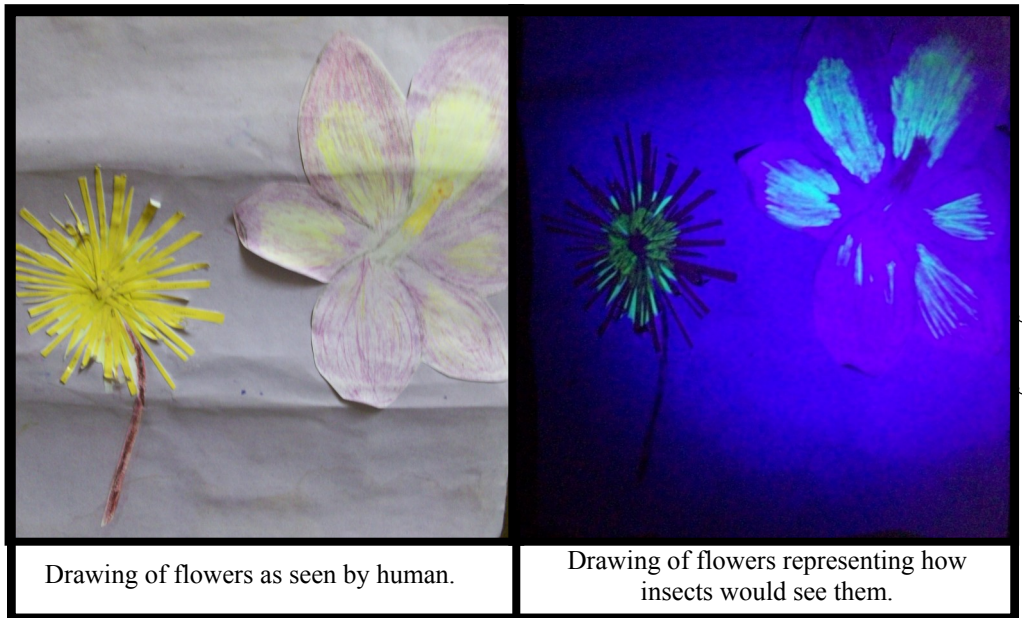


Black Light Art

During a night hike, students may be a part of a group lucky enough to see bioluminescent mushrooms or any one of the glow-in-the-dark living organisms around Taft. However, if a group's night hike has the unfortunate event of being rained out, students can create their own glow-in-the-dark features using black light art. Previously done with a handful of schools as a Halloween treat or rainy night activity, black light art has received the Taft-approved WOW reaction.

Black light art was inspired by the way some insects see. The colors that we see are actually different wavelengths of light energy. As humans, we can see the colors in our rainbow: violet, indigo, blue, green, yellow, orange, and red. These colors are visible to most of us because we can differentiate the wavelengths. Violet to red colors are approximately 400 to 800 nanometers. There are, of course, more wavelengths beyond what we can see. If you go beyond red, a wavelength greater than 800nm, you enter the infrared, microwave, and radio wave frequency. These are invisible to the naked eye, yet definitively existing. On the same note, light less than 400nm falls into the ultraviolet range. Studies have shown that many insects have a visible light range from 300-650nm. This means that many insects cannot see red, but they can see ultraviolet light! This changes their world dramatically.



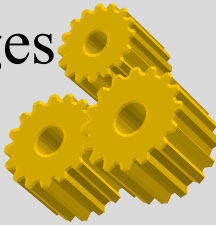
Using special camera lens filters, photographers can take a picture of a flower to show it under ultraviolet light, thus helping us see what an insect would see. Often, the flowers appear to be bright near the center and sometimes have a bull's-eye pattern. This intensity in the center of the flower acts as a guide to insects to lead them directly to where the nectar can be found.

(Continue on Page 3)





Changes At Taft



Many improvements, upgrades, and changes can be seen around Taft Campus. Next time you visit, make sure to check out:

- New benches around the chimney and at the South Field fire circle. Many thanks to our wonderful Maintenance Staff for their hard work!
- Three new teambuilding elements that were constructed with help from Washington School!
- New Instincts for Survival course located in South Field. Best used for those schools wishing to play, but do not have a lot of time. Thanks to Washington School for helping install this course!
- New floor in Eagle's Nest.
- Healthy forested area near South Clarkson. Honey-suckle was removed with help from the NIU Cares team, and Thomas, South, and Illinois schools!
- Plate of Fame award board in the dining hall recognizing those schools who have a zero ort meal.
- Weather board in the dining hall to inform you of the temperature and chance of rain.
- New wigwam constructed from saplings located at the Native Site.
- Flowers planted all over campus by Chana School.

What Happens at Taft in the Summer?

Since many (if not most) of our readers are familiar with Taft through the outdoor education program, you might wonder what we do when school is out. While the summer calendar looks different, we still stay pretty busy. As is the case during the school year, a variety of groups use our facilities during the weekends. Weekend programs include the IDNR Becoming an Outdoors Woman event, various NIU groups, and church group retreats. Weekday groups vary throughout the summer. In June, we host Chicago High Jump for an outdoor education camp that is part of the kick-off to their summer programs. In July, we are offering 2 day camps, and we participate in the Oregon Trail Days Festival (see below). Several suburban high schools use our facilities for football, volleyball, and cross-country team camps throughout the summer.

