

Youth Outreach Report

Northern Arizona

October 2020 - March 2021 | Prepared by Julie Polovitch



Seeds of Stewardship

- Developed curriculum and facilitated two seasons of [After School on the AZT](#):
 - Fall 2020 - 2 groups, 14 youth, 15 outings including 2 trail maintenance projects.
 - Winter 2021 - 1 group, 9 youth, 6 outings. [Outing reports](#).
 - [Unisource Newsletter: Encouraging Kids to Explore Outdoors Safely](#).
 - Registration for the spring season is happening now.
- Facilitated 2 trail maintenance projects with Flagstaff Junior Academy's mountain bike club.
- Capacity building: Hired 1 new co-leader, Miguel Sotelo, who has been very reliable and helpful; his experience and commitment has been a real asset to the program!
- We've begun the initial stages of partnership development with Flagstaff Youth Riders (Flyers), which will lead to providing numerous educational stewardship opportunities along the Arizona Trail; this would significantly help us increase our volunteer hours and broaden our reach.
- Brainstorming for summer programs is underway.

Gear Girls

- Facilitated two seasons of [Gear Girls](#).
 - Fall - 2 groups, 18 youth, 16 practices including 2 trail maintenance projects.
 - Winter - 2 groups, 20 youth, 17 outings.
- Capacity building: Onboarded 1 new coach and 1 new volunteer coach.
- Completed registration for the spring season. Groups are full with a waitlist!
- Revived the [Junior Coaches](#) program. Junior Coaches, a leadership and skills development program, is for older Gear Girls participants who are excited to take on more leadership. This program will create pathways for participants to become coaches and stay involved in the program beyond 8th grade, ultimately making Gear Girls more long-term sustainable. We completed registration for the Junior Coaches spring season, developed a new curriculum, and completed all the programming.
- Brainstorming for summer programs is underway.

Other

- Recruited volunteer help to distribute AZT maps to Flagstaff business.

Southern Arizona

October 2020 - March 2021 | Prepared by Treven Hooker

Youth Ambassador Program

Seeds of Stewardship developed the Arizona Trail Youth Ambassador Program in October and we have maintained a 100% retention rate. The Youth Ambassador Program is an 8-month internship program for high school seniors who want to become the next environmental education generation. We implement a strict pandemic protocol for all outdoor experiences to ensure the safety of our participants. By the end of the program Ambassadors collectively experienced 1,500 hours of outdoor experience and 250 collective hours of virtual experience. Ambassadors have committed to 5 stewardship trips on the AZT and numerous other volunteer stewardship trips within the Tucson community.

The ATA's Youth Ambassador Program is nationally recognized through the North American Association for Environmental Education. The NAAEE has partnered with the ATA and this new program by providing their accredited seal of approval on Ambassador Certification.

In addition, the Arizona Master Naturalist Program has partnered with us by certifying the Ambassadors as official Youth Master Naturalists of Arizona. This certification provides the Ambassadors reduced admission fees and priority admission into the Arizona Master Naturalist Program.

Youth Ambassadors are responsible for creating and completing a Community Action Project. Some Ambassadors have committed to removing trash and invasive species within Cienega Creek. Another student is painting murals on buildings in Tucson of plants that exist along the AZT which would be negatively impacted by extractive industries. Another student is working to write and publish a children's book about the Sonoran Desert. Other projects include the formation of community gardens where waste is currently being dumped, and the creation of brochures for specific trailheads to inform AZT users about the flora, fauna, and cultural history of the areas. One student even collected the materials and erected an ocotillo shade remade on the AZT.

The Ambassador Program is committed to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. We have partnered with representatives from Climbing in Color, Karlyn Bradley with Defend Our Future, and Sergio Avila with the Sierra Club, in order to provide a broader understanding of our communities' experience with public lands and outdoor spaces as a whole. With community support from EE organizations, social justice groups, and organizations, and businesses and the public, the Arizona Trail Youth Ambassadors are living up to their name. They are the next generation of inspired leaders for the Arizona Trail.