The Eclipse Crossroads of America!

The 2017 Eclipse
at Touch of Nature Environmental Center
August 18 – 22
Information Packet

CONTACT INFORMATION
WHAT IS HAPPENING?

The first of two once-in-a-lifetime total solar eclipses will be taking place here in Southern Illinois, and Touch of Nature is in one of the most ideal sites for the Maximum Duration of this event. On Monday, August 21, for nearly 2 minutes and 40 seconds, the sun will be completely blacked out by the moon at 1:21 p.m. Our staff, along with other amateur and professional astronomers, will be on hand to help everyone in attendance enjoy this event from August 18-22. Our facilities have been prepped for people of all ages so bring the family, bring your school group, gather up your local astronomy club/group or just come on your own.

PACKAGE DEALS

One extended weekend package includes lodging, activities, meals on Saturday/Sunday/Monday, adventure and educational sessions, and prime total solar eclipse.
viewing space. Package prices vary by lodging preference.

**LODGING**

- **Little Grassy Lodge** – Little Grassy Lodge offers hotel-style accommodations like air conditioning, private bath, Wi-Fi, flat screen TV with satellite, mini-fridge and microwave. The cost to stay in Little Grassy Lodge for this event is **$850 per person**.

- **Morris Lodge** – Morris Lodge is a bunk-style lodge equipped with two person rooms that share a bathroom. There are 9 rooms (18 people total) in Morris. The common area in Morris is air conditioned. Cost per person is **$700**.

- **Shawnee Lodge** – Shawnee Lodge is a bunk style lodge equipped with two-person rooms with a shared bathroom. There are 11 (22 people total) rooms in Shawnee. The common area in Shawnee is air conditioned. Cost per person is **$700**.

- **L.B. Sharp Lodge** – L.B. Sharp Lodge is a bunk-style lodge equipped with four-person rooms with a shared bathroom. There are 4 rooms in L. B. Sharp. The common area in Sharp is air-conditioned. Cost per person is **$700**.

- **Cabins** – Touch of Nature has eight-, 10- and 24-person cabins available. All cabins have an open floor plan and use centrally-located bathrooms and shower houses. Cost per person is **$600**. All cabins at this cost are air-conditioned and have electricity.

- **Rustic Cabins** – Seven cabins at Touch of Nature that sleep 8 people do not have air conditioning. They have an open floor plan, electricity and share a centrally-located
bathroom and shower house. Cost per person in these NON-AIR CONDITIONED cabins is $500.

- Primitive Camping- Tent camping on lawn or tent pads. No hookups available. Must hike to site. $250.

- **SCHOOL GROUP SPECIAL** – School groups of 20 or more pay only $450 per person for air-conditioned cabins!

**PAYMENT**

Upon registration, a 50% down payment is to be paid over the phone or in person. Full payment should be received by March 1st. Payment includes meals and programming for the duration of your stay.

**COMMONLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

**WHAT IS TOUCH OF NATURE LIKE?**

Located in Shawnee National Forest, we are a secluded facility with low light pollution from surrounding cities and home to many different wildlife species. Touch of Nature is a rustic camp with a variety of buildings and lodges. We host many summer camps, weddings and conferences at our facilities. Most cabins are air-conditioned and a mix of our larger indoor spaces are air-conditioned or non-air conditioned. Camps are very spread out and guests will
not be allowed to drive vehicles to their cabin or lodge. Most of our trails around and through the Camps are paved. Be prepared to walk most places. The main camps (Camp 1 and Camp 2) are mostly level terrain with gentle slopes, except for areas surrounding the lake. When heading to beach 1 or beach 2 use caution, the paved walkways may be slick and have a steep incline. Enjoy the beauty of Southern Illinois!

WHEN CAN I ARRIVE?

