

# Recreational Use Attainability Analysis for Rocky Creek

## Rocky Creek

Rocky Creek begins at the confluence of the Lavaca River in Lavaca County, flows approximately 36 river miles through Lavaca County, then into Gonzales County where it ends approximately half a mile north of FM 533 in Shiner, Texas. The small watershed includes approximately 11,707 acres in a rural area that is predominantly hay, pasture, and deciduous forest. The only city within the watershed boundary is the City of Shiner.

## What is a Recreational Use Attainability Analysis (RUAA)?

An RUAA is a specific type of Use Attainability Analysis that is conducted to evaluate and determine the correct category of recreational use appropriate for a water body. RUAAs are typically site specific studies that assess attainable recreational uses that can occur based on the physical characteristics of a stream and historical and current recreational uses. In order to assess historical and existing patterns of recreational use, individuals and organizations within the watershed are asked to complete a survey sharing their knowledge of the water body.

## How did we get here?

All creeks, rivers, streams and lakes in Texas have a recreational use category designated by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ). Rocky Creek's current recreational use category is Primary Contact Recreation. Each designation has a corresponding bacteria limit which is monitored by a state or county entity for the TCEQ. Rocky Creek is one of many rural waterbodies listed on the *2014 Texas 303(d) List*. This list is part of the Texas Integrated Report which describes the status of Texas' natural waters based on monitoring data. Rocky Creek is listed as impaired due to elevated levels of *E. coli*. *E. coli* is the indicator bacteria used to assess the possible presence of pathogens that may increase the risk of illness when ingested while participating in contact recreation in a water body.

## Why this approach?

This RUAA will evaluate Rocky Creek's current use of Primary Contact Recreation. The RUAA study will document information that will determine if Primary Contact Recreation is the appropriate use category.

## Funding

Funding for this project is provided through a federal grant from the TCEQ to the Texas Water Resources Institute (TWRI). The Texas Institute for Applied Environmental Research (TIAER) at Tarleton State University is the managing entity for this RUAA. The project period extends from September 1, 2016 through August 31, 2017.

## Public Participation

Local landowner cooperation and input from the public is crucial to identify survey sites along the creek and access survey sites on private property. Local city/county officials, landowners, as well as the general public will be consulted on their knowledge of how the stream is being used. Public meetings will be held throughout the project to allow stakeholders to provide input and remain informed as the study moves forward.

## Project Objectives

- Conduct an RUAA to document factors affecting recreational use, and the types of recreation occurring currently or historically.
- Facilitate public participation and involvement throughout project activities so that stakeholders make informed decisions about the future of their watershed.

## Contact Information

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