

Arizona Trail Seeds of Stewardship Program

Renewal in the Cienega

by Deborah Oslik

On December 15 the Arizona Trail Seeds of Stewardship Program launched its first outing in Southern Arizona. The participating students all attend Pima Partnership Academy in central Tucson, which is a school focused on working with underserved populations. The outing was a day hike starting at Gabe Zimmerman Trailhead in Vail, and ending at Colossal Cave Mountain Park. We spent the afternoon hiking a 6.5-mile section of the Arizona Trail, where we encountered Cienega Creek, a unique riparian area, learned about some of the defining flora and fauna of the Sonoran Desert, and then went underground on a tour into Colossal Cave.



Beginning the hike at the Gabe Zimmerman trailhead gave us the opportunity to speak about the tragedies of last year's January 8th shootings, and use that as a moment to reflect upon how lucky we were to have these special outdoor experiences. We also had the chance to spend part of the day hiking with the Gateway Community Coordinator for the Arizona Trail Association, as well as meeting one of the trail stewards who cares for a portion of the trail we hiked that day.

At the day's conclusion, all of the students who came out with us were excited and eager for our next outing...and so are we!

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