



Earth Team Volunteer Newsletter

August 2009



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

Oxley Interpretive Building Celebrates Grand Reopening

The District had the privilege of enjoying the great interpretive building Oxley has just finished remodeling at their Grand Reopening on Saturday June 27th. They had activities both inside the new building and outside in the heat. Quicktrip was there giving away their delicious sandwiches and some bottled water. The Oxley employees were busy bees that day making sure that all of the guests were having a good time and also helped to keep people refreshed with some cold water. The mercury hit 101 that day and our volunteers can attest that it was HOT HOT HOT. At the TCCD booth, Nan Ray, Heather Crain, and Brenda Crain helped some of the visitors make fish prints. This activity is based on a Japanese printmaking technique called gyotaku.



The paper that we use has tips on how citizens can help to keep their stream water cleaner for fish and other organisms living there. All in all it was a fun day with a good group of likeminded people. I wanted to say thank you to Nan Ray, Heather Crain, and Brenda Crain for coming out to assist with our fish prints despite the heat - we really appreciate their efforts!

Blue Thumb Curb Marking Projects Help Water Quality

As many of you know, Blue Thumb is one of many volunteer opportunities that we have at the District. We have had some substantial curb marking projects that have been underway or completed in the past couple of months. You may remember the group of kids from Lewis and Clark Middle School that marked over 80 as well. Brandon Townsdin has completed 35 hours of volunteer work for TCC Achieves program and marked 150 curbs in Tulsa. Mat Hunt and Mayra Yanez, also Achieves students, have currently marked 87 curbs in Tulsa in 17.5 hours. Frances Hardy is working on marking curbs in Sand Springs where we have not had many volunteers who have marked curbs, and she has worked for 5 hours.

We appreciate these volunteer's efforts, especially in this hot weather. These curb markers will help to show people that anything that goes into the storm drain system will be transported into a creek or stream in this area without being treated. When one stops to consider the population density here in Tulsa, a little bit of trash, chemicals, and yard waste from each person has a big impact on these smaller order creeks and streams.

This is also the perfect time to talk about our macroinvertebrate collections. We will be going out in August to sample the macros from creeks around Tulsa. The presence or absence of certain species of bugs can reveal a lot about the water chemistry and suitable habitat in the creek. Assisting with these collections is a great way to see some of the urban streams in our area and also to beat the heat by playing in the creek for a few hours. Give me a call or email if you would be interested in helping.





I just wanted to thank everyone that came to the July morning QA. We had a really great turnout—probably the best since I have been here. I’m glad that many of you were able to meet some of our other great Blue Thumb monitors. Hope to see all of you at the next one!

Please make sure to mark the next Earth Team meeting, October 1st at 6 PM, on your calendar. Chad Burden, featured in June’s newsletter, will be giving a presentation about green building and remodeling. It will be a very informative talk. I hope to see lots of you there.

Environmental Term of the Month

Community-Supported Agriculture is the practice of focusing on the production of high quality foods for a local community, often using organic or biodynamic farming methods, and a shared risk membership/marketing structure. This kind of farming operates with a much greater-than-usual degree of involvement of consumers and other stakeholders — resulting in a stronger than usual consumer-producer relationship. By CSA theory, the more a farm embraces whole-farm, whole-budget support, the more it can focus on quality and reduce the risk of food waste or financial loss. In its most formal and structured European and North American forms, CSAs focus on having:

- a transparent, whole season budget for producing a specified wide array of products for a set number of weeks a year;
- a common-pricing system where producers and consumers discuss and democratically agree to pricing based on the acceptance of the budget; and
- a ‘shared risk and reward’ agreement, *i.e.* that the consumers eat what the farmers grow even with the vagaries of seasonal growing.

Thus, individuals, families or groups do not pay for *x* pounds or kilograms of produce, but rather support the budget of the whole farm and receive weekly what is seasonally ripe. This approach eliminates the marketing risks and costs for the producer and an enormous amount of time, often manpower too, and allows producers to focus on quality care of soils, crops, animals, co-workers — and on serving the customers. There is financial stability in this system which allows for thorough planning on the part of the farmer, and emotional investment on the part of the members.

