

Asombro Insights

Science education for eager minds

A Quarterly Newsletter

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CONTACT US

Asombro Institute for Science
Education

PO Box 891
Las Cruces, NM 88004

575-524-3334 (voice)

575-646-2315 (fax)

information@asombro.org

www.asombro.org

Teaching Students About Water and Our Changing Climate

By Stephanie Haan-Amato

Pilot testing has begun on Asombro's new middle and high school curriculum for the USDA's Southwest Regional Climate Hub. Climate Hubs were created earlier this year to deliver science-based information to farmers, ranchers, and land managers to help them effectively respond to climate change. The Southwest Regional Climate Hub, based at the Jornada Experimental Range, has asked Asombro to make sure this same science-based information makes its way to students.

Because water is such an important resource in the southwest, our first unit of the curriculum focuses on the effects of climate change on the water cycle. We have created a flexible, 10-hour unit about the hydrologic cycle and water issues that can be used in its



Students experiment with variables that affect water evaporation rates as part of the new water unit developed by Asombro for the Southwest Regional Climate Hub.

entirety or in parts, based on educators' needs.

Students begin by learning about the greenhouse effect and climate change with hands-on experiments and activities. Next, they simulate the hydrologic cycle with a paper-ball tossing game and examine the effects of climate change on the water cycle with a Chutes-and-Ladders-style board game called "Streams and Steam." Learners will then gain a better understanding of water availability and issues with more experiments and practice examining and communicating hydrologic data.

As with all Asombro programs, the unit will be extensively pilot tested and refined prior to publication. The first pilot test is happening now with 7th graders at a middle school in Las Cruces. Revisions and more pilot testing will follow, and the unit will be ready for release online to formal and informal educators throughout the southwest in summer 2015.



7th graders cheer for their teammate as they learn about the effects of climate change on water cycling through a fun hands-on game.

Middle School Merriment



By Stephanie Bestelmeyer, Ph.D.

It's a good thing that Asombro staff members like middle school students so much because we're working with them a lot through three fun education programs this school year.

You may have heard about a small portion of the Spaceport tax that goes to Las Cruces Public Schools to support science, technology, engineering, and math education in local schools. Through a wonderful partnership, LCPS and Asombro are using part of those funds to provide unique, inquiry-based science for all 7th grade students. Asombro staff will bring our award-winning programs directly to classrooms, focusing on diverse topics chosen by teachers such as ecosystems, the carbon cycle, DNA and wildlife CSI. Many of the 7th graders will also visit the Chihuahuan Desert Nature Park and then receive follow-up classroom programs with Asombro staff.

This year, LCPS created advanced, integrated science classes for 7th graders, and they asked Asombro to be a big part of the curriculum. With funds from the Spaceport tax and the National Science Foundation, Asombro is bringing six classroom programs and a field trip to the Chihuahuan Desert Nature Park to all students in these classes.

Finally, a generous grant from the Wolslager Foundation allowed us to continue our Stepping Out for Science Inquiry Project at four middle schools. Through monthly science programs in the classroom with Asombro staff, students gain an increasingly sophisticated understanding of the Chihuahuan desert ecosystem.

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If you plan to do some of your holiday shopping on amazon.com, a couple more mouse clicks will result in donations to Asombro.

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Education Programs

Thanks to your support, Asombro staff provided 609 hours of science for 12,195 students so far in 2014!