The Eclipse occurs on Monday, August 21. You are welcome to arrive anytime starting Friday, August 18. Every person or group checking in will find their lodging assignments at Little Grassy Lodge in Camp 2 or the Dining Hall in Camp 1. A staff member will be in our office starting Friday morning to check guests in unless you or your group have arranged for an earlier check-in.

HOW DO I GET THERE?

From the north:

Take Interstate 57 South to the Route 13 exit (Carbondale - Exit #54B), turn west (right) onto Route 13 toward Carbondale, go approximately 15 miles. Look for Wal-Mart on your right once you enter Carbondale. Turn left (south) at this light onto Giant City Road. Continue 8 miles south on Giant City Road. Touch of Nature Road will be on your left (east). Turn left and continue straight on Touch of Nature Road. Administration building is
the first left.

**From the south:**

Follow I-24 to I-57 North, or stay on I-57, to the Route 148 exit (Exit #45), head northwest on 148 for approximately 2 miles. Turn left on Grassy Road. There is a convenience store on this corner. Follow Grassy Road for about 7 miles. Stay left when you come to a Y. Continue southwest on Grassy Road. Grassy Road will come to a T at Giant City Road. Turn south (left) on Giant City Road. Continue on Giant City Road approximately 1 mile. Touch of Nature Road will be on your left. Turn left and continue straight on Touch of Nature Road. Administration building is the first left.

**From the east:**

Head west on I-70 or, if you are further south, take I-64 to I-57 South. Continue approximately 50 miles south from I-64 to the Route 13 exit (Marion - Exit #54B), head west on Route 13 toward Carbondale, go approximately 15 miles. Look for Wal-Mart on your right once you enter Carbondale. Turn left (south) at this light, Giant City Road. Continue 8 miles south on Giant City Road. Touch of Nature Road will be on your left (east). Turn left and continue straight on Touch of Nature Road. Administration building is the first left.

**From the west:**

Head east on I-64 approximately 50 miles from St. Louis. Take the Route 127 (Nashville) exit south. Continue south for approximately 50 miles to Murphysboro. At Murphysboro, go
left (east) for approximately 10 miles. You will pass through the town of Carbondale. Watch for the mall on your right. When you see Wal-Mart on your left, this is your light. Turn right (south) at this light onto Giant City Road. Continue 8 miles south on Giant City Road. Touch of Nature Road will be on your left (east). Turn left and continue straight on Touch of Nature Road. Administration building is the first left.

WHAT SHOULD I EXPECT THE WEATHER TO BE LIKE?

Southern Illinois is known for being unpredictable. In August, expect high humidity and temperatures in the 80s to 90s during the day and 70s at night. Though midday summer storms are common, the sky should be fairly clear for eclipse-viewing. Live streaming of the Eclipse will be available should we experience inclement weather the day of the Eclipse.

WHAT ELSE IS THERE TO DO?

Southern Illinois University is located 15 minutes north of Touch of Nature and will be hosting their own eclipse activities including a craft fair and astronomy expo happening at the SIU Arena. More information on SIU’s activities can be found at eclipse.siu.edu. Carbondale will also be hosting a music festival during this weekend. Makanda Illinois is a charming town with an ice cream parlor and a trinket shop. These are both located 8 minutes south of Touch of Nature. Directions to areas of interest can be given by our staff upon arrival.
OTHER INFORMATION:

ACTIVITIES AT TOUCH OF NATURE

A schedule of events will be posted each day. Open activities typically include swimming in designated areas of Little Grassy Lake, boating in provided canoes or kayaks, an onsite climbing wall and craft areas. Guests may have the opportunity to hike on their own. Guided interpretive hikes will be offered and some hikes may go offsite, so participants should be prepared to participate for the entire time. Night-time activities include night-sky viewing and campfire programs.

Some adventure activities require pre-registration prior to participation. High ropes course, zip lines, team building, off site rock climbing and guided canoe/kayaking are at no additional cost but are on a first-come first-served basis; Meaning you and your group should sign up for these activities ASAP to insure you get a spot. Open activities may change due to weather, staffing or other factors during this event.

