



Success Stories



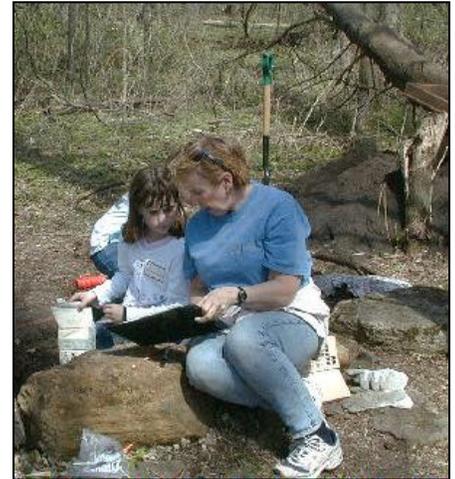
PIT Teams Up With Mighty Acorns on Midewin

Throughout the summer, the Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie is hosting a series of conservation education events centered on the rich history of the Midewin area and efforts to restore the land to its native habitat.

Passport in Time volunteers arrived in April from across the Midwest to investigate 19th Century farmsteads at the Midewin. In July, the Youth Conservation Corps agreed to clear thick vegetation, and the PIT volunteers will return in September to continue their work.

The Mighty Acorns Program—a land stewardship program for youth that emphasizes environmental conservation—piggybacked with this year’s PIT project. The Kelly Farmstead—vacated after the U.S. Army purchased the land in 1940—was selected for this year’s investigation. The farmstead is located in a heavily wooded area that will eventually be thinned out to make room for shade beds and the production of native prairie savanna plant seeds. The entire site must be mapped, recorded, and evaluated prior to its restoration.

An unusually dry spring offered an opportunity for the Mighty Acorns to work alongside the skilled PIT volunteers led by Prairie Archaeologist Mike Rizo and Forest Archaeologist Mary McCorvie of the Shawnee National Forest, which co-hosted the project.



PIT volunteers like Wiladene Yankee took the time to mentor and work with youth from the Mighty Acorns program.

Inside:

Mark Twain Fishing Derby

Wayne Battles Gypsy Moth

Look Out for Wild Parsnip!

Urban Connections Slithers In

Hoosier Firefighters Go West

Deam Wilderness Honored

Fire Training at Midewin

Fawn Rescue on the Hoosier

Usually at this time of year, the students pull non-native garlic mustard to prevent the spread of this invasive species at Midewin. Due to dry conditions, the plants were not yet sprouting, so the Mighty Acorns had an opportunity to tackle an unfamiliar project and assist the PIT volunteers in clearing overgrown vegetation to expose various features of the historical site.

The students also assisted in the test excavations and screened for artifacts. The volunteers acted as instructors and mentors while the children learned about archaeology and the need for preserving important historical sites.

An unexpected event during this year’s project occurred on the first day when a prescribed burn on state property adjacent to Midewin blew out of control. Strong winds redirected the fire onto Forest Service land where it quickly grew into a wildfire, forcing the evacuation of the PIT volunteers and Mighty Acorns. Although no one was in immediate danger, the fire burned 300 acres of grass-land within a mile of the project area before it was contained.

The project was rained out on the fourth day, and the Mighty Acorns went on to other endeavors. The wet weather offered the PIT volunteers an opportunity to explore the cultural heritage of the surrounding area. They explored notable historic sites such as the remains of the Joliet Iron Works and the Illinois and Michigan Canal, both of which were crucial to the local economy’s development during the mid-1800s.

National Historic Trust historian Dr. Dennis Cremin led a special tour of the Gaylord Building—a National Historic Trust Site on the I & M Canal once used for storage and as a brokerage house. This was followed by a visit to the Illinois State Museum Gallery at Lockport, where an exhibit of original Audubon prints illustrating Illinois bird life is currently on display.

All in all, the project was a huge success in spite of—and in part because of—the unanticipated ‘events’ that added both excitement and learning opportunities.



Mark Twain Hosts Young Anglers

“I’ve got one! I’ve got one!”

Those words echoed repetitively across the Bilderback Pond in Potosi City Park in Potosi on June 7 as kids of all ages celebrated National Fishing and Boating Week by participating in the annual “Kids’ Fishing Derby.”

A total of 130 people participated in the event—including 73 children between the ages of 5 and 13 years old. Not only did the kids catch dozens of bluegill, catfish and bass, but they also broke the record for most in attendance at this annual event sponsored by the Mark Twain National Forest since 1995.

