

1.9.5 Upper Sabine River

Several small streams join in Collin County in the northeast portion of the state to form the Sabine River. From its source to its mouth on Sabine Lake, the river flows about 360 miles and drains approximately 9,756 total square miles, of which about 7,360 square miles are in Texas (Ramos 1999). The upper segment is characterized by a relatively low gradient streambed with a broad deeply cut channel. Numerous marshes, sloughs, bayous, oxbows and backwaters are associated with the river, which has a near total lack of riffle, rapid and waterfall areas through this section (NPS 1995). The banks contain a diverse mixture of bottomland hardwood forests, pine ecosystems and wetland habitats with all stages of the hydric-xeric successional continuum being well represented and a diverse plant and animal assemblages (NPS 1995). There are at least seven natural areas along this section of the river, including "Woodland Cathedral", a natural oxbow lake amphitheater containing a nearly pristine oak-cypress-sweetgum forest. The ecologically significant stream segment is from the headwaters of Toledo Bend Reservoir in Panola County upstream to the Panola/Rusk County line (within TCEQ classified stream segments 0504 and 0505).

- **Biological function-** Texas Natural Rivers Systems nominee for outstandingly remarkable wildlife values (NPS 1985) and extensive priority one bottomland hardwood habitat performs valuable biological function (USFWS 1984).
- **High water quality/exceptional aquatic life/high aesthetic value-** Texas Natural Rivers Systems nominee for outstandingly remarkable scenic value (NPS 1995).
- **Threatened or endangered species/unique communities-** significant due to presence of state threatened paddlefish (*Polyodon spathula*) (St.T) and the alligator snapping turtle (*Macrolemys temminckii*) (SOC/St.T) (Rudolph et al 2002).



Figure 11. Upper Sabine River south of FM 1794 in Panola County (8/13/01).



Figure 12. Upper Sabine River north of FM 1794 in Panola County (8/13/01).