



Earth Team Volunteer Newsletter

March 2009



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

Roosevelt Elementary Kids Enjoy Fish Print Activity

On February 10, I went to visit my crew of kids at Roosevelt Elementary's afterschool program. I have been visiting these kids since the summer on 2008, about once a month. On this visit, we made fish prints. This is the activity that we had at the Kids' World International Festival for those of you that may have attended or assisted with the event. The activity is based on a Japanese printmaking technique called "gyotaku". Literally translated as "fish rubbing," the technique involves applying ink to an object (typically fish, shells, or other smaller animals) and then gently pressing them against a sheet of paper. This creates an image of the object on the paper. The kids really enjoyed this activity and we will likely be doing it again at Earthfest at the Tulsa Zoo on April 18th.



Home and Garden Show is Growing Near

The Home and Garden Show is held from March 12-15 at the Quicktrip Center at the Tulsa State Fairgrounds. The District will have a booth, as always, at the event. This year we have elected "Native Trees" as our topic. We will hopefully be handing out seedling at the show as well. We still have a few shifts on Saturday and Sunday that need to be filled. If you would like to spend 2-3 hours at our booth, you can gain free entrance to the show for that day. The Home and Garden Show is a great place for us to meet and talk with local citizens and hear the concerns that they have. It is also a good place to give information about green topics to home owners that are interested in making their homes and yards healthier. See the Page 4 about the shifts still open. Please give us a call at 280-1595 if you would be interested in working a shift.



New Information about the Earth Team Meetings and QA

Due to the fact that most of our volunteers that come to the morning session are taking a break from their work day they have voted to **only** offer QA at 10:00 am. And to not have a guest speaker. We will continue to have speakers and presenter for the evening sessions.

The **new schedule for Earth Team meetings** will be QA session **only** at 10 AM . We will have a volunteer presentation from 6-7 PM, followed by a QA session from 7-8 PM.

Our next meeting will be on April 2nd. We will be going over to Water on the Run from 6-7 PM for those of you that were unable to attend the last meeting.

It is especially important that the Blue Thumb monitors come to the QA session. This ensures that you have the most up to date information and are properly conducting the chemical monitoring.

See all of you on the 2nd!

Environmental Term for the Month

Cultural eutrophication - an increase in chemical nutrients in an ecosystem that may occur on land or in water. However, the term is often used to mean the increase in an aquatic ecosystem's primary productivity (excessive plant growth and decay), and further effects including lack of oxygen and severe reductions in water quality, fish, and other animal populations due to human actions. In aquatic environments, enhanced growth of choking aquatic vegetation or phytoplankton (that is, an algal bloom) disrupts normal functioning of the ecosystem, causing a variety of problems such as a lack of oxygen in the water, needed for fish and shellfish to survive. The water can become cloudy, colored a shade of green, yellow, brown, or red. Human society is impacted as well: eutrophication decreases the resource value of rivers, lakes, and estuaries such that recreation, fishing, hunting, and aesthetic enjoyment are hindered. Health-related problems can occur where eutrophic conditions interfere with drinking water treatment. Recent surveys have shown that around half of all lakes in the US are eutrophic. Much of this is the result of nutrient runoff from lawns, golf courses, and farmland. The reduction of nonpoint-source pollution is needed to address this fast growing problem. You can see the effects of eutrophication in the image below. The picture on the left is the normal water quality of the lake, and the image on the right shows the appearance of the water after eutrophication. Notice the high amount of algae and the marked difference in the clarity of the water.



Blue Thumb Data Interpretations Are Underway

Blue Thumb volunteer groups from around the county have begun work on their data interpretations. The creeks in Tulsa that will have interpretations written about them include: Haikey, Crow, Mill, Mingo, Little Joe tributary, Harlow: Edison and Ranch. These data interpretations allow the teams to synthesize a report about the health of their stream and the impacts on that stream. The Blue Thumb Program is about stream protection, so the collection of data is part of the story! This means turning the numbers from data sheets into a meaningful and accurate interpretation of what that data means for their creek. This information is important to both the local and state communities. This extensive look at years, in some cases over a decade, of data for local creeks helps the teams to educate citizens on their site. When summaries are completed for creeks, then it is easier to get information out to the public about how to protect streams and rivers. The data can be used locally by neighbors, concerned citizens, or local agencies to raise awareness of local environmental issues affecting our surface water like nonpoint source pollution, litter/dumping, and increased runoff from roads and streets. A great example of how this works can be seen as the Crow Creek Team continues to work toward a large educational kick-off event for a multi-year education campaign within the Crow Creek watershed. Healthy biologic communities, water chemistry, and habitat are the three necessary components for a healthy stream. The decrease in quality or loss of even one of these factors can have a large impact on the overall health of the stream. After completion, these reports will be posted, along with previously completed interpretations, online at Blue Thumb's website. We appreciate all the hard work and dedication that all of our volunteers do, and we are really proud of our Blue Thumb teams publishing these reports. Great work guys! The completed reports can be found here: http://www.ok.gov/conservation/Agency_Divisions/Water_Quality_Division/WQ_Blue_Thumb/BT_Volunteer_Monitoring_/BT_Data_Interpretations.



