

## **Midwin Environmental Learning Center Design Program**

The US Forest Service desires to build an environmental learning center and picnic area within the vicinity of the existing Iron Bridge Trailhead at Midwin. The center will serve as a hub for recreation and education activities at Midwin. The proposed facilities shall serve as a hub for recreation, trails and education facilities at Midwin. The project will reflect the conservation mission of the US Forest Service. The ELC should be designed to accommodate current uses at Midwin while remaining flexible to allow for future expansion as recreation opportunities and visitor use increases.

### **General Goals**

The following are goals or restrictions for the entire site and will portray the Forest Service's conservation mission.

- Sustainable construction materials/practices will be used
- Alternative power sources will be used for all facilities
- No water will be provided on site.
- All facilities will meet universal design standards for people with disabilities
- Facilities should allow for future expansion as the volume users increase

### **Program Elements**

#### **Outdoor Interpretive Exhibits**

Interpretive Exhibits should be provided to accomplish the following:

- Provide orientation to recreation opportunities available at Midwin that allows for change as new recreation opportunities are developed
- Provide history of the land at Midwin
- Provide overview of the prairie restoration/native habitat
- Explain the challenges of Midwin

Additional goals for this area include:

- Should not require staffing to be effective
- Will not be connected to grid power
- Should be conducive to phased construction
- Should allow for future expansion
- Provide native landscaping demonstration area
- Provide natural landscape areas

#### **Public Contact Station**

A public contact station will be provided that will allow appropriate staffing during peak uses. The contact station shall provide for the following in a secured environment:

- Desk seating for two people
- Public counter space
- Storage for brochures
- Radio hook-up

- Refrigerated bottled water sales point
- Four 120V duplex outlets

### **Outdoor Classroom Facilities**

Weather resistant outdoor classroom facilities to provide the following:

- Seating/tables for 60 students at one time
- 100 sf of floor space for storage
- Fireplace
- Classroom facilities shall also serve a group use space for other events
- Facility lighting
- Two 120V duplex outlets within the “classroom” area
- One 120V duplex outlet with the storage area

### **Campfire Ring**

A campfire ring designed for evening interpretive programs shall be provided to accommodate thirty people. Trail lighting shall be provided to allow for safe nighttime use.

### **Visitor Sign-In**

Visitor sign in will be provided for the following:

- Site visitors
- Hunters
- Trail users

### **Picnic Area**

Picnic area/day use facilities will be provided for ten groups of 6 people each.

### **Parking**

The following parking facilities will be provided:

- 20 single car spaces for trail use
- 10 equestrian/vehicles with trailers spaces for trail use
- 10 spaces for picnic area
- 2 bus parking spaces for educational facilities

Electrical

Alternatives will be provided for all facilities.

### **Landscaping**

Landscaping shall include the following features:

- Native landscaping demonstration gardens
- Prairie Demonstration Areas
- 10,000 SF open turf area for educational activities

Natural landscaped and native demonstration gardens shall allow for a prescribed fire management regime.

### **Toilet facilities**

Waterless toilet facilities should be provided to accommodate all projected uses on the site.

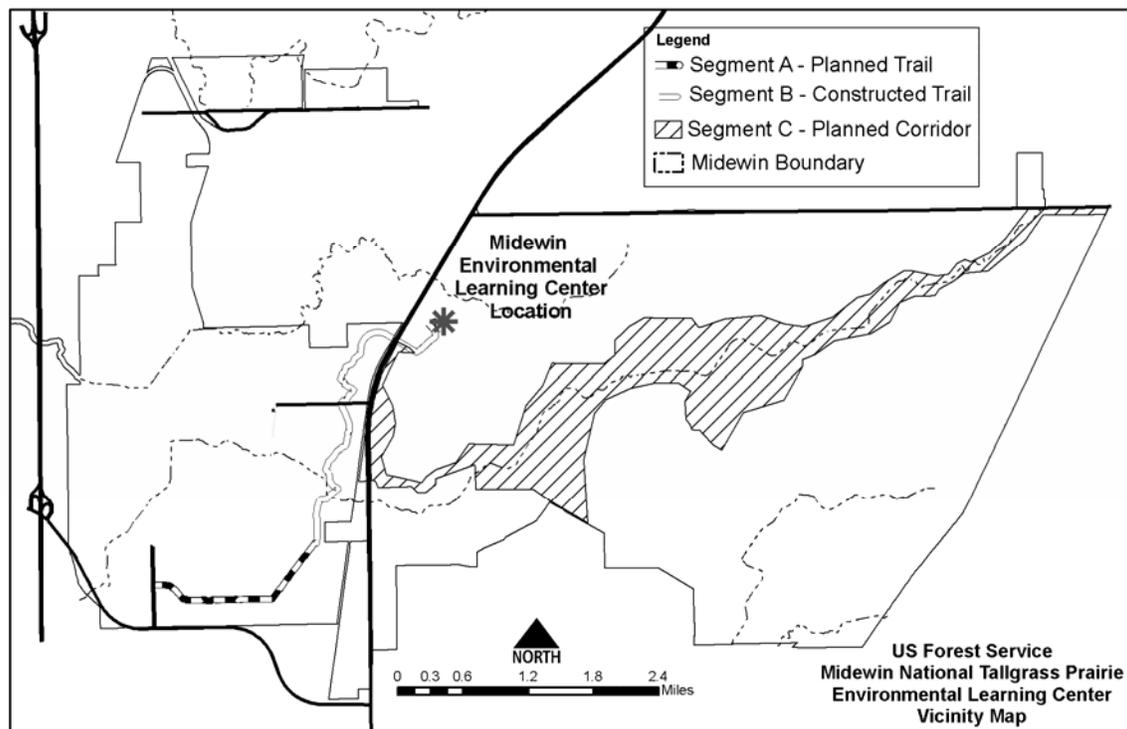
### **Additional Amenities**

- Bike racks
- Equestrian tie up
- Trash and recycle receptacles
- Security lighting

### **Additional Considerations**

Architectural Theme and Site Planning – Architectural style and site planning shall adhere to Midewin Thematic Guidelines

All lighting to meet night sky lighting guidelines



**Figure 1 Midewin Environmental Learning Center Vicinity Map**

### **Action Requested**

1. Conceptual site plan to include the following features:

- a. Outdoor classroom facility with area for expansion
  - b. Picnic area
  - c. Outdoor interpretive exhibits with area for expansion
  - d. Public contact station
  - e. Fire ring area
  - f. Parking facilities including areas for expansion
  - g. Vehicular and pedestrian circulation routes and linkages
  - h. Native plant demonstration area
  - i. Site amenities
2. Conceptual floor plans, using balloon diagrams study alternative floor plan layouts
  3. Site design configuration alternatives include parking access and pedestrian circulation
  4. Provide alternatives for “off grid” and how it should be integrated into the site.
  5. Building design character and LEED considerations integral to design
  6. Special design and graphic features capable of “branding” and/or wayfinding