During the summer of 1898, the noted American sculptor, Lorado Taft, and a small group of artists, architects, and scholars came to the Wallace Heckman estate, an idyllic property located on a wooded bluff overlooking the Rock River near Oregon, Illinois. They established a summer retreat as a place to work, exchange ideas, and socialize in peaceful isolation away from the distracting pressures and oppressive summer heat of the city. This enclave became known as the Eagle’s Nest Art Colony and flourished until the last of its original members died in 1942.

In 1951, Northern Illinois University acquired a portion of the Heckman estate including heavily wooded areas, open fields, ravines, and the site of the original art colony. Named after the art colony founder Lorado Taft, the 141-acre campus became the University’s environmental education and conference center. For over five decades, thousands of participants have come to Taft Campus to teach and learn in the outdoors and to experience its vitality and sense of renewal.

The spirit of the Eagle's Nest Art Colony - a unity of purpose, humane acceptance, and good fellowship - still permeates the campus and characterizes everything that happens here. You are invited to be part of it.

Conferences and Retreats

Lorado Taft Field Campus facilities are available to both university and non-university groups for conferences, workshops, meetings, and retreats. All or part of the facilities can be reserved and are available throughout the year. Examples of functions that have been held here include:

- High school retreats or teambuilding
- Weekend educational conferences
- Departmental retreats and planning sessions
- Administrative staff meetings
- Youth group programs

Such activities range in length from several hours to several days. Services can include meals, lodging, meeting rooms, and program assistance.
The Facilities
Some of the original artist colony buildings have been refurbished and remain in use. Several other buildings have been added over the past 40 years; all are heated and most are air-conditioned.

MEETING ROOMS: Two large multi-purpose meeting rooms serve as primary meeting areas. Several smaller rooms, suitable for up to 40 people, are also available.

FOOD SERVICE: Meals are served family or buffet style in a modern air-conditioned dining hall with a seating capacity of up to 130. Guests report that the meals served at the Taft Campus are unrivaled in quality. Our dining hall staff is willing and able to accommodate menu requests and special dietary needs.

DORMITORY HOUSING:
  Heckman – nine rooms with eight beds each, plus three small rooms with four beds in each room.
 Clarkson – two rooms with 28 beds each, plus an additional staff room for two in each of the large rooms.
  Grover – one room with 20 beds, plus a staff room for two.

All dorms are air-conditioned and have complete bathrooms.

Services and Planning
A member of the Taft Campus staff serves as host to each group and is available to assist groups with planning and coordinating prior to arrival. Instructional or program services can usually be provided upon request to augment the group's own schedule of activities. These are often in the form of interpretive walks and nature hikes. Team-building activities are also offered using our Group Initiatives Course.

Reservations
Reservations can be made up to one year in advance; early reservations are recommended. Occasionally, however, a group can be taken on short notice. A contract detailing the group's arrangements – dates, services, and costs – is sent to the representative of the group and must be signed and returned to the Director to confirm reservations. Cancellations may be made without penalty up to 60 days before the meeting or by mutual agreement.

Accessibility
Lorado Taft Field Campus offers handicap accessible facilities. Most natural areas, however, are not. Please contact Taft Campus for further information.

For Further Information, contact: Conference Coordinator, Lorado Taft Field Campus, Northern Illinois University, P.O. Box 299, Oregon, Illinois 61061 (815) 753-0205 or (815) 732-2111, or at www.niu.edu/ltfc.

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