

## **Midewin Trail: Design Program**

### Overview

Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie wishes to design and construct a trail that connects the Wauponsee Glacial Trail at Midewin's northeast corner with the River Road seed gardens at Midewin's south west corner. This trail will be a multiple use trail accommodating hikers, bicyclists and equestrians.

The objective of the trail is to provide an interesting recreational trail that will draw the user along the way. Opportunities should be taken to highlight the future restoration of Midewin, a variety of habitats and wildlife viewing opportunities and cultural resource sites within the trail corridor.

Multiple use trails at Midewin are typically constructed as an eight-foot-wide pathway constructed of limestone aggregate (road mix) topped with compacted limestone screenings.

### Existing Conditions

The trail can be divided into three distinct segments based upon its current planning/construction status. Part of the trail has been constructed, part of the trail is planned but not constructed, and part of the trail has not yet been planned.

**Segment A.** Segment "A" runs from the River Road Seedbed trailhead at the southwest corner of Midewin toward the east through an old tree line along the South Patrol road restoration area to Diagonal Road north to the intersection of Diagonal Road and South Patrol Road. This section of the trail is planned but not yet constructed. Due to changed hydrologic conditions as a result of restoration, construction of this section of trail is awaiting a wetlands delineation and issuance of a 404 permit from the Army Corps of Engineers. The proposed corridor was selected due its slightly raised elevation lessening the impact of a new trail on the area and reducing the construction cost.

Although this section of trail is straight and flat, excellent opportunities exist to interpret the South Patrol Road restoration area, currently Midewin's largest and most mature prairie restoration, as well as prairie wildlife.

**Segment B.** Trail segment "B" begins at the intersection of South Patrol and Diagonal Road and continues to the north and east across Illinois 53 to the Iron Bridge Trailhead. The tread surface of this segment of trail has been completed.

Original planning documents included an interpretive overlook adjacent to the trail at the top of the terminal moraine, southwest of where the trail crosses Illinois 53.

**Segment C.** Trail segment "C" runs south from the Iron Bridge Trail to intersect with Prairie Creek, then follows Prairie Creek to the northeast to the intersection of Hoff Road and the Wauponsee Glacial Trail.

This segment of trail is identified in the Midewin Land and Resource Management Plan (LRMP) but no further planning or design has been done. As identified in the LRMP, horse back riders and bikers may be separated in the future when more trails at Midewin are constructed.

Many opportunities exist along the proposed corridor for interpretive wayside exhibits, including pre-arsenal and arsenal history sites. As native habitats are restored, additional opportunities will be available to interpret the flora, fauna and the restoration process itself.

### Program Elements

#### **Segment A**

- Interpretive wayside siting and design. Midewin wishes to design and construct a wayside exhibit on the trail adjacent to the South Patrol Road restoration area. This wayside will interpret the flora and fauna of this prairie and the process of prairie restoration. Recommendations from the charrette team on siting and design concepts are desired. Design should be sensitive to the environment both visually and in construction methods.

#### **Segment B**

- Interpretive wayside siting and design. Midewin wishes to design and construct a wayside exhibit on the trail at the cusp of the terminal moraine. Expansive views from this location lend themselves to interpretation of the geologic history of the area including the outwash plain and the glacial history of the area. Recommendations from the charrette team on siting and design concepts are desired.

