

North Fork Guadalupe River

The North Fork of the Guadalupe River is the upper tributary to the Guadalupe River. It rises in the western part of Kerr County. It flows east 29 miles to Hunt where it joins the South Fork Guadalupe River²⁴. The North Fork Guadalupe River is within the Edwards Plateau ecoregion. The segment begins 11.3 miles upstream of Boneyard Draw in Kerr County and continues downstream to its confluence with the Guadalupe River in Kerr County (Fig. 12). The ecological significance of the segment is based upon the following criteria:

1. Biological function – The aquatic and riparian habitats associated with the stream (Fig. 18) support an exceptionally diverse assemblage of invertebrates, fish, reptiles, and birds characteristic of the Edwards Plateau ecoregion. The riparian and canyon forests are dominated by sycamore, willows, green ash, bald cypress, pecan, sugarberry/hackberry, plateau live oak, Texas oak, Ashe juniper, and many other deciduous trees and shrubs.
2. Hydrologic function – Fish and Wildlife Springs are the source of the North Fork Guadalupe River. These springs also issue from the Edwards and associated limestone of the Edwards-Trinity (Plateau) Aquifer. Other springs also contribute to the baseflow. The entire segment is within the Edwards Aquifer drainage area. The riparian habitats function to improve the quality of runoff and groundwater discharge into the river, attenuate peak flood flows, and to some extent, stabilize base flows.
3. Riparian conservation area – The Kerr Wildlife Management Area (WMA) has frontage on the segment and offers water-based recreational opportunities. The WMA has been nominated for inclusion in the Heart of Texas Wildlife Trail.
4. High water quality/exceptional aquatic life/high aesthetic value – The segment has high water quality and is designated an exceptional aquatic life stream¹⁹. The segment also has very high aesthetic value¹⁴. There are numerous rapids and limestone bluffs and formations. The segment supports heavy recreational use.
5. Threatened or endangered species/unique communities – The following rare species associated with aquatic or riparian habitats may occur in or along this segment although most would not be restricted only to the segment habitats: Zone-tailed hawk (St.T), Golden-cheeked warbler (Fed.E, St.E), Black-capped vireo (Fed. E, St.E), Cagle's map turtle (Fed. Candidate, category 1), Tobusch fishhook cactus (Fed.E, St.E).



Figure 18. North Fork Guadalupe River from RR 1340 west of Hunt (11/22/00).