Typically, CSA farms are small, independent, labor-intensive, family farms. By providing a guaranteed market through prepaid annual sales, consumers essentially help finance farming operations. This allows farmers to not only focus on quality growing, it can also somewhat level the playing field in a food market that favors usually large-scale, industrialized agriculture over local food. Vegetables and fruit are the most common CSA crops. Many CSAs practice ecological, organic or biodynamic agriculture, avoiding pesticides and inorganic fertilizers. The cost of a share is usually competitively priced when compared to the same amount of vegetables conventionally-grown, partly because the cost of distribution is lowered. An advantage of the close consumer-producer relationship is increased freshness of the produce, because it does not have to be shipped long distances. The close proximity of the farm to the members also helps the environment by reducing pollution caused by transporting the produce.

Over a period of time, consumers get to know who is producing their food, and what production methods are used. Recipes and farm work days are often included along with the shares. Seasonal eating is implied, as shares are usually based on the outdoor growing season, which means a smaller selection at the beginning and perhaps the end of the period, as well as a changing variety as the season progresses. Some CSA programs offer different share sizes, also, a choice of share periods (eg. full-season and peak season). Check LocalHarvest.com for some CSA programs near Tulsa.



Stimulus funds to help dams, streambanks and fight invasive species



OKLAHOMA CITY, July 6, 2009 — Dams, streambanks and the fight against invasive plant species will all receive federal stimulus funding in a package of projects totaling nearly \$17 million approved Monday by the Oklahoma Conservation Commission (OCC). The projects are funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) through the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). The group of projects will be managed by OCC in cooperation with local conservation districts. Most of the projects will receive all federal funding, but a few require a state cost investment as well.

NRCS rehabilitation projects are planned for seven small watershed upstream flood control dams in five counties. These are the only projects that are not completely federally-funded, requiring a 35 percent (\$4,707,500) state cost share to go with \$13,450,000 federal funds. The projects will be sponsored locally by the South Caddo, Adair County, Kingfisher County, Pontotoc County and West Caddo Conservation Districts. One of the dams, Sugar Creek L-44 near Anadarko, was severely damaged in August 2007 when Tropical Storm Erin swept across western Oklahoma.

NRCS projects for remedial repairs on 17 dams and other flood control structures in 12 counties total \$1,120,000. Another \$55,000 is budgeted for watershed engineering services.

EPA is providing ARRA funding to the Oklahoma Water Resources Board for the Clean Water State Revolving Fund. The Conservation Commission will apply for \$2 million of these funds to be used for streambank stabilization projects in the Illinois River and Eucha/Spavinaw watersheds in Adair County, Cherokee County and Delaware County Conservation Districts. This will add to OCC's accomplishments in nonpoint source demonstration projects and Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program projects in protecting water quality in these two critical watersheds.

ARRA funds to USFWS will use \$100,000 to purchase equipment and supplies for prescribed burning in Beaver County, Dewey County, East Woods County, Ellis County, Harper County, Upper Washita, Woods County and Woodward County Conservation Districts. Prescribed burning, under strictly-controlled conditions, has proved to be an effective natural resource management tool. It is particularly effective for controlling invasive plant species like eastern redcedar that has become rampant across the state in recent years.

"This is a tremendous investment in Oklahoma's conservation infrastructure and the dollars spent on these projects in local communities will multiply many times over," said Mike Thralls, OCC executive director. "The challenge, in light of the recent cuts to state budgets, is finding the cost share dollars for those projects that require it. It also places greater responsibility on existing personnel without possibility for hiring additional staff," he said. "But we are excited about being able to move on a backlog of needed conservation projects," Thralls said.

15th Annual Creek Cleanup

Tulsa County Conservation District



What? - Little Joe Creek Cleanup

When? - September 12th from 9:00 AM-12:30PM

Why? - To clean up trash from the creek and surrounding park and also to learn about what measures citizens can take to help our streams.

Where? - Memorial High School at 5840 S Hudson

Highlights

- ◆ Helping out water quality by removing trash and other items from the creek and adjacent areas.
- ◆ FREE Food!!!! We will be having bagels and donuts before and will be grilling hotdogs after trash pickup.



