



ANNUAL REPORT 2024-2025

Natural Resource Education Center



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I Introduction

The Natural Resource Education Center (NREC) is a non-profit organization committed to providing natural resource and water conservation education programs to Pinal County residents for the last 28 years. NREC is sponsored by the West Pinal Natural Resource Conservation District (NRCD), Eloy NRCD, Florence-Coolidge NRCD, and the Arizona Department of Water Resources (ADWR).

NREC, with funding and support from the Arizona Department of Water Resources, delivered water and natural resource conservation education to Pinal County students and residents for the fiscal year 2024-2025. This report details the attendance, educational hours, learning outcomes, evaluations, and promotional activities for the year.

Task 1 and 2- Water related classroom activities, field days, attendance and evaluations.

Water Out West and other “Farm-Filled Ag-Venture” Programs



NREC offers seven natural resource education programs each year. The programs include Water Out West (WOW), the Corn Festival, From Alfalfa to Ice Cream: Dairy Program, the 5 C's of Arizona, Veggie Ventures, Let's Get Crackin': Egg Program and Sonoran Desert Plants. All seven NREC “Farm Filled Ag-Venture” programs are school/grade age specific, aligned to the current Arizona State Educational Standards and include a water conservation component.



Each program is delivered in a variety of styles. NREC programs can be presented as on-campus field trips to the NREC classrooms/farm at Central Arizona College, as a classroom presentation by NREC instructors in individual classrooms, as on-line virtual ZOOM presentations or as a video presentation through the NREC website. In addition to in-classroom presentations, students and adults can access NREC program content on the NREC website:

www.naturalresourcecenter.org.

The Water Out West Program (WOW) specifically, is a program developed to teach fifth and sixth graders about the history of Arizona's water systems, the water cycle, the many uses of water and availability throughout the west, hydroelectricity, management and conservation. In 2024-2025, NREC was able to present the WOW program to **141 students and 13 adults**, for a total of **316 educational ag education hours**.

Following each presentation, teachers were given a survey to complete. **One hundred percent** of participating teachers “strongly agree” or “agree” with the following statements; The WOW program helped enrich student's knowledge of the water cycle, water availability and conservation. The WOW program helped meet all or most of the Arizona State Teaching Standards for grade level. The program provided activities and resources that students can share with their families and friends.



5th graders participate in the many hands-on activities offered during the WOW program.



Attendance Summary

During the 2024-2025 school year, the Natural Resource Education Center presented in **56 Pinal County classrooms**, hosted **3 on-school site water festivals** as well as participated in **6 community water festivals** (in collaboration with Arizona Project Wet). These programs combined reached **4279 students** and **272 adults** in Pinal County. The programs total **11,065 student educational hours** of agriculture and conservation education embracing STEM and Arizona State Educational Standards

