

Engaging Youth in Noxious Weed Control and Land Stewardship

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INTRODUCTION

Educating youth about noxious weed control is essential for long-term land stewardship. In **2024 and 2025**, the **Farm Field Day** engaged approximately **830 students each year** in hands-on learning about invasive plant species, their impact on rangelands, and control strategies. Students participated in interactive weed identification stations, discussions on land management, and hands-on demonstrations using real-world control methods.

To complement this large-scale outreach, the **Wilderness Protectors Camp** was introduced as a follow-up program for a smaller group of youth. Camp activities included plant identification, soil erosion experiments, and discussions on responsible grazing and habitat restoration. Pre- and post-camp assessments showed increased knowledge retention, with all participants improving their ability to identify and understand the ecological impacts of noxious weeds.

These programs have successfully introduced youth to the importance of weed control and conservation, fostering a greater awareness of land stewardship. By integrating large-scale educational events with more focused, hands-on programs, we aim to enhance youth engagement in land management practices. Future efforts will strengthen partnerships with local ranchers, land managers, and conservation organizations to provide more immersive learning experiences and encourage long-term involvement in land stewardship.

METHODOLOGY

Farm Field Day Activities

Noxious weed identification stations.
Demonstrations on weed control techniques.
Discussions on land management and conservation.

Wilderness Protectors Camp Activities

Hands-on plant identification.
Soil erosion experiments.
Habitat restoration discussions.

RESULTS

Knowledge Retention:

Pre/post assessments showed improved understanding of invasive species.
See the "Knowledge Improvement Chart" for details.

Engagement Levels:

All camp participants showed increased interest in conservation.
Farm Field Day reached **830 students annually**.

Student Feedback:

"I didn't know weeds could hurt the land. Now I can help my family manage them!"

CONCLUSION

These programs successfully educated youth on noxious weed control and conservation, fostering greater awareness of land stewardship. By integrating large-scale educational events with focused, hands-on programs, we have enhanced youth engagement in land management practices. Future efforts will continue strengthening partnerships with local ranchers, land managers, and conservation organizations to provide more immersive learning experiences and encourage long-term involvement in land stewardship.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Category	Pre- (%)	Post-(%)
Weed Identification	40	85
Impact of Invasive Species	35	80
Land Stewardship Importance	50	90

