



Neches Wild and Scenic River Initiative

WATER QUALITY

The State of Texas has the authority to enforce water quality standards, whether a Wild and Scenic River is in place or not. Enforcement is done through the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ). Federal managers of the Wild and Scenic River would have *no enforcement authority* for water quality. It would continue to be the purview of the State.

Designation as a Wild and Scenic River would not change the water quality standards of the river. During the study phase, the study team would look at whether existing state water quality standards are being maintained. If they are not, the study would conclude that the river is not suitable for designation as a Wild and Scenic River.

If the river were designated as a Wild and Scenic River and someone upstream later began violating the existing state water quality standards, the federal managers of the Wild and Scenic River could approach the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality and request the agency to enforce existing laws, but, as stated above, the Wild and Scenic River managers would have no direct enforcement authority.

Source of information: Interagency Wild and Scenic Rivers Coordinating Council, composed of representatives of the federal agencies which manage Wild and Scenic Rivers System

POULTRY FARMING IN STUDY AREA

Poultry farmers have questioned whether Wild and Scenic designation would affect water quality standards for their farms. According to the Texas Soil and Water Conservation Board, there are no poultry farms within the proposed study area of the Neches River.

There are 30 or so poultry farms in Angelina and Cherokee Counties and none in the other counties that border the Neches study area. The closest poultry operation is 3½ miles from the Neches. The next two closest are 3.7 miles and 5.3 miles, respectively. All the others are farther from the river.

None of the farms discharge into streams. They are not required to have permits from the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) because they are “dry litter farms”, with no discharge into streams. The manure is spread on nearby fields, sometimes on the same farm, sometimes sold to others. (By contrast a “wet facility” adds fresh water to the manure and collects waste in a pond. A wet facility would require a permit from TCEQ.)

All the farms have a water quality management plan through the Texas Soil and Water Conservation Board. They have both a litter management plan and a mortality management plan.

The Soil and Water Conservation Board inspects each farm for compliance.