



# Prairie Telegraph

A Newsletter of the Midewin Tallgrass Prairie Alliance for its Members and Midewin Volunteers  
Volume 11, No. 5

## New Participation in National Public Lands Day

*From Logan Lee, Prairie Supervisor, MNTP*

Wow! I can't believe that this is the first article I have written for the *Prairie Telegraph*. I guess I think you would rather hear from the folks who are doing the real work....

I wanted to let you all know that we are hoping to expand participation in National Public Lands Day (NPLD) and share some background with you. The Midewin Alliance was awarded a grant from the National Forest Foundation to help expand outreach to urban populations. The grant was based on two premises – bringing some of our environmental education partners from the inner city down for NPLD and improving our “host” capacity.

For the former purpose and on this year's NPLD on September 29, our *El Valor* partners will bus down some of the kids, and their families, who have been participating in our Science & Technology Camp and Urban Academy for Environmental Sciences. The families from Pilsen, Little Village, and South Chicago have been very appreciative of our efforts to teach the kids about the environment and give them learning experiences outside of the schoolroom. Our new partner, the Fuller Park Community Development Corp., will also be looking to fill a bus from the Fuller Park neighborhood in Chicago with kids who will be spending their first “overnight camping experience” with Pat and Angie later this month, as well as folks who, as part of their South Point Academy, will be doing some small construction projects for us. These bus trips create an opportunity for families to participate in NPLD and see what their family members have been doing to help restore the prairie.

I think Jerry Heinrich has already spent the second half of the grant on a tent designed to be used for such events. As we have all learned, nurturing volunteers is important and temporary relief from our harsh prairie summers can mean a lot.

I hope that this venture will lead to new volunteers and a connection to the “city” that will grow and strengthen over time. Come join us on September 29th and meet some families who are willing to stretch their neighborhood to include Midewin!

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**SAVE THE DATE: PUBLIC LANDS IS SEPTEMBER 29!** (See Page 4 for details.)

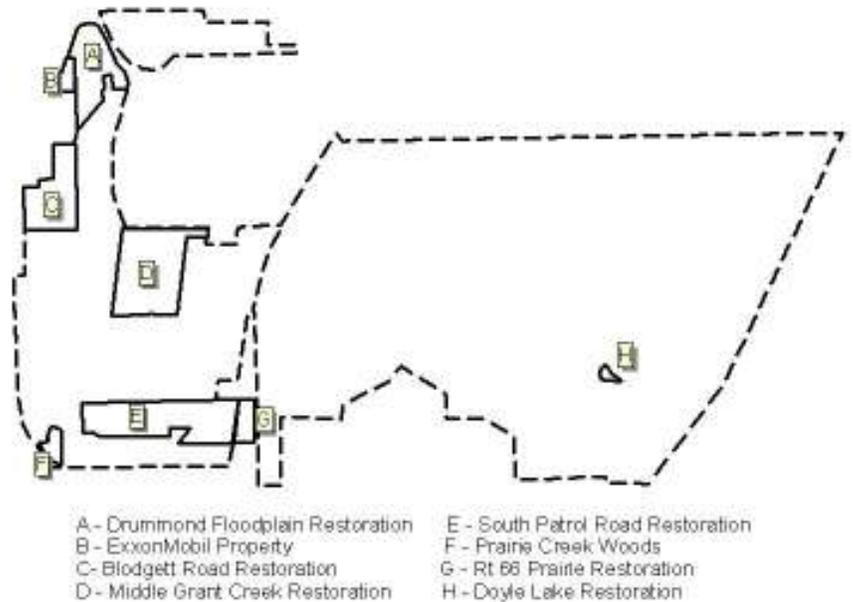


## Ten Years of Prairie and Woodland Restoration at Midewin

From Bill Glass, Ecologist, MNTF

It's been 10 years since the first land transferred from the Army to the Forest Service. So what's happened on the land over the past 10 years? Although most of the first 4 years were spent in the planning process, Midewin's enabling legislation allowed for some restoration during the planning process. Since the finalization of the Prairie Plan, restoration has been ongoing at a rapid pace.