1-Jul	Tularosa Library - Desert Animals	11-Sep	Zia MS - Soil Types & Water Infiltration
8-Jul	Jornada Basin LTER - Tour of Nature Park	12-Sep	Sierra MS - Field Trip
10-Jul	Westside Branch Library - Desert Animals	15-Sep	J Paul Taylor Academy - Biotic & Abiotic Ecosystem Components
11-Jul	Alamogordo Library - Arthropod Identification	16-Sep	North Valley Elem. - I'm A Scientist, Too
12-Jul	Doris Van Doren Library - Bats	17-Sep	Sierra MS - Biotic & Abiotic Ecosystem Components
1-Aug	NPSNM - Asombro & Science Education	17-Sep	Vista MS - Scientific Method
5-Aug	White Sands Youth Services - Asombro Institute	18-Sep	J Paul Taylor Academy - I'm A Scientist, Too
15-Aug	J Paul Taylor Academy - Radiotelemetry	20-Sep	Dog Days
16-Aug	Butterfly Flutterby	22-Sep	Vista MS - Dust Data Jam
26-Aug	Sierra MS - Soil Types & Water Infiltration	23-Sep	Sierra MS - Biotic & Abiotic Ecosystem Components
27-Aug	Vista MS - Soil Types & Water Infiltration	23-Sep	East Picacho Elem. - I'm A Scientist, Too
28-Aug	East Picacho Elem. - Biomes	24-Sep	Picacho MS - Biotic & Abiotic Ecosystem Components
29-Aug	Arrowhead Park Early College HS - Desert Data Jam	24-Sep	LC Catholic - Habitat stats; Food Web & Biodiversity; Rock and Mineral Identification
2-Sep	Arrowhead Park Early College HS - Desert Data Jam	25-Sep	Vista MS & Mesa MS - Field Trip
2-Sep	University Hills - I'm A Scientist, Too	25-Sep	Sierra MS - Biotic & Abiotic Ecosystem Components
3-Sep	LC Catholic - I'm A Scientist, Too	26-Sep	Lynn MS & Picacho MS - Field Trip
3-Sep	Picacho MS - Soil Types & Water Infiltration	29-Sep	MacArthur Elem - I'm A Scientist, Too
4-Sep	Camino Real MS - Dust Data Jam	29-Sep	J Paul Taylor Academy - Science Interns: Earth
8-Sep	Fairacres Elem - I'm A Scientist, Too	30-Sep	Mesa MS - Dust Data Jam
9-Sep	Lynn MS - Soil Types & Water Infiltration		
10-Sep	Mesa MS - Soil Types & Water Infiltration		
10-Sep	Picacho MS - Dust Data Jam		
11-Sep	Camino Real MS - Soil Types & Water Infiltration		

Upcoming Events

Kettle Corn Sales at Renaissance ArtsFaire - Saturday, November 1st & Sunday, November 2nd

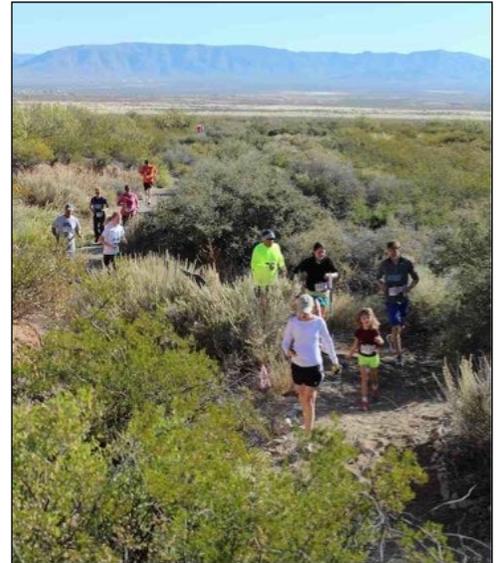
Supporting Asombro has never been so easy. Come out to the 43rd annual Renaissance ArtsFaire at Young Park in Las Cruces and buy delicious kettle corn from Southwest Kettle Korn. Asombro staff and volunteers will work with long-time Asombro supporter and Southwest Kettle Korn owner Brian Peterson during the Faire. A portion of the proceeds will go toward supporting our education programs.

Desert Dash Trail Race - Saturday, November 8

Enjoy the fresh air and beautiful trails at the Chihuahuan Desert Nature Park during the Desert Dash Trail Race. This year, runners and walkers can choose from four races: children's 1 mile, 5K, 10K, and half marathon. The first race begins at 8:30 AM at the Chihuahuan Desert Nature Park. You can register online and get more information by visiting www.asombro.org/dash.

Luminarias at the Park - Friday, December 12th 5:00- 7:30 pm

Come see the park glowing with luminarias at dusk. Enjoy music and hot chocolate. This free event will feature a fire pit and a great chance to relax and take in a peaceful sight during this busy season.



THANK YOU!

We are grateful to the generous donors in the third quarter of 2014.

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Moonlight Taste of the Desert Dinner

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You won't believe the animals we are capturing on our wildlife cameras at the Chihuahuan Desert Nature Park! Make sure you like the Asombro Institute for Science Education on Facebook so you don't miss a single one of our Critter Cam posts, showcasing some amazing wildlife species that prefer to roam when people aren't around.



This bobcat (*Lynx rufus*) was "caught" this summer on one of the automatic wildlife cameras installed at the Chihuahuan Desert Nature Park.

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