

Pinto Creek

Pinto Creek rises northeast of Brackettville and flows southwest into the Rio Grande (Fig. 21). The significant stream segment includes the entire stream and is within the South Texas Brush Country (Tamaulipan Brushlands) ecoregion. The ecological significance of this segment is based upon the following criteria:

1. Biological function – The aquatic and riparian habitats associated with the creek (Figs. 26&27) 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 – Pinto Springs flow from Georgetown limestone of the Edwards-Trinity (Plateau) Aquifer Artesian Zone². The springs contribute to the baseflow of the creek and therefore to the baseflow of the Rio Grande below Del Rio. The 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), Indigo snake (St.T), and Tobusch fishhook cactus (Fed.E, St.E).



Figure 26. Pinto Creek at US 90 in Kinney County. The riparian woodlands were alive with songbirds (11/20/00).



Figure 27. Pinto Creek at US 90 in Kinney County. Note the rather extensive riparian forested habitat in the photo. Source: Standart DOQ, 1995, 1m CIR.