

Big Cypress Creek (0405A) within the Cypress Creek River Basin Recreational Use-Attainability Analysis Summary and Recommendation

A recreational use-attainability analysis (RUAA) was conducted on Big Cypress Creek (0405A) in the summer of 2021 to determine the appropriate recreational use and numeric criteria. Big Cypress Creek is an unclassified intermittent with pools water body in Franklin and Wood Counties, TX, approximately 10 miles in length. It is currently listed on the 2024 Texas Clean Water Act Section 303(d) List of Impaired Water Bodies due to elevated bacteria levels. It was initially listed in 2018.

The RUAA identified that the presumed use of primary contact recreation 1 (PCR1) for Big Cypress Creek should be revised to primary contact recreation 2 (PCR2). PCR2 applies to where site-specific information demonstrates that water recreational activities such as swimming or wading by children can occur, but it occurs less frequently than PCR1 due to physical characteristics of the water body or limited public access.

During the field surveys, field staff did not observe any type of recreation occurring on the stream. A total of three interviews were conducted with stakeholders and landowners. Only one interview reported that they knew of people that had fishing holes on their property.

Big Cypress Creek's public access is limited to only alternate public access sites such as public road crossings. It had an average stream thalweg of 0.41 meters (16.1 inches) during the first survey and 0.33 meters (13.0 inches) during the second survey. Big Cypress Creek had 1 persistent substantial pool ≥ 1 meter deep located at a public road crossing site that was present during both the first and second survey. Stream flow was considered low to normal during the first survey and no flow to low flow during the second survey. The Palmer Drought Severity Index was moderately moist during the first survey and very moist during the second survey. Stream bank access was rated moderately difficult to difficult in many locations, due to steep banks and thick vegetation. Big Cypress Creek flows into Lake Cypress Springs, where primary contact recreation is known to occur on that water body.

Due to having no primary contact recreation activities reported, public access only at public road crossings, and flowing into Lake Cypress Springs with known PCR activities, this evidence supports a reclassification of the creek to PCR2. In accordance with §307.4(j)(3)(C) of the Texas Surface Water Quality Standards, TCEQ recommends a reclassification from PCR1 to PCR2 with the corresponding geometric mean of 206 colonies *E. coli*/100mL for all of Big Cypress Creek, from the confluence with Lake Cypress Springs in Franklin County, to approximately 5 mi west of State HWY 37. 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 Big Cypress Creek in the Texas Surface Water Quality Standards, 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.