

# Patagonia Pollinator Project Finalist for National Grant

By Karen Field Carroll



Contributed photo

**The Patagonia Pollinator Project team shared Borderlands Restoration's work with ArtPlace America as one example of its educational program.**

Thanks to ArtPlace America, students in Patagonia could have a rare opportunity to learn about their environment from local experts through a creative new media arts format. The Patagonia Pollinator Project, which is a grant finalist in ArtPlace America's highly competitive National Creative Placemaking Fund, will develop an educational pilot called "Outstanding in the Field," using local artist Ned Schaper's fantastical world of Beveldom to help local experts teach students about place-based fields of study.

The project proposal, submitted by Mat Bevel Company, reaches K-12 students by incorporating the achievements of local experts into curricula and hands-on workshops that include theater, found-object kinetic art, and digital storytelling. The goal? To increase school enrollment and provide a model for other rural public schools across the country that face the challenge of declining enrollment. Specifically, the project is designed to draw

more young people to the community, bringing the median age far below the current 59.8.

Paula Schaper, Vice President for Mat Bevel Company, says, "If we can develop an educational pilot that makes learning exciting and memorable, we can increase student comprehension, engagement and achievement. In doing this, we will attract more parents, students and teachers to Patagonia Schools because of our education curricula and programs." The opportunity will become a reality if the project is selected to receive the grant from ArtPlace America's

highly competitive National Creative Placemaking Fund.

Partners for the Patagonia Pollinator Project

include Rachell Hochheim, Superintendent for Patagonia Public Schools, Cassina Quiroga Farley, Director & Program Developer for PCAA, Jose Manule Barraza Santos, 10th grade student and artist at Patagonia Public Schools and Mandy Montanez, Business Manager for Red Mountain Foods, Town of Patagonia Planning & Zoning member, and Patagonia Public Schools site council member.

Through its National Creative Placemaking Fund, ArtPlace America invests in communities across the country so that artists and arts organizations can use arts and cultural activities to develop communities in ten areas: agriculture and food; economic development; education and youth; environment and energy; health; housing; immigration; public safety; transportation; or workforce development.

When choosing its grant finalists, ArtPlace America representatives visited each finalist's community. On June 28, ArtPlace America's Javier Torres and McKayla Shirley visited Mat Bevel Company's New Bevel Studios and three other locations, including Patagonia Public Schools, Patagonia Creative Arts Association and Borderlands Restoration's Seed Bank at the Old Main Campus.

ArtPlace America will announce its winners in December. The winners will begin their projects in January, 2018. To learn more about the Patagonia Pollinator Project, contact Paula Schaper, at Mat Bevel Company, at 520-604-6273.

# SCC Fair Seeking Entries

The 102<sup>nd</sup> Santa Cruz County Fair, to be held at the Sonoita Fairgrounds Sept. 15 – 17, encourages everyone to enter the fair this year. Produce, crafts, baked or canned goods, photography, art sewing, quilting and much more are displayed in Pioneer Hall, and are eligible for prizes, ribbons and special awards. It is free to enter and blue and red ribbons earn cash prizes. Help support this tradition of displaying the best this county has to offer. Be sure to check the Sonoita Fairgrounds website at [www.sonoitafairgrounds.com](http://www.sonoitafairgrounds.com) and click on the SCC Fair link for more information about entering the fair, or call 455-5553 or 455-4700.

There will be a lot to see and do at the fair this year. Special attractions include the award winning mentalist and magician Paul Draper, and Davis' Muttley Crew, performing dogs who have appeared on America's Got Talent, as well as at rodeos and performances across the country.

For those who would like to sell their produce or crafts, please contact Jen at 520-455-5553 to reserve a space in the 'Bounty From the County' Tent.



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