Want to earn college credit outside, teaching kids about what you love?

Throughout the year, SIU’s Touch of Nature offers a number of camps and programs beginning with ‘I Heart Eco mini-camp’ and ‘Maple Syrupin’ Festival’ in February, reaching full steam by summer with as many as five summer camps running at once.

These camps and programs are experiential in design, and follow two tracks that sometimes intertwine: Underway Adventures and Environmental Education. Programs for all camps utilize our 3,100 acres of land, shores and waters of Little Grassy Lake, and hiking trails. We also offer specialized programs such as our high ropes course and utilize adjacent state and federal wild lands like neighboring Giant City State Park.

In the camp tradition we also work to create a group spirit of cooperation, self-confidence, and helpfulness in our campers and staff.

A student taking on a fieldwork position at Touch of Nature gets the opportunity to spend their required hours facilitating programs for children from 7 – 15 years old as well as the opportunity to work some programs for college groups and adults.

A fieldwork position would begin with 10 hours of training in the office. ‘In the field’ training will be based on the student’s availability to ‘shadow’ programs and camps, until program coordinators feel the student has the ability to lead programs. During summer camp weeks, students have the opportunity to have on-site lodging at Touch of Nature.

Camps are day camps for 7 – 13 year olds and 5-day long overnight camps for 13 to 15 year olds. Community events and other programs can draw in kids of all ages, teens, adults, and families.

Qualifications:

- Ability and desire to work in a varied environment including some office work.
- Ability to work in a fast-paced environment that sometimes entails adverse weather.
- Ability to lift and move up to 30lbs at a time including tables/chairs, and teaching resources.
- Ability to provide outstanding customer service to all staff and guests and make decisions based on sound judgment.
- Ability to demonstrate professionalism at all times.
- Ability and willingness to serve others, be a team player, and take on leadership roles and responsibilities.
- Desire to gain experience teaching in an outdoor environment.
Duties and Responsibilities:
- Maintain teaching resources and setup prior to group use.
- Coordinate programs, host groups, and take on other responsibilities as they may arise.
- Problem solve issues that may arise with children or families in a professional manner.
- Provide world-class customer service to all groups.
- Teach or facilitate individual groups as needed based on staff availability.
- Support other program areas as needed.
- Must be prepared to work some weekends and evenings.

Knowledge and Skills Desired:
- CPR/AED and basic first aid highly desirable.
- Knowledge or experience in one or several of the following areas is helpful. Willingness and enthusiasm to learn is a must!
- Good personality and ability to work with a diverse population of clients highly sought after.

Adventure Education Track
- Canoeing/kayaking
- Rock climbing
- Challenge course facilitation/teambuilding
- High ropes course
- Backpacking/camping
- Expedition planning/logistics

Environmental Education Track
- Interpretive hiking and paddling
- Community events
- Group art, crafting and music
- Nature and human connections
- Campfire programs
- Local biodiversity
- Land and water biology
- Ecosystems
- Zoology
- Sustainability/environmental stewardship
- Ancestral peoples
Think this may be the job for you? Contact us! For Underway Adventures, email Shane Brady at
shanebrady6@siu.edu. For Environmental Education, email Molly Maxwell at molly.maxwell@siu.edu.
You can also call Touch of Nature at (618) 453-1121.