



# Midewin Quarterly

Spring Quarter 2008  
30239 S. State Route 53  
Wilmington, IL 60481  
(815) 423-6370  
[www.fs.fed.us/mntp](http://www.fs.fed.us/mntp)

## About This Update

Welcome to the Midewin Quarterly, designed to provide a summary and update of projects and activities at the Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie listed on the Scheduled of Proposed Actions (SOPA), which can be found at [www.fs.fed.us/sopa/forest-level.php?110915](http://www.fs.fed.us/sopa/forest-level.php?110915).

The SOPA provides notice to interested and affected agencies, organizations, and persons, of upcoming proposals which may undergo environmental analysis and documentation. The purpose of the SOPA is to give early informal notice of proposals so the public can become aware of Forest Service activities and indicate their interest in specific proposals.

## Planning & Project Update

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires that Federal agencies prepare a detailed analysis of actions on Federal lands that affect the quality of the human environment. Public comments on specific analyses are an important part of the process, and the Forest Service asks for the public to review and comment on projects planned at Midewin.

Please read through the list of proposed projects. If you want to provide site-specific comments on a project or get more information, please call the contact person listed on the SOPA at (815) 423-6370.

We value your involvement and encourage you to participate when we can meaningfully consider your ideas concerning upcoming projects and respond before a decision is made.

## Fiscal Year 2007 Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Report

Midewin's annual M&E report is now available on our website. If you are unable to access the web or would like a hard copy of the document, please contact Mary Honer or Maya Solomon at the Midewin office.

## Completed Projects

### Midewin Prairie-wide Habitat Maintenance:

The decision notice was signed on March 7, 2008, with the legal notice appearing in Joliet's *The Herald News* the following day. Invasive species treatments authorized by this decision will be applied to lands across the Prairie and will also be applied to lands after they are transferred from the Army. Specifically, the following activities are now approved across all of Midewin: entire-tract, spot, and brush-mowing; individual tree removal (only in 833 acres of identified native vegetation remnants); mechanical and hand removal of invasive plant species; prescribed fire; grazing; row crop production; and herbicide application.

*Contact Bill Glass at (815)423-6370 for more information.*

## Cancelled (Delayed) Projects

### Iron Bridge Trailhead and River Road Turn Lanes Categorical Exclusion:

This project is being delayed until specific designs are developed for each of the turn lanes. Future turn lanes will be on Illinois State Route 53 to access the Iron Bridge Trailhead and on River Road at the Boathouse Road intersection to access Parking Area 3 and the River Road seedbeds.

## Ongoing Projects

### Environmental Assessments (EA)

**Prairie Plan Amendment:** The Prairie Plan was completed and approved in 2002. This amendment would add a third management area (MA 3 – Special Management Areas) for remediated lands transferred from the U.S. Army with soil and/or groundwater restrictions that limit future use. Also, utility corridors will be designated into Management Area 2 (administration) to manage existing and future proposal for utilities.

A draft EA was mailed on September 12, 2007 for a 30-day comment period. If you wish to view the document please visit the current project section of our website. A decision on this amendment is expected in mid 2008.

*Contact Mary Honer at (815) 423-6370 for more information.*



### **Phase II Demolition of Unneeded and Unsafe Facilities and Structures:**

Scoping was completed on October 13, 2006. The purpose and need for this project is to reduce the potential safety hazards associated with abandoned and deteriorating buildings and structures. Removing the old facilities is the first step to restoring the prairie to a more natural condition and preparing the area for safe outdoor recreation opportunities. A decision is expected in the summer of 2008.

*Contact Bill Mains at (815) 423-6370 for more information.*

### **Cattle Watering Systems:**

This is a new project in the proposal development stages of the NEPA process. The purpose of this project is to develop several cattle ponds and wells to provide water for cattle and to provide wetland wildlife habitat. Installation of the wells will allow for further removal of cattle from stream tributaries while allowing for grazing to provide habitat for grassland birds. These wells are not to be used for potable water purposes.

*Contact Jeff Tepp at (815) 423-6370 for more information.*



### Categorical Exclusions (CE)

#### **River Road Seed Production Area Tree Removal:**

The purpose of this project is to remove fence lines and hedgerows, including trees larger than 6 inches in diameter, that are sources of invasive species infestation into the seed production area.

*Contact Bill Glass at (815) 423-6370 for more information.*

#### **Accessible Hunting Blind Construction:**

The purpose of this project is to construct a hunting blind east of the Parking Area 1 (PA1). The hunting blind will include an accessible ramp extending from the blind to a newly constructed trail.

*Contact Mike Thom at (815) 423-6370 for more information.*

Please visit Midewin's website at, [www.fs.fed.us/mntp/](http://www.fs.fed.us/mntp/), for updates on activities and projects. Thank you for your interest in the Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie.