



Midewin Meadowlark Messenger, August 2008 <http://www.fs.fed.us/mntp>

8.07.08

Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie

Summer Welcome Center Hours 8 am-4:30 pm (Mon-Sat)

30239 South State Route 53

Wilmington, IL 60481

Phone: 815-423-6370

## Here's what the bird is bringin'

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## ☆ Calendar of Volunteer Workdays for August

Date & Day	Time	Meeting Location	Activities
9 August 2008 Saturday	9:00 am – 2:30pm	River Road Seed Beds	Installing prairie plant plugs at River Road.
20 August 2008 Wednesday	10:00 am – 3:00pm	Midewin SO (Horticulture Bldg)	During the morning, we'll install prairie plants in the SO seed beds. In the afternoon, we'll locate and collect wild seed.
23 August 2008 Saturday	9:00 am – 2:30pm	Midewin SO (Horticulture Bldg)	We'll be installing prairie plants in a restoration project. River-Prairie Chapter of Sierra Club workday, but all are welcome.

**For more information about the workshops or events listed or to RSVP contact Allison Hedden, Volunteer Coordinator at 815-423-2149 or [ahedden@fs.fed.us](mailto:ahedden@fs.fed.us).** Knowing how many volunteers will attend a workday allows Midewin staff to better organize the workday, and we can inform you of any changes. Workdays may be cancelled if extreme weather occurs (again, please call ahead). If you plan on staying for the entire workday, please bring your lunch. As always, Midewin will provide tools, safety gear, and water for volunteers.

Children are welcome, but must be accompanied and supervised by a parent, guardian or chaperones (for educational groups). Volunteer groups are welcome to join our workdays; many hands make for light work. Please do not bring dogs or other pets to workdays.

## Directions to Workdays

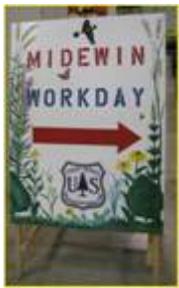
### All Wednesday workdays will meet at Midewin Headquarters

To reach the Midewin Headquarters (Supervisor's Office or SO), exit I-55 at Exit #241; proceed eastwards on New River Road for approximately 3½ miles to the State Route 53 intersection. Turn left (north), and proceed northwards for one mile; the Midewin Headquarters is on the right. Be forewarned; there is considerable road construction on I-55 From Weber Road south to I-80; plan for extra delays, or take I-355 to I-80, then I-80 west to IL Route 53 (see below).

If you are coming from the east on I-80, exit at IL Route 53 (Chicago Street), and proceed south approximately 10 miles; our headquarters will be on the left (east) **after** Prairie Creek Grain Company (which is on the right side of the road).

### River Road Seed Beds:

Exit I-55 at Exit #241; proceed eastwards on New River Road for approximately 1¼ miles; the entrance to the seed bed area is on the left (north) side of the road, at the Boathouse Road intersection. Proceed north on the access road to the parking area. Be aware that there is construction on I-55.



If coming from the east, access New River Road from State Route 53; this intersection is approximately 12 miles south of I-80, one mile past the Midewin Supervisor's Office, or 1¼ miles north of Wilmington. Proceed west on New River Road for 2¼ miles, the entrance to the seed beds will be on the right (north) side of the road, at the Boathouse Road intersection. Proceed north on the access road to the parking area.

There will be workday signs along New River Road.

We will meet at the picnic tables under the large tree in the center of the seed beds.

### ☆ Round Two for POC at Midewin,

Thanks to our volunteers! *Dani Drelich, POC research assistant*



August will be the start of another stint of rare plant monitoring at Midewin, and with only three species left to monitor, we've had quite the busy season! This spring and early summer we monitored 9 different species throughout Midewin's Drummond Prairie, Grant Creek Prairie, and Blodgett Road Dolomite Prairie. Not only did we conduct population counts of these rare plants, but demographic data was collected on certain species, involving measurements of stem height, number of branches, number of flowers, and lengths of leaves. Invasive species and other threats such as deer browse and duff were assessed, as well as recording a comprehensive list of associate species to help clarify the habitat type. It takes a lot of time and effort to gather all of this important information, and it never could have been accomplished without the help of our dedicated volunteers!

Beginning in Mid-May through early July, we have had a few soggy days, many sunny, some chilly and some near broiling, but our volunteers were there with bells on, always making for a fun and productive day in the field. Thanks to the generosity of the eight volunteers we've had out so far, a whopping 139.25 hours have been donated to helping our rare plants at Midewin, and that's just the monitoring time! When taking into account the time we need to get to our sites, search for populations, and all the hours graciously contributed from a handful of the seasonal workers at Midewin, the tally is up to 204.25 hours, and it's only July! There is no way that our program could continue, nor would our rare species get the attention that they need, if it weren't for our hard-working corps of volunteers.

