

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Is previous experience necessary?

Yes. 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 recommends that participants have at least 20 days of backcountry experience. For more information or questions please contact Touch of Nature Environmental Center at 618-453-1121 or <https://ton.siu.edu/>.

2. What do you mean by “backcountry”?

Backcountry refers to land that is undeveloped, isolated, remote and difficult to access. The primary access to backcountry is by human powered means i.e. hiking, paddling, cycling, etc.

3. Is there an age restriction for the Master Educator courses?

Touch of Nature Environmental Center policy states that participants must be a minimum of 14 years of age or older.

4. What are things I should consider before signing up for a course?

- **Previous experience:** Do you have the necessary backcountry skills to complete the Master Educator course.
- **Terrain:** Know what course you are registering for. If the course is a backpacking style course be prepared for hiking in all weather conditions while carrying all your gear. If the course is a paddling style course make sure you have the necessary skills to safely and successfully complete the course.
- **Distance per day:** For hiking courses you may be required to hike up to 5 miles per day. For paddling courses you may be required to paddle up to 8 miles per day.
- **Length of days:** Expect long days starting around 8:00 am and ending around 6:00 pm. Some days may run longer or shorter than average.
- **Remote environments:** Many Leave No Trace Master Educator course are taught in a backcountry environment. Due to the remote location(s), in the case of a medical emergency, definitive emergency care may be several hours away.

5. How do I know if the gear I'm planning on bringing is sufficient?

Touch of Nature Environmental Center will provide a detailed equipment list prior to the start of the course. The equipment list will cover mandatory equipment as well as personal and optional pieces of gear. The equipment list also provide additional descriptions to help answer questions that you may have when considering what to pack.

6. How do I let you know what gear I want to rent?

Contact Touch of Nature Environmental Center at (618) 453-1121 or <https://ton.siu.edu/>

7. What size tent can I bring?

Maximum tent size should not exceed 7 ft. x 5 ft. x 4 ft., an average two person tent.

8. What is the cancellation policy?

Cancellation Policy

If you cancel or leave for any reason we will retain the non-refundable deposit (\$100) or the following percentage of tuition, whichever is greater:

- Between 15 and 29 days prior to the course start date, Touch of Nature Environmental Center will retain 25 percent of the course tuition
- Between 8 and 14 days prior to the course start date, Touch of Nature Environmental Center 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

9. When do I need to register for a course?

Registration will close 10 days prior to the first day of the course or once participant enrollment has reached capacity.

10. How do I apply for assistance with the cost of participation?

The Leave No Trace center for Outdoor Ethics provides scholarships for Master Educator Courses. 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.

11. What does the cost of the course include?

- Meals for the duration of the course
- Permits – Permits are required for courses to be taught on lands managed by the National Park Service, U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and designated Wilderness Areas.
- Transportation (if applicable)
- Experienced Instructors
- Group gear (stoves, fuel, tarps, medical kit)

12. How do I register for a course?

Visit Touch of Nature's website <http://ton.siu.edu/> or call 618-453-1121