Slightly over 600 acres has been converted from former cropland to native vegetation. Approximately 400 acres of existing native plant communities are under active management. Over 2000 acres of former cropland has been converted to habitat for grassland wildlife. Overall, more than 13,000 acres at Midewin is receiving some type of management (seeding, invasive species control, prescribed burning, grazing, etc). Restoration highlights are listed below. Please refer to the accompanying map for orientation.



**Doyle Lake Watershed Planting:** This was Midewin's first real restoration activity.

Approximately 5 acres of former crop field that had become too wet due to a beaver dam was seeded in wetland plants. The initial planting was successful and wetland plants dominate. We are looking for a couple of volunteers that would be willing to take on the management responsibilities for this 5-acre site. Contact Chris Pratt (815-423-2148) if you're interested.

**South Patrol Road Restoration:** Planning for this 460 acre wetland and prairie restoration was started in 2000 with actual work starting in 2002. A major drainage ditch was filled and agricultural field drain tiles were disabled to return the hydrology to a more natural state. A former railroad berm was removed along with the trees from old fence lines. The entire area was seeded with prairie and wetland plants and has had supplemental yearly plantings of prairie and wetland plugs. Over 170 different plant species have been put into the restoration. Invasive species control has been an ongoing management task. South Patrol Road Restoration is probably the best restoration Midewin has done to date. The area is dominated by native plants and is one of the best locations to see a good prairie reconstruction. Most of the initial work was done through the help of partners including The Wetlands Initiative, CorLands and the US Army Corps of Engineers. The Wetlands Initiative also received grants from a number of sources to help fund this project. An added bonus has been creation of wetlands in former crop areas south of the project area following the hydrological restoration. This has added approximately another 100 acres of habitat.

**Blodgett Road Dolomite Prairie Restoration:** This project started about the same time as the South Patrol Road Restoration. This 271 acre restoration project included the restoration of existing wetlands and prairie, along with the conversion of about 125 acres of former cropland to prairie and wetlands. Field tiles were disabled and some small berms were put in place to create wetlands. Woody vegetation was removed from the existing wetland and prairie remnants. Planting was done at the same time as the South Patrol Road restoration, but this planting isn't as far along as the South Patrol Road restoration.

(Continued on next page.)

## Restoration at Midewin (Continued from Page 2.)

**Blodgett Road Prairie Restoration Continued:** However, it has improved in quality over the past year. Over-seeding and invasive plant species control are ongoing restoration work. This restoration was another project with The Wetlands Initiative and other partners. We are also looking for some volunteers to take on some management responsibilities for this restoration area. Contact Chris Pratt (815-423-2148) if interested.

**Route 66 Prairie Restoration:** Route 66 prairie is located across Route 53 (formerly Rt. 66) from the Midewin office. Restoration work was started in 2002 with removal of woody vegetation and stopping water drainage from the site into a drainage ditch. Restoration started with the installation of plant plugs by volunteers in 2002, continued in 2003 with planting of prairie and wetland seed, and over seeding continues today. This restoration has received over a thousand hours of volunteer labor. The wetland areas are exceptionally rich in plant species, although cottonwoods have been invading. Invasive species control continues to be a major effort at this site. Corlands, the US Army Corps of Engineer, and Ducks Unlimited partnered in this project.



A reconstructed sedge meadow at Route 66 prairie.

**Prairie Creek Woods:** Prairie Creek Woods is located just west of the River Road Seed Beds. To date, 53 acres of this woodland/savanna remnant has been actively managed. Management activities include thinning of the invasive tree and shrub species, control of herbaceous plant species, and planting savanna/woodland vegetation along with oak and hickory trees. The understory was severely shaded by non-native bush honeysuckle with little native understory vegetation. With the removal of the honeysuckle, the native herbaceous vegetation has flourished. Large stands of woodland wildflowers can be found where only scattered individuals were prior to restoration. Future plans call for expanding into additional portions of the woods. Corlands and the US Army Corps of Engineers also helped in the funding and restoration of Prairie Creek Woods.

**Middle Grant Creek:** This project is a 502 acre wetland and prairie restoration project being funded through funds from CenterPoint Properties as wetland mitigation from the construction of Deer Run Industrial Park. So far, trees and shrubs have been removed along with old Army infrastructure such as railroad ties, power line poles and some bunkers. Field tiles were disabled and recontouring of the land will take place this year. Planting should begin this winter and continue next summer. It's estimated that more than 70 acres of wetlands will be restored at this site.

