



# Blue Thumb in Pictures

## December 2023 & January 2024



### Stream Protection information offered to City of Glenpool

Blue Thumb staff and urban soil health specialist Jack Titchener came together to offer City of Glenpool municipal employees information on stream protection for the creeks that flow through town, in this case Coal Creek, a Blue Thumb monitored site.

The training was less than two hours and deemed very helpful by the City's stormwater manager.

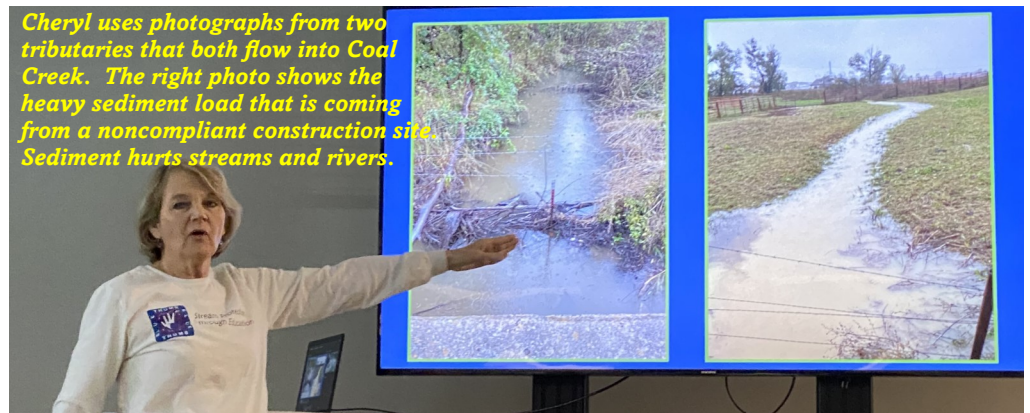
The training covered: the insidious nature of nonpoint source pollution, soil as a serious pollutant, and the value of healthy soil for rain infiltration and filtering of pollutants.



*Candice with the EnviroScope*



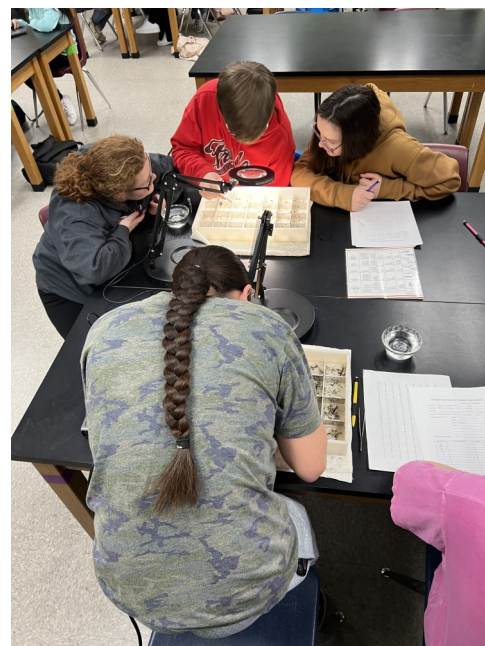
*Jack with the tabletop rainfall simulator*



*Cheryl uses photographs from two tributaries that both flow into Coal Creek. The right photo shows the heavy sediment load that is coming from a noncompliant construction site. Sediment hurts streams and rivers.*



**'Tis the season for bugpicking!** Cleveland County Blue Thumb volunteers remove a randomly selected subsample of benthic macroinvertebrates from preserved collections made on two different sites on Bishop Creek in Norman.



**Pawnee Middle School students** learn about stream invertebrates as they accomplish "bugpicking" on two local streams.



## Groundwater Screening

The Central North Canadian River CD and the Blaine County CD partnered to hold a Blue Thumb groundwater screening on 11/29. Twenty-nine samples were tested for alkalinity, nitrate, sulfate, pH, and chloride.

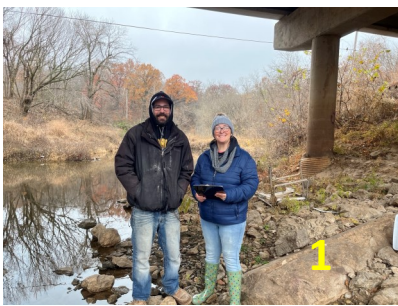
Through a partnership with OSU's Oklahoma Well Owners Network, Oklahoma State University provided testing for bacteria on 18 samples.

<https://water.okstate.edu/our-work/oklahoma-well-owner-network.html>



## Education does not take a winter break!

- 1) Girl Scouts of Western OK hosted STEAM QUEENS at Camp Trivera near the OKC zoo. Kim introduced 35 girl scouts (ages 5—13) to benthic macroinvertebrates (bugs) from the stream on November 19.
- 2) Briant and Kim led 37 Piedmont High School students on an adventure into Spring Creek at OKC's Martin Park on November 15.
- 3) Cheryl set up the EnviroScope for the Bristow Public Library's Teen Time on November 29.



## Four more angels get their wings!

*No, it's four new volunteers get their test kits!*

- 1) Jeremy and Christine Brown will begin monitoring Fisher Creek in Sand Springs.
- 2) Meghan Homan will begin monitoring Crow Creek at Cascia Hall.
- 3) Jennifer Haase will begin monitoring Hager Creek in Jenks.

These are all sites in Tulsa County.



**Blue Thumb Volunteers** educate watershed residents about protecting Okmulgee Creek, in Okmulgee County. Maddie and Maggie Amador have been volunteers since 2018, and they are now using the data they collected to let local citizens know how their stream is doing. This is one of three important data projects that have taken place in Oklahoma in 2023. These photos are from the Muscogee Nation’s Conservation District annual meeting held on December 19.



**Congratulations** to Blue Thumb staff member Candice Miller who was recently selected as the Oklahoma Conservation Commission’s employee of the quarter!



**Winter bugs and QA (above)**

- 1) Volunteer Brandy at her bug collection on a tributary to the Arkansas River and
- 2) Jim measures water clarity on Nickel Creek. Jim has devised a tool that allows him to lower the Secchi disk in deeper water while he remains safe in the shallows. Both sites are in Tulsa County.



**Volunteers Kaysen Atkinson and Connor Stephens** (seniors at El Reno High School) work with Briant and Kim to complete monitoring on their two streams in Canadian County: Four Mile Creek and Six Mile Creek. (Photo far left also features Briant.)



**An Award Winning Water Quality Education Program** does not just happen! Here is the Blue Thumb staff at Will Rogers Gardens in OKC at one of their “visioning” events on 1/4/2024.



**The Yard by Yard Community Resiliency Project** has leaped into 2024 with a new aspect for “grounds.”

Businesses, parks, churches and schools can participate with their “nature friendly” properties and have an appropriate sign!



**Student volunteers from Riverfield Country Day School** in Tulsa learn how to make a benthic macroinvertebrate collection on a tributary to Mooser Creek.



Commission staff enjoyed the opportunity to learn more about their coworkers and the agency’s programs recently including the Emergency Drought program, the Terry Peach North Canadian Cedar Project, and the Soil Health Implementation Program. All Commission programs are made possible through vital partnerships with the legislature, conservation districts, USDA-NRCS, and other entities. *Photo taken December 13, 2023.*