Participants found themselves reeling in not only fish, but several door prizes, gifts and trophies provided for the event by local sponsors and Hooked on Fishing, International. Prizes were awarded for the biggest fish in each age category as well as the heaviest stringer of fish.

Even those having less luck fishing could compete for prizes in the casting contest. The successful day was possible through the work of several partners, including Missouri Department of Conservation and Potosi Wal-Mart, who provided prizes and gifts. The City of Potosi provided hot dogs, cookies and candy; Washington County Soil and Water Conservation District participated in planning and funded a Johnny on the Spot; Enhancements, Inc., provided trophies; and the Sunnen Boy Scout Camp helped with planning, providing trophies, and assisting with cooking the hot dogs.



Forest employees were on hand as youngsters reeled in their catch, like this nice-sized catfish.

Wayne Sorties Lay Siege to Gypsy Moth



Coalition aircraft attacked enemy Gypsy Moth positions in a series of raids June 23.

On June 23, the Wayne National Forest—in cooperation with the Ohio Department of Agriculture—used aerial spraying to apply gypsy moth pheromone flakes in the Hanging Rock area of the Forest. The airplane flew at low levels to ensure the pheromones reached the intended areas.

Work on an environmental assessment began last year when gypsy moths were found in the area. Treatment will slow the infestation and prevent the spread into surrounding areas. Approximately 1,700 acres of National Forest land throughout the United States is scheduled for treatment as part of the national “Slow The Spread” program.

Insects release natural pheromone chemicals to communicate with each other. In nature, gypsy moth females release pheromones when they are ready to mate, and the scent from the pheromones attracts the male moths. The intent of this aerial spraying project is to disrupt this process.

Very thin plastic flakes (1/32 x 3/32 inches) are impregnated with synthetic pheromones and spread over the area where the moths are found. These flakes slowly release the pheromone over a 2-3 month period. Because the air is filled with the pheromone, the male moths become disoriented and unable to find the females thus drastically reducing their reproduction rate. Field studies have shown this technique to be effective in managing low-density gypsy moth populations.

The products to be dropped from the airplane—Disrupt II and Gelva—do not pose a risk to humans or the environment. An environmental analysis for this project was completed, and a Decision was made to proceed with the project on April 10.



Hiawatha Raises Awareness of an Invasive Pest

Efforts are underway on the Hiawatha National Forest to halt the spread of an invasive species and better educate visitors to the potential risks of coming into contact with this noxious pest.

Wild parsnip is a tall, common weed on the Forest with clusters of yellow flowers atop its stem. It can cause reddened skin and painful blistering rashes when exposed to the plant or its juices. Most often found along roadsides, railroad tracks and other sunny locations, this particular species—*Pastinaca sativa*—has become well established throughout Michigan.

“It is problematic due to its ecologically invasive habitat as well as health concerns to humans,” said Jan Schultz, the Hiawatha’s Forest Plant Ecologist.

Wild parsnip has been designated as a noxious weed in more than 30 states. Increasing numbers of people are coming into contact with the wild parsnip due to its rapid spread into open habitats. Individuals who will be working, hiking, or involved in other activities in wild parsnip areas can reduce the risk of exposure by wearing long-sleeved shirts, gloves, and long pants.

Wild parsnip causes “phyto-photo-dermatitis” when the juice of the plant—from broken stems and leaves—touches the skin and is exposed to the ultra-violet light that is present throughout the summer whether it’s cloudy or sunny.

Within 24 to 48 hours, the affected area will first redden and in most cases be followed by blisters that can be painful for a couple of days. In many cases, the blisters will lead to brownish pigmentation that can last for years.

The Hiawatha continues the fight to contain this threat to Forest health, and raise the awareness of Forest visitors to the consequences of contact with this invasive pest.



Contact with wild parsnip can lead to painful redness and blistered skin.

Using Urban Connections to Build Bridges in the City



Jo Santiago brought her slithering friends along on visits to Boston-area schools as part of Urban Connections.

Some animals have the uncanny ability to stir the imagination. And for the students in the Massachusetts’ towns of Somerville, Roxbury and Dorchester, that’s exactly what happened when Monongahela National Forest employee Jo Santiago—along with the ever popular Roy Moose—introduced them to “Mr. Shanti”—a great red-tailed hawk—and numerous snakes on a whirlwind tour June 3-5.

Jo and Roy’s presentation on wildlife conservation was sponsored by State & Private Forestry Northeastern Area—Durham Field Area in New Hampshire, and the R9 Hispanic Program. Schools in underserved Boston neighborhoods were identified through Boston community partners working with the Eastern Region’s Urban Connections.

