

### The TMDL Process in Texas: Do You Know What It Is?

The Cypress Creek Watershed is one of 14 segments in the northwest Houston area where it has been determined bacteria concentrations are sometimes higher than the criteria set to protect the safety of contact recreation. Activities such as wading, swimming, water skiing, diving, and surfing are called “contact recreation” in the state’s standards for water quality. Bacteria from human and animal waste indicate the presence of disease-causing microorganisms that may pose a health risk.<sup>1</sup> Cypress Creek Segment 1009C (which runs from its confluence with Spring Creek upstream to the confluence of Snake Creek and Mound Creek in Waller County) is included in the project.

The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) has initiated a total maximum daily load (TMDL) project to determine the measures necessary to restore support of the recreational uses of the segments. The goal of the TMDL is to determine the amount (or load) of a pollutant that a body of water can receive and still support the designated uses. The load is then allocated among all the potential sources of pollution within the watershed, and measures to reduce pollutant loads are developed as necessary.

Learn more about water quality standards and management by reading *Clean Water for Texas: Working Together for Water Quality* available on the web at [www.tceq.state.tx.us/implementation/water/tmdl/tmdlprogram.html](http://www.tceq.state.tx.us/implementation/water/tmdl/tmdlprogram.html)<sup>1</sup>

Quoting from their publication, “The TCEQ and the TSSWCB believe it is essential to participate with residents in the watershed when developing plans to reduce pollution. Residents provide the local expertise needed to identify specific problems, target them for cleanup, and help determine what measure will be most effective.” Visit the TCEQ’s TMDL Program Web site for a current listing of projects and opportunities to participate: [www.tceq.state.tx.us/goto/tmdl](http://www.tceq.state.tx.us/goto/tmdl).

*Look Upstream* articles are provided by the Cypress Creek Flood Control Coalition non-profit, community grass-roots organization as a public service. Visit their website [www.ccfcc.org](http://www.ccfcc.org) for more information on needed flood protection, environmental preservation, flood insurance and membership or e-mail to [floodalliance@ccfcc.org](mailto:floodalliance@ccfcc.org).

<sup>1</sup>TMDLs for Bacteria in Fourteen Segments of the Lake Houston Watershed, TCEQ, September 2007

