



Using New Skills to Find Their Way in the Forest

by Treven Hooker and Angel Breault

On Wednesday November 9, 2016 a group of six students from EDGE High School and their teacher Emily Gindlesparger loaded up into the Seeds of Stewardship van for their third outing. This time the students would be heading toward Sunset Trail near the top of Mt. Lemmon in the Santa Catalina Mountains.

The goal of this outing was to teach the students the fundamentals of orienteering and the use of a map and compass to localize their position in the wilderness.

Once we arrived at the trailhead, we bundled up into our jackets to protect ourselves from the cool, crisp mountain air. Everyone had filled their water bottles, applied sunscreen, and warmed up a bit before we headed into the forest. We reached an open area where the students were able to listen comfortably and learn about the basics of triangulation and orienteering. Each student was equipped with a map and a compass of the Coronado National Forest. The students were exposed to topography, how to gauge distance, direction, as well as general cartographic terminology.



Due to the size of the group everyone got to know each other rather quickly, making it easy to support each other as the students absorbed a skill not usually applicable in their everyday life. Several students embraced in this newfound knowledge and helped their peers while acting as natural mentors. After about 45 minutes of coaching we hit the trail, pausing periodically to orient ourselves using the skills the students had only recently acquired.



After hiking 1.5 miles down the trail we reached a beautiful vista overlooking the Santa Catalina range, and the students decided lunch with a view would be great.

After a tasty lunch and engaging conversations about the mineral composition of granite, the difference between coniferous and deciduous trees, and phenology, students once again practiced their orienteering skills. This time everyone was able to successfully orient themselves with no assistance

needed. This success brought out a newfound confidence for some of the students who then asked to explore down the stream. Two students chose to stay and discuss the native

ecology and sketch in their field journals. After about an hour of exploring and stimulating conversation, we headed back to the van led by a group of six confident teens all of whom were reluctant to leave.

The hour drive back to school was one filled with conversation about the brand new outdoor skill they had learned, as well as excitement for their next outing with the Seeds of Stewardship program!



This Seeds of Stewardship outing made possible by support from:

