

# Leave No Trace Master Educator Course

## Touch of Nature Environmental Center, Illinois

### Course Description – Shawnee Expedition

- Duration: 5 days
- Cost: \$695
- Location: Touch of Nature, Shawnee National Forest, Giant City State Park
- Meeting time and location: 8:00 a.m. at Touch of Nature Environmental Center

### Course Overview

The Master Educator course is an extensive experience designed to immerse participants in Leave No Trace skills and ethics through hands on practice and teaching. The course provides participants with a comprehensive overview of Leave No Trace techniques through practical application in a backcountry setting. Students who successfully graduate from this course will receive a certificate and will be qualified to offer and teach two-day Leave No Trace Trainer courses as well as shorter Awareness Workshops.

During five days of training participants will be backpacking approximately 10 miles through various locations across Southern Illinois while learning and teaching the principles of Leave No Trace. Locations such as Touch of Nature Environmental Center, Little Grassy Lake, Panther's Den Wilderness, Giant City State Park, Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge and the Shawnee National Forest provide ideal settings for exploring and discussing outdoor ethics, frontcountry issues, and backcountry Leave No Trace principles.

This is a great opportunity for educators, naturalists, park rangers, recreation planners, scout leaders and anyone that works, or would like to work, in the outdoor industry to improve their Leave No Trace teaching skills while experiencing the unique treasures found in beautiful Southern Illinois.

## **Course Agenda (subject to change)**

This agenda gives an overview of a typical course progression. Topics will be added or changed depending on final enrollment numbers, and the agenda is subject to change. Activities are dependent on terrain, course size and weather.

### **Day One**

Course begins at 8:00 am at Touch of Nature Environmental Center

Instructor and participant introductions

Introduction to the Master Educator course and history of Leave No Trace

Goals and objectives of Master Educator course and Trainer course

Personal goals of the group

Principles of education

Principle One – Plan Ahead and Prepare

### **Day Two – Raccoon Circle, 1 mile**

Backpack to Rocky Ledges and Raccoon Circle (about 1 mile)

Principle Two – Travel and Camp on Durable Surfaces

Activity – Exploring Campsite Selection

Principle Three – Dispose of Waste Properly

Activity – Exploring Trash Disposal

Discuss “Authority of the Resource”

Introduce “Action Plans”

### **Day Three – Upper 40, 3 miles**

Backpack to Upper 40 Cabin

Principle Four – Leave What You Find

Activity – Exploring Natural Areas and Archeological Areas

Principle Five – Minimize Campfire Impact

Activity – Exploring Fires and Stoves

Principle Six – Respect Wildlife

Activity – Exploring Respect for Wildlife

Cover all Trainer course material

### **Day Four – Red Cedar Trail, 5 miles**

Backpack to the Nature Trail and Devil’s Standtable in Giant City State Park

Principle Seven – Be Considerate of Other Visitors

Activity – How to Be Considerate of Other Visitors

Hike the Giant City Nature Trail

Wildland Ethics

Share and discuss “Action Plans”

Backpack to Giant City Campground

### **Day Five – Touch of Nature, 2 miles**

How to run a Trainer course

Course evaluations

Final thoughts and debrief

Graduation – present certificates, patches/pins

Backpack to Touch of Nature

## **Curriculum**

The Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics has designated Touch of Nature Environmental Center an educational provider of Master Educator courses. Touch of Nature Environmental Center brings over 65 years of experience teaching wilderness skills, interpretation and leadership to the Leave No Trace program.

Master Educator courses are informative, practical, hands-on and fun. You will learn skills and teaching techniques through lectures, activities and discussions in a spectacular outdoor setting. The course is designed for people who actively teach outdoor skills or provide recreation information to the public. It emphasizes three components:

- low-impact camping skills
- wildland ethics
- outdoor teaching techniques

## **Participant Lessons**

Each participant will be required to present a 15-20 minute lesson on one of the Leave No Trace principles or how it relates to a specific activity, such as backpacking, canoeing/kayaking or mountain biking. The lesson may be skills-oriented or theoretical in content. Although some preparation time will be available once the course has begun, plan to prepare your lesson prior to arriving at Touch of Nature. As a component of the

class the participant is also required to conduct a short (5-10 minutes) activity pertaining to their teaching topic.

If you have questions regarding class presentations, please refer to the teaching information on the LNT website [www.lnt.org](http://www.lnt.org) or contact Touch of Nature Environmental Center at <https://ton.siu.edu/> or call 618-453-1121.