**Up Coming Projects:** Restoration work on the 470 acre Drummond Floodplain will begin this year with funding through the US Army Corps of Engineers, CorLands and The Wetlands Initiative. Restoration activities will include field tile removal, drainage ditch filling, Army infrastructure removal (parking pads, railroad berms, and roads) tree and shrub removal, invasive species control, planting of seeds and plant plugs and prescribed burning. With the impending transfer of the ExxonMobil dolomite prairie to Midewin, restoration work will begin in the near future.



Volunteers are invited to join the Midewin Tallgrass Prairie Alliance, the National Forest Foundation (NFF), and the U.S. Forest Service for a volunteer day at Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie. The *Friends of the Forest* & National Public Lands Day will take place on Saturday, September 29<sup>th</sup> beginning with on-site registration at 8.30am. All projects will begin at 9am at various locations. All ages of volunteers are welcome to participate. Children 16 years or younger must be accompanied by an adult or group chaperone.

Volunteers may register on-line at [www.becomeafriend.org](http://www.becomeafriend.org) (look for the Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie link on the homepage), or call Chris Pratt at (815) 423-6370 to Sign-up.

### PROJECTS INCLUDE ....

- Harvesting seed & planting prairie plants
- Planting a Butterfly Garden
- Grassland Bird Research
- Cleaning tombstones and recording the condition of the plots in a pioneer cemetery
- Constructing bridge decking

\*\* Space is limited for some projects. Pre-Registration is encouraged to join the activity of your preference.\*\*

**Great activities for FAMILIES, SCOUTS, STUDENTS, CORPORATE and CHURCH GROUPS, OUTDOOR ENTHUSIASTS of all ages!**

**On-Site Registration begins at 8:30 a.m.  
at Midewin's Welcome Center  
(9 a.m. start time for all projects)**

*RSVP to Chris Pratt by September 21<sup>st</sup>*

*to guarantee your FREE lunch*

**815-423-6370**

**Directions:** From I-55 take Exit #241/Wilmington; turn left onto eastbound River Road and go 4 miles; at the stop sign, turn left onto northbound Route 53 for 1 mile; Midewin's Welcome Center is on the right.

**From I-80** take Exit #132/Route 53-Chicago Street; turn right onto southbound Route 53 and go 12 miles; Midewin's Welcome Center is on the left.

Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie

30239 S. State Route 53, Wilmington IL 60481

[www.fs.fed.us/mntp](http://www.fs.fed.us/mntp)

*Pick a project and pitch in! "It's your land, lend a hand!"*

## Volunteer Workdays for September and October 2007

### Prairie Restoration and Horticulture

*From Bill Glass and Eric Ulaszek, USDA Forest Service, Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie*

Date and Day	Time	Meeting Location	Activities
5 September 2007 Wednesday	10:00 am – 3:00pm	Midewin SO (Horticulture Bldg)	We'll be installing prairie plants at the SO Seed Beds, and collecting native seed at the SO and at prairie remnants.
15 September 2007 Saturday	9:00 am – 2:30pm	River Road Seed Beds	We'll be installing prairie plants at River Road, and collecting some early-ripening seeds.
19 September 2007 Wednesday	10:00 am – 3:00pm	Midewin SO (Horticulture Bldg)	Collecting seed from SO seed beds (morning) and wild populations (afternoon).
29 September 2007 Saturday	9:00 am – 2:30pm	River Road Seed Beds	This is one of several activities on Midewin for National Public Lands Day. We'll be harvesting seeds and installing prairie plant plugs.
3 October 2007 Wednesday	10:00 am – 3:00pm	Midewin SO (Horticulture Bldg)	Collecting seed from seed beds (morning) and wild populations (afternoon).
13 October 2007 Saturday	9:00 am – 2:30pm	River Road Seed Beds	Collecting seed from River Road seed beds.
17 October 2007 Wednesday	10:00 am – 3:00pm	Midewin SO (Horticulture Bldg)	Collecting seed from seed beds (morning) and wild populations (afternoon).
27 October 2007 Saturday	9:00 am – 2:30pm	River Road Seed Beds	Collecting seed from River Road seed beds and, conditions permitting, visiting prairie remnants to collect wild seed.
31 October 2007 Wednesday	10:00 am – 3:00pm	Midewin SO (Horticulture Bldg)	Collecting seed from seed beds (morning) and wild populations (afternoon).

