



Backcountry Camping

Class Outline

Brief Synopsis: (formerly *Minimum Impact Camping*). Backcountry camping allows one to experience nature in a unique and personal way. Yet if done improperly, can affect the serenity and beauty of the site. Students will learn the philosophy behind the 7 principles of Leave No Trace and apply that knowledge to the skill of backcountry camping. Students will work together in small groups to pack a backpack, navigate a trail, set up a tent, dig a cathole, and prepare a small meal using a gas stove.

Outcomes:

1. Students will learn the 7 principles of Leave No Trace and exhibit environmentally sensitive behavior throughout the class period.
2. Students will demonstrate positive teamwork and cooperation by sharing tasks and offering assistance while learning the skill of backcountry camping.
3. Students will apply the 7 principles of Leave No Trace to other outdoor activities.

Outline:

I. Leave No Trace Principles (15 min.)

In this introduction to LNT, students will be given a scenario and be asked to make a choice in how they would respond. Making sound choices is imperative to LNT. At first LNT camping may seem to be nothing more than a set of rules. But with experience, students will realize that they are not just following rules, but acting in a way that promotes respect for the natural environment and others.

II. Plan Ahead and Prepare (20 min.)

Backcountry camping requires specific knowledge, skill, and practice. Students will work in small groups to determine what essential items would be needed for a backpacking excursions.

Considering both weight and space will be imperative as gear is assessed and evaluated. Each group will have an external framed backpack that must be properly packed before trekking outdoors to Eagle Bluff's backcountry campsite.

III. Hike to Site and Set up Camp (2 hrs, and 25 min.)

From the time the class exits the building until the end of the class period, students will be practicing LNT techniques. Students will work cooperatively to select a campsite, set up a tent, rig a rain fly, and prepare a small meal using a backpacking stove. Students will take the "cathole" challenge, linking LNT principles to sanitary procedures. Students will end the class period reflecting on the experience and recognizing the important role humans play in minimizing their impact on the environment both at home and in wild places.

Quick Facts

Class Length: 3 hours

Ages: 5th grade or older

Season offered:
Mid-March through October

Time outside: 2.5 hours

Hike length/physical activity:
1.5 miles, moderate

Pre-requisite/prior knowledge:
None

Minnesota Academic Standards:
Language Arts: 6.III.A.3,
Physical Ed: 6.6.1,4, 7.5.2,3, 7.6.3,
8.3.4, 8.5.1,2