## **Environment**

Touch of Nature Environmental Center sits on 3,100 acres of the unglaciated Shawnee Hills natural division of the Shawnee National Forest. The Eastern border of the facility is Little Grassy Lake, one of three lakes on Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge. It shares its Southern and Western borders with Giant City State Park and Crab Orchard Wilderness. A National Environmental Education Landmark (designated by the National Park Service) and outdoor laboratory for Southern Illinois University, Touch of Nature has been serving a broad range of populations as a leader in the fields of environmental, therapeutic and adventure education for 65 years.

Spanning 289,000 acres, including seven wilderness areas, Shawnee National Forest is nestled in Southern Illinois between the Ohio and Mississippi rivers. It features strikingly beautiful oak-hickory forests, flourishing wetlands, lush canyons, razorback ridges and unique geological features. A rare convergence of six natural ecological regions results in one of the most biologically diverse ecosystems in Illinois.

Southern Illinois is home to a variety of plants and animals. The forests are primarily hardwood oak and hickory but also contains maple, walnut, ash and beech among many others. There is a plethora of animals in Southern Illinois and participants may see anything from deer, bobcat, fox, otter and beaver to hawks, eagles, loons, egret, and heron.

Weather in Southern Illinois varies from season to season and is generally unpredictable. May through September are hot and humid with the average high temperature in the 80's. October through November are cooler with the average high in the 60's. The winter months, December through February, may be very cold or rather mild with temperature ranging from single digits up to the 50's. March through April are pleasant with the average high in the 60's.

## Camping

Participants will be backpacking and camping each day of the course in a different location. This will require participants to carry all of the necessary equipment and supplies for at least four days in the backcountry including, but not limited to, clothing, shelter, food, and personal gear. Expect to hike up to five miles per day during the course. **The Leave No Trace Master Educator course does not cover backcountry skills and participants should have at least 20 days of backcountry experience.**

## Equipment

Participants are required to provide their own gear. Plan for a variety of weather, from warm and sunny to cool and windy. A detailed equipment list will be emailed to the participants prior to the course. Touch of Nature Environmental Center will provide group gear such as stoves, fuel, cookware, first-aid kit, water filter and ground/overhead tarps.

If needed Touch of Nature Environmental Center will rent certain, specific equipment items to clients for a cost. Costs will cover the entire duration of the course. All items must be returned in good condition.

Tent: \$20

Sleeping bag and pad: \$20

Internal frame backpack: \$20

## Food

Touch of Nature Environmental Center will provide breakfast, lunch and dinner for each day of the course. Day five of the course participants will only be provided breakfast and lunch. Participants will need to provide their own snacks for the duration of the course. Touch of Nature Environmental Center is able to modify meals due to dietary restrictions if needed. **Touch of Nature must be notified of any dietary restrictions prior to the start of the course.**

## Enrollment Forms

All participants will need to register for the Master Educator Course online at <https://ton.siu.edu/>

- Self-Screening Medical Form
- Insurance Form - all course participants must have some form of medical insurance
- Student Agreement

### **All payments and enrollment forms should be sent to:**

Touch of Nature Environmental Center/LNT  
1206 Touch of Nature Road  
Makanda, Illinois 62958

## Scholarships

For information regarding Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics scholarships go to <https://lnt.org/teach/master-educator-course-scholarships> or contact the Center for details at 800-332-4100.

## Additional Information

The Leave No Trace Master Educator Course does not cover backcountry skills. Participants must be familiar with the use of stoves, backcountry cooking, tent setup, water filters, clothing selection, etc. and have 20 days or more of backcountry experience before enrolling in the course. For more information or questions please contact Touch of Nature Environmental Center at 618-453-1121 or <https://ton.siu.edu/>.

## **Payment and Cancellation Policies - Please read carefully!**

Course tuition is \$695 and includes a one-year individual membership to Leave No Trace, instruction, group equipment, some meals, educational materials and certification. Partial scholarships are available through the Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics. Please contact the Center for details 800-332-4100.

To enroll, a completed application and a \$100 non-refundable deposit are required. The balance of tuition is due 45 days prior to the course start date. For applications within 45 days of the course start date, tuition is due in full with the application.

\*The \$100 deposit may be waived for scholarship applicants until the scholarship amount has been determined.

### **Cancellation Policy**

If you cancel or leave for any reason we will retain the non-refundable deposit or the following percentage of tuition, whichever is greater:

- Between 15 and 29 days prior to the course start date, Touch of Nature will retain 25 percent of the course tuition
- Between 8 and 14 days prior to the course start date, Touch of Nature will retain 50 percent of the course tuition
- Less than 8 days prior to the course start date or after the course has begun, there will be no refunds

Course transfer requests may incur a \$25 processing fee.