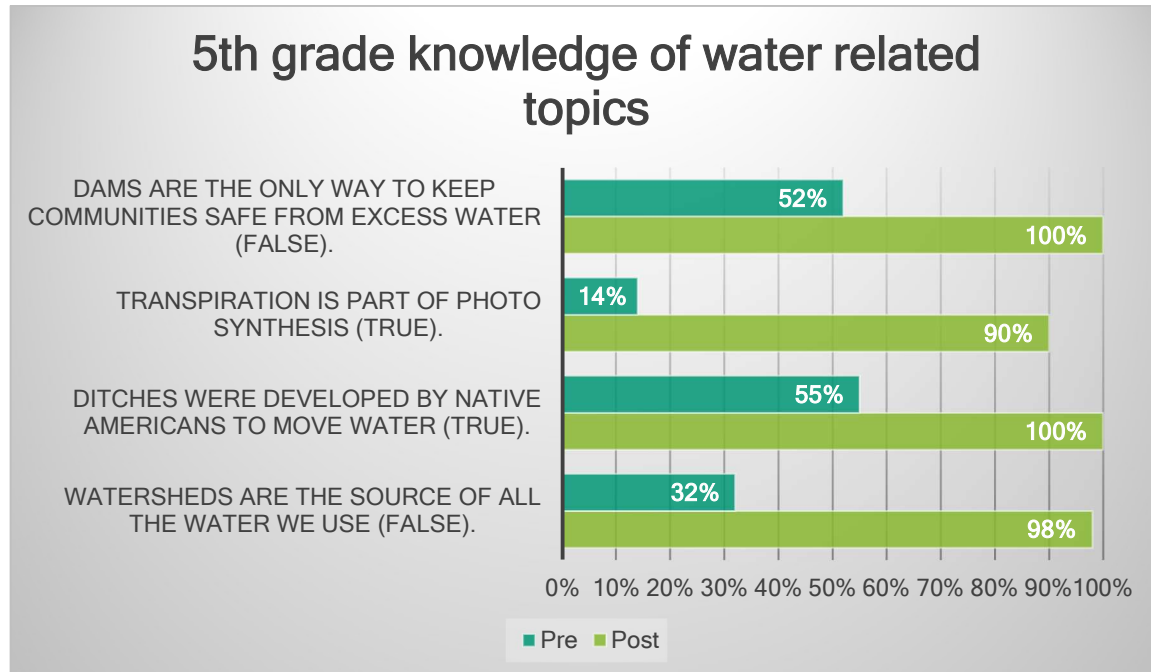
-A chart of attendance details can be found in Appendix B

Task 2- WOW field day

NREC's Water Out West program is designed to educate students about water conservation. The field day is scheduled in two parts. The morning session consists of water usage and conservation techniques and is followed by four learning stations that the students rotate through. Students learn about watersheds using model watershed areas, hydroelectricity, and about the history of water in Arizona. At another station, students work together to build cities, roads, parks, and farms then watch how flooding affects their communities. All these stations incorporate **STEM** standards for learning. Using critical thinking skills, the students get to rebuild their structures and see if they withstand the ravages of the floodwaters. The water cycle is explored as the students are transformed into water molecules and follow their individual water journeys. Students also learn the importance of the Native American canal systems and make clay pots, decorating them with different symbols. During lunch, students are engaged in water hauling and bucket brigade relays. The day ends with a trip to our farm fields for a hand's-on irrigation lesson.

Students are asked true or false pre and post questions before and after the WOW field day to assess prior knowledge and post knowledge gain. The following chart represents the percentage of students who answered the questions correctly.





Task 3- Community event participation

In 2024-2025, three NREC teachers volunteered to help instruct during three Arizona Project Wet (APW) water festivals. Prior to the festivals all three NREC teachers attended professional development refresher training provided by APW staff. The six water festivals were held in Pinal County. Combined, the six festivals *instructed 2688 4th grade students and 111 adults* in water education and conservation. The three NREC teachers taught the watershed, water cycle and ground water lessons. NREC's 5th grade WOW curriculum was developed to compliment and build on the knowledge 4th graders gain who have previously attended APW water festivals.

II Conclusion

For 28 years the Natural Resource Education Center has focused on educating residents of Pinal County on the awareness of natural and renewable natural resources in our county and state. NREC pledges to teach conservation techniques so these resources will be available to be used by future generations. Since NREC's inception, *thousands of students and adults* are instructed each year on water and agriculture related topics. Each year, teachers report that the NREC programs are beneficial to their students and that the information and activities



presented meet many grade- level state educational standards and STEM requirements. Past, present and future students, teachers and adults are the great beneficiaries of the support of NREC by entities such the Department of Water Resources.

NREC sincerely appreciates the support of ADWR to further its educational and outreach goals.



APPENDIX A





ABOUT OUR PROGRAMS

We are a non-profit organization.

These programs are **FREE** to all Pinal County Schools.

If you have questions or would like to schedule a program, please e-mail:

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 jrsalcido@hotmail.com
 (520) 560-4550
www.naturalresourceeducationcenter.org



Natural Resource Education Center
 of Pinal County

The farm field trips are held on
 Tuesdays and Thursdays at Central
 Arizona College.