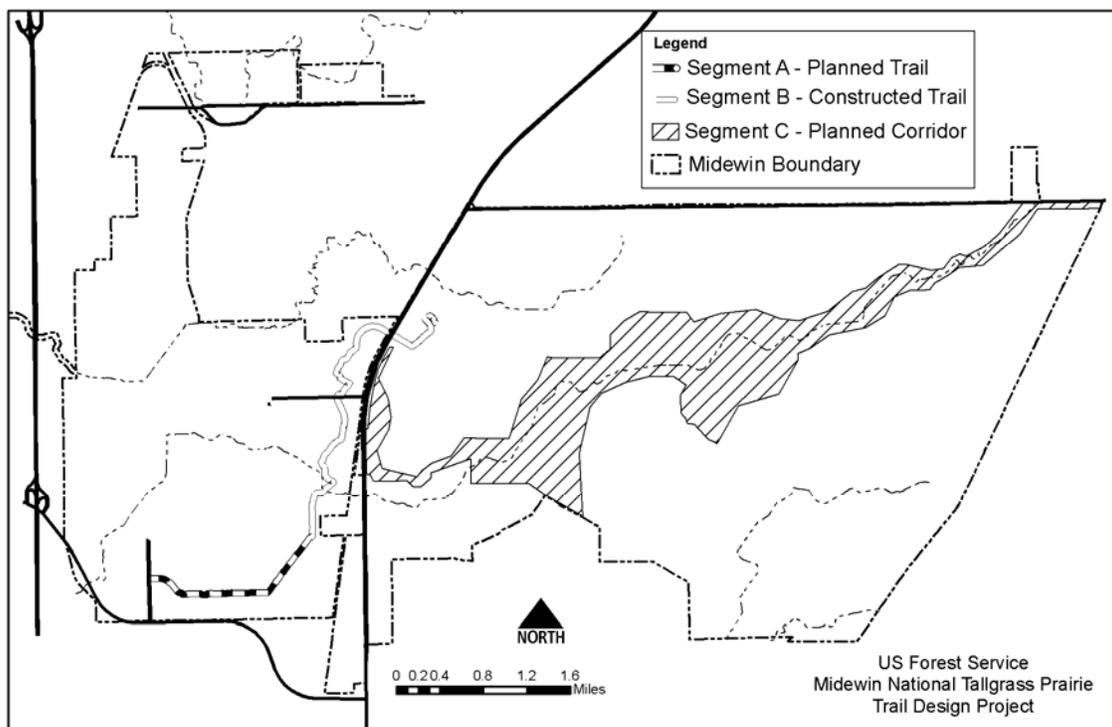
#### **Segment C**

- Trail routing. The charrette team should route the trail to identified nodes or anchor points along the trail corridor. Nodes should include points of interest including historic sites, natural areas and scenic vistas. Nodes will include the following:
  - Iron Bridge Trailhead
  - Midewin High Point
  - Bunker fields
  - Turtle Pond/Chicago Road seedbeds
  - Bailey Bridge
  - Midewin/Wauponsee TrailheadOther nodes and anchor points may be identified by the working team.
- Trail design should draw the visitor along the trail taking advantage of the expansive landscape of Midewin. Care should be taken to consider impacts on natural resources and cost effectiveness of corridor location. Special mitigation techniques or trail design that varies from typical trail cross sections should be included.

- Interpretive wayside siting and design. The charrette team should identify proposed interpretive sites, make recommendations on interpretive methods and site specific design.

### General Design Recommendations

The charrette team shall make general recommendations on general trail and signage design. The US Forest Service has long established standards for trail and wayfinding signage design. These are standards that have proven effective across much of the US, especially in rural areas where people have had a long standing history of interacting with the land. Because Midwin is set adjacent to an urban area that is not accustomed to large open landscapes and is unfamiliar with Forest Service traditions, the charrette team should make recommendations on modifications to trail and sign design to acclimatize the new visitor to FS land.



### Actions Requested

#### Segment A

Prepare conceptual design for interpretive wayside areas.

- Show relationship of all major elements including:
  - Trail
  - Overlook
  - Bicycle parking and horse tie-up

- Interpretive sign location
- Show recommended construction materials and methods

### **Segment B**

Prepare conceptual design for interpretive wayside areas.

- Show relationship of all major elements including:
  - Trail
  - Overlook
  - Bicycle parking and horse tie-up
  - Interpretive sign location
- Show recommended construction materials and methods

### **Segment C**

Prepare a trail plan including the following:

- Proposed nodes and/or anchor points
- Trail route
- Show recommended construction materials and methods that vary from typical Midewin designs
- Develop schematic layouts for interpretive wayside areas and features

### **All Segments**

1. Prepare sign design guidelines with conceptual examples of sign family recommendations. Guidelines shall include special design and graphic features that assist in establishing “branding” and/or providing wayfinding support.