



# Earth Team Volunteer Newsletter

December 2008



*Tulsa County Conservation District  
USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service  
Tulsa County Blue Thumb*



## The Cost of Bottled Water

Article from: Water Headlines weekly on-line publication

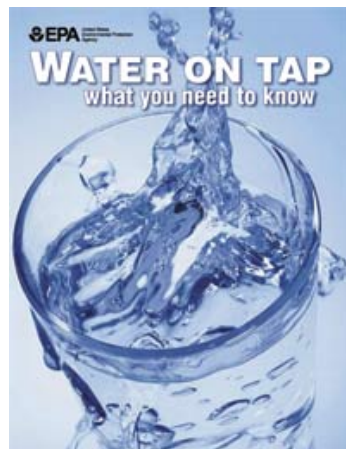
Tap water is a tremendous value for families and communities, typically costing less than half a penny per gallon. Bottled water is often an important and convenient choice for consumers and the traveling public but it certainly has its costs.

Consumers should know about the carbon footprint and environmental impacts of bottled water. It takes a lot of energy to manufacture, transport, and store bottled water. Experts estimate the plastic bottle manufacturing process alone consumes 17 million barrels of oil a year.

Street litter and marine debris are costly concerns, as well. Marine debris is a major pollution problem affecting the world's oceans, coasts, and watersheds. Although impacts may be more visible at the local beach; marine debris is a national and international problem. Anything can become marine debris. Extremely light-weight items, like plastic bottles, are more likely to become marine debris than heavier items because they can easily be carried by wind from one location to another.

**Think globally and drink locally. Tap into the savings and recycle for the streams' sake.**

For more information about Water on Tap visit: <http://www.epa.gov/safewater/wot/index.html>



# Quarterly Earth Team Volunteer Meeting and Quality Assurance

January 8th

10:00 am or 6:00 pm

5401 S Sheridan Suite 201

Tulsa, OK 74145

Remember to bring your test kit for Quality Assurance Testing and to refill any supplies you might be running low on. Also keep in mind that the QA session is MANDATORY for any Blue Thumb Volunteer who monitors a creek. These sessions are to help keep your testing skills and kit current to ensure that our data is the best that we can provide. Test against known standards, hear important announcements, visit with other volunteers, and replenish your reagents and DI water. Don't forget your test kit!

By January 1 there will be MORE volunteer-written data reports on the Oklahoma Conservation Commission Blue Thumb website ([www.conservation.ok.gov](http://www.conservation.ok.gov)). When you get to the website, look on the left for Water Quality Division and click. In the body of the text that appears, click water quality division again. Then on the left click WQ Blue Thumb. Go to the volunteer page and in the lower portion you will find data reports. These are very interesting, and much hard work (of volunteers!) goes into each. Learn something more about our streams, and get a feel for how YOU can complete your OWN report!

## Macroinvertebrate Mayhem returned to Okmulgee

On Friday October 10<sup>th</sup>, 175 students and teachers from Preston, Wilson, and Morris school came to Kiddy Lake/Woodland Park in Okmulgee for a natural resource day. The Tulsa County CD assisted the Okmulgee County CD with the event. TCCD once again did the macroinvertebrate mayhem activity which teaches kids about the effects of pollution, habitat destruction, and loss of food on benthic macroinvertebrates, or bottom dwelling bugs with no backbones that you can see without a microscope.

In the game, the kids are given cards with seven different types of macros on them – caddisfly larva, mayfly larva, stonefly larva, dragonfly nymph, damselfly nymph, midge larva, and rat-tailed maggot. The caddisfly, mayfly, and stonefly larva are intolerant of pollution, the damselfly and dragonfly nymphs are facultative, and the midge larva and rat-tailed maggot are intolerant of pollution. The kids try to race across the “stream” where they are tagged by an environmental stressor, which simulates the effects of pollution on the intolerant population. These intolerant bugs are then brought back into the game as more tolerant species. The score after each round shows that as the stream is “stressed”, the intolerant bugs disappear and tolerant species begin to take over. The game involves lots of running and left me pretty tired. The kids really enjoyed the activity and I look forward to being able to assist Okmulgee County CD with more natural resource days.



## “Recycle Michael” takes TCCD volunteers on a informative shopping trip

Many of you have seen recycling centers scattered through Tulsa and surrounding communities run by the Metropolitan Environmental Trust or simply the M.e.t. Michael Patton is the director of the M.e.t. and a recycling guru. Full of puns, jokes, statistics, and knowledge, Michael led us through a tour of the Reasor’s at 71<sup>st</sup> and Sheridan during our volunteer meeting on Thursday October 9<sup>th</sup>. We started in the produce section and worked our way through the various sections of the store. The first thing that Michael stressed was the need for “pre-cycling.” Pre-cycling is buying only what you need, and not getting unnecessary extras like added packaging or extra food. Pre-cycling keeps things from being used in the first place. For example, buying tomatoes that are not packaged versus the four tomatoes packaged in a polystyrene flat with saran wrap. Often times, items that we want have an extraordinary amount of extraneous packaging that will only be thrown away, and cannot be reused or recycled. It is important to keep this in mind when buying things at the store.



