

Environmental Report April 2020

Environmental Manager

Teresa Sidwell

50 years of Environmental Protection - The first Earth Day was April 22, 1970 and at that time there was no legal or regulatory mechanisms to protect our environment. Senator Gaylord Nelson created Earth Day and twenty million Americans came out in different U.S. cities to demonstrate and it inspired change and action. We could not celebrate this momentous occasion by educating the public the way we usually do but we were able to join @NEEFusa in their annual environmental education week celebration on April 20-24 by sharing on the NWA EcoFest Instagram account.



The first annual NWA EcoFest is scheduled for November 6-7. It will be held indoors at the Benton County fairgrounds from 10:00 am until 3:00 pm. Friday will be a Free Field Trip day for area schools and Saturday will be open to all of the public. Area agencies, businesses and groups will share their message of environmental protection in an interactive way that excites the public about caring for our environment. **Share with potential exhibitors and the public.**



[@nwaecofest](#) on Instagram has a link in the bio to the event [website](#).

Follow, like, and comment on the NWA EcoFest social media accounts.

Nuisance Cases - The Environmental Division's nuisance cases are the worst of the worst. Cleaning up these properties take a long time, a lot of work, and sometimes county funding. Ordinance 2007-28 authorizes Benton County Environmental to regulate unsanitary conditions that pose a threat to the health, safety and welfare of our citizens. In March of 2013 our office received a report of an abandoned mobile home on Clairborne Road in the Monte Ne area. After a year and a half the environmental officer was able to get the property owner to clean up the yard but the mobile home remained vacant. Years later in July of 2018 our office received another report that the abandoned mobile home was unsafe and a nuisance to the community. After almost a year of research and following the procedures set forth by the County Attorney the mobile home was removed from the property at a cost of \$3,500.



Status of Nuisance Properties in Benton County

Case opened	Location	Status
2011	Plank Rd., Rogers	Outstanding warrants on property owners
2012	High Meadows Rd., Rogers	Court
2013	Mulberry Ln., Rogers	Court
2018	Rhoden Ln., Lowell	Recent drug activity discovered/ cleanup on hold
2019	Shortcut Rd., Decatur	Property owner died/property cleanup scheduled for May
2019	Lakeside Dr., Rogers	Working with new property owner to remediate property
2019	Bonnabel Rd., Monte Ne	Working with daughter of elderly property owner to remediate property
2019	Cloverdale Rd., Rogers	Dangerous buildings determination obtained in April 2020
2019	Taylor Barnett Rd., Garfield	Abandoned car in Sugar Creek/ waiting on Road Department assistance
2020	Phillips Rd., Lowell	Trying to locate heir
2020	Mtn. Crest Loop, Bella Vista	Dangerous building determination obtained in April 2020 on two sites

County Teaching Garden - The county teaching garden located at the Benton County Road Department, 1206 SW 14th Street in Bentonville is not looking good. I have been trying to keep up with maintenance on my own but the inmate crew has not been able to assist with monthly weeding and trimming due to COVID19 restrictions. The milkweed plants are coming up and looking healthy. Recently the garden was adopted by a local Cub Scout Troop and they hope to start alternating families to do general maintenance at the garden so that they can help while maintaining social distancing.

The County teaching garden is an alternative storm water management system called a rain garden. Each time it rains, impermeable surfaces such as driveways prevent water from collecting naturally and soaking into the ground. This water enters our storm drain system, carrying with it fertilizers, solid waste, hazardous chemicals from vehicles, bacteria from pet waste and other impurities. This untreated storm water dumps directly back into rivers, streams and lakes. Rain gardens are an enormous benefit for a healthy ecosystem.

I printed garden plant tags on my personal 3D printer.



The area around the garden is getting weeded slowly.



Roadside Cleanups – Officer Cervantes and I took the grappaling truck to 8 sites across Benton County in April to clean up illegal roadside dumps. We removed 6 couches, 3 mattresses, 2 piles of rolled up carpeting, 2 toilets, 1 sink, 5 bags of household trash, 3 refrigerators, 2 large bags of aluminum cans, 34 tires, and a boat.

I climbed into a ditch about 12 feet deep to hook up a couch on Hardie Road in the Rogers area (below left). Officer Cervantes used his grappling skills to remove this boat filled with tires in the Monte Ne area (pictured below right).



The Jackson's Adopt-a-Road group picked up all of this waste on Peach Orchard near Bentonville.



Convenience Center Program

The Convenience Center program closed to the public on March 18 due to COVID19 restrictions and is scheduled to reopen May 1 with face coverings required by both the public and staff.

Merced Cervantes
Environmental Enforcement Officer

This case was one of four cases I am currently working east of Garfield in the Lost Bridge area. POA members and residents alike are extremely grateful for beautifying this community.

BEFORE



AFTER



ENVIRONMENTAL CASE DATA

Refer to the charts below for environmental cases received and actions initiated in April.

VIOLATION TYPE	QTY
Burn (appliances)	0
Burn (auto bodies & parts)	0
Burn (construction debris)	0
Burn (electronics)	0
Burn (furniture)	0
Burn (general waste)	2
Burn (household garbage)	0
Burn (mobile home)	0
Burn (tires)	1
Bury (auto bodies & parts)	0
Bury (construction debris)	0
Bury (electronics)	0
Bury (furniture)	0
Bury (general waste)	0
Bury (household garbage)	0
Bury (mobile home)	0
Dumped by others (appliances)	2
Dumped by others (auto bodies & parts)	0
Dumped by others (construction debris)	2
Dumped by others (electronics)	1
Dumped by others (furniture)	7
Dumped by others (general waste)	5
Dumped by others (household garbage)	3
Dumped by others (metal)	0
Dumped by others (mobile home)	0
Dumped by others (tires)	2
Dumped by others (trees)	0
Dumped by self (appliances)	0
Dumped by self (auto bodies & parts)	3
Dumped by self (construction debris)	4
Dumped by self (electronics)	0
Dumped by self (furniture)	2
Dumped by self (general waste)	1
Dumped by self (household garbage)	1
Dumped by self (metal)	0
Dumped by self (mobile home)	0
Dumped by self (tires)	0
Dumped by self (trees)	0
OTHER	QTY
Agency Assist	1
Camera/Sign installation	5
Extra Patrol	3
Littering	0

ACTION TAKEN	QTY.
NOTICE OF VIOLATIONS ISSUED	0
WARNINGS ISSUED	0
CITATIONS ISSUED	1
WARRANTS	0
COURT APPEARANCES	0
CASE STATUS	QTY.
CASES OPENED THIS MONTH	43
CASES CLOSED THIS MONTH	36
TOTAL NUMBER OF OPEN CASES CURRENTLY UNDER INVESTIGATION	64
TOTAL NUMBER OF CASES CURRENTLY IN COURT SYSTEM	29
TOTAL NUMBER OF CASES CLOSED YTD	139

Officer Spotlight – Officer Merced Cervantes has been with Benton County Environmental for a year and five months. He works environmental law enforcement cases on the east side of the county, uses the grappling truck to remove illegal roadside dumps, and installs “Illegal Dumping” signs and surveillance cameras. Officer Cervantes has an excellent rapport with the public and received some great feedback from a Benton County citizen in April “who stated that she “...was blessed with meeting one of the environmental officers today. I was walking the side of the dirt road searching for morels. All I can say, Amazing Gentleman.” I am proud to have him on our team!