While we are busy, we do have some openings and down time. If you are a part of a group who might be seeking a place for a summer conference, program, sports camp, or retreat, keep us in mind. You can contact Diana Dennis, our conference coordinator, for more information at ddennis@niu.edu.

Oregon Trail Days Festival

Have you been looking for a reason to come to Taft outside of your normal outdoor education or conference program? Or perhaps you are a student who would really love to show Taft to your family? Then come out to Oregon on



July 19-20 to check out the Oregon Trail Days Festival. The festival, originally created to raise funds for the restoration of the Blackhawk Statue, focuses on life in the "olden days." Activities take place in Lowden State Park and at Lo-

rado Taft Campus. Things going on at Taft include campus tours, pioneer life activities and tours of our pioneer cabin, a quilt show in Poley, and an amazing breakfast in our dining hall on Sunday morning. For more information about the festival, go to <http://www.oregontraildays.org/>. Hope to see you there!



Spring is Here!

The long awaited arrival of spring has finally come to the Rock River Valley and to Taft, bringing with it new life. Young plants have popped their heads through the leaf litter, making the forest bright and green again, with spots of purple and pink hepatica, violets, trillium, buttercups, blue bells, and others. Just a few weeks ago we had our first water ecology classes since the fall; in which students have found scuds and mayfly larva, seen swimming snakes, observed the Great Blue Herons nesting, picked up a baby turtle, caught minnows, and tried to catch frogs.

Another spring arrival are the American White Pelicans, which are often seen floating down the river in large groups called squadrons or soaring past the dining hall. The surprise of seeing pelicans in the Midwest has not yet gone away, though they have been spotted in marshes, rivers, and lakes of northern Illinois for the past several years.

In some places in Illinois, they have been seen for almost ten years, where they stop to rest their wings as they migrate back north to the Dakotas and Canada, after a long winter in the Gulf of Mexico and southern California.



Photo by Kelsey Thorp

Pelicans are graceful for their size, and easily spotted by their bright white bodies with touches of black on the underside of their wings, and bright orange legs and bill. They stand about five feet tall and have a wingspan of up to nine feet. Their bill alone can be up to a foot long. Despite their mass, they are seen soaring high above the ground or inches above the water.

(Continue on page 4)

(Continued from Page 1)

Black light art was first done to show the difference between how a human would see a flower and how an insect would see that same flower. Using the same techniques, students can create their own pictures and have them change dramatically under a black light. It is especially eerie when done with a Halloween theme! Fear not if your night hike is rained out or if you do not want to rely on the weather; request this activity to your Taft coordinator.

Source: Turpin, Tom. "Insects See the Light." June 2012.
<http://www.agriculture.purdue.edu/agcomm/newscolumns/>



Artwork



Still Seeking Your Taft Memories!

We've received responses from just a few of you to our request for your favorite memories of Taft. Since we've been doing this for 60 years, there should be LOTS of people out there who could share something fun they did or something new they learned (or at least a quick, "I loved the food!"). Send your Taft memories to melcostello@niu.edu or share them via our Facebook page. We would love to hear from you!

(Continued from page 3)

Photo by Kelsey Thorp



They feed while swimming and will fish cooperatively, steering fish towards other pelicans in the squadron. Their bill has a distinctive pouch, called a gular pouch, which helps it to catch fish and filter water. In the Rock River, they are often seen on the shallow rock below the dam, a popular fishing spot for many in Oregon. Pelicans tend to stay in large groups, but pair up during mating season and partake in courting rituals

with their mate, including flights as a pair, strutting walks, and bowing. They will stay in their breeding colony with their mate to protect the nests.

Though they do not stay for very long, their arrival and presence is anticipated and enjoyed, and feels just as much a part of spring as seeing the geese and their goslings, new flowers, or excited children stepping off the bus each week to experience all that the forest has to offer.

Sources: Cornell Lab of Ornithology, All About Birds
University of Michigan, Museum of Zoology

Zero Ort!

ZERO ORT for Multiple Meals

Thomas Middle School: Delta (4)
Thomas Middle School: Gamma (2)
Spencer Loomis (2)

Disney II Magnet
St. Mary's
Warren Jr. High
Hurley
Seth Paine
St. Francis de Sales

Heritage Middle
Washington
South Middle School: East
South Middle School: West
Illinois
Indiana



Lorado Taft Field Campus
1414 North River Road
P.O. Box 299
Oregon, IL 61061
Phone: (815) 732-2111
Fax: (815) 732-4242

Taft Times Contributors:

Newsletter Editor: Amy Banner
Black Light Art and Changes at Taft by Amy Banner
Oregon Trail Days Festival and What Happens at
Taft by Melanie Costello
Spring is Here! By Stefanie Landman

