



FAQs

Seeds of Stewardship - After School on the AZT Fall 2021

Who can participate?

This program is for Flagstaff youth in grades 5-8. Participants should be prepared to hike up to 5 miles on uneven terrain in varying weather conditions. No prior outdoor experience is necessary!

What is the schedule like?

We'll meet once a week on Fridays for 8 consecutive weeks, starting September 3 and ending October 29. Participants are highly encouraged to attend all 8 outings, but we understand that everyone's lives are very full; please keep us informed if your child can't make it to an outing, so we know not to wait up at the trailhead.

[Check out the calendar with meeting times and locations.](#)

What will participants do and learn?

Outings will typically consist of hiking, a fun educational activity, a snack break, games/initiatives/mindful moments, and nature-learning opportunities along the trail!

Participants will gain outdoor skills and knowledge essential for a lifetime of trail adventures, including Leave No Trace principles, local ecology, and survival techniques. We will use the process of learning to travel effectively as a group to illustrate concepts like planning ahead, self care, self confidence, and being part of a thoughtful community.

For two of our outings, we'll experience the Arizona Trail on mountain bikes. Participants should know how to ride a bike in order to have a fun time at this outing; youth do not need to have any mountain biking experience, as we'll be utilizing beginner-friendly trails and providing all necessary instruction and individualized support. Please see the packing list on page 3 for details on what gear you'll need. We have extra of all required gear, including bikes, and will gladly lend out anything you need.

In the midst of the program, participants will have the opportunity to improve a segment of the Arizona Trail during a special trail maintenance event. Youth will be taught how to identify trail issues and then fix the problems using tools and teamwork. This service learning day will show participants the importance of public lands volunteerism and how the Arizona Trail is the result of many people working together towards a common goal.

The program's capstone experience will be a group challenge hike. The group will have collaborated over several outings to choose a location and create a trip plan. Youth will be given the chance to self-lead the hike, demonstrating their refined abilities to navigate, communicate, identify potential risks, and guide others with compassion.

What safety measures are being taken in response to the coronavirus?

The Arizona Trail Association's Seeds of Stewardship (SoS) Program is committed to reducing the risk of coronavirus transmission. Information about our safety strategies can be found in our [Revised COVID Epidemic Protocols](#).

SoS participants will be required to:

- Follow any federal, state, and local mask ordinances.
- If unvaccinated, wear a mask at all times unless they are physically distancing, eating, or drinking. We will not check participants' vaccination status, and we ask that participants respect one another's requests to wear masks and/or requests for physical distancing.
- Possess and utilize disinfectants (provided by SoS).

We ask that youth kindly refrain from participation if they have COVID-19 symptoms, believe they may have COVID-19, or have had any exposure to someone with a confirmed case of COVID-19 in the past 14 days.

What will participants need for outings?

We have extra of everything you could need! We're happy to lend out any items; just let us know what you'd like to borrow.

For each outing, please bring...

- A comfortable backpack with space for extra clothing layers, snacks, & water.
- A mask.
- Minimum 2.5 liters of water
- Snacks are provided (bars, chips/pretzels, seeds/nuts, and fruit) by Seeds of Stewardship! We will accommodate allergies and dietary restrictions.
- Comfy weather-appropriate footwear (closed-toed shoes) and clothing (layers) meant for moving
- For chilly weather days, warm gloves and a warm hat
- Sun protection: Sunglasses, sun hat or baseball cap, sunscreen
- Cell phones should stay in backpacks on silent.
- Any participants who require an epi pen, inhaler, or other life saving medications must have those medications available for every outing.
- Optional: binoculars, notebook, colored pencils

Notes on outings requiring special equipment:

- For the biking outings: You'll need a mountain bike, a helmet, glasses (sunglasses, bike glasses, or prescription), and bike gloves. We have extra gear, including bikes; please give us a heads up at least 24 hours in advance if you would like to borrow anything.
- For the trail stewardship day: Everyone needs to wear long pants, sturdy closed-toed shoes, glasses or sunglasses (bring your own or borrow SoS safety glasses), and sturdy work gloves (bring your own or borrow ours).

What if there is inclement weather?

Please ensure your child is always prepared with weather-appropriate clothing; be sure to check the weather the day before our outing and then pack accordingly. With the proper clothing and attitudes, rain, snow, and cold are awesome opportunities to experience the trail in new ways, awaken the senses, and embark on memorable adventures. That being said, our instructors know when to call it off; when inclement weather is forecasted, we'll be in touch to give you a heads up to pack extra items or that we'll be cancelling/postponing that week's outing. Again, if there is any item you need to borrow, we've got you covered!

Is there a fee?

Nope! Our program is funded by grants and private donations. We hope to remove the barriers to entry as much as possible and don't want cost to be an issue. We do however accept donations from anyone who wants to support Seeds of Stewardship; you are welcome to donate here: <http://www.aztrail.org/donate.html>.

Who is leading the outings?

Miguel Sotelo, Arizona Trail Association's Youth Outreach & Education Associate, joined After School on the AZT in September 2020 after moving back to Flagstaff from Seattle where he worked as an Environmental Educator and Backpacking/Climbing Guide for middle and high schoolers. Miguel holds a B.S. in Environmental Science and a Wilderness First Aid certification. He has been leading and guiding groups in the outdoors for over 5 years. Miguel uses his education and experience to actively diversify and equify outdoor and conservation spaces. Miguel's goal is to use these outings to a) help participants feel confident in the outdoors, b) challenge participants to better make the outdoors a safe and welcoming place for everyone, and c) give youth the opportunity to be themselves and make new friends.

Julie Polovitch, ATA's Youth Outreach & Education Coordinator, launched After School on the AZT in response to challenges that youth, families, and public lands faced through the coronavirus pandemic. Julie, a Flagstaff resident, holds a B.A. in Environmental Education and a Wilderness First Responder certification. She has extensive experience leading groups in wilderness settings, a background in ecology and conservation, and an excitement for enlivening new curiosities for the natural world. A perfect outing in Julie's mind is one that a) excites youth to explore more and ask more questions, b) challenges participants to try something new, and c) leaves a little extra dirt on our shoes, hands, and—yes, sometimes—faces.

Learn more about Seeds of Stewardship online!

Ed-venture vicariously through our [outing reports](#).

Follow us on [Instagram](#) & [Facebook](#)!

More questions?

Please reach out to Miguel at miguel@aztrail.org.