Local Sponsors Include:

5401 S Sheridan Suite 201
Tulsa, OK 74145
Phone: 918-280-1595
Fax: 918-280-1594
E-mail: tulsaccd@conservation.ok.gov

Applebee's (Together it good.)
Chilis
Starbucks Coffee
Walmart
NRCS
USDA
REASOR'S
Water ON THE RUN
TALL GRASS RC&D
ON THE BORDER (MEXICAN GRILL & CANTINA)
TULSA AREA CONSERVATION FOUNDATION
City of Tulsa (A New Kind of Energy)
AMP PUBLIC SERVICE COMPANY OF OKLAHOMA
The M.e.t. (The Metropolitan Environmental Trust)
Q1 Kitchens
THUMB
STARBUCKS
WALMART
NRCS
USDA
REASOR'S
Water ON THE RUN
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ON THE BORDER
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REASOR'S
Water ON THE RUN
TALL GRASS RC&D
ON THE BORDER
TULSA AREA CONSERVATION FOUNDATION

Calendar of Events

Sewer-in-a-suitcase / Water Quality Presentation

We will be giving a presentation to a group of elementary school teachers to show them some resources that we have and also to show them some things to use with their classes
Aug 6th TCC Northeast Rm 1214 from 3-4 PM

Summer Macroinvertebrate Collections

We will be collecting bugs from the Tulsa area creeks which will help us to evaluate the overall health of the water body
August 11-14th

TU Volunteer Service Fair

We will recruit new volunteers at this year's fair
September 2nd at the TU Student Union from 10 - 2

Little Joe Creek Cleanup

We will be picking up trash and having a cookout afterwards for the hardworking volunteers. We will meet at Memorial High School, break into groups, pick up some trash, and then meet back at Memorial for a cookout.
September 12th from 9-12:30 at 5840 S Hudson

Blue Thumb Stream Monitor Training

Become a certified Blue Thumb water quality monitor. One day will be spent in the office learning why and how we do the chemical testing and the other day will be spent playing in the stream learning how to take samples and what to look for at your site.
September 26th-27th 9 AM—4:30 PM
5401 S Sheridan Tulsa, OK 74135
Call 280-1595 or email

Tulsa State Fair Booth

We need volunteers to man our booth at all times during the fair to assist patrons with any questions that they may have and to help distribute some literature
October 1-11th 10AM – 10 PM Mon-Thur and Sun
10AM - 11 PM Fri and Sat

Volunteer Christmas Party

It's never too early in the year to put a Christmas Party on the calendar! We will be having our usual potluck party where the district provides the proteins and you bring a side dish. A game of Dirty Santa will also take place.
Dec 8th from 6-8:30 at OSU Extension
4116 E 15th St Tulsa, OK 74112

Volunteer Notes

- The Tulsa State Fair is right around the corner and we are in need of lots of volunteers to man our booth. The building hours are 10 AM—10 PM Mon-Thur and Sun and 10 AM—11 PM on Fri and Sat. Please give us a call if you would be able to work a 3 or 4 hour shift during any of those dates. You do get free admission to the fair the day that you work.
- The Tulsa County Conservation District Board meeting are open to the public and are held at the district office on the 3rd Thursday of the month at 4:30. There is a portion of the meetings to allow for Public Comments. We would love to have some visitors for our meetings.

Quotes

“Man is not set above nature. Moreover, his power is constrained by duty and responsibility. Man's appointment is not an ordination but an *assignment*. The earth is not his property; he is neither its owner nor its master. Rather, man is a custodian, entrusted with the stewardship of God's garden, and he can enjoy it only on the condition that he discharge his duty faithfully. This view of humanity's role accords with the modern ecological principle that the life of every species is rooted not in separateness from nature but in integration with it.”

~ Daniel Hillel in *Out of the Earth: Civilization and the Life of the Soil*

“What's the use of a house if you don't have a decent planet to put it on?”

~ Henry David Thoreau

“I thought I saw a blue jay this morning. But the smog was so bad that it turned out to be a cardinal holding its breath.”

~Michael J Cohen



The Earth Team Newsletter is published by Tulsa County Conservation District, 5401 S. Sheridan Rd., Suite 201, Tulsa, OK, Phone: (918) 280-1595. 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