



**BORDERLANDS  
RESTORATION  
NETWORK**

## **BRN Education Program Description**

BRN's Education Department is composed of place-based educational programs built around a common curriculum that covers the restoration of watersheds, ecosystems, and communities, providing a culturally relevant context. Our current programming is divided into four ongoing initiatives:

**Borderlands Earth Care Youth (BECY):** This paid internship opportunity for youth ages 15-24 living in Pima, Santa Cruz and Cochise County in Arizona and is offered during the spring and summer pause in district school schedules. BECY empowers youth by developing their awareness of the growing environmental and sustainability challenges associated with climate change, habitat fragmentation, aridification, and other ongoing challenges. Throughout the program, youth connect with conservation and arts professionals, engage in hands-on restoration projects, and gain personal development and leadership skills. Our interns come from historically marginalized populations, the majority of whom share Latino and/or working-class backgrounds. Since our inception, over 180 youth have graduated from BECY and re-entered their communities with valuable environmental education and skills to promote local and regional sustainability.

**Water Is Life:** Building upon past experiences, BRN is working with Organ Pipe National Monument staff and local O'odham elders to pilot an alternative spring break program for local O'odham youth, ages 15-24. The program will help restore Quitobaquito Springs, an extraordinary cultural and biological relevance site. It will utilize the BECY curriculum as a basis but tuned to place, target audience, and community values, with the objective of uplifting traditional ecological knowledge for climate resilience initiatives.

**Curso de Campo en Zonas Fronterizas / Borderlands Field Course:** This is a comprehensive, immersive, practical training course focused on holistic approaches to ecological challenges of the southern Arizona and northern Sonora borderlands region. It is designed to inspire the next generation of environmental leaders. The curriculum, taught entirely in Spanish, includes integrated lectures, workshops, field trips, and hands-on learning opportunities covering many topics spanning the restoration of watersheds, ecosystems, and communities. The course showcases pathways to cross-border collaboration and humanitarian aid and encourages systems that support social and environmental justice. For the past three years, this program has targeted young professionals living and working in Sonora, México, who come from interdisciplinary backgrounds. Moving forward, we aim to recruit young professionals from both sides of the border to advance quality education and networking opportunities and create a

diverse cross-border conservation sector to further support a restorative economy in the Madrean Archipelago.

**Borderlands Earth Care Center (BECC):** We are developing this educational facility, at the 19-acre property previously occupied by the Deep Dirt Permaculture Institute. BRN aims to have an accessible demonstration hub for restoration knowledge and community engagement. This center will be accessible to the local Patagonia community and visiting groups from our region and beyond to showcase our applied curriculum through demonstrations and workshops. Topics will include watershed management, soil improvement techniques, rainwater harvesting, arid lands agriculture, and sustainability practices. BECC is being designed with community and stakeholder input. We want to plant the seeds of earth care, people care, and fair share in our visitors' hearts and minds, equipping them with technical skills and interpersonal connections to foster ongoing community resilience.

These programs help shape participants' views of the environment they live in and the role they each play as stewards in their communities. By providing technical skills and training and connecting our participants to professional and informal community networks, program graduates are more prepared and energized to act.