acres
2000
Impact:
12.68%
2,249 acres
2010

Impact: 19.67%
3,489 acres
Impact: 25.36%
4,499 acres
Impact: 30.98%
5,496 acres

2017
SAN JACINTO RIVER MAKES MOST ENDANGERED LIST

By Ellen Tyler

American Rivers, a national non-profit organization dedicated to protecting and restoring healthy natural rivers, has named the San Jacinto River as one of America's Most Endangered Rivers of 2006. It is ninth on a list of ten rivers.

The Threat

The San Jacinto River system is threatened by sedimentation and bank erosion due to sand mining operations. Sand mining involves cutting down and excavating of forests and wetlands to access adjacent sandy riverbanks. When intact, these forests and wetlands provide natural filtration and flood protection benefits by absorbing, filtering, and then gradually releasing stormwater into the river.

Unfortunately, sand mining is unregulated in Texas, and companies can clearcut and dig as long as the sediment does not enter the river or fill wetlands. Sediment discharge into the river requires a stormwater permit from the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ). The placement of sediments in the river or adjacent wetlands requires a permit from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. However, recent aerial footage shows evidence of non-permitted spills into the river.

Additionally, in the absence of state regulations, sand mining operations are not required at the end of mining operations to restore the sites to a more natural state. The topsoil is seldom replaced, leaving the land unable to support reforestation. If restored, it would prevent further erosion and rechannel some of the natural flood control and clean water benefits.

What’s At Stake

Sand mining threatens to permanently damage the San Jacinto watershed, and the last remnants of the ecological Big Thicket habitat. A 2004 TCEQ study found that 47 percent of construction sand and gravel mining operations investigated ran facilities without a stormwater permit. According to the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, increased sedimentation in the San Jacinto River has caused severe bank erosion, filling in the Lake Houston Reservoir—which provides drinking water to the Houston Metropolitan area—such as 20 percent. Sedimentation also causes a water supply.
Without remediation this is what the community is left with
RESTORING LAND
QUARRY RECLAMATION KEEPS ANIMALS SAFE

PLEASANTON
CALIFORNIA
WESTERN DIVISION

WILDLIFE THRIVES
PARTNERING WITH THE WILDLIFE HABITAT COUNCIL

VULCAN CONSERVATION BANKS
PARTNERSHIPS HELP PROTECT LAND AND WILDLIFE