

## Environmental Education Success Stories

### Teaching Rivers in an Urban Environment: The Blue River Watershed Project, T.R.U.E. Blue Project

#### Blue River Watershed Association (BRWA)

[www.brwa.net](http://www.brwa.net)

BRWA staff trains students and teachers in chemical and biological monitoring in class. Staff provides equipment and technical assistance for field study. Students work in groups of 3-5 streamside and are paired with an agency, corporate, or community mentor, as they perform visual, biological and chemical assessments. Data is then shared with other school groups, and Kansas and Missouri state agencies. BRWA also sponsors an annual KC Clean Streams area-wide student litter pick-up involving over 2,000 students in the region.

#### Center Middle School, 326 E. 103<sup>rd</sup> Street, Kansas City, MO 64114

##### Ron Scott, 8<sup>th</sup> grade science

[rscott@center.k12.mo.us](mailto:rscott@center.k12.mo.us)

(816) 612-4400

Ron Scott began as a teacher at Center Alternative High School and now teaches at CMS. "Dang, I want to do this for my job!" is a quote heard from one of Ron's CAHS students practicing chemical tests to be performed creekside. He combines on-line resources broadcast on a Smartboard with hands-on experiences in the field to engage his students. Eighth grade accomplishments include water quality monitoring, participation in the KC Clean Streams area-wide student litter pick-up, stream corridor and wetland restoration projects, and Earth Day school yard plantings.

##### Melinda Merrill, 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> Gifted

[mmerrill@center.k12.mo.us](mailto:mmerrill@center.k12.mo.us)

(816) 612-4400

Melinda Merrill works with small groups of gifted students to monitor Indian Creek monthly. She is coordinating her efforts with Martha Nowak, an Olathe teacher conducting monthly studies at the headwaters of Indian Creek near 159<sup>th</sup> Street.

#### Chisholm Trail Junior High School, 16700 W. 159<sup>th</sup> Street, Olathe, KS 66062

##### Martha Nowak, 7<sup>th</sup> grade science

[mnowakcst@olatheschools.com](mailto:mnowakcst@olatheschools.com)

(913) 780-7240

Martha has partnered with the City of Olathe to develop a third grade drinking water curriculum. Olathe provides maps and support services to her students. She is conducting a monthly study of Indian Creek at 159<sup>th</sup> and sharing data with the city and with Center Middle School students across the state line in Missouri.

**Don Bosco Charter High School, 531 Garfield, Kansas City, MO 64124**  
**Susan Palmer, Social Studies**  
[sepalmer@hotmail.com](mailto:sepalmer@hotmail.com)  
(816) 691-2937

Susan combines social studies and science education to involve her students in water quality monitoring on the Blue River, establishing and maintaining a rain garden to slow stormwater runoff, KC Clean Streams litter pick up, recycling, and the Bridging the Gap Leadership in Environmental Action Projects (LEAP).

**Shawnee Mission West High School, 8800 W. 85<sup>th</sup> Street, Overland Park, KS 66212**  
**John Wiley, Environmental Studies**  
[wewiley@smsd.org](mailto:wewiley@smsd.org)  
(913) 993-7800

John's students conduct water quality monitoring studies, litter pick ups and stream corridor restoration along Indian Creek. Following a study of restoration practices, students will remove invasive species and revegetate a former trail bed with native grasses and shrubs along Indian Creek between Roe and Nall.

**Turner Middle School, 1312 S. 55<sup>th</sup> Street, Kansas City, KS 66106**  
**Jim Benz, 7<sup>th</sup> grade science**  
[benzi@turnerusd202.org](mailto:benzi@turnerusd202.org)  
(913) 288-4000

Jim founded the T.R.U.E. Blue Project in 1997. His students monitor water quality, as well as maintain woodland trails and a water garden they have built on their school's property. Jim organizes teachers in his building to participate in KC Clean streams each year. This year Jim's students adopted Kaw Point at the confluence of the Kansas and Missouri Rivers.