



Since 1999

*"The More You Carry In Your Head,
The Less You Carry On Your Back"*

Earth Skills Programs Fact Sheet

How large are your courses?

Our Earth Skills programs are limited to 6 students. This ensures individual attention and allows us to travel with relative ease and a minimum impact on the environment. It also allows us to immerse ourselves in nature without the lingering artificiality that large groups create.

Who is a typical ESSP student?

Roughly half of past ESSP participants have been college students, representing such schools as Brown University, Evergreen State College, New York University, Colorado Mountain College, the University of Colorado, Duke University, Plymouth State University, the University of Saskatchewan, Harvey-Mudd College and Antioch New England Graduate School, among others. Other students have come from diverse backgrounds, including truck drivers, organic farmers, soldiers, and commercial fishermen. 55% of our semester students have been male, 45% have been female. The one characteristic they all share is a desire to know nature on intimate terms and motivation to learn the traditional skills of the forest.

How are you different from the large outdoor education and wilderness travel companies?

Earth Skills Education has different goals than modern outdoor education. Using skills and techniques that have been passed down since the stone age, our goal is to show our students that they are part of the natural world, then teach them how to live in it. The large wilderness travel companies focus on traveling through the wilderness using high-tech gear as an umbilical cord to the modern world. In contrast, we focus on immersing students in the natural world and showing that any separation from it is only a figment of their imagination and enculturation.

How large of a company are you?

We're a small, family business and plan on remaining so. While we benefit greatly from numerous instructors and guides who share their experience and specialized skills with us, the majority of courses are instructed by Master guide and wilderness educator Tim Smith, M.Ed. We've been doing this full-time, year-round, since 1999, and prior to that we taught and guided part time since 1995.

How do is student work assessed?

Portfolio-based assessment is the standard for experiential education. We embrace this idea, as it shows what a student has accomplished instead of placing them in competition with their peers. Students keep a daily logbook and nature journal to record what they've done. These, along with crafts they've made, projects they've worked on, photographs they've taken, and everything else they've done during the program, are assembled into individual student portfolios to be put on display at the Earth Skills Symposium.

Is this type of experience environmentally friendly?

Throughout the course, students will be living and learning in a low impact, ecologically sustainable manner. We compost all organic refuse using a simple, efficient, and odorless thermophillic composting system. We purchase paper products made from recycled, unbleached paper. We eat organically grown food when possible, emphasizing products that have been locally or regionally grown. Our goal is to be part of the solution, not part of the problem.