A Day in the life at HFC: Leading, serving, learning

“The sun is shining, and the birds are singing. It’s a great day to be alive!” — Frank Lupton

By Teresa Koltzenburg ’92 M.S. ’11

For those Western Illinois University alumni who studied in the Department of Recreation, Park and Tourism Administration (RPTA), this elemental reflection—often proclaimed by WIU RPTA Professor Emeritus Frank Lupton—may be associated with some time they spent at Horn Field Campus (HFC). (Even those who never had a course with Professor Lupton, who retired in 1993, are likely familiar with his upbeat persona and lighthearted legacy. An RPTA alumna, Betsy Williams ’07 M.S. ’11, had the proclamation tattooed on her leg.)

Since the early 1970s, when Lupton first began to utilize the 92-acre area as an outdoor educational facility for his RPTA students, Horn Field Campus has provided opportunities for Western students—as well as faculty, staff and the region’s community members—to lead and to serve. During the Fall 2013 semester alone, according to Horn Field Campus Program Coordinator Mindy Pheiffer ’91 M.S. ’92, a total of 1,200 volunteer hours have been logged at HFC.

From free, open-to-the public natural resource education programs conceived and presented by students, to student organizations and classes looking to lend a hand in the maintenance and upkeep of the enormous facility, Horn Field Campus provides a natural learning space ideally suited for developing leadership and team-building skills. The campus includes woodlands, prairie, several miles of nature trails and, these days, a challenge course that features a teams course, a high-ropes course and a 40-foot climbing/rappelling wall. As these photos illustrate, it gives individuals and groups an outdoor outlet to pursue and practice Western’s core values.

Plans are underway for a 2015 commemoration of 50 years of Horn Field Campus at WIU. Along with Pheiffer, Western staff members, including Dana Moon ’98 MBA ’01, Julie Murphy ’94 M.S. ’95, Dale Adkins, Karen Peitzmeier ’88, Susan Welsh ’97 and Marilyn Pruitt ’94, will be working on the plans for the golden anniversary celebration. For more information about ways to get involved, contact Pheiffer at (309) 833-5798 or MJ-Pheiffer@wiu.edu.

Maddie Ruhl, a naturalist and RPTA graduate student, developed the program, “Get the Buzz on Bees,” which she presented in September to members of the WIU campus and Macomb communities.

Members of Lambda Alpha Epsilon (LAE), a professional fraternity of the American Criminal Justice Association for students studying in the School of Law Enforcement and Justice Administration, during a service day at Horn Field Campus.

WIU Professor Emeritus Maurice Kellogg ’48 MS-Ed ’56 (in orange, tending the fire) with a local youth group at Horn Field Campus. Kellogg is known throughout Illinois and nationally as a leader in science education. He was a faculty member in science education and biological sciences until his retirement from Western in 1990.

Members of WAVE (Western’s All Volunteer Effort) carved pumpkins for the annual Haunted Corn Maze held Halloween night this year.

Members the Western Illinois Construction Management Association (WICMA), a professional student organization, standing on a bridge they designed and built at Horn Field Campus.

Western Illinois University Housing and Dining Services’ professional and student staff took part in a team-building and leadership-development retreat this past August at Horn Field Campus.

An entrance to one of the many trails at the Horn Field Campus.