



DIY Guide: Exploring the Arizona Trail

Seeds of Stewardship | Arizona Trail Association
Tucson, AZ | Grades 5-12



I hope you are able to get outside and enjoy our amazing trails and wild places, especially during difficult times. Tucson has easy access to the Arizona Trail, from the cool mountains of Mt. Lemmon to the lush riparian gallery of Cienega Creek, and all of our wonderful biomes in between. I hope the Arizona Trail can provide you opportunities to be outside and stay safe and healthy. If you have any questions about local trails, good outdoor learning areas, or questions about plants and animals you've seen, please feel free to reach out any time. This is a resource to help you and the young people in your lives get outside safely and responsibly while connecting with and learning about the natural world just beyond your doorstep. Our activities can be adapted to most outdoor places like local parks or even green spaces in your neighborhood! Remember the age-old saying in outdoor education: "Do what you can, with what you have, where you are!"

Happy Trails,
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Know Before You Go & Post-Hike Sharing		
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Layers of a Forest Exploration	Butterfly Trailhead	Layers of a Forest
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Storytelling Hike	Sahuarita Road Access Point	Landscape Storytelling

Know Before You Go:

- Practice Leave No Trace principles. Please visit www.lnt.org to learn the important ways you can protect the natural places you visit.
 - Follow important COVID-19 safety protocol and rules:
 - If you are feeling ill or exhibiting any symptoms, stay home!
 - Only travel to trails that are within close proximity to home, not requiring stopping for services that would require close interaction with others.
 - Don't touch anything at trailheads, including register box, signs, benches, etc.
 - Maintain six feet between yourself and other trail users.
 - Know your limits – now is not the time to rely on emergency medical services.
 - Visit <https://aztrail.org/covid-19-and-the-arizona-trail/> for more updates.
 - Prepare your hiking materials:
 - Minimum 1 liter of water per person per hour you're on the trail
 - Salty snacks
 - Weather-appropriate clothing and sun protection: hat, sunscreen, sunglasses
 - Map of the area (click the links below for a map of each area)
 - Cell phone
 - First aid kit
 - Activity-specific supplies
 - Optional: Camera to capture your experience!
 - Remember to let someone know exactly where you're going and how long you'll be gone.
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After your hike:

- Take a moment to reflect. What was the best part of your experience? What did you see and learn? What would you like to learn more about?
- Share your experience!
 - Tell your friends and family about your hike.
 - Share what you learned with your teacher.
- Email photos of your experience and activity sheets to Seeds of Stewardship (treven@aztrail.org). We love to see what you're learning and that you're enjoying the outdoors!
- Find us on Instagram. Post your photos and tag [@aztsos](https://www.instagram.com/aztsos).

Mapping the Wild

Location: Gabe Zimmerman Trailhead, Cienega Creek, [AZT Passage 8: Rincon Valley](#)

Access: Take I-10 east and take Exit 279 (Wentworth Road/Colossal Cave Road). Turn east (left) for 0.2 mile to Frontage Road. Turn south (right) on Frontage Road for 5.2 miles to Gabe Zimmerman Trailhead.

Route: From the trailhead, hike past the ramada east toward Cienega Creek. Take some time to read the informational signs about Cienega Creek. The trail will bring you to a dry riverbed (*arroyo*). Follow the creek to the north (left) toward the tall cottonwood trees. When you're under their canopies, you have arrived and can begin the activity.

What's there?

Circle what you find!



Eastern Cottonwood



Prickly Pear



Cienega Creek



Coati



Longfin Dace



Ornate Box Turtle



Red-tailed hawk



Saguaro Cactus

Activity: [Sensory Map](#) | *Sensory observation, art, mindfulness, exploration, nature study*
Use your senses to create a map and learn about the area's ecology.

Materials: Activity printout, pencil, optional: colored pencils/markers

Tree Diversity Hike

Location: Marshall Gulch Trailhead, [AZT Passage 11: Santa Catalina Mountains](#)

Access: Take Tanque Verde Road East to Catalina Hwy junction. Turn North, following Catalina Hwy for 30 miles (55 min). Drive through the town of Summerhaven until the road comes to a dead end at Marshall Gulch Trailhead. If the gate is closed, parking is available in Summerhaven.

Fee: The Coronado National Forest requires a \$5 per day per vehicle fee.

Route: The trail is located just north of the restrooms. Look for a large steel Arizona Trail sign that shows a map of the trail. Begin here and hike northwest.

What's there?

Circle what you find!