Plants of Concern has scheduled monitoring dates for our last few species at Midewin. In August and September we will be focusing on the Showy Coneflower (*Rudbeckia fulgida* var. *sullivantii*), False Mallow (*Malvastrum hispidum*), and Eared False Foxglove (*Tomanthera auriculata*). While we've had great help thus far, we'd love to see new faces too! Many people had signed up at workshops this spring, but haven't yet made it down to Midewin to see

## ☆ Round Two for POC at Midewin continued...

what all the buzz is about. If this sounds like you, come out for a day to check it out! There is always wildlife to be seen, and the prairies will be exploding with wildflowers. Carpools can possibly be arranged if you don't want to make the trek alone. It's a great place to enjoy the outdoors, learn about nature, and meet new folks with similar interests. How can you pass that up?

If you'd like more information about Plants of Concern, please contact Dani Drekich, Midewin research assistant, at (847) 835-8347 or [ddrekich@chicagobotanic.org](mailto:ddrekich@chicagobotanic.org). If you are already at Midewin, you could also speak with their ever-helpful volunteer coordinator Allison Hedden, (815) 423-6370, and she can help point you in the right direction.

## ☆ Around the S.O. Grounds, *Janine Catchpole*

I have spent a lot of time this summer working on the expanding Pollinator Garden at the front of the Welcome Center. It has allowed me to be a bee on the balm, so to speak watching our visitors. And the bee balm, *Monarda fistulosa*, draws folks to look closer. Many gardeners are familiar with red-flowering bee balm, *Monarda didyma*, and cultivars thereof, so seeing our native prairie species up-close opens new garden possibilities.

The summer vacation season has triggered thoughts about being closely involved with one place over time. From my childhood on I've enjoyed the experience of coming home to see how much the gardens had changed. The weed growth is never as thrilling. It is the ritual of frequent observation that makes time away more dramatic at homecoming. An observant grower tries to prevent problems sneaking up on them, so paying attention is needed. Each stage of development is noted. Keeping focused gets hard, it is a lot like work. And now I think I need a little away time so I am off to Montana to go home and see what has changed in my Mom's garden.

## ☆ Do Not Miss the Mighty Acorns Experience this Fall

The Mighty Acorns Youth Stewardship program provides children with knowledge and activities that will encourage them to connect with nature. The Mighty Acorns program has developed a field trip schedule that allows 4<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> graders from local schools to come to Midewin 3 times a year for 3 seasons. The students participate in activities based on education, restoration, exploration, and stewardship. These activities are led by volunteer staff that truly see the value in passing it on. We must keep the children excited about and invested in nature. This is a fantastic way to get generations together to share stories and learn from each other. The Mighty Acorns program has become so popular that Midewin does not have enough volunteers to mentor all the students that want to come and learn more about nature. We provide a terrific training workshop for new volunteer instructors and a refresher for returning volunteers. Shifts are on weekdays for about 3 hours each and you may sign up for as many shifts you wish. **The fall training session is scheduled for Tuesday, Sept 9 to meet in the Welcome Center. You may choose the 9:30am OR the 3:00pm workshop.** If you are not available, there are other ways to get experience with the Mighty Acorns program.



For more information or to RSVP, please contact Chelsea Muise at 815.423.6370 or email [clmuise@fs.fed.us](mailto:clmuise@fs.fed.us).

## ☆ Interpretive Tours Continue, August Schedule

We invite you to come and learn more about this land we now call Midewin, the prairie under construction. Midewin has passionately dedicated volunteers that lead tours and share knowledge about the deep history of this area and also a future vision. Interpreters will help you visualize past uses of this area including early settlers crossing the prairie, farmers making their living here, and ammunition plant workers during WWII. Interpreters can show you special places where natives, settlers, and veterans lay in their final resting places. There are also tours to teach and show you what plant and animal species were, still are, and may return here. Midewin is even more fascinating than you imagine. What interests you at Midewin this month? There is a \$3.00 fee for each tour and children under 12 are free. Don't forget your camera and your binoculars! **Please reserve your spot at the message line at 815.423.2170 or email Leo at [Lbazan@fs.fed.us](mailto:Lbazan@fs.fed.us).**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Program</u> (Bring your own bike, horse, or hiking shoes)
Saturday, August 9	9:30a-12:00p	Walk: Explore the Wild Side of Midewin
Saturday, August 9	12:30p-3:00p	"The Prairie State" Tour
Saturday, August 9	6:00p-8:30p	Twilight Bike Ride
Saturday, August 16	9:30a-11:30a	Prairie Walk
Saturday, August 16	12:30p-3:00p	Historic Cemeteries Tour
Saturday, August 23	9:00a-11:30a	History on Horseback Ride
Saturday, August 23	12:30p-3:30p	Ghosts of the Ammunition Plant Tour
Saturday, August 30	8:00a-10:30a	Bikes & Birds Ride
Saturday, August 30	9:30a-11:30a	Prairie Walk
Saturday, August 30	12:30p-2:30p	Spider Walk

