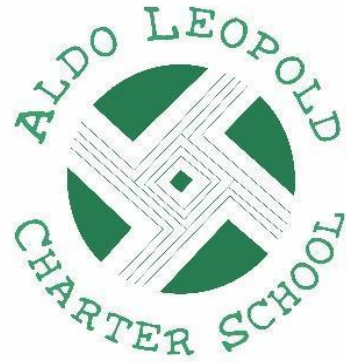


Live. Learn. Learn about Desert Sustainability



Dear Citizen Scientists and Their Parents:

In our endless quest to understand where we live, we are venturing further afield next month, heading down from the mountains of our beloved Gila & into the low country around Tucson and into the Sulphur Springs Valley. It's time to learn about one of the most fascinating -- and, *biologically diverse* -- bioregions on the planet, the Sonoran Desert Sky Island region, which is composed of geographically-isolated, high-elevation mountains floating in a vast sea of low-elevation desert.

Here are the trip essentials:

Who: 9th Graders

What: A 4 -day trip to the Sonoran Desert's Sky Island region

Need to know:

- Students need to bring a sack lunch for the first day.
- Also, money for a meal in Tucson one night (\$15-\$20).
- Students will be car camping. They need to pack appropriately (see list)
- Gear that you don't have can be checked out from the school.

Where: Chiricahua Mountains (Turkey Creek region), Dragoon Mountains (Eastern Chiricahua Stronghold), El Coronado Ranch, Coronado Dairy, Forest in the Desert, Catalina State Park, Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum, Tohono Odham Gardens, Los Morteros —plus a side-trip to Tucson's Fourth St.

Why: To deepen our understanding of desert ecosystems and the myriad adaptations (*plant and animal... "human-beings" included*) that sustain life in desert regions.

Travel, as you know, can be both enlightening & expensive. As always, ALCS faculty have endeavored to keep our trips as affordable as possible, camping when we can, taking advantage of student discounts, and packing as much as possible into 4 days of desert travel. We are hoping that all students will be able to attend this worthwhile road trip that offers them a glimpse into an ecosystem very different from – yet, paradoxically, closely related to -- our Gila home country.

This Sonoran Sojourn trip offers students an equal balance of time in the outdoors and research time in museums. Some years, the weather has been spectacular, but the principle of layering prevails when you're in the desert: a jacket or fleece is necessary, as are light clothes & a hat for warm days. So a warm sleeping bag is also necessary. And, while rain is rare in November, it's always possible—so students should bring rain gear.

A packing list is attached below. If you have any questions about the trip, don't hesitate to contact Pete prankin@aldocs.org

With kind regards,

Pete Rankin

Sonoran Sojourn Packing List

Items with an asterisk () beside them are available on loan from the school. "Loaners" require that students offer \$50 collateral as a guarantee that items are returned in good condition. Please let Pete Rankin or Orien MacDonald know if you need any of these items.*

- 3 masks (we may enter museums or facilities that still require masks and want our students to be respectful wherever they go.)
- Duffel or "softside" travel bag (or backpack*)
- Tent*
- Cool-weather sleeping bag in a stuff-sack*; should be rated 20 degrees or lower
- Sleeping pad* (more important than you might think)
- Cap with a brim
- Rain poncho *or* raincoat and pants
- 2 sturdy water bottles or Camelbak-style hydration system
- Headlamp or flashlight
- Sturdy close-toed hiking shoes
- Sandals for camp (optional)
- Mess kit (sturdy bowl, cup, spoon, fork)
- Trash bag
- Hand towel and washcloth
- Bandana
- A "sack lunch" for the first day of the trip
- \$7-10 for dinner in downtown Tucson on Wednesday, Nov. 9th
- Toiletries: sunscreen, lip balm, soap, comb, toothpaste, toothbrush, deodorant
- Journal, along with at least one pen & pencil
- 2 optional items for camp:
 - Lighter (for fire-starting)
 - Pocket knife with a 3-inch (or shorter) blade

- In general, you need **clothes for 4 days**: the clothes you wear to school on Monday, & a couple changes of clothes for Tuesday, Wednesday, & Thursday. The key word is **layering**.
 - 2 pair of socks; cotton is not recommended
 - Warm jacket—but probably not a "winter coat"; cotton is not recommended
 - Warm cap; cotton is not recommended
 - 1 long-sleeved shirt; cotton is not recommended
 - 2 short-sleeved shirts; cotton is not recommended
 - 1 pair of pants; long pants that convert into shorts are ideal; cotton is not recommended
 - Underwear, of course—including some sweatpants or long-johns for sleepwear

- Also, a watch would be handy, so that we can stay on schedule; we are visiting a number of sites that require us to keep a strict appointment.

Note: All secret stashes of food should be shared with the chaperones, and stored on the bus instead of in tents. Skunks aren't fun in tents. ☺