



Blue Thumb—In Pictures



April 2018

Join Us in Welcoming Our New Team Member!



This month, we were excited to be joined by our new Blue Thumb Field Educator, Becky Zawalski. She joins us from Ohio, after having completed her graduate degree in Texas. To learn more of her story, check out our interview with Becky at the Blue Thumb Blog: www.bluethumbok.com/the-blue-thumb-blog



Bug Picking Sessions Begin

As soon as winter bug collection season ends, we begin scheduling bug subsampling (“picking”) events. These are scheduled with the assistance of volunteers who often secure a space such as a classroom for the events, which can last anywhere from four hours to an entire day. Volunteers in the surrounding area are brought together to go through their creek sample, picking bugs out of randomly selected squares. After the squares are picked by volunteers, Kim and Candice check each square to make sure every bug has been removed from it. These are great opportunities for volunteers to get even more in-depth knowledge of their creek and what’s living there. Recent bug picking events were held at OKC Metro Tech (top left), in Tahlequah (top center), Wyandotte (top right), Stillwater (bottom left), and at OCU (bottom right).



Spring Quality Assurance

The Quality Assurance procedures built into the Blue Thumb program are an integral and invaluable part of what we do. Quarterly QA sessions allow us to monitor how volunteers are conducting their work and to find areas for improvement. It's also a great opportunity to catch up with our volunteers and always fun to hear how they're doing. During bug picking sessions this spring, volunteers are being asked to fill their testing equipment with water, to ensure they are filling to the proper volume.



Blue Thumb at OCLWA

The Blue Thumb program was well represented at the Oklahoma Clean Lakes and Watersheds Association Conference, held in Stillwater at the beginning of April. Volunteer Terrie Becerra (left) gave a presentation on how students at East Central University are incorporating Blue Thumb monitoring into their education and volunteer Larissa Balzer (right) gave a presentation on how volunteers in Norman are using their Blue Thumb data and experiences as part of their activism and advocacy efforts in that city. A number of other current or former Blue Thumb volunteers also gave presentations on a variety of topics.



Education, Education, Education



Volunteer Vanessa McKinzey joined Rob at Lake McMurtry's Spring Celebration, where they used the stream trailer to demonstrate erosion and riparian areas.



Volunteer Rachel Giles brought the EnviroScape to EarthFest at Martin Nature Park, where she used it to teach about nonpoint source pollution and stormwater runoff.



Kim braved some icy winter weather to be at the Girl Scout STEM Meet at SWOSU, where kids got to see live creek bugs, learn from the EnviroScape and make fish prints.

Five Years!



At the April Commission Meeting, our own Candice Miller was recognized for five years of service with the Oklahoma Conservation Commission. Read about how she was recognized and see more of her great work at our Facebook page, www.facebook.com/bluethumbok