The next workday is on Saturday, November 10<sup>th</sup>

Most of the upcoming workdays feature seed collecting since seed of the majority of prairie plants ripens in fall. Collecting wild seed from remnants is a great way to see Midewin and our local prairie remnants during a time of the year when the fall colors of native grasses and the late flowering asters, goldenrods, and gentians make the remnants great places to visit. This time of year usually features our best weather, with mild, clear days. But in case of rain, we will meet at the Horticulture Building and clean seed.

**Wednesday Workdays will meet at Midewin Headquarters:** To reach the Midewin Headquarters (Supervisor's Office or SO), exit I-55 at Exit #241; drive east on New River Road for approximately 3½ miles to the State Route 53 intersection. Turn left (north), and proceed northwards for one mile. Midewin Headquarters is on the right. If coming from the east on I-80, exit at IL 53 (Chicago Street), and proceed south approximately 10 miles. Our headquarters will be on the left (east) after Prairie Creek Grain Company (which is on the right side of the road). All Wednesday workdays will meet at Midewin Headquarters.

**Directions to River Road Seed Beds:** Exit I-55 at Exit #241; go east on New River Road for approximately 1¼ miles; the entrance to the seed bed area is on the left (north) side of the road, at the Boathouse Road intersection. Proceed north on the access road to the parking area. There will be workday signs along New River Road. We will meet at the picnic tables under the large shade tree in the center of the seed bed fields. If coming from the east, access New River Road from State Route 53; this intersection is approximately 12 miles south of I-80, one mile past the Midewin Supervisor's Office, or 1¼ miles north of Wilmington. Go west on New River Road for 2¼ miles, the entrance to the seed beds will be on the right (north) side of the road, at the Boathouse Road intersection. (Continued on Page 6)

## Directions for Volunteer Workdays (Continued from Page 5.)

Please contact, Chris Pratt, Volunteer Coordinator, if you plan on attending workdays (telephone 815-423-2148, or email at [cmpratt@fs.fed.us](mailto:cmpratt@fs.fed.us)). Knowing how many volunteers will attend allows Midewin staff to better organize the workday, and we can inform you of any changes. Workdays may be cancelled if extreme weather occurs (again, please call ahead). If you plan on staying for the entire workday, please bring your lunch. As always, Midewin will provide tools, safety gear, and water for volunteers. Please wear appropriate clothing for fieldwork; weather, sharp tools, rough ground, and spiny plants are hazards present on Midewin. Boots (hiking or work boots) are good idea, as are clothes that allow freedom of movement. Midewin will provide rubber boots if we are planting in restored wetlands. Late summer and early fall weather can produce sudden downpours, so bring both a hat and a raincoat. Sun protection (hats, sunscreen, and a long-sleeve shirt made of light fabric) is always a good idea. Children are welcome, but Midewin does not provide childcare services. Minors 16 years old or younger must be accompanied and supervised by parents, guardians or chaperones (for educational groups). Volunteer groups of 10 or more must schedule workdays two months in advance. Please do not bring dogs or other pets to workdays.

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## Like Kids and Nature? Join the Mighty Acorns Program

*From Angie Opiola, Environmental Education Specialist, MNTP*

The Mighty Acorns Youth Stewardship Program introduces students from local schools to nature through hands-on projects. The field trips for the kids and other activities at Midewin are a fun way to introduce the next generation to the natural world. The program is so successful that many schools are interested in participating, but we do not have sufficient staff to accept more schools into the program. Volunteers will receive all the training and background information needed to make each field trip special.

The field trips start this Fall. If you love to teach about the environment and want to make a difference in a young person's life, then the Mighty Acorns Project may be for you! New and returning volunteers welcome. A volunteer refresher meeting for **returning volunteers** is scheduled for **Thursday, September 6<sup>th</sup> at 9:30 AM and again at 3:00 PM**. Please RSVP to Angie at the number below to save your place at one of these sessions. **New volunteers** for the program will be tutored in the basics before being assigned to lead a group. Make arrangements with Angie at (815) 423-6370 or email: [aopiola@fs.fed.us](mailto:aopiola@fs.fed.us) if you're just getting started in Mighty Acorns.

