



Blue Thumb—In Pictures

July 2018



Some Sad News

As you may have heard, this month we are saying goodbye to one of our own. Rob Barossi has been with us for more than a year and has made some incredible differences within Blue Thumb, from starting the monthly blog to really expanding our reach within Oklahoma. While we will miss him greatly as he moves to Vermont, we are excited about where he will end up. Good luck on your next great adventure, Rob! You'll always have a home here in Oklahoma!



Summer Bug Collections Commence!

On a much lighter note, after a few months rest from bug picking, summer bug collections have once again resumed! Lasting until the middle of August, Candice, Kim, and Becky will be traveling once more to conduct macroinvertebrate collections and perform QA, in all manners of heat. Hopefully creeks don't dry up before we can get those bugs!



Volunteer carefully performs this season's QA under the watchful eye of Blue Thumb staff



Rob and Becky help volunteers do their bug collections, which they will pick through come fall

Fun in the Sun

This month, Blue Thumb, GRDA, and OSU Extension held two kids day camps, one in Langley and one in Tahlequah. Held for groups between 6-12 years old, each camp taught about the water cycle, water quality, and streams. Kids enjoyed a tour of the Pensecola Dam, the GRDA police boats, and several other educational activities. They also had the opportunity to kick for bugs and seine for fish, Blue Thumb style!



Fish, Fish, and More Fish!

July was very busy when it came to fish collections, with eleven total scheduled for this month alone. Because of the rotating basin schedule, this years collections are mostly around the central part of the state, in more urban areas like OKC and Norman. We were joined by volunteers at their creeks to help out with the fish collections, and we were constantly surprised by the amount of fish species that we caught, including all manners of sunfish, some shiners, a few catfish, and even some common carp. Some of these urban areas had over 13 different species! Of course, we also managed to seine up some reptiles and amphibians as well.



Can you spot the small gar?



Longear Sunfish, which is moderately tolerant of pollution



Red Shiners are tolerant of pollution



Common Snapping Turtle that got caught in the seine

Education, Education, Education

During the middle of the month, Blue Thumb collaborated with several other organizations, including OSU Extension 4-H, OU Water Survey, Ag in the Classroom, and the Grand River Dam Authority (GRDA) to host Riverology 101. This was a 3-day workshop held in the northeast that brought teachers from all over the state. During this time, we showed them some tools that helped to bring some new, fresh, and hands on learning to their classrooms, in addition to teaching them about water quality and non-point source pollution.



OSU Extension and Rob demonstrate the Stream Trailer to teachers. This is a great way to talk about erosion and the differences between a healthy riparian area and a non-healthy riparian area.



Jeri Fleming from OU Water Survey shows the teachers how to make edible aquifers. It's a messy but delicious activity, and the teachers really seemed to enjoy it.



At the very end of the workshop, GRDA took the teachers out on a police boat tour of Grand Lake. Of course, we managed to squeeze a bit of education about water law and some of Grand Lake's history in between the fun.