Michael also stressed the importance of reduce, reuse, recycle – in that order. The best way to help the environment is to reduce the amount of things that you buy and use, reuse what you buy when possible, and then recycling anything that you may have left that is able to be recycled. Another important thing to keep in mind is the distance that your food has to travel. This is something that most people do not consider while buying their groceries and one thing that makes farmers markets preferable over supermarkets. Buying food grown locally or regionally will reduce the amount of greenhouse gas emissions from the transport of your food and also allows you to get perishables that are fresher. Composting those perishable scraps and leftovers is another thing that you can do. This creates a valuable resource (compost) that can be used around your yard or garden and limits the amount of waste reaching landfills. This is important to take into account when 30% of the food that Americans buy is thrown away.



Another important thing to consider is the material that packaging is made from and whether it is recycled or can be. This can be verified by the number printed on plastic materials or by looking for a black circle with recycling arrows in it on paper products. On plastics, the number refers to the kind of plastic. #1 is polyethylene terephthalate, #2 is high density polyethylene, #3 is polyvinyl chloride, #4 is low density polyethylene, #5 is polypropylene, #6 is polystyrene, and #7 is either polycarbonate or acrylonitrile butadiene styrene. To consumers, this decides which bin you throw your recyclables in. Most plastics are either #1 or #2 and the M.e.t collects these plastics. Undyed plastics, like milk jugs and some shampoo bottles are over 4 times more valuable to recyclers than dyed plastics, like detergent containers and soda bottle, because they can be turned into any color.



Looking for recycled content of paper good is a good habit to get into. Recycled paper products can contain two kinds of recycled paper – post-consumer and pre-consumer. Post-consumer paper waste is material discarded after consumer use, including old magazines, old telephone directories, and residential mixed paper. Pre-consumer waste is material that was discarded before it was ready for consumer use. Internationally, about half of all recovered paper comes from pre-consumer recycling of shavings and unsold periodicals; approximately one third comes from household or post-consumer waste. The average per capita use of paper in the US in 2001 was 700 pounds compared to 110 pounds per capita globally. Recycling paper saves energy, water, and trees. Look for marking on cereal boxes indicating that they use recycled paper in their boxes, or switch to the bags of cereal. The box’s sole purpose is for marketing – trying to make their brand more appealing than the competitor’s box. Look to take cereal boxes and other cardboard boxes to the M.e.t facility in Broken Arrow, where they currently collect those items.

# Calendar of Events

## Thanksgiving

Office Closed November 27th and 28th

## Volunteer Christmas Party

December 5<sup>th</sup> 6 pm -8:30 pm

[tulsaccd@conservation.ok.gov](mailto:tulsaccd@conservation.ok.gov)

(918) 280-1595

OSU Extension Center 4116 E. 15th St

## Tulsa Farm Show

December 11-13

Thur Dec 11th - 9AM - 5PM

Fri Dec 12th - 9AM - 5PM

Sat Dec 13th - 9AM - 4PM

[tulsaccd@conservation.ok.gov](mailto:tulsaccd@conservation.ok.gov)

(918) 280-1595

Tulsa State Fairgrounds

## Christmas

Office Closed December 25th and 26th

**If you are planning on attending the Volunteer Christmas Party held at the OSU Extensions center on December 5th, please let us know by RSVPing at 280-1598. This will help us to but the proper amount of food and other products. We look forward to seeing all of you at the event!**

# Many Thanks

**To Those Volunteers that helped us pull off the Tulsa State Fair, Kids World International and the Magical Night of Giving.**

**Michael Henk, Ashley Armitage, Rey Granados, Sharon Proctor, Kevin Axley, Buddy Baker, Denis Ware, Drew Vanzandt, Denis Andryushchenko, Graham and Terri Brannin, Kendra, Kristen, Ryan Bevenue. Sammie Spaulding, Roy and Rose Foster, Bonnie Mallory, Mara Onelia, Taylor, Alex, Sharice Nelson, Marina, Trish Kloeckler, Jared Newton, Nan Ray, Cheryl, Cody and Bruce Fritz, Amber, Jocelyn, Erik Friend, Kevin Axley, Jessica, Sara, Johnathan, Olivia Jacobs, Kathryn Spencer, Jack Sherrod, Cassidy McCance, Steven Pendleton, Stacy Lewis, Tom Neumeyer, Hillarie, Kendal, Drew Vanzandt, Scott and Lori VanLoo, Brenda and Heather Crain, Kenneth and Kim Risenhoover, Kristin Ruyle, Loyce Dubuc Donna Burks, Donna Grant, Sue Lachapelle, Janice Ong, Joan Gerber, Trish Kloecker, Rhnea Stoy, Cheryl Cheadle, Susan Tolbart Nathan Randall, Shelley Umezawa, Sarah Simdon, Heather Harbor, Kristi Taylor, Devinn Parks and Debbie Eagle**



*The Earth Team Newsletter Blue Thumb Prints is published by Tulsa County Conservation District, 5401 S. Sheridan Rd., Suite 201, Tulsa, OK, Phone: (918) 280-1595. [Tulsaccd@conservation.ok.gov](mailto:tulsaccd@conservation.ok.gov) Tulsa County Conservation District and USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service are equal opportunity providers and employers. Visit the web site at [www.tulsacountyconservationdistrict.org](http://www.tulsacountyconservationdistrict.org)*