On June 5, the final presentation day, youth program leaders and students were invited to meet Jo and Roy, and stay for presentations on job opportunities with the Forest Service and other natural resource agencies.

Speakers came from the White Mountain National Forest, National Parks and Conservation Association (an advocacy group for National Parks), Massachusetts Department of Environmental Management, and Student Conservation Association.

Community groups included Eagle Eye Institute, Franklin Field-Franklin Park-Dorchester Healthy Boston, University of Massachusetts Extension 4-H, Youth Enrichment Services, and Chelsea Human Services.

This effort to work together with local communities was another important step towards building a foundation of trust and partnership with our urban residents.



It's 'Bugs For Lunch' on the Wayne NF



Jadon Redman was among the youth who took part in the Wayne's "Bugs For Lunch."

"Bugs for Lunch" was on the menu at Lake Vesuvius in a program presented June 21 to a group of children at the nature center by Wayne National Forest employee Constance Roberts.

The children—ages 3 to 12— spent two fun hours with Roberts learning about insects, what insects eat, and what eats insects. Various activities were used to teach how scientists group and name living organisms, the body parts of an insect, and what role insects played in the food chain.

The program, part of the nature center programming by Ohio University Southern Campus, was kicked off by an introduction to new words associated with insects. Each child (and adults too!) were assigned a new name for the program. Some of the names were **hexapod**, **antennae**, **molt**, and **compound eyes**; each name in bold letters on colorful paper, laminated and hung around the participants' neck by a ribbon.

Taxonomy—the science of classification of organisms—was introduced next by giving each child a handful of buttons and instructing them to look for similarities and differences. The buttons that looked alike were then placed in separate muffin pan holes. Once grouped, the children then learned to name the parts of an insect by playing with Cooties®.

Each child was then equipped with a butterfly net and a small container with a magnifying glass as a lid. After a safety message, they were released on the grassy lawn of the nature center to capture insects. Several organisms were captured and identified as insects by counting the body parts and legs. Other organisms like "pill bugs" and even an earthworm were captured, and compared and contrasted with the insects. All organisms were harmlessly released at the conclusion of this activity.

Building on the theme of the program, "the role of insects in the food chain," the "lunch" activities table was covered with a tablecloth, paper plates and cups illustrated with insects.

Each child drew pictures of what insects eat and what eat insects on their personal placemats. The finale was creating and eating marshmallow "insects." When Roberts summarized the program by reminding the children that they were told at the beginning that insects would be served for lunch, one little girl exclaimed, "I thought you meant REAL insects!" Roberts laughs saying the children and their parents had fun time learning about insects and creating and eating the marshmallow bugs for lunch.

Roberts serves on the planning team for the Wayne National Forest in the Nelsonville office.





Hoosier Firefighters Head West for Training

After a busy spring wildfire and prescribed fire season, three Hoosier National Forest firefighters headed west for the summer to gain valuable knowledge and experience.

Engine Captain Tyler VanOrmer from the Brownstown Ranger District left for Flagstaff, Arizona on April 22 to join the Mormon Lake Hotshots for a 90-day detail. This is the second summer Tyler has joined the Mormon Lake Hotshots for an extended period.

He joined them last April and spent 120 days in Region 3 on some of the largest fires in history.

Fire Engine Operator Sarah Arthur from the Tell City RD headed to California and the Shasta-Trinity NF on May 20, for a 120-day detail as an Engine Operator on a Type 3 Model 62-500 gallon fire engine.

Sarah Peachey, Fire Engine Operator on the Tell City RD, left June 1 for a 120-day detail to the Sawtooth NF in Idaho as a helicopter crew-member on the Sawtooth NF heli-rappell crew.

And James Sullivan, an Engine Captain on the Tell City RD, has now returned to the Hoosier but earlier spent the month of May detailed to the Lincoln NF in New Mexico as a Engine Captain on the Capitan District of the Forest.

The Hoosier NF is extremely proud of these employees for their contributions to the wildland fire community, and for their dedication for strengthening the Hoosier NF's fire program.



When not training or assisting fellow firefighters out west, Hoosier firefighters work out of the Indiana Interagency Coordination Center.

Hoosier NF Wilderness Honored With National Award



The prestigious national award is framed and hangs on the wall behind Hoosier receptionist Linda Edwards.

