

Mission: to unite as citizens and actively engage in the preservation of the Spring Creek Watershed

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**Spring Creek Coalition
2434 East 56 Place
Tulsa, Oklahoma 74105**

Spring Creek Watershed Landowners Spring 2011 Newsletter



THE MOST PRISTINE
LARGE OZARK STREAM
IN OKLAHOMA
MANAGED AND
PROTECTED BY
PRIVATE
LANDOWNERS

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Things You Should Know — gravel excavating on Spring Creek legal with the proper permits

Some of you may have noticed the heavy equipment and gravel extraction going on at Teresita on Double Spring Creek just before it joins Spring Creek. According to a recent public legal notice:

"M5 Enterprises Mining Company, Inc., 27925 S. Lakeview Drive, Park Hill, Oklahoma, 74451, has submitted a permit application to the Oklahoma Department of Mines (ODM) to mine Creek Gravel through the surface mining method on portions of the following parcels of land: SECTION 20 TOWNSHIP 19N RANGE 22E, CHEROKEE COUNTY, OKLAHOMA."

Gravel mining and dredging is lawful in Oklahoma with the proper agency permits. Spring Creek, BUT NOT Double Spring Creek, is listed as a State High Quality Water which means activity on Spring Creek is subject to stricter regulations, under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps).

For example, in May 2010 the Corps investigated removal of gravel from Spring Creek near the confluence of Snake and Spring Creeks. Their letter to the landowner stated that "it is unlawful under Section 301 of the Clean Water Act to place dredged or fill material into Waters of the United States without prior authorization" and since no permit was issued, this landowner's activity was a violation.

Landowners are the eyes and ears of the creek. We all help to ensure the ongoing high water quality of our creek. The Corps is the agency you should contact first for permits or potential violations.

While legal, gravel mining is not always desirable, especially for upstream landowners. Stud-

ies conducted on Ozark streams in 1999 have shown that the hole in a stream caused by gravel removal causes the stream to try and move gravel from upstream into the hole, eroding the bottom and banks of UP-STREAM neighbors. Please see this video created by Arkansas Game and Fish for a demonstration of this effect: <http://www.friendsoftherivers.org/videos.html>.



Gravel mining operation on Double Spring Creek.

Gravel mining has other negative impacts that affect the entire stream. Erosion causes streams to get wider, slower and hotter as trees are removed and more area is exposed to the sun. Increased temperatures increases plant growth in the water, removes oxygen and decreases quality fish populations. Without tree root structures to hold banks in place and slow water down during storm events, water rushes off with enormous force and volume, causing flash flooding and more erosion.

With These Rocks I Thee Wed — Spring Creek stones inspire artists

When Marianna Jensen and Jeff Wilson decided to get married last July, picking the place was easy. They would have an outdoor wedding on their bluff overlooking

Gravel Extraction

Spring Creek just south of the Teresita bridge. Choosing wedding bands was more difficult. Jeff wanted something natural, but after looking at numerous local stores and internet sites, he still hadn't found that special ring. Marianna secretly took action. "I found a jeweler in Hawaii who did custom rings," explained Marianna, "and I hurriedly shipped him about 3 pounds of Spring Creek rocks. He laughed when he saw what I sent.



The Wilson's wedding bands fashioned from creek stones.

He only needed two tablespoons worth to create our wedding bands. And they arrived just in time, four days before our wedding."

Another artist who has been influenced by Spring Creek is Nancy Hamill. But unlike the Hawaii jewelry maker who had the rocks sent to him, Hamill went to the rocks herself, though that was not the intent. She was simply visiting the area with friends when the slate found throughout the creek caught her eye. "I liked it because it was black, and when I scooped it out of the water it had a matte finish that was very attractive to me," said Nancy. "Here was something anybody could pick up, of no value, that could be fashioned into something beautiful and meaningful. I especially like it when a customer exclaims "I used to swim in Spring Creek as a child!" Then the necklace or ring becomes

Creek Inspires Jewelry

so much more than just a piece of jewelry; it is a wearable reminder of a special place and time."

Marianna and Jeff Wilson enjoy their property on Spring Creek whenever their busy lives allow.



In addition to raising three girls age seven and younger, Marianna is a Project Manager and Jeff a Storage Area Network Administrator, both with IBM at Williams in Tulsa.

Nancy has dabbled in jewelry making since college, but it wasn't until after her children were raised that she had the time to turn her hobby into something more. You can find her pieces at M. A. Doran Art Gallery in Tulsa, at the Norman Firehouse Art Center, and in galleries in Austin, San Antonio, and Oklahoma City. See her work and a necklace fashioned from Spring Creek slate at www.nancyhamill.com.

Battling a Growing Global Problem in Oklahoma

By Priscilla Crawford

What is one of the most costly environmental problems on Earth? One that does damage not only to biodiversity, but also to the economy? Invasive species – alien organisms arriving from foreign lands to thrive and expand in native

Battling Invasive Species

habitats and agriculturally important areas. This is a current and immediate threat – not a problem to imagine for future generations – a hazard that we face today. In fact, in 1999 biologists from the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at Cornell University estimated that damage and losses from invading alien species add up to more than \$138 billion per year. Just think, that calculation is over a decade old! Invasives are a global problem – from the European rabbit in Australia to channel catfish in Japan to zebra mussels in Lake Texoma. Although the problem is worldwide, we can still combat the menace locally.

In Cherokee County, there are over 100 plant species that are not native to North America. Of these species, only a few are likely to cause any significant problems. Some species you might want to look out for are:

Tree of Heaven (*Ailanthus altissima*): Also known as **stink tree**, this woody plant pops up in disturbed places and quickly forms a dense thicket due to its fast growth and profusion of seeds produced. It further reduces native plant growth by producing chemicals that prevent the growth of other nearby species.



Jeweler Nancy Hamill looks at a stand of invasive stink trees.

Japanese honeysuckle (*Lonicera japonica*): A lovely fragrance drifts from the pale yellow

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flowers as this vine chokes out native vegetation. You will find this on roadsides and fencerows, blanketing trees, shrubs, and even understory herbaceous species.

Teasel (*Dipsacus fullonum*): Teasel grows in open, sunny, disturbed habitats that are a little wet, such as roadside ditches. However, teasel may occur in native prairies. Teasel has expanded rapidly over the past 30 years and movement has been documented via highway systems, where mowers can help to spread seeds.

Other problem species in our area are Kudzu, Mimosa, and Sericea lespedeza. To see pictures and learn more about these and other invasive species, including management suggestions, go to www.ok-invasive-plant-council.org.

Priscilla Crawford is the coordinator of the Oklahoma Natural Areas Registry.

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