



## One Last Outing with Coronado Elementary by Treven Hooker

On November 15, 2017, 50 fourth grade students from Coronado Elementary School embarked on an adventure into Coronado National Memorial. This was the third and final expedition for these students, who had explored this memorial in so many ways over the past few months. The class was split up into three groups: the Elf Owls, Gila

Monsters, and Coatimundis. After this expedition, each group will have explored Coronado Cave, Montezuma's Peak, and arroyos through the Huachuca Mountains.

The Gila Monsters began their adventure with a wonderful presentation from Park Ranger Kimberly Wentland. She brought out a massive display of wild animal pelts, skulls, and scat. Some were replicas and others real. The students were stunned by the treasures in front of them. Kim described that



these animal remains were representative of the local wildlife, and that they were out there now waiting for us. The youth were extremely excited, but before the adventure could begin, they were equipping their backpacks with colored pencils, markers, and sketch pads. Their goal was to hike and explore, then search to find an example of something that demonstrates the season of the desert. They did an incredible job, and the representations they produced were incredible.

The Coatimundis started their adventure by donning helmets, headlamps, gloves, and plenty of water. After a bathroom stop, the youth were set for a steep hike up to Coronado Cave. Their mission was to explore and learn about the formation and history of the cave, then filled their plastic bags with any trash they could find. Narrow tunnels offered wonderful adventure, and hidden pockets of trash treasure. The youth did an outstanding job removing trash left behind by previous hikers – stewardship in action!

The Elf Owls hiked into a small arroyo not far from the visitor center. Here we explored our five senses, and analyzed how we learn indoors vs. outdoors. The youth described how they only use two to three senses to learn in the classroom, whereas they can use all five when learning outside. Together we observed objects around us, attempting to isolate our stimulated sense as much as possible. Once we all felt we had a strong understanding of

how to learn using our natural tools, we loaded into the vans and traveled up to Montezuma Pass where we began our hike up to Montezuma Peak.

The youth were instructed to find something natural and unique to study, then present to the class after analyzing it using their senses. We found ourselves constantly distracted as we analyzed cholla cactus, animal scat, juniper berries, colorful rocks, and felt a cooling breeze. At the top of the mountain, the 4<sup>th</sup> graders presented their findings, devoured their lunch, then relaxed, explored, and played on the peak before beginning their hike back down.



Every student had an amazing time, and were describing it in a large circle as we all gathered back at the visitor center. We passed out gifts for the youth, shared our gratitude, then sent them on their way back to school. With this final outing complete, we were proud that each student participated in an experiential, educational, and stewardship experience, allowing for a full experience inside Coronado National Memorial.

**This Seeds of Stewardship outing was made possible by an Active Trails grant from the National Park Foundation, funded by the Coca-Cola Foundation.**

