



# Blue Thumb in Pictures

## February 2024



### First Blue Thumb Training of 2024: Stillwater

A great group of people showed up for Blue Thumb training in Stillwater. While many of the participants were OSU students others were from different walks of life. The weather was cold, but doable. The Bluegill sunfish below was one of several species seined up in Boomer Creek.



**Blue Thumb** staff and volunteers set up and attended an exhibit at the 2024 Environmental Education Expo at the Oklahoma City Zoo in February. We were able to talk to lots of people and the sessions were excellent!



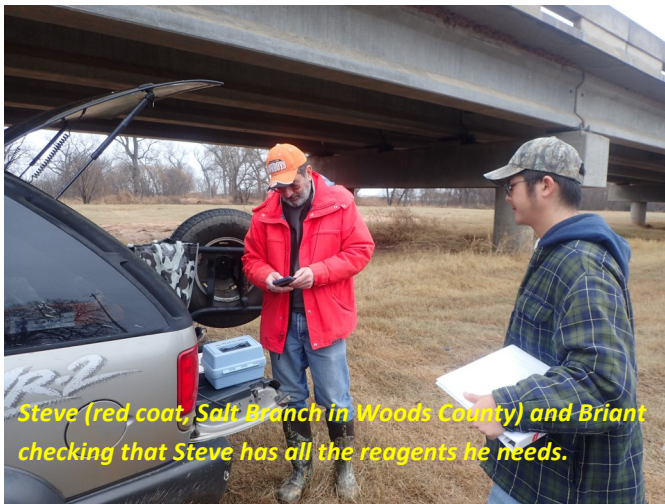
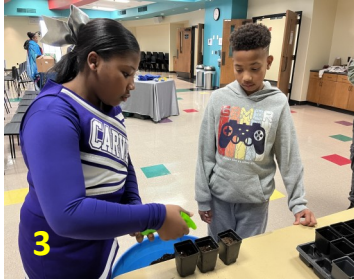
**A Computer at the Creek?** Kim (pictured), Briant, and Candice all three now have tablets that are small and hardy enough to take right to the stream! The goal is to be able to enter information directly as opposed to taking notes and using those notes for entering information back at the office. Watch your *From the Water's Edge* for more information.



## Butterflies, Birds, and Bees OH My!

The Crow Creek Community Partners came together to leap beyond the Crow Creek watershed and up to Rudisill Regional Library for this come and go event that set up all participants to have nature friendly yards!

- 1) Flyer for the upcoming event in Brookside
- 2) Beautiful volunteer butterflies braving the cold to lure people to the event
- 3) Students from Carver Middle School planting milkweed and coneflower for later transfer to their yards
- 4) Participants learning how native plants increase water infiltration and clean runoff



*Steve (red coat, Salt Branch in Woods County) and Briant checking that Steve has all the reagents he needs.*



*Left to right—Brian, Briant, and Mickey at Boggy Creek in Enid making a bug collection.*



*Students from Wes Watkins Technology Center gaining experience with bug collections in Little Wewoka Creek, Seminole County.*



*Christine at Fisher Creek in Sand Springs measuring water clarity with a Secchi disk as part of her QA.*

**Blue Thumb Volunteers** in the photographs above are taking care of their winter “on site” activities with Blue Thumb staff. Regular meetings among staff and volunteers are a large part of what keeps the effective monitoring of streams happening, and also produces data in which we have confidence. Once winter activities are completed, the next series of meetings of staff members and volunteers will take place during spring bug-picking events, where volunteers will follow standard operating procedures to remove a portion of the preserved sample for further identification. For more quality assurance activities, volunteers will be tested on running one or more chemical tests. They will also have the opportunity to restock their test kits.



**Blue Thumb Volunteer** Cheyanne Olson, assistant professor at Rogers State University in Claremore, invited Blue Thumb staff to come in and lead her aquatic resources students through a Blue Thumb mini academy. During a mini academy students of a Blue Thumb teacher are introduced to using the Blue Thumb water chemistry test kits.

Kim and Briant led this event, and a part two will be when these students review Blue Thumb data and create educational projects.



Briant in teaching mode.



## Blue Thumb Volunteer Trash Collection

Blue Thumb volunteers in Cleveland County took it upon themselves to take care of business by collecting trash from Bishop Creek in Eastwook Park, Norman.

The effort was put together and worked by Dan Mains, and his wife Alise. Blue Thumb volunteers Karen Chapman and Nick Czaplewski, as well as some teenage helpers participated. Three cheers for these volunteers for taking pride in their local stream!

It is clear that many volunteers spend time picking up trash, maybe in an organized fashion, maybe just as part of the monthly monitoring. It is all good. With spring around the corner, make sure that you keep a couple of trash bags handy so that when litter is out there, you can easily snag some pieces and either have them recycled or placed in a proper container.

## Sediment Issues at Coal Creek

Blue Thumb volunteers and staff members have been in contact with Tulsa County officials for several months concerning an eroding residential development in the Coal Creek watershed. If you read your monthly newsletter *From the Water's Edge* you are familiar with this.

Note the two volunteers doing a bug collection on Coal Creek. Then note the large amount of sediment being stirred up during kicking. To learn more about the negative impacts of sediment to a stream, read your March issue please of *From the Water's Edge*.