

THE FOLLOWING IS A STATEMENT FROM EAST TEXAS COMMUNITIES NETWORK

DON'T TRASH EAST TEXAS WATERS!

OPPOSE THE LOWERING OF WATER QUALITY FOR EAST TEXAS STREAMS

The Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission (TNRCC) has lowered the water quality standards for approximately 60% of East Texas streams, so-called "unclassified" streams. These streams are the headwaters and tributaries of the major rivers and lakes in East Texas as well as the small creeks that run through our communities and our neighborhoods. Lowering the water quality standards will allow polluters to dump more pollution into these streams, thereby degrading the water and making it difficult or impossible for those streams to maintain a diversity of fish and other aquatic life.

THE CULPRITS:

TNRCC took this action as a result from municipal and industrial polluters who want to be able to put more pollution into East Texas streams and want us to bear the economic burden of their unwillingness to help keep our waters clean. These polluters ignore the fact that most of the unclassified streams in East Texas that have been studied demonstrate higher dissolved oxygen standards than the standards they pressured TNRCC into setting. So the lowering of the standards will mean degradation of EXISTING water quality in East Texas, and all because a few greedy or irresponsible polluters don't want to spend a little more money.

THE IMPACTS:

The lowering of water quality standards for East Texas unclassified streams will have major negative impacts. For example the lowering the standards will:

- **increase water supply treatment costs to downtown cities receiving the dirtier water discharged by upstream cities;
- **adversely affect fish populations and thus have a negative economic impact on areas promoting water-based recreation such as fishing and boating;
- **shift the burden of proof in wastewater permit proceedings from the polluters, who now have to show that their discharges will not violate existing quality in a stream, to State agency officials and/or to the neighboring property owners whose land is likely to be devalued by pollution.

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