## ☆ Campfire Program Continues, Only 2 left, *Pat Thrasher*

Join storytellers and musicians around a campfire under the night sky and enjoy the full moon. A variety of different aspects of prairie life will be explored. Beginning this year, our campfire programs will take place at the Iron Bridge Trailhead, located on Highway 53 approximately two miles north of the Midewin Welcome Center. Participants may go directly to the Iron Bridge Trailhead for these programs. Please bring a camp chair, stool, or blanket to sit on for these programs. There is a \$3.00 fee for each program and children under 12 are free. We encourage you to reserve your spot at the message line at 815.423.2170 or email Leo at [Lbazan@fs.fed.us](mailto:Lbazan@fs.fed.us). Leave your contact info for convenience.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Program</b>
August 16	7:00 PM	Songs of the Prairie Pioneer
Sept. 13	7:00 PM	Tall Tales and Scary Stories

☆ **Midewin for Kids Program, August Schedule**

Kids who are 7-11 years old (along with a parent or guardian) are invited to join a Midewin interpreter for a free two-hour program of nature study and exploration. Each program is offered twice. There is no fee for these programs. We encourage you to reserve your spot at the message line at 815.423.2170 or email Leo at [Lbazan@fs.fed.us](mailto:Lbazan@fs.fed.us). Leave your contact info for convenience. Meet at the Welcome Center at 9:45 am.

Kids Program #5 of 6  
**Wednesday, August 13**  
**10:00a-NOON**

Kids Program #6 of 6  
**Wednesday, August 27**  
**10:00a-NOON**

**Saturday, August 16**  
**10:00a-NOON**

**Saturday, August 30**  
**10:00a- NOON**



*Midewin has a variety of volunteer opportunities year round, come and find one that fits your style or feel free to offer your own hobby:*

- Environmental Education
- Mighty Acorn Instructor
- Welcome Center Host
- Interpreter/Ambassador
- Trail maintenance
- Construction
- Woodworking
- Prairie planting
- Seed cleaning
- Seed harvest
- Herbarium assistant

- Ecological Monitoring
- Cemetery maintenance
- Invasive control
- Research
- Landscaping
- Office Assistant
- Art/Design
- Photography
- Editing documents
- Oral History Recorder
- And more...

To unsubscribe to this newsletter please contact Allison Hedden at 815.423.2149 or us the link, <mailto:ahedden@fs.fed.us?subject=unsubscribe me please>



# National Public Lands Day

A National Environmental Education Foundation Program

**Saturday, September 27, 2008**

National Public Lands Day is the nation's largest hands-on volunteer effort to improve and enhance the public lands that Americans enjoy. Volunteers are invited to join the U.S. Forest Service and Midewin Tallgrass Prairie Alliance for a volunteer event at Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie. All ages of volunteers are welcome to participate. Children 16 years or younger must be accompanied by an adult or group chaperone.

## How to join the fun

**① RSVP and sign up for one of these projects:**

- ☀ Harvesting seed & planting prairie plants at River Road Seedbeds
- ☀ Planting native roses at Iron Bridge Trailhead
- ☀ Wooden trail bridge construction
- ☀ Stream Debris Removal

\*\* Space is limited for some projects. Pre-Registration is encouraged to join the activity of your preference.\*\*

**② Check in at 8:30am the morning of Sept. 27 at Midewin's Welcome Center**

*Great activities for FAMILIES, SCOUTS, STUDENTS, CORPORATE and CHURCH GROUPS, OUTDOOR ENTHUSIASTS of all ages!*

RSVP to Allison by September 21 to guarantee your **FREE LUNCH** 815-423-2149 or [ahedden@fs.fed.us](mailto:ahedden@fs.fed.us)

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30239 S. State Route 53, Wilmington IL 60481

[www.fs.fed.us/mntp](http://www.fs.fed.us/mntp)

*Pick a project and pitch in! "It's your land, lend a hand!"*