



# Blue Thumb—In Pictures



## August 2019

### While the Rain is Away...

Now that the rain has stopped, Blue Thumb staff have been able to schedule and perform the summer bug collections! Kim, Becky, and Candice travel all over the state to get the benthic macroinvertebrate (water bugs!) collections done with volunteers who are currently monitoring a site. These collections are always a fun and interesting thing to do, because it always surprises us on what we find. The volunteers also enjoy looking at what lives on the bottom of their stream, and those who have been volunteers with Blue Thumb for many years can pick out instantly what changed between bug collections.



Bug collections are fun for everyone! It doesn't matter what you do, how old you are, or if you're a solo monitor or a group monitor; if you kick, bugs will be in the net!



### I Smell Something Fishy...

Staff has been working extra hard this past month to get as many fish collections done as possible (so it's probably them that you smell). Because of the heavy rain in May and June, fish collections had to be put on hold until the creeks were low enough to enter safely. July saw 11 fish collections, and an additional 5 in August so far, all in the Central Great Plains Ecoregion. While the monthly chemical monitoring Blue Thumb volunteers do tells us what is happening at the creek that second, and the bugs can give us a few months history about the creek, the fish can tell a story for a few years, so they are important organisms to study.



## New Volunteers Enter the Ranks!

Blue Thumb had a two day training in Tulsa this past month! Attendees learned all about Blue Thumb and stream ecology concepts on the first day, using Project WET activities to help them better understand the importance of water conservation. Of course, a Blue Thumb training isn't complete without a creek visit to check out some bugs and some fish. On the second day, they went back to the creek to learn how to perform the monthly chemical tests. This group was fantastic for braving the heat both days and didn't complain once! Welcome to the Blue Thumb family!



## Education, Education, Education

Lots of education events took place this past month! Blue Thumb staff was especially busy all over the state, providing knowledge about water, conservation, creek life, and natural resources to kids and adults alike. We only have a limited amount of fresh water on our planet, so understanding why we need to protect this precious resource is important.



Left to right: Kids attending A Grand Adventure summer camp in Langley got a tour of Grand Lake's dam; OCC Water Quality staff come together to present the "three legged stool" (biology, chemistry, and physical habitat) to the South Central NACD conference; Cheryl teaches kids about stream life at the Spring Creek Coalition's 25th anniversary in Northeast Oklahoma; Carl Albert State University General Biology students get up close and personal with creek life.