

FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

MIDEWIN NATIONAL TALLGRASS PRAIRIE LAND AND RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN

Will County, Illinois

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Abstract: Six alternatives for development of a Land and Resource Management Plan are described and evaluated in this Final Environmental Impact Statement. Each alternative provides a different mix of goods, services, and uses, and ultimately results in a different condition of the environment at Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie. The alternatives are:

- 1) No Action alternative,
- 2) Emphasizes maintaining and expanding habitat for sensitive grassland bird species,
- 3) Emphasizes developing and maintaining both developed and dispersed recreational opportunities,
- 4) (The Preferred Alternative) emphasizes a balance of habitat for grassland bird species and native prairie restoration,
- 5) Emphasizes restoring native prairie vegetation and ecological functions and
- 6) Emphasizes restoring native prairie vegetation with minimal investment in recreation.

The plan will guide management of Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie for the next decade. The plan will be updated and revised on a ten year cycle or more frequently if necessary.

PREFACE

The regulations implementing the Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Planning Act of 1974 (RPA), as amended by the National Forest Management Act of 1976 (NFMA), require the preparation of a plan, by each National Forest unit, (here Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie), of the National Forest System. These regulations also require an Environmental Impact Statement be prepared to assess and disclose the environmental effects of the alternatives considered and to assist in making the choice of a Land and Resource Management Plan.

This Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) has been prepared following procedures established by the Forest Service regulations for implementing the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations (40 C.F.R. Part 1500).

The Midewin Land and Resource Management Plan (Prairie Plan) is a companion to this document. The plan was prepared following procedures established for the National Forest System Land and Resource Management Planning (36 C.F.R. Part 219, 1982 version).

For purposes of NEPA disclosure, this Final Environmental Impact Statement and the Midewin Land and Resource Management Plan are treated as combined documents (40 C.F.R. §1506.4).

2002

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