The *Prairie Telegraph* is published bimonthly by the Midewin Tallgrass Prairie Alliance, a non-profit organization incorporated in the State of Illinois that serves as "Friends of Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie". Members of the Alliance include representatives from conservation, environmental, and outdoor sporting organizations. We serve as advocates for the Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie. Questions about the Alliance should be addressed to Jerry Heinrich, President, at 815-476-6171. Comments and suggestions regarding the newsletter can be given to the Co-editors, Jolie and Steve Krasinski ([joliek@aadimonte.com](mailto:joliek@aadimonte.com)) or Marianne Hahn ([mariannehahn@sbcglobal.net](mailto:mariannehahn@sbcglobal.net)).

The opinions expressed herein are not necessarily endorsed by the Board of the Alliance or the US Forest Service. For additional information about Midewin, visit [www.fs.fed.us/mntp](http://www.fs.fed.us/mntp).

## Midewin and *El Valor* Celebrate National Pollinator Week 2007

By Catherine Segar, Public Affairs Specialist Trainee, MNTP

Midewin celebrated National Pollinator Week on June 27, 2007 with *El Valor* Science and Technology Camp by planting a Monarch Butterfly Garden in a South Chicago community green space.

The “*El Valor* Partnership” is a component of Midewin’s urban outreach initiative to teach conservation education, and to expose urban audiences to the prairie outdoor environment. Under the partnership with *El Valor*, Midewin sponsors the environmental education for the science portion of three, four-week-long educational summer camps at different community centers in South Chicago.

Angie Opiola, Midewin Environmental Education Specialist, also a staff member of Chicago Academy of Sciences, assists the *El Valor* staff with camp curriculum, and has led many of the outdoor education activities. Planting the Monarch Butterfly Garden was an enriching experience for the campers, who are encouraged to take a hands-on approach to science, technology, conservation education, and stewardship.

Many of the *El Valor* campers have family ties to the area in Mexico where Monarch Butterflies spend their winters. Each Spring, the Monarchs leave Central Mexico and travel over 2,000 miles to the Eastern United States and Canada. The Monarch Flyway Garden will give migrating Monarchs a temporary habitat.

Some campers who emigrated from Mexico to Chicago could recall sighting Monarchs in huge clusters on trees in the mountainous forests of Central Mexico. Midewin staff used this activity to connect conservation education and stewardship to the campers’ heritage. “Monarchs actually travel the same route that Mexican immigrants took to come north,” explained Midewin Archeologist Mike Rizo.

Before the students began planting the garden, Opiola taught the students about pollinators: “Ninety percent of flowering plants need to be pollinated. Without pollinators we would not have apples, melons or any other fruit.” She explained the importance of Monarchs as one type of pollinator.

Midewin employee and Horticulturist, Janine Catchpole assisted Opiola with the pollinator and butterfly garden lesson. Catchpole gave the students a lesson on the importance of seeds and proper seed planting methods. “Seed is the hope that the plant will have for the future. The seeds that you are planting are the hope that we will bring Monarchs to the center.” Catchpole said. Midewin employees also distributed seed packets and wildflower identification booklets to the students so they could start their own Monarch Gardens.

As part of their summer camp, the students also visited Midewin for an overnight visit in July. For many of the students, this was their first experience in the Great Outdoors. The campers participated in night hikes and nature games and planted another Monarch garden at Iron Bridge Trailhead at Midewin.



Angie Opiola (center), Midewin Environmental Education Specialist and staff member of Chicago Academy of Sciences, showing four *El Valor* students how to properly pot plants.

## It's Great to be Back

By Allison Hedden, Volunteer Coordinator Assistant, MNTP



New Volunteer Coordinator Assistant, Allison Hedden

Hi Everybody, I'm Allison Hedden, Midewin's new Volunteer Coordinator Assistant. I look forward to finding my niche here at the Prairie. I will be assisting the volunteer program primarily with data entry. My goal is to develop and support spreadsheets, databases, and reports to keep track of records and trends from all of our valuable monitoring projects.

I grew up in Manhattan, Illinois. I am grateful to have a family that instilled in me a respect for nature from day one through camping, traveling, education, and nature crafts, all of which will always be my passion. I enjoyed attending Joliet Junior College for their Ecology program and also participated in the Grassroots Club. I obtained a BS in Biology and a BA in Chemistry from Lewis University in Romeoville.

