



## **One Small Step: A Texas Teen Puts Oil in Its Place**

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"I'm the president of my 4H club and part of its rabbit program. My whole family raises rabbits. In 1997, when I was 12, I had to come up with something to do for my 4H demonstration — a required talk. One day a 4H friend saw her dad pouring oil on a fence post and later noticed that it had killed off the plants nearby. She and I and another friend decided to look into it.

"We contacted an oil-recycling company called Spill Response. They told us how oil contaminates groundwater and also how their company uses old oil to make asphalt.

"At first we were just trying to prepare a good speech for 4H, but then we decided to start a recycling program for our town. Spill Response helped by connecting us with the Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission. The TNRCC said if we could get county officials on board they'd help us with the campaign. They even gave us the name — Don't Be Crude — to use. So we talked to the county judge and county commissioners and they approved our idea.

"At first things were kind of slow and people were like, 'Y'all are 12 years old and don't what you're talking about!' or 'We don't do that sort of thing in Texas; that's what people in California do!' But we kept going. As of now, we have 17 recycling sites in and around Victoria. Since 1997, we've collected and recycled approximately 40,000 gallons of used oil a year." — Interview by Marilyn Berlin Snell

**Crude Facts:** Dumping one gallon of oil can contaminate more than one acre of groundwater, but the solution is simple: Recycle your used oil.