



COTTONWOOD GULCH EXPEDITIONS

SCHOOL/COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

STUDENTS IN WILDERNESS INITIATIVE



SIWI students at Ab-Shi-Sle-Pab Wilderness, 2019

OVERVIEW

The Students in Wilderness Initiative (SIWI) helps middle school learners answer the question “where is my home?” Aimed at broadening the definition of *home* by guiding students towards feeling at home in outdoor spaces, SIWI centers teaching about public lands, ecology, and sense of place in New Mexico. Through a combination of classroom and field lessons, SIWI students will learn about everyone who calls this place home, both human and more-than-human. The experience takes an experiential approach by exposing students to different public lands and ecosystems, and culminates in a 3-5 day camping trip in the Southwest.

OUTCOMES

- Students will feel a connection to their home environment.
- Students will be able to see themselves as belonging in outdoor spaces.
- Students will gain practical skills for outdoor living: how to hike, camp, and thrive in the outdoors.

INTENDED PARTICIPANTS

6th, 7th, and 8th grade students.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Scaffolded sequence for 6th-8th grade which seeks to answer the following questions:

- 6th grade: **How does our world change throughout the year?**
 - Students explore seasonal changes in their home ecosystem through an in depth study of the Rio Grande Phenology Trail and other associated phenology projects.
- 7th grade: **How do we take care of our home and those who live here?**
 - Students work with public land managers (US Forest Service, National Park Service, US Fish and Wildlife, Bureau of Land Management, local land managers) to engage in stewardship projects.
- 8th grade: **How do I feel at home in this place?**
 - Students engage directly with their home ecosystem through an in-depth study of physical and human geography, as well as building social-emotional skills.

PROGRAM LENGTH

6th grade: 3 classroom days, three 1-day trips

7th grade: 5 classroom days, three 1-day trips, 1 2-day trip

8th grade: 5 classroom days, 5 field days

STANDARDS ALIGNMENT

6th GRADE

SS NMIS 6.18 Identify how natural forces shape Earth's environments and regions.

- Students will be able to articulate seasonal differences in ecosystems.
- Students will be able to describe the interconnectedness of Earth's systems.

7th GRADE

SS NMIS 7.19 Describe how environmental factors affect human activities and resource use.

- Students will understand the importance of stewardship in the context of the outdoors.
- Students will be able to draw connections between human and non-human uses of natural resources.

8th GRADE

SS NMIS 8.29 Define a region by its human and physical characteristics.

- Students will gain an understanding of the physical and human geography of New Mexico.
- Students will be able to describe different land management agencies and designations, particularly Wilderness.

TOTAL COST - 6th grade:

Up to 35 students per field session: \$11,995

TOTAL COST - 7th-8th grade:

Up to 35 students per field session: \$15,995

*Contact us for alternative payment options if you are a Title I school or a nonprofit organization



SIWI students at Valle De Oro, 2023



SIWI student in Santa Fe National Forest, 2022

CONTACT US

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We could not run this program without the critical support of our partner, The Wilderness Society. We are grateful for their support as we work to bridge New Mexico students with public lands, and grow the environmental stewards and critical thinkers of the next generation!