While attending Lewis University, I had the opportunity to work on the Midewin Restoration Crew. Fortunately, with the Student Temporary Employment Program, I was able to work year round from spring 2001 through winter 2003. For the past three years I have been

working in a chemistry lab at Loders Croklaan in Channahon, which is a plant that refines and distributes soybean and palm oil for America's cakes and crackers and such. The work there was interesting; however, I wanted to redirect my energy back into a nature conservation and restoration project. It thrills me to reunite with, join, and recruit people who will contribute so much to Midewin's goals.

I am thankful for the partnership between the USFS and The Nature Conservancy which provides the opportunity for my position here at Midewin. I am eager to share ideas with all of you. Please call me at 815.423.2149 or email me at [ahedden@fs.fed.us](mailto:ahedden@fs.fed.us)

It's great to be back!

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## Making More Leafy Prairie-clover at Midewin (and Elsewhere!)

From Eric Ulaszek, Horticulturist, USDA Forest Service at Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie

Leafy Prairie-clover (*Dalea foliosa*) is an endangered prairie plant that is restricted to prairies and glades atop dolomite bedrock. Historically, leafy prairie-clover has only been found in three places that have these conditions: central Tennessee, around Nashville; north central Alabama; and northeastern Illinois. In Illinois, it was once a common plant in dolomite prairies along the lower stretches of the Des Plaines, Fox, and Kankakee rivers. Over the past century, however, leafy prairie-clover declined as dolomite prairie habitat was lost to canal building, rock quarrying, industrial development, and encroachment by invasive species. Because leafy prairie-clover was a rare plant, it was often taken by private collectors, and for a time was thought to have disappeared from Illinois.

After its rediscovery in 1972, leafy prairie-clover is now known to survive in six natural populations in northeastern Illinois. To ensure its survival in Illinois, the US Fish and Wildlife Service would like to increase the size of existing populations and establish new populations in suitable habitats. To achieve these objectives, the Fish and Wildlife Service has developed a partnership with the Forest Preserve District of Will County, the Forest Preserve District of Kane County, the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, the Joliet Army Training Area, and the USDA Forest Service at Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie.

(Continued on next page.)

**Leafy Prairie Clover** (Continued from Page 8.) A limited number of seeds were harvested in 2006 from the six remaining Illinois populations. The seeds were processed by the seed-cleaning equipment at Midewin, and they are being grown by staff in the shadehouses. At present, we have over 3,000 leafy prairie-clover seedlings that will be ready for the field in 2008. Midewin seasonal staff have been busy caring for these plants. Some of the most vigorous seedlings are already six inches tall and will probably attempt flowering before October.

These plants will be used to enhance existing small populations and establish new ones. All five participating agencies are managing and preparing sites to receive the plants, many of which are degraded dolomite prairies. These sites are being improved through fire management and control of invasives. Techniques perfected during this project can then be applied to help leafy prairie-clover populations in Tennessee and Alabama, where the populations are smaller and development threats are more immediate. Eventually, this effort should help move the leafy prairie-clover further from the edge of extinction.

## Eagle Scout Builds Landscape Project at Midewin Trailhead

By Catherine L. Segar, Public Affairs Specialist Trainee, MNTP

The Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie appreciates the hard work of a local Boy Scout who completed a recreation service project this summer. Midewin Landscape Architect Rick Short spent one year working with Scout Matt Harvey on a project that they hoped would make visitors feel comfortable as they spent time on the prairie. Short designed two toilet screens that he believed would add to the recreation environment at two Midewin trailheads. Harvey took the design from Short, and he constructed two screens from cedar panels.

The sides of the cedar panels are engraved with a graphic design resembling tree trunks. This graphic design gives the illusion that the tree trunks on the screens are connecting with the rest of the branches from nearby trees. The toilet screens were designed for the Hoff Road and Iron Bridge trailheads. The Iron Bridge toilet screens are made for two handicapped accessible portable johns, and the Hoff Road screen is made for one handicapped accessible portable john.

When the Iron Bridge trailhead environment is complete, visitors will be able to ride their horses and bikes, hike and picnic with the use of a comfortable restroom area, all at one location. Midewin Horticulturalist Janine Catchpole has also been working to develop the Iron Bridge trailhead environment by planting different types of prairie grasses and flowers. Catchpole said, "The screens look really nice and they have improved the visual components of the trailheads."

