



Blue Thumb—In Pictures

June 2021



Field Season!

It's time for fish collections! This year, we're fishing the Central Irregular Plains Ecoregion, which includes most of the Tulsa area, Okmulgee, Broken Arrow, and a little further east to Muskogee. Volunteers will get a chance to get a different look at their creek through a habitat assessment and the experience of seining for fish. A healthy riparian area and a diverse fish population indicate that a creek is functioning as it should.



Top left: Becky, Candice, and volunteer Brenda educate some onlookers about the fish they caught so far in Adams Creek.

Top Right: It is important to seine underneath overhanging vegetation while fishing; it's very good habitat for fish!

Bottom (from left to right): A gizzard shad (accompanied by a very large, aggressive snapping turtle) and some longear sunfish in Owasso Creek. A black bullhead catfish that we managed to catch in Owasso Creek as well (no noodling involved). And a beautiful redear sunfish from a tributary to Haikey Creek. The shad and catfish are tolerant to pollution, while the redear is slightly sensitive. Longear sunfish are also somewhat tolerant, are found throughout Oklahoma, and can be very bright and colorful! Common snapping turtles are sometimes mistaken for rocks while performing the habitat assessment.



New volunteers!

We had a training for new volunteers this month in Oklahoma City! Even with the hot, hot temperatures, these new volunteers were a great bunch! They went through 16 hours of training, during which they learned about Blue Thumb, stream ecology, nonpoint source pollution, biological assessments and chemical monitoring and analysis. Staff assist monitoring volunteers with fish and bug collections, and volunteers complete monthly chemical testing on their own.



Education, Education, Education

Education events are ramping back up! We could not be more excited. We've had a volunteer borrow the Incredible Journey to help kids learn about the water cycle in Tulsa. Our most popular activity, the EnviroScope®, was at Chouteau Elementary School, where kids got to see how nonpoint source pollution affects a watershed.

