

1.9.3 Upper Neches River

The Neches River begins about 12 miles southeast of Canton in Van Zandt County and flows southeasterly about 260 miles before emptying into Sabine Lake between Jefferson and Orange Counties. The river has a large number of tributaries and a drainage area of approximately 10,100 square miles. The upper section of the Neches River drains the majority of the Davy Crockett National Forest and the Angelina National Forest. No levees or major channel modifications occur in the floodplain, which is characterized by frequent flooding and a significant amount of permanent water, sloughs, and oxbows (USFWS 1984). The ecologically significant stream segment is from a point immediately upstream of the confluence of Hopson Mill Creek in Jasper/Tyler County upstream to the Blackburn Crossing Dam in Anderson/Cherokee County (TCEQ classified stream segment 0604).

- **Biological function-** extensive priority one bottomland hardwood habitat performs valuable biological function (USFWS 1984).
- **Riparian conservation area-** fringed by the Davy Crockett National Forest, Angelina National Forest, Big Thicket National Preserve, State Wildlife Scientific Area, and Alabama Creek Wildlife Management Area.
- **High water quality/exceptional aquatic life/high aesthetic value-** Texas Natural Rivers system nominee for exceptional aesthetic value (NPS 1995).
- **Threatened or endangered species/unique communities-** significant due to presence of a unique, exemplary, and unusually extensive natural aquatic community including the creek chubsucker (*Erimyzon oblongus*) (SOC/St.T), alligator snapping turtle (*Macrolemys temminckii*) (SOC/St.T) (Rudolph et al. 2002), blue sucker (*Cycleptus elongatus*) (ST.T.) (Moring 2003), and Neches River rose-mallow (*Hibiscus dasycalyx*) (Candidate for listing) (TPWD 2005).



Figure 7. Neches River south of SH 21 in Houston County (8/14/01).



Figure 8. Neches River south of SH 294 in Houston County (8/13/01).