



SOIL AND PLANT SCIENCE DIVISION

Technical Soil Services

Southwest Soil Survey Region

Tucson MLRA Soil Survey Office

Soil and Plant Science Division Soil Scientist Teaches Classes at a Natural Resources Summer Camp in Dudleyville, Arizona

Purpose

The Winkleman and Redington Natural Resource Conservation Districts invited the Tucson MLRA Soil Survey Office staff to teach at a summer camp for grade school students in Dudleyville, Arizona, and share with students what soil scientists do. Soil Scientist Andreas Khechfe went to two days of the camp where he discussed the importance of soil in our community and demonstrated how different types of soil cover impact soil erosion, water infiltration, and runoff.

Background

Khechfe taught the same content to two different groups of students at the science-based camp. On June 5, 2024, Khechfe taught basic soil lessons and concepts to preschool and younger grade-school students; he taught similar, but more complex, lessons to older grade-school students on June 12. Khechfe covered the definition of soil, the importance of soil texture, how water moves through a soil profile, and how different particle-size classes hold water. Each class ended with a demonstration that used the rain simulator (fig. 1) to show how different types of soil cover impact rainwater infiltration and runoff.

Key Outcomes

The classes were well received by the camp's students and staff and prompted scientific discussion among the class participants. The young campers were given a crash course in the importance of soil science and health, which will hopefully develop into a deeper appreciation for natural resource conservation. Our relationships with our local camps and organizations allow the NRCS to develop a positive presence in our local community.



Figure 1.—Soil Scientist Andreas Khechfe explaining the importance of soil-cover and how the different types of soil cover influence water infiltration and runoff.