Creek



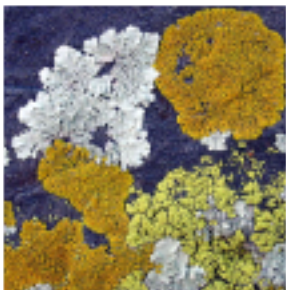
Arizona Pine



Ponderosa Pine



Douglas Fir



Lichen



Regal Horned Lizard



Abert's Squirrel



Stellar Jay

Activity: [Trees of Marshall Gulch](#) | *Photography, art, drawing, comparison, diversity*
Observe and learn about the area's diverse trees through photography and drawing.

Materials: Camera, activity printout, pencil, optional: colored pencils/markers

Layers of a Forest Exploration

Location: Butterfly Trailhead, [AZT Passage 11b: Pusch Ridge Wilderness Bypass](#)

Access: Take the Catalina Highway off Tanque Verde Road in Tucson. Drive 4.2 miles to the Forest boundary and continue 19 miles to the Palisade Visitor Information Center. The trailhead for Butterfly Trail is located at the north end of the parking lot across the road. The upper trailhead is about another 4 miles up Catalina Highway at the Soldier Camp access road.

Route: From the trailhead, hike for 10 minutes before beginning this activity.

What's there?

Circle what you find!



Acorn Woodpecker



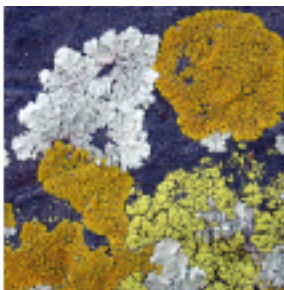
Arizona Pine



Ponderosa Pine



Douglas Fir



Lichen



Regal Horned Lizard



Abert's Squirrel



Stellar Jay

Activity: [Layers of a Forest](#) | *Art, drawing, photography, reading, writing, hiking*
Learn about ecosystem layers in a forest through observation and drawing.

Materials: Activity printout, pencil, notebook

Biodiversity Saunter

Location: Oracle Ridge Trailhead, [AZT Passage 12: Oracle Ridge](#)

Access: From Tucson, drive north on Catalina Highway toward Summerhaven. Just beyond the Loma Linda Picnic Area, look for the Control Road (FR 38). Turn north (right) here and pass the Mt. Lemmon Fire Station. Follow this dirt road for 0.25-mile. Just beyond the first cattle guard, look for the parking area on the west (right) side of the road. Locate the trail by finding the trailhead sign and begin hiking north.

Route: Follow the trail for 10 minutes before beginning the activity.

What's there?

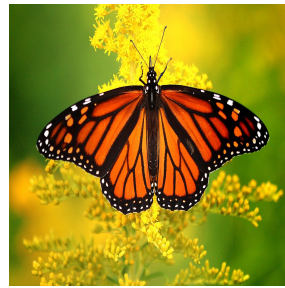
Circle what you find!



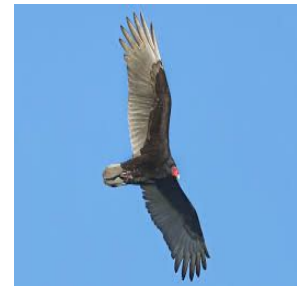
Valleys



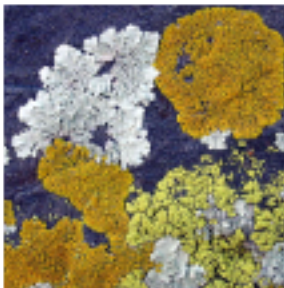
Arizona Pine



Monarch Butterfly



Turkey Vulture



Lichen



Regal Horned Lizard



Abert's Squirrel



Common Raven

Activity: [Biodiversity Study](#) | *Science, art, writing, exploration, nature study*
Find evidence of biodiversity in a plot study.

Materials: Activity printout, pencil, optional: colored pencils & tape measure

Storytelling Hike

Location: Sahuarita Road Access Point, [AZT Passage 7: Las Cienegas](#)

Access: From Tucson, take I-10 East to AZ-83 South, exit 281. Drive south on Hwy 83 for 3.3 miles to Sahuarita Road. Park on the northwest corner of the intersection, immediately west of Hwy 83. Walk 150 feet west to locate the trail, then hike north or south—it's up to you!

Route: For this activity, follow the trail for 10 minutes until you find a place to stop and complete the activity.

What's there?

Circle what you find!



Palo Verde Tree



Red-tailed Hawk



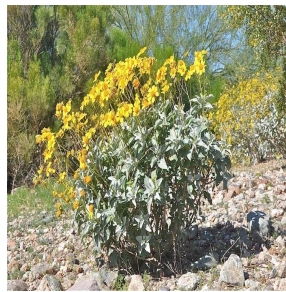
Cholla



Pipevine Swallowtail



Ocotillo



Brittlebush



Phainopepla



Desert Spiny Lizard

Activity: [Landscape Storytelling](#) | Reflection, writing, natural history

Reflect: If the landscape had a story to tell, what would it say?

Materials: Activity printout, pencil