

Leave No Trace Master Educator Course

Touch of Nature Environmental Center, Illinois

Course Description – Frontcountry Southern Adventures

- Duration: 5 days
- Cost: \$495
- Location: Touch of Nature Environmental Center, Makanda, Illinois
- Day 1 meeting time and location: 9 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 frontcountry 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 immersing themselves in the forests of Southern Illinois. Touch of Nature provides an ideal setting 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 Leave No Trace teaching skills while experiencing the unique treasures found in beautiful Southern Illinois.

The course will involve practicing Leave No Trace skills at various locations across Southern Illinois, Participants will return to Touch of Nature each night to camp at Rocky Ledges on the shores of Little Grassy Lake.

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 9 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

Hike 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

Shuttle to site in Southern Illinois (subject to change.)
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

Shuttle to site in Southern Illinois (subject to change.)

Principle Seven – Be Considerate of Other Visitors

Activity – How to Be Considerate of Other Visitors

Hike the Giant City Nature Trail (1 mile)

Wildland Ethics

Share and discuss “Action Plans”

Day Five

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, or contact Touch of Nature at <https://ton.siu.edu/> or call 618-453-1121.

Environment

Touch of Nature Environmental Center sits on 3,400 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

Frontcountry courses that occur during summer and fall months will be ran as a base-camp style course. Participants will be camping for the duration of the course at Rocky Ledges on the lakeshore of Little Grassy Lake. Rocky Ledges is an established campsite with tent pads, an established fire ring with benches, an outdoor kitchen and an evaporating eloo (outhouse). Participants will be living, sleeping and eating in the outdoors. Participants will travel to a different location each day and return to Rocky Ledges in the evening.

During frontcountry courses that occur during winter months (January-February), participants will be staying in Shawnee Lodge which holds 2 twin beds in each room, a large common area with an indoor fireplace, refrigerator and microwave and a large table and chairs. Restrooms and showers, separate for men and women, are available within the lodge. Access to outdoor/indoor fire pit is available as well as cooking gear. Touch of Nature will provide participants with linens (twin sized sheets, pillow, and towel) and cup/bowl/eating utensils. Volunteers should bring their personal gear in addition to the items listed on the equipment list.

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.

Tent: \$20

Sleeping bag and pad: \$20

Internal frame backpack: \$20

Food

Participants will need to provide ALL of their own meals and their own snacks for the duration of the course. Touch of Nature will supply a space for cooking and equipment if necessary.

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.