

*July 7, 2010*

### **DSHS Issues Fish Advisory for Trinity River**

The Texas Department of State Health Services has issued an advisory warning people not to consume any species of fish from portions of the Trinity River in Tarrant, Dallas, Ellis, Kaufman, Henderson, Navarro, Freestone and Anderson counties.

The advisory includes the Clear Fork of the Trinity River from the Benbrook Reservoir Dam and the West Fork of the Trinity River from the Lake Worth Dam through the main stem of the Trinity River downstream to the U.S. Highway 287 bridge on the Freestone-Anderson county line.

The advisory was issued after laboratory testing of fish samples found elevated levels of dioxins and polychlorinated byphenyls, or PCBs.

Long-term consumption of dioxins and PCBs may cause cancer and reproductive, immune system, developmental and liver problems. According to DSHS standards, PCB levels in fish above 0.047 milligrams per kilogram (mg/kg) may pose a risk to human health. PCB levels in the most recent Trinity River samples averaged 0.185 mg/kg and were as high as 1.301 mg/kg. Levels of dioxins averaged 2.64 picograms per gram (pg/g), above the DSHS standard of 2.33 pg/g.

PCBs are industrial chemicals once used as coolants and lubricants in electrical equipment. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency banned PCBs in 1979, but items containing them did not have to be replaced. Dioxins are byproducts of combustion and industrial activity. Dioxins and PCBs degrade slowly in the environment.

Elevated levels of PCBs and dioxins in fish do not pose a health risk for people swimming or participating in other water recreation activities.

DSHS is lifting two aquatic life orders that prohibited people from possessing fish from a smaller section of the Trinity River due to high levels of the pesticide chlordane. Levels of chlordane have dropped and are no longer a health concern. The fish consumption advisory still applies.