



Basis Basics of Stewardship

by Treven Hooker

On November 18th, 2017, sixteen students from Basis North geared up for a day of trail work in the Santa Catalina Mountains. This group began the semester hiking Oracle Ridge Trail, now they've returned to restore and maintain sections of the trail for themselves and future hikers. This is one of three stewardship expeditions with this group. Our mission was to discuss the safety of trail work, strategies of repairing a trail, repair sections of the trail, and spend a wonderful day exploring and learning in the outdoors.

Our First hike in September displayed a very different landscape as leaves and foliage grew abundant. Now in November, growth has either stunted or regressed to hibernating plants. It was a fascinating opportunity to compare seasonal differences. We unloaded tools and equipment, and then equipped ourselves with tools, gloves, and helmets. At the trailhead, I demonstrated proper tool edict, use for each tool, and described the work to be done. Once students showed understanding, we began our hike.

The trail was easier to navigate through since the foliage has reduced. We hiked a little less than a mile before stopping. Splitting up into three groups, students began the intense work. At first the learning curve was heavy, but soon the youth found their rhythm. We worked for over an hour before the hunger kicked in, so we rested on steep slopes of the ridge to enjoy hard earned lunches over massive desert landscapes.



the same place. Not only does this look unorganized and ugly, it forces animals to retreat from the impacted areas. This insight gave students a new motive for their work, which was to make the trails as nice as possible while promoting wildlife and habitat prosperity.



I asked the students why trail work was important. They showed a lot of understanding, stating that it promoted use and was safer for hikers. To highlight the environmental aspect, I reminded students that nice trails hold hikers to their path. Poorly maintained trails encourage hikers to make new paths of their own. This can be devastating to local habitats, and cause multiple off trails and routes that lead to

After lunch we continued to work, hiking and working all the way back to the vehicles. By 2:30 in the afternoon, students were sore, tired, bruised and cut, all wearing smiles and dirt from their hard work. We loaded the tools back into the trailer, hopped back into the vehicles, and began our windy long drive down Catalina Highway. The youth expressed their excitement about what they had just accomplished and for the future expeditions. Nothing beats a day of work on mountaintops, helping our community explore and grow outdoors.



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