

# **Leave No Trace Master Educator Course Touch of Nature Environmental Center, Illinois Course Description – Backcountry River to River Trail**

- Duration: 5 days
- Cost: \$550
- Location: Touch of Nature Environmental Center, Makanda, Illinois
- Day 1 meeting time and location: 8 a.m. Touch of Nature Environmental Center

## **Course Overview**

The Master Educator course is an extensive experience designed to train participants practicing and teaching Leave No Trace skills and ethics. 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 the five days of training at Touch of Nature, participants will learn and teach the principles of Leave No Trace while backpacking along the River to River Trail in Southern Illinois. 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 Leave No Trace teaching skills while experiencing the unique treasures found in beautiful Southern Illinois. The course will involve practicing Leave No Trace skills along the famous River to River trail with participants backpacking approximately 10 miles per day and camping in various backcountry locations.

## **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 a.m. 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 (Approximately 8 miles)**

Drive to Trailhead on River to River Trail  
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 (Approximately 10 miles)**

Continue to Hike River to River section  
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**

Continue to hike River to River Section (approximately 10 miles)  
Principle Seven – Be Considerate of Other Visitors  
Activity – How to Be Considerate of Other Visitors  
Wildland Ethics  
Share and discuss “Action Plans”

### **Day Five (TBD)**

Hike remainder of the River to River section  
Return to Touch of Nature  
How to run a Trainer course  
Course evaluations  
Final thoughts and debrief  
Graduation, present certificates and patches/pins  
Course ends at 2 p.m.

## **Curriculum**

The Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics has designated Touch of Nature Environmental Center as an educational provider of Master Educator courses. Touch of Nature 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

## **Participants Lessons**

Each participant will be required to present a lesson, 15-20 minutes in length, 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.

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 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 over 65 years. Southern Illinois is known for its lush hills, diverse ecosystems, sandstone cliffs and numerous lakes.

Southern Illinois is home to a variety of plants and animals. The forests are primarily hardwood oak-hickory but also contain 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, beaver and otter to hawks, eagles, 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.

## Lodging

Participants will be camping along the River to River trail for the duration of the course living, sleeping and eating in the outdoors.

## Equipment

Participants are required to have their own gear for use during the course. Plan for a variety of weather, from warm and sunny to cool and windy. A detailed equipment list will be sent to each participant 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 tarps.

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.

For equipment rentals, please contact SIUC Basecamp at [basecamp@siu.edu](mailto:basecamp@siu.edu)

## 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 menus due to dietary restrictions if needed. **Touch of Nature must be notified of dietary restrictions prior to the start of the course.**

## Enrollment Forms

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

Registration will include:

- 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 teach backcountry skills. Participants must be familiar with stoves, backcountry cooking, water filters, tent setup, clothing selection, etc. and have backcountry experience before enrolling in the course. Touch of Nature Environmental Center recommends that participants have 20 days of backcountry experience prior to 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

Course tuition is \$550 and includes a one-year individual membership to Leave No Trace, instruction, group gear, food, 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.