

**American Alpine Institute  
Leave No Trace Master Educator  
Pacific Northwest Backpacking Itinerary  
Five-Day Program**

The Leave No Trace Master Educator course provides participants with extensive training in Leave No Trace skills and ethics. This program was designed for those who work extensively in the outdoors as teachers, volunteers, rangers, instructors, outfitters, and guides.

The AAI Backpacking Leave No Trace Master Educator course is designed for those with previous backpacking experience who are able to set-up a tent, use a camp stove, pack a backpack and operate in a wilderness setting without significant instruction. Pacific Northwest weather can sometimes be cold and wet, so participants should be ready for inclement weather camping and training.

It should be noted that while this program includes some backpacking, it is not exclusively a backpacking program. The Leave No Trace Master Educator course will focus on learning how to teach Leave No Trace skills, with backpacking objectives as a secondary goal of the program.

**Day Zero:**

Many participants travel to Bellingham, Washington the day before the official start of the program. If you wish to camp prior to the program, the closest campground to our classroom is Larabee State Park. Another option is Birch Bay State Park, but that is approximately 40-minutes from our classroom. It is possible to make reservations for either of these areas at <https://parks.state.wa.us/>. You may also wish to stay at a hotel. AAI provides pick-up and drop-off service to Four Points by Sheraton in Bellingham (<https://www.marriott.com/hotels/travel/blifp-four-points-bellingham-hotel-and-conference-center/>).

**Day One:**

Meet at the classroom at 8am. On the first day, the group will discuss the itinerary, learn about Leave No Trace, and make a plan for the week. The day will run from eight-to-five with an unstructured one-hour lunch break. The team will not formally camp or eat together on the first night.

*Classroom Sessions:* Introduction to Leave No Trace, introduction to teaching topics, introduction to outdoor pedagogy, lesson planning, equipment and food check, gear rentals, tent and food partner planning, development of the week's plan, and principal one - plan ahead and prepare.

*Lodging:* front-country camp on your own, or hotel.

**Day Two:**

Meet at the American Alpine Institute with all backpacking equipment packed and ready to go. The meeting time for Day Two will be determined by your instructors on Day One. One of the primary elements of this day will be to make our way into the backcountry. This will require a drive to a trailhead and then a hike to our camp. The hike should not be more than three hours on any given day, with most days being two hours or less.

*Field Classroom Sessions:* principal two – travel and camp on durable surfaces, and principal three – dispose of waste properly.

*Lodging:* backcountry camp

**Day Three:**

The team will pack-up and move to a second backcountry camp.

*Field Classroom Sessions:* principal four – leave what you find, principal five – minimize campfire impact. If conditions are acceptable, the team will build a mound fire.

*Lodging:* backcountry camp

**Day Four:**

The team will pack-up and move to a third backcountry camp.

*Field Classroom Sessions:* principal six – respect wildlife and principal seven – be considerate of other visitors. In addition to these topics, the instructors will demonstrate how to complete several different types of bear hangs. Obviously, if the trip is in bear country, this will be done earlier in the program.

*Lodging:* backcountry camp

**Day Five:**

On this final day, the team will complete the last lessons, hike back to the trailhead, and drive back to Bellingham.

*Field Classroom Sessions:* outdoor ethics, authority of the resource, and how to run a Leave No Trace Trainer course.

*Lodging:* The program is finished on Day Five. Participants may depart Bellingham, they may stay at a hotel, or camp. It is not recommended that people attempt to fly out on the final day of a program, as programs occasionally come back late.