Harvey recruited over 20 volunteers that include members of his Joliet Boy Scout troop and their families, to set up the screens. As part of his requirement to become an Eagle Scout, he led the members of Troop 18 and their families through the mounting process of both screens in one day. "The Boy Scout program is known to build leaders, and the Eagle Scout project is the last test of the scout's leadership skills," said Patrick Thrasher, Midewin Environmental Education & Interpretation Coordinator, who is also a former Boy Scout leader.

Harvey will be a senior at Joliet Catholic Academy in the fall.



Standing in front of the completed cedar screens are Scout Matt Harvey (fifth from left), flanked by fellow Scouts from Troop 18 and family members, with Midewin Staff Pat Thrasher on the left and Rick Short on the right.

## Midewin 2007 Volunteer Recognition Banquet

*From Jerry Heinrich, Midewin Alliance*

Midewin Volunteers! Mark your calendar. The Midewin 2007 Volunteer Recognition Banquet will be held on the evening of Wednesday, November 7 at the Republic Banquet Hall in Joliet. Invitations will be mailed to volunteers of record sometime in early- to mid-October. After you receive your invitation, please RSVP as soon as possible if you plan on attending. (Note: If you are a 2007 volunteer and you have not received an invitation by October 24<sup>th</sup>, please contact Chris Pratt, Midewin Volunteer Coordinator, at 815-423-6370.) The evening of festivities will kick off with a social hour at which time the Midewin Alliance will hold a silent auction. The dinner and program will follow.

If you are not a volunteer but would like to attend the event, please contact Connie or Jerry Heinrich at (815) 476-6171 or [g.heinrich@sbcglobal.net](mailto:g.heinrich@sbcglobal.net) to obtain details concerning registration and cost.

If you have an item that you would like to donate to the Midewin Alliance silent auction, please contact Connie or Jerry Heinrich. The Midewin Alliance is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization that serves as "Friends of Midewin". All donations are tax deductible as allowed by law.

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## A Visit to Nachusa Grasslands

*By Lorin Schab, Midewin Alliance*

Situated in north central Illinois, just east of Dixon, Nachusa Grasslands is a gem in The Nature Conservancy's (TNC) holdings. The 2,500 acres of rolling topography is a mosaic of colors and textures at all times of the year, but particularly now. About a dozen Alliance members gathered at the Nachusa Grasslands on Sunday morning, August 5, 2007. Dodging rain fronts on the way there and back, we were lucky to have partly sunny skies while on our tour. The cloud-broken sunlight painted a landscape in pastels as it swept across the St. Peter sandstone outcroppings referred to as knobs, and across the wetlands, oak/hickory savannas, wooded streams, and grasslands.

The volunteer center was a rescued barn, donated to the TNC by a local farmer. Much of the job of relocating and renovating it was done by volunteers. The barn has room for vehicle storage and a workshop on the ground floor and on the second floor, a large area for seed processing, a meeting room/kitchen, and other office space. John Schmadeke, a very active volunteer, gave us a briefing on their volunteer system, and how things get done at Nachusa. The Grasslands is divided up into about 70 units that range in size from about 5 to 30 acres. Volunteers may take on the stewardship of a unit or may work in other areas as needed. Some stewards are extremely active, at times working 7 days a week at their site doing weeding, applying herbicide, collecting or planting seed and performing prescribed burns. Locally collected seed is directly planted on their sites. While Nachusa does have a resident TNC manager, stewards are very much in control of their units and take great pride in their restoration progress. Many volunteers travel from the western suburbs of Chicago, and some travel from as far as Bloomington to donate their time and talents. Many will stay overnight at a nearby farmhouse recently acquired by TNC, allowing them to work several days at a time. Although there are no specific management plans for the units, informal discussions between stewards and staff seem to work well in deciding on how and what to plant. As at Midewin, land not ready for restoration is leased to local farmers for crops.

The field trip, lead by John, was like an African safari. We loaded up into the backs of a pickup truck, and a mule - a four-wheeled mule, not a long-eared one. Splashing across creeks and through puddles, we had a chance to stop and explore a variety of units that are not usually accessible to the general public without a long hike. About 150 to 350 native plant species are found on individual units while all of Nachusa has over 700 species. (Continued on next page.)