**Programs begin
 promptly at
 8:30 a.m.**

At the Central AZ College farm, children
 will participate in hands on activities.
 Appropriate attire should be worn
 (shorts or long pants, tennis shoes that
 can get muddy, hats, t-shirts,
NO SANDALS OR FLIP FLOPS)

"IF YOU EAT YOU'RE INVOLVED IN AGRICULTURE"

We are touched by agriculture every day of our lives, from the time we wake until we go to sleep. The food we eat and the clothes we wear are primary benefits.

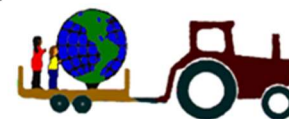
Agriculture is the number one industry in the United States, employing one out of every five people. From field to consumer and every job in between, our quality of life is built on this basis. Even our hard-earned paper currency is made from fiber producing plants grown on farms.

The "Ag-Venture" program pledges to teach students about food and fiber, science, natural and renewable natural resources as well as ways they can be conserved, managed and available for future generations.



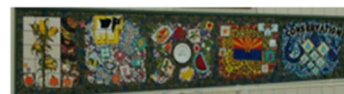
FARM FILLED "AG-VENTURES"

Destination Conservation



Natural Resource
 Education Center

Fall 2024- Spring 2025



Partnered by:
 Eloy, Florence-Coolidge and West Pinal
 Natural Resource Conservation Districts

Arizona Department of Water
 Resources
 Services





Arizona State Land Department



Pinal 40





Central Arizona College



	<p>LEGG'S GET CRACK'N Kindergarten</p>
<p>OFFERED THROUGHOUT THE SCHOOL YEAR UPON REQUEST</p> <p>1 hour classroom presentation exploring the parts of an egg and the sequence of eggs from farm to store.</p> <p>Addresses the following State Standards Science- K.L1U1.6 Science- K.L1U1.7 Science- K.L2U1.8</p>	
	<p>FROM ALFALFA TO ICE CREAM First Grade</p>
<p>AVAILABLE November-January</p> <p>Classroom visit prior to field trip prepares students for Ag Venture!</p> <p><u>On-site field trip at CAC:</u> This day starts with alfalfa and ends with ice cream. Students will learn about the anatomy of a cow. They will learn how cattle can turn alfalfa, which is inedible to humans, into milk which is an essential part of our diets.</p> <p>Addresses the following State Standards Science- 1.L1U1.6 Social Science-1.E3.1 Health Ed- Strand 7/ Concept 2/PO 1</p>	

	<p>VEGGIEVENTURES Second Grade</p>
<p>AVAILABLE—April</p> <p>Classroom visit prior to field trip prepares students for Ag Venture!</p> <p><u>On-site field trip at CAC:</u> Fruits and vegetables are a very important part of our diet. Students will learn about healthy nutrition, growing techniques, seed germination, and have the chance to harvest vegetables (depending on harvest conditions.)</p> <p>Addresses the following State Standards Science- 2.L2U1.9 Science- 2.E1U3.7 Health Ed- Strand 7/Concept 2/PO 1</p>	
	<p>ARIZONA'S 5 C'S Third Grade</p>
<p>AVAILABLE – February</p> <p>Classroom visit prior to field trip prepares students for Ag Venture!</p> <p><u>On-site field trip at CAC:</u> The history of Arizona is interesting and colorful. This program is to introduce students to the five symbols found in the Great Seal of the State of Arizona: Copper, Cattle, Citrus, Cotton and Climate.</p> <p>Addresses the following State Standards Science- 3.L2U1.8 Social Science- 3.G2.1 Social Science-3.E2.1</p>	

