



Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie

Volunteer Job Description

Title: Conservation Educator

Purpose: Conservation Educators deliver educational programs for school and youth groups that promote awareness, knowledge and appreciation for the environment and natural resources.

Duties and Responsibilities: Present on-site & off-site education programs to schools, youth groups and partner sponsored day camps. Volunteers will need to be able to handle school groups in a leadership role. School group sizes range from 6-15 youth.

Department and Location: Under the direction of the Interpretive Specialist, volunteers work within Midewin's Education Program to deliver quality curriculum to broaden youth environmental awareness. The majority of education programs take place at Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie. Off-site travel is required on occasion. Compensation for off-site travel expenses is evaluated each situation.

Qualifications: Individuals must be friendly and enjoy working with youth; Individuals are required to have excellent communication skills. Volunteers may be required to drive a Forest Service vehicle; in this event a valid driver's license is necessary.

Time Commitment: Weekday availability during the school year is key in becoming a Conservation Educator. The majority of Midewin's education programs occur in the Fall, Winter and Spring, but educators are needed year round. Based on the current school programs scheduled, Conservation Educators are asked to participate in a minimum of 4 days in each school year cycle (Fall, Winter, Spring), which is a minimum of 12 days annually. Midewin does ask that once the volunteer declares their commitment they adhere to that commitment, and let their supervisor know when a change in commitment is needed.

Training: All volunteers are required to complete the Conservation Educators in-house orientation. In addition to the initial orientation, a refresher course is provided before each school cycle. First Aid and CPR is encouraged, but not required.

Working Conditions/Physical Effort: The Conservation Educator may work in variable conditions.

These conditions include:

- Exposure to outdoor weather conditions & allergens

- Walking on uneven ground for short distances
- Standing for up to 2 hours at a time
- Light to moderate lifting

Benefits: You play a critical role in delivering environmental lessons to children who may not otherwise experience nature in their everyday life. You gain the satisfaction of helping these children learn first hand what they can do to become a steward of the environment. You have the opportunity to inspire tomorrow's decision makers and positively affect their environmental awareness. You will meet other like-minded individuals who also volunteer with the program. You will become familiar with the employees and history of the Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie. Be a part of our mission and help with our activities and services we offer. Volunteers receive ongoing recognition from their supervisor and other employee staff, and are invited to an annual volunteer recognition banquet in November.

Contact: Chris Pratt, Volunteer Coordinator, cmpratt@fs.fed.us, (815) 423-6370