## Nachusa Grasslands (Continued from Page 10.)

Although much of Nachusa was cropland before TNC acquired the property in 1986, they also had some good remnant areas, particularly the knobs that couldn't be farmed. Climbing to the tops of the knobs gave us some great views of the property, as well as a chance to see some federal and state listed plants. Time passed quickly and our planned two hour outing became three as the mid-day heat and humidity rolled in. Heading back to the stewardship barn for our last water break before heading home, we had a chance to reflect on what a great place Nachusa is. By the way, John wanted us to mention that they are always looking for new volunteers.

## Fundraiser – Jewel Shop & Share – Sept 17, 18, 19, 2007

*From Sally Fisher-Planic, Midewin Alliance*

Midewin Tallgrass Prairie Alliance has scheduled a Shop & Share fundraising program at all area Jewel-Osco stores on September 17, 18, and 19. If you might be shopping at Jewel on one of those days, present this Shop & Share slip at checkout. Five percent of the total purchases, excluding sales tax, will be donated by Jewel-Osco to the Midewin Tallgrass Prairie Alliance. For additional slips to pass on to friends, you may either make copies of the one below or contact Jerry Heinrich at [g.heinrich@sbcglobal.net](mailto:g.heinrich@sbcglobal.net) for an e-mail copy.

	<b>SHOP &amp; SHARE IDENTIFICATION SLIP</b>		AMOUNT OF PURCHASE								
	0829265	□ □ □	<table border="1" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 25%;">□</td> <td style="width: 25%;">□</td> <td style="width: 25%;">■</td> <td style="width: 25%;">□</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">DOLLARS</td> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">CENTS</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>		□	□	■	□	DOLLARS		CENTS
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DOLLARS		CENTS									
GROUP NUMBER	STORE NUMBER										
GROUP: <b>Midewin Tallgrass Prairie Alliance</b> YOUR SHOP & SHARE DAYS: <b>September 17, 18, 19, 2007</b>											
SIGNATURE _____											
PLEASE SIGN THIS SLIP AND TURN IT IN TO YOUR CHECKER WHEN YOU SHOP. PARTICIPANTS CAN MAKE PURCHASES AT ANY JEWEL-OSCO ON THE DATE ABOVE.											
IDENTIFICATION SLIPS ARE NOT TO BE DISTRIBUTED IN FRONT OF ANY JEWEL-OSCO. 											

## Membership Application If you are already a member, tell a friend!!

Yes, our organization (or I, as an individual supporter,) would like to become a member of the Midewin Tallgrass Prairie Alliance. Enclosed is a check for \_\_\_ \$25.00 for my organization's annual membership, or \_\_\_ \$15.00 for annual individual membership. (The Alliance is incorporated as a non-profit, 501(c)3 organization. Donations are deductible to the full extent of the law.)

Your name: \_\_\_\_\_ Name of Organization: \_\_\_\_\_

If organization membership, the office you hold: \_\_\_\_\_

Street address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, state, and zip code: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Send to: Midewin Tallgrass Prairie Alliance, P.O. Box 2026, Joliet, Illinois 60434

Midewin Tallgrass Prairie Alliance  
P.O. Box 2026  
Joliet, IL 60434

Non-profit  
U.S. POSTAGE PAID  
Permit No. 43  
Channahon, IL

*Midewin Tallgrass Prairie Alliance  
General Meeting and Program Notice*

# Unique Natural Communities of Midewin and Surrounding Parklands

Presented by Bill Glass, USFS Midewin Ecologist

*When: Monday, September 10, 2007 at 7:30 pm  
Where: Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie Headquarters*

*On September 10<sup>th</sup>, Bill Glass will present a special program on the unique natural communities and rare plants that can be found at Braidwood Dunes and Savanna, Kankakee State Park, Goose Lake Prairie, Des Plaines Conservation Area, Hitt's Siding Prairie, Midewin, and other local natural areas. Join us and explore black sand prairies, dolomite prairies, upland forests, savannas, prairie seeps, limestone outcroppings, and more.*

*For directions to Midewin Headquarters, please see "Volunteer Workdays" on page 5 of this newsletter. For additional information, feel free to contact Jerry Heinrich at (815) 476-6171.*