TCCD Visits Two Local High Schools to Talk Environment With Our Future

The Union High School Environmental Science Club invited us to come speak to them on the topic of "Are We In an Environmental Crisis?" The majority of students and teachers at the talk thought that we were indeed in a crisis. We talked about problems globally and locally that led them to believe this. These included: Tar Creek, nonpoint source pollution, overpopulation, spread of exotic species, weather pattern changes, global warming, and others. A few attendees didn't think that we were in an environmental crisis. Some of the reason they gave were that temperatures have fluctuated rapidly in the past, the rise in prominence of biofuels, and a change from the Dust Bowl to Green Country. Our talk with the students raised many question about the way we use resources and the land around us and generally made the students think critically about the problems facing us and how we might address them in the future.

We were also invited to come visit Mrs. Donna Gradel's Broken Arrow High School's Environmental Science classes. Blue Thumb guru Jean Lemmon and I made a trip to talk to the students about water science and stream ecology. We took some trips down to Adams Creek which flows right next to the BA campus. We talked about the types of aquatic bugs that are typically found in streams, the importance of a diverse biological community, why water is important to life, how we make macroinvertebrate collections, scientific accountability, and other related topics. The kid's favorite part was taking a walk up the creek in their waders to investigate the stream channel. I look forward to going back in the spring to talk to some more of Mrs. Gradel's classes. Being a Broken Arrow graduate myself, it was a great trip!

Calendar of Events

Tulsa Home and Garden Show

Info about homes and gardens abounds here
March 12th-15th
Tulsa State Fairgrounds

Going Green Kickoff

Saturday, March 21, 2009 1:00-4:00 p.m. Herman & Kate Kaiser Library located inside LaFortune Park (5202 S. Hudson Ave., Tulsa)

Conservation Day at the Capitol

Day to meet with legislators to tell them about conservation issues in OK
March 25th 9 AM – 2 PM

Resource Management Conference

Come hear presentations about green topics including recycled building supplies, low impact development, and green development
April 1st 8 AM—4 PM
Tulsa Home Builders Association
11545 E 43rd St Tulsa, OK 74146

Earth Team Volunteer Meeting and QA

New format - morning QA session from 10-11 AM ET meeting from 6-7 PM & evening QA from 7-8
April 2nd at 10 AM and PM

Earthfest at the Tulsa Zoo

We will be making fish prints
April 18th 9 AM—5 PM
Tulsa Zoo and Living Museum

Tulsa County Free Fair

Join 4-H for this free fair in the summer
July 22-24
Tulsa State Fairgrounds

15th Annual Creek Clean Up & Water Festival

The morning will begin with a run followed by a creek cleanup. Then a fair-like water festival with food vendors, kids zone, art show, earth friendly vendors, a live auction and much more.
September 12th
Tulsa Riverparks from 21st to 41st
Tentatively scheduled from 7 AM—7 PM

Blue Thumb Training

Become a certified Blue Thumb monitor
September 26th-27th
TCCD Offices
5401 S Sheridan Tulsa, OK 74135

Open Shifts for Home and Garden Show

Fri March 13th from 7-9 PM (2)
Sat March 14th from 10AM-1PM (1)
Sat March 14th from 4-7 PM and 7-9 PM (1)
Sun March 15th from 10AM-1PM (1)

CALLING ALL VOLUNTEERS!!!!

Are you interested in being on a specialized planning committee? We need help with the 2009 Water Festival sub-committees. We have Events, Media, Finance, Donations and Volunteer Manpower committees that need your help. We also need volunteers to work at the 2009 Home and Garden Show AND Earthfest at the Tulsa Zoo. Please let us know if you are interested. WE NEED YOUR HELP!!!



Look into getting some rain barrels for around the house. These plastic barrels are connected to the downspouts from your gutters and hold the runoff from your house onsite. This reduces the amount of pollutants entering streams and rivers and also saves you money on your water bill. The water can be used around the yard or to wash your car in the front lawn. You can find them online

There will be a Household Pollutant Collection event at the Tulsa State Fairgrounds on April 4-5, 2009 from 10 AM—3 PM. Items accepted include: household cleaners, pesticides, fertilizers, automotive fluids, cooking oil, batteries, all fluorescent light bulbs, small ammunition, smoke alarms, aerosol paint, hobby paint, pool chemicals, items containing mercury and unused or out of date prescription medications. Items NOT accepted at the event include latex paint, tires, computers, radioactive waste and commercial waste. To dispose of latex paint, remove the lid and let paint completely dry. Place cans of dry paint next to trash for pick up.

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