



Blue Thumb—In Pictures

August 2017



Volunteer Highlight!

Running through a heavily developed residential area of Norman is Brookhaven Creek, which was first monitored by Blue Thumb in 2010. This month, we celebrate the most recent Brookhaven team, Carrie McKenzie, Brooke Morris and Larissa Balzer.

Volunteer Carrie McKenzie is a science educator at the Sam Noble Oklahoma Museum of Natural History. She describes volunteering for Blue Thumb as a chance to fully immerse herself in the science of what we do as well as the contribution to the community it provides. It also comes in handy at her job, where she says, “I am better able to discuss and explore stream ecology and community/stream interaction with my program participants...I have even developed entire camps specifically around sciences behind water quality and ecology.” Carrie notes that monitoring has also had a impact on how she lives her life and the way she now always goes the extra mile to do whatever she can to help the environment, even if it isn’t easy. “I would say the most important thing to come of this experience thus far is that I now feel as though what I do can make a difference.”

Brookhaven Creek monitor Brooke Morris attended a recent Blue Thumb training with the desire to spend her time volunteering for an organization dedicated to helping people understand and preserve the environment. She says the fact that Blue Thumb requires volunteers to attend formal trainings was proof that “this is a solid and strong volunteer program.” While still relatively new to monitoring, Brooke looks forward to using the information and data to become more actively involved in protecting the stream and its surroundings. She has been surprised by how much life she has already seen in a small stream located in the middle of suburbia. She adds, “I was surprised at how simple tests can tell us so much about how our environment is functioning and its overall health! Super cool stuff!”



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It’s Bug Collection Season!

The rainy August has made bug collecting difficult. We have standard operating procedures that require the stream be at base flow for 10 days before we can collect. Even though we haven’t been able to always do bug collections, we have been doing quality assurance sessions at the creek with our volunteers. Below left is in Ada, below center, is Kiowa Creek in Beaver County and below right is Owasso Creek.



Fish Collections 2017!



The rain has also played havoc with our fishing schedule, but we got a few sites done in August. Above left is Tyner Creek, where we had a water moccasin keep us company; below left we were in Town Branch Creek in Tahlequah; center, volunteer Jason is happy to let this little guy go; top right, volunteer Newell is letting us know Spring Creek is cold! Middle right we caught a nice largemouth bass in Ross Branch and bottom right Rob and Kim and under a bridge over troubled water...or just water.

Education, Education, Education



Top left—Rob and Jeri participated in TahlequaH2O with the stream trailer and live creek bugs; top right—Rob, Jeri and Kim organized a field trip for the Institute of Tribal Professionals where we met up with Osage Nation youth to talk about their Blue Thumb experience; bottom left—Jean took students from Carl Albert State College on creek exploring in Poteau; bottom right—Candice led a Blue Thumb training in Idabel, where we got 5 new volunteers!

