

Mountain Biking In Arizona

Travel Day: March 7th, 2011

We left school at five in the morning and boarded our plane at around 7:20. The plane ride was a total of five hours and forty minutes. After landing, Mr. Smith went and picked up our van and trailer. We stopped for lunch on the way to the KOA in Apache Junction camp ground where Jake R. ate two foot long subs. We unpacked in our designated cabins and then set out to get our bikes. We had to drive for forty-five minutes to reach the bikes in Scottsdale then back to dinner at Trec Bonderas, a local Mexican restaurant. After which we went and bought our food supply for the next couple days at Super Walmart. Then finally back the camp site and had our first group meeting then sent off to our cabins.

Day 1: March 8th, 2011

Ten of us students and our two teachers hooked up the trailer to the van and headed out into the Sonora Desert. Our first biking adventure was McDowell Mountains Regional Park. We biked along occasionally stopping and re-biking certain parts like washes, deep sand, and rocky hills to practice changing gears appropriately and how to balance our weight over our bikes. We stopped for lunch among the rocks on the side of a trail for shade. After that the biking was a fun gradual downhill for six miles causing us to practice leaning on the turns as to not lose traction. The skills we all learned on this day were to come in much handy later in the trip as the trails became more challenging.

Day 2: March 9th, 2011

We brought our bikes to Utery Mountain Regional Park. The trails had more ups and downs and gave us more challenges. However, Alvaro ended up getting two flat tires. Looking on the bright side of things, we all learned how to change the tires on a bike. We decided to bike part of the trail going in the opposite direction changing our perspective immensely.

Day 3: March 10th, 2011

We went back to the first place we biked, McDowell Mountains Regional Park. We biked around a more scenic route. The gradual uphill was more work than the shorter steeper inclines. After stopping for lunch on the trail again the trail became more up and down and was more fun to bike. The dangers included in mountain biking became very apparent when Alvaro flipped off his bike. He scraped up his elbow and knee but after he was cleaned off he got back on his bike and finished the last six miles of downhill.

Day 4: March 11th, 2011

We drove about an hour and a half to the Tonto National Monument. This monument holds the past of the Salado Indians that used to inhabit the mountains. We hiked up the side of a mountain to the upper cave dwelling. During the hike, we learned about the plants the people might have eaten and what they used to build their incredible homes. Upon reaching the dwelling, we unloaded our camelbaks as to not disturb the structure if we were to accidentally bump up against the wall or door frame. As we walked through the ancient homes we saw how they planned out the water supply with a leak in the back of the cave and how the cave itself protected the people from intruders and harsh weather conditions. We then hiked to the lower cave dwelling where we were allowed to roam more freely because this dwelling was considered more stable than the first.

Day 5: March 12th, 2011

We brought our bikes to the South Mountain Park where we faced the toughest challenge of this trip. At first the trail was relatively flat but then became extreme up and down hills. We

biked along a ridge with large, loose rocks and thick sand. Some parts were even considered scary by at least half of our group. Then the trail turned into very steep rocky up hills with massive boulders to be maneuvered over. Each one of us tried every single challenge that was put in front of our tires and put our all effort into each try. We then went back to the main entrance for lunch and started on the trail called the Desert Classic. Since we were all so worn out from the first challenge we only went for thirty minutes or so and turned around knowing that we would be back to concur all eighteen miles of it on the last Tuesday.

Day 6: March 13th, 2011

We drove to an Arboretum where we walked around for hours learning about the different cacti in the deserts around the world. These weird cacti were so odd looking it made them beautiful. The intricate shapes and unique sizes of each species caught our eyes a different way. For example, some of the cacti looked as though they were soft and could act like a pillow but in reality they were extremely sharp and would be very painful to lie on. We later drove back to camp and packed our night bags to stay in a motel over night. The drive was two hours long and was a good place to bond as a group.

Day 7: March 14th, 2011

Waking in a new place had a new energy among the group. We ate at a waffle house and were on our way to the Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum. This was an interesting kind of museum though. It was more laid out like a zoo with the animals of the desert sectioned into different types of desert landscape. This was a fun museum that seemed to be designed to help younger children learn about the world around them which made the kid in all of us come out. We ran through the caves and awed at the different and weird looking animals that were hiding in the desert.

Group Members:

Jake K.

Emily B.

Jake R.

Kevin H.

Alvaro A.

Chris G.

Thomas B.

Megan S.

Spencer R.

Declan S.

Teachers:

Michael V.

David S.