

1.10.2 Big Cypress Creek

Big Cypress Creek begins about two miles northeast of Bessmay in Jasper County and flows southeasterly 20 miles before joining the Sabine River in Newton County at Deweyville. Timber production and woodland grazing dominate land use within the 142 square mile watershed (Neitsh 1982). A thick canopy composed of bald cypress (*Taxodium distichum*), water oak (*Quercus nigra*), black willow (*Salix nigra*), box elder (*Acer negundo*), and sweetgum (*Liquidambar styraciflua*) among others shade the majority of Big Cypress Creek. Abundant instream cover is provided by woody debris, overhanging vegetation, and bald cypress knees and roots (Figure 21). The substrate is composed primarily of silt and clay with an abundance of detritus due to a large input of organic material. Bayer et al (1992) collected 25 fish species (Appendix C), including two species intolerant of degradation, from a braided portion of the creek within a large swamp complex. The ecologically significant stream segment is from the confluence with the Sabine River in Newton County upstream to the Newton/Jasper County line.

- **High water quality/exceptional aquatic life/high aesthetic value-** identified as a South Central Plains ecoregion reference stream by the TPWD and received an exceptional aquatic life use rating based on diversity of fish sampled (Bayer et al 1992, Linam et al 2002).

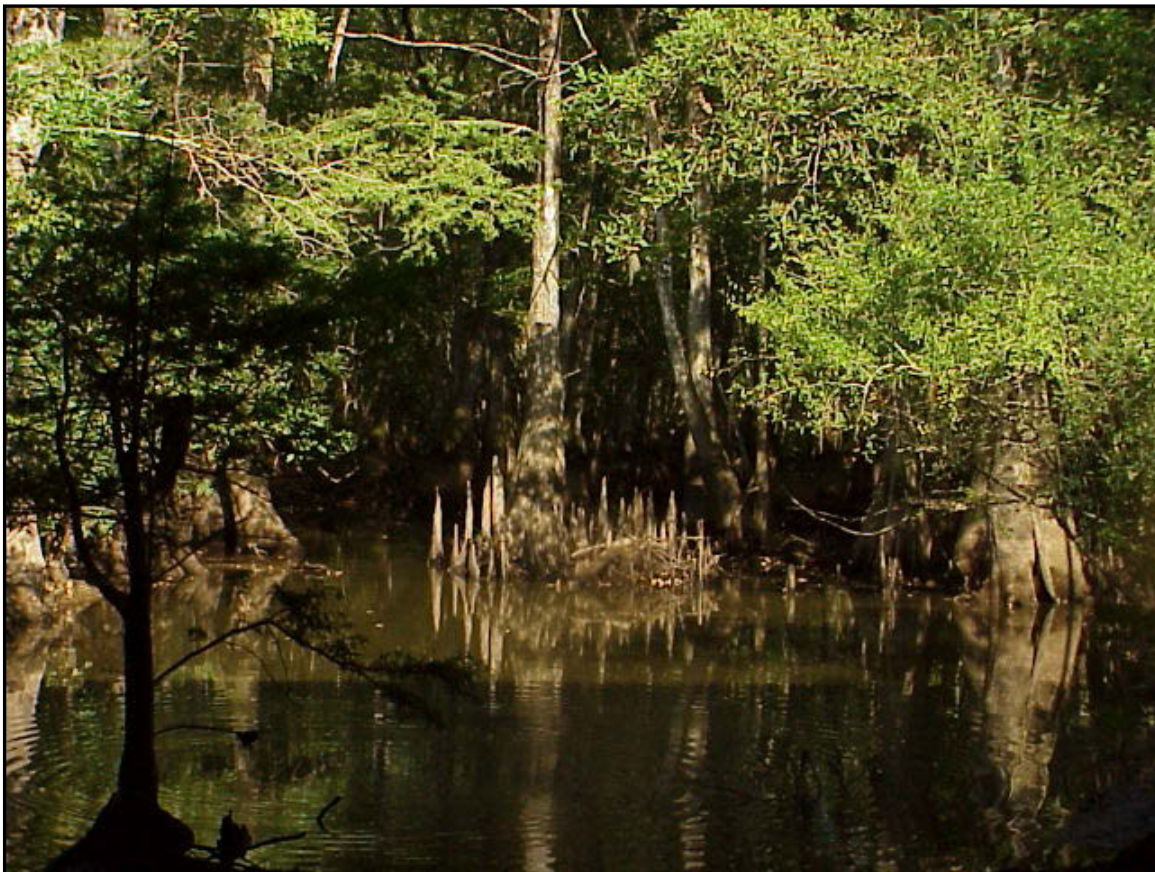


Figure 20. Big Cypress Creek east of SH 87 in Newton County (08/14/01).