

Youth Outreach Report: Southern AZ Seeds of Stewardship & Ambassador Program March - May 2022 | Prepared by Treven Hooker

Seeds of Stewardship South just completed another amazing season. We served 8 schools in Southern Arizona, providing 900 outdoor experiences for youth, hiking 288 collective miles, stewarding 100 collective miles of the Arizona Trail, and graduating 5 new interns as the Arizona Trail Association's official Arizona Trail Ambassadors.

Communities in Southern Arizona are still responding to the Covid-19 pandemic. School operations are limited, teachers remain overwhelmed and overworked, and students are still recovering from a year and a half of online learning. As the Outreach and Education component of the ATA, it is our duty to find ample ways to respond to the needs of our community partners. Seeds of Stewardship is ever increasing its viability as an educational partner program as we are providing top notch leadership, education, and experiences for youth. Our creative and brave visions are pushing the limits of traditional educational partners; and schools are noticing.

This year Seeds of Stewardship South has been asked to become school sponsors for multiple schools in Southern Arizona, not monetarily nor just in brand, but in education pedagogy and curriculum. The Nature based education provided by SOSS is inspiring schools to incorporate more environmental learning indoors and outdoors. As educational leaders, The Arizona Trail is influencing the way *schools are instructing*. The Arizona Trail is becoming a pathway not just for hikers, bikers, and equestrian riders, but ever more for the educational development of our young communities. This is a direct fulfillment of our program's mission, "to provide educational and meaningful outdoor experiences that empower youth to become the next generation of stewards of Arizona's wild landscapes."

Meet your new Arizona Trail Ambassadors: Ali Soland, Strix Krulger, Alaska Macon, Hako Kaplan, and Leyza Cuevas. Our Arizona Trail Ambassadors completed 300 hours of training in Sonoran Desert place based environmental education and teaching methodologies. These students are all in high school. They dedicated every Sunday for 31 weeks to steward the Arizona Trail, and learn about the ecology and natural and human histories of Southern Arizona. The Arizona Trail Association's Ambassador Program also serves as Arizona's Jr. Master Naturalist Program, as designated by the Arizona Association for Environmental Education. This means our Arizona Trail Ambassadors are certified not only as Ambassadors, accredited by the North American Association for Environmental Education, but are also certified as Jr. Master Naturalists accredited by the Arizona Association for Environmental Education. No other National Scenic Trail is offering this caliber of education, training, and certification to youth.

Youth Outreach Report: Northern AZ Seeds of Stewardship & Gear Girls

March - May 2022 | Prepared by Julie Polovitch

Northern AZ Seeds of Stewardship:

- Coordinated and facilitated 14 outings with 10 school groups.
 - Wrapped up a successful school year, which was an awesome accomplishment, since this was our first time being able to host a full school year's worth of programming since the 2018-2019 school year!
- Completed 7 stewardship projects with 141 youth, contributing 728.25 volunteer hours.
 - Participants improved the AZT with routine maintenance, such as drain and tread repair, as well as habitat restoration through removing invasive plants.
 - We built a more robust partnership with the City of Flagstaff's Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Program through co-coordinating 3 invasive species removal projects at Picture Canyon and McMillan Mesa.
- Helped onboard Clay Showalter as the new Northern AZ Youth Outreach & Education Coordinator through an over-the-phone training session.
 - Collected important information and updated resources for Clay.

Gear Girls:

- Coordinated and facilitated the spring session of Gear Girls.
 - The 10-week program encompassed 1 group, 13 youth, 7 coaches, 9 weekly practices, and a 1-night campout.
 - Get a glimpse into the program through the [Gear Girls Spring 2022 photo album](#).
- Coordinated Peaks to Park outreach, registration, and planning. Peaks to Park is a vehicle-supported multi-day ride from the San Francisco Peaks to the Grand Canyon, covering nearly 100 miles of the AZT. Unfortunately, the program will be short-staffed due to unforeseen circumstances, and subsequently won't be able to run this June as intended. Hopefully my work put into planning will make for a successful 2023 trip.
- Assisted Brittany Chavez with renewing Catena Foundation funding, which has been secured for 2022-2024.
- Helped onboard Makenzie Mabery as the new Gear Girls Coordinator through an in-person training session.
 - Collected important information and updated resources for Makenzie.