Sycamore Creek

Sycamore Creek rises in southwestern Edwards County and flows into Kinney County, then southwest to the Kinney/Val Verde County line, then south 14 miles forming the county line to its confluence with the Rio Grande 10 miles southeast of Del Rio. The designated segment runs from the Rio Grande confluence upstream to US 90 on the Val Verde/Kinney County line (Fig. 21). The ecological significance of this segment is based upon the following criteria:

1. Biological function – The aquatic and riparian habitats associated with the creek (Fig. 29) support a diverse assemblage of invertebrates, reptiles, fish, and birds due to the overlap, in this region, of the Edwards Plateau and Tamaulipan Brushlands ecoregions. The riparian gallery forest is dominated by sycamore, willows, sugarberry/hackberry, cottonwood, pecan, and huisache.

2. Hydrologic function – Sycamore Creek is a tributary of the Rio Grande and therefore contributes to the baseflow in the Rio Grande below Del Rio. The fringing riparian habitats function to improve the quality of runoff and groundwater discharge into the creek, attenuate peak flood flows, and to some extent, stabilize base flows.

3. Riparian conservation area – None identified.

4. High water quality/exceptional aquatic life/high aesthetic value – This segment is designated an Ecoregion Stream on the basis of benthic macroinvertebrate diversity[1,3].

5. Threatened or endangered species/unique communities – The following rare species associated with aquatic or riparian habitats may occur in or along this segment: the Common black-hawk (St.T), Golden-cheeked warbler (Fed.E, St.E), Black-capped vireo (Fed.E, St.E), Proserpine shiner (St.T), Rio Grande darter (St.T)[1,10], Devils River minnow (St.T)[10,17], Indigo snake (St.T), and Tobusch fishhook cactus (Fed.E, St.E).

Figure 29. Pools (excavated) in Sycamore Creek at US 90 bridge in Kinney County. Stream was not flowing (11/20/00).