	<p>CORN FESTIVAL Fourth Grade</p>
<p>AVAILABLE—October/November</p> <p>Classroom visit prior to field trip prepares students for Ag Venture!</p> <p><u>On-site field trip at CAC:</u> For thousands of years, corn has been a major staple in our diets. We have grown, ground and gobbled it down! Students will be participants in a variety of educational activities ranging from harvesting and grinding to tasting corn products.</p> <p>Addresses the following State Standards Social Science-4SP3.1 Science- 4.EIU3.9 Science- 4.P4U3.4</p>	
	<p>WATER OUT WEST Fifth Grade</p>
<p>AVAILABLE March-April</p> <p>Classroom visit prior to field trip prepares students for Ag Venture!</p> <p><u>On-site field trip at CAC:</u> This field trip builds on information from 4th grade Project Wet. Water conservation is the highlight as students learn about hydroelectricity, the history of water in AZ, in depth water cycle movement and water careers.</p> <p>Addresses the following State Standards Science- 5.P1U1.1 Science- 5.P3U2.5 Social Science-5.G2.1</p>	



APPENDIX B





NREC 2024-2025 Program Attendance

Date	School/Group	Grade	# students	# adults	Ag Ed hours	Contact	Program
4/17/2025	West School	K	104	4	108		Egg
4/22/2025	Cholla Elementary	K	69	4	73		Egg
			173	8	181		
1/14/2025	West-Coolidge	1	40	7	231		Dairy
1/16/2025	West-Coolidge	1	40	8	231		Dairy
1/30/2025	Desert Willow-Casa Grande	1	66	5	350		Dairy
1/29/2025	Casa Blanca- Special Education	K-5	30	15	180		Dairy
			176	35	992		
3/3/2025	Heartland-Coolidge	2	42	4	228		Veggie Ventures
3/5/2025	Heartland-Coolidge	2	42	4	228		Veggie Ventures
3/6/2025	Casa Blanca-Special Education	K-5	30	15	180		Veggie Ventures
3/25/2025	West-Coolidge	2	50	6	275		Veggie Ventures
3/27/2025	West-Coolidge	2	50	5	274	Ve	Veggie Ventures
4/8/2025	Eloy Curiel	2	39	3	206		Veggie Ventures
4/9/2025	Eloy Curiel	2	38	3	205		Veggie Ventures
			291	40	1596		
2/25/2025	Palo Verde-Casa grande	3	51	6	279		5 C's of AZ
2/27/2025	Palo Verde-Casa grande	3	51	6	279		5 C's of AZ
			102	12	558		
11/5/2024	West-Coolidge	4	47	2	243		Corn Festival
11/7/2024	West-Coolidge	4	48	3	300		Corn Festival
11/6/2024	Big House Christian Academy	4	39	14	212		Corn Festival
11/19/2024	Eloy Curiel	4	37	3	195		Corn Festival
11/21/2024	Eloy Curiel	4	36	3	156		Corn Festival
11/25/2024	Heartland Ranch	4	28	4	128		Corn Festival
11/26/2024	Heartland Ranch	4	27	4	124		Corn Festival
			262	33	1358		



10/1/2024	Stanfield STEM	5	33	7	80	WOW
10/3/2024	Big House Chrisitan Academy	5	33	3	80	WOW
10/29/2024	West-Coolidge	5	75	3	156	WOW
11/8/2024	Florence Project WET	4	575	22	1194	W APW
11/14/2024	Coolidge Project WET	4	272	12	568	APW
2/20/2025	Maricopa Project WET	4	639	23	1324	APW
3/4/2025	Casa Grande Project WET	4	701	33	1468	APW
11/12/2024	Marana Project WET	4	207	11	436	APW
4/24/2025	Apache Junction Project WET	4	294	10	608	APW
			2829	124	5914	
<hr/>						
9/26/2024	Desesert Willow	1	60	3	63	Desert Plants
9/30/2024	Cholla	1	57	3	60	Desert Plants
10/10/2024	Saguaro	K	67	3	70	Desert Plants
10/24/2024	Eloy Curiel	2	68	3	71	Desert Plants
2/13/2025	Heartland Ranch	K	102	4	106	Desert Plants
2/19/2025	Palo Verde	1	92	4	96	Desert Plants
			446	20	466	

Program Totals

#	#	Ag Ed hours
students	adults	
4279	272	11065