CAMPFIRES

Campfires are only allowed in designated areas. If you are not sure please, contact Touch of Nature staff or ask for assistance with starting a campfire and receiving extra firewood. On most evenings staff will be present and assist with starting campfires, especially if your group has scheduled a Campfire Program.
VEHICLES

The Touch of Nature speed limit is 15 MPH. Please obey this speed limit to protect yourself, our wildlife and other customers. **Personal vehicles are not allowed inside the camps to unload or load equipment.** If you have mobility concerns and need help loading or unloading equipment please contact us before you arrive.

PARKING

All vehicles will have to remain in the Touch of Nature designated parking lots. Parking passes will not be necessary. Please avoid parking on the sides of roads and follow signs to appropriate parking areas.

QUIET TIME

Please respect other guests. Quiet time is from 11 p.m. to 7 a.m. each day.

FISHING/BOATING/BIKING

Anyone wanting to fish in Little Grassy Lake must abide by Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge policies and procedures. Visit their website for info:

[https://www.fws.gov/refuge/Crab_Orchard/visit/rules_and_regulations.html](https://www.fws.gov/refuge/Crab_Orchard/visit/rules_and_regulations.html). Please
avoid beaches and heavy traffic areas when fishing off Touch of Nature property.

Sorry, guests are not allowed to bring personal watercraft for this event.

Biking is permitted on paved and gravel roads at Touch of Nature. Bikes are not permitted on trails or paved walkways. Please dismount and walk your bike through Camp.

**FIRST AID**
There are no dedicated medical staff on site for this event. All camp staff are First Aid and CPR trained and many are First Responder trained. Program staff carry first aid kits but do not administer medication from these kits. Guests will need to carry and administer their own medication as needed, both prescription and over the counter.

**EMERGENCIES AT CAMP**
Please dial 911 in case of an emergency while on site. Staff will direct emergency vehicles when they arrive. Emergency procedures are posted in all buildings. Please read these procedures upon arrival in case an emergency situation should arise. These procedures include staff numbers on site to contact as needed.

**SMOKING/ALCOHOL/DRUG POLICY**
Smoking is not permitted at Touch of Nature. Guests may smoke inside of their vehicles
while parked in the parking lots. See SIU’s Smoking Policy here: smokefree.siu.edu.

SIU Alcohol Policies are located here: policies.siu.edu/other-policies/chapter6/alcohol.php.

Consumption of alcohol by anyone under the age of 21 is strictly prohibited and will result in eviction from Touch of Nature property.

The possession or use of illegal drugs is strictly prohibited at Touch of Nature and will result in immediate eviction from Touch of Nature:

policies.siu.edu/other_policies/chapter3/alcoholdrugabuse.php

FOR YOUR SAFETY
1. Firearms and explosives of any kind are strictly prohibited

2. Absolutely no pets are allowed. Service animals are permitted.

3. Swimming, boating, rock climbing and any use of Touch of Nature programs or equipment is permitted only under the supervision of Touch of Nature staff during scheduled program times.

4. Personal Flotation Devices (PFDs) must be worn at all times when boating. PFDs are also to be worn when swimming outside of roped swimming areas.

5. All activity areas, including Net Leap, Zip Lines, High Ropes, and Team Building are off limits to guests without staff supervision.
6. Climbing and rappelling is not permitted on Touch of Nature property unless it is a staff-supervised program.

7. Poison ivy is common at Touch of Nature. Please ask staff to point it out if you are not sure.

8. Venomous snakes are common at Touch of Nature. Under no circumstances should guests pick up snakes. Do not kill snakes, simply back away and report the encounter to Touch of Nature staff.

9. Ticks are common at Touch of Nature. Please check yourself daily for ticks and ask staff about removal methods if you are unsure.

Mosquitoes can be a nuisance at Touch of Nature. Plan ahead and bring bug spray.