"It was definitely a proud moment," said Forest Supervisor Ken Day following his trip to Washington, D.C., to accept the national Wilderness Education Leadership Award on behalf of the Hoosier National Forest.

"We believe our wilderness program here on the Hoosier is truly exceptional," Day said. "We've put tremendous energy into it, so it's a real tribute that nationally, others recognize our success."

The Hoosier received one of five wilderness awards at a special ceremony in Washington in June. Outstanding work in several areas of wilderness management is recognized annually. The Hoosier was the only Eastern Region forest to be recognized this year.

The Hoosier received the award for outstanding planning and implementation of a comprehensive wilderness education program. Areas cited in the award were the numerous educational outreach and wilderness stewardship presentations at community events, Boy Scout and Girl Scout camps, and to Indiana University classes. The Hoosier also presented wilderness management programs at the National Trails Symposium, the World Wilderness Conference in South Africa, and the International Symposium on Society and Resource Management.

Day said though the 12,953 Charles C. Deam Wilderness is "one of the smallest wildernesses in the nation, it is still an excellent avenue to teach wilderness values."

"We've used urban outreach as an opportunity to take the wilderness to our visitors, and spark an interest in learning more about the forest," notes Day, who calls the Hoosier "a backyard forest," within an easy drive of several metropolitan areas.

Rod Fahl, Kyle Ramey, Eric Sandeno, Danna Strout, and Lester Wadzinski were employees named on the award.



One Final Use of the Midewin Farmhouse



Firefighters pull a fellow red hat to safety during a simulated rescue drill.

The farmhouse that once served as the main headquarters for the Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie will soon be demolished by contractors, but before it's razed two local men wanted an opportunity to use the vacant building as a training site for practicing firefighter rescue drills.

On June 5, Firefighter Mike Hermes and Fire Captain Todd Friddle of the Wilmington Fire Protection District were granted their request.

Shortly after 6:30 pm, a host of firefighters arrived at the Prairie in full gear. Midewin Engineer Bob Hommes, who helped coordinate the drill location, was on hand to monitor and assist the firefighters.

After a basic tour of the farmhouse, the 20 firefighters set up three drill stations designed specifically focused on confined-space rescue techniques.

Using a chainsaw, a hole was cut into the north side of the farmhouse balcony to be used in conjunction with the "Nance" drill, named for a firefighter who died in the line of duty. On the south-end of the main floor, a window was taken out and shelving units were to be set up to be used for the "Denver" drill. The last site was the basement, where firefighters set up tools such as hammers and axes for a drill that focused on breaching walls to per-

form daring rescues. Roughly every 45 minutes firefighters rotated to practice at other drill stations in the house.

Dan Kinsella—a 22-year veteran of the Illinois Fire Service Institute and Manhattan Firefighter—ran the Nance drill, which is a rescue technique named after Lt. John Nance. During this drill, rope is used to make a double loop knot known as a handcuff knot that is tightened around a victim's extremities to pull them through narrow opening.

"Nance was involved in a rescue when he fell one floor, about a 10- to 12-foot drop to the bottom of the place," Kinsella said. "His men sent him a ladder, going up he hit his head on a rafter and fell back down. Finally, to prevent from getting hurt themselves, the crew had to walk away leaving him behind, a couple guys tried to go back and find another way in but Nance died in the hole before they could figure out how to get him out."

At the "Denver" drill station, Captain Friddle guided firefighters through the steps of the drill. While wearing 80 pounds of gear, two firefighters climbed through the south window to rescue a victim firefighter, with only 28 inches of aisle space to maneuver around.

Captain Friddle said the drill was named after a member of the Denver fire department who died in a fire. During this drill, firefighters found that applying the techniques proved difficult, but they talked to each other and had an admirable level of communication that worked to help them in their practice rescues.

In the basement of the farmhouse, firefighters at drill station three were working vigorously to breach a hole in the concrete wall as a practice for rescuing a victim firefighter who is trapped in a room with no available entry point. Kinsella instructed this drill and tried to make the simulation as real as possible.

The firefighters were instructed to stay with their air packs and only take them off as a last resort. With dust flying in the darkness and adrenaline pumping through their blood, firefighters learned the importance of time and teamwork. After all the three-station practices, they pulled a ladder from Engine 2613 to begin their final drill of the night: ladder bails. During this fourth and final drill of the night, firefighters practiced coming out of the east side window on the second floor of the farmhouse head first and rotating their bodies around to slide down the ladder and land feet first.

"I definitely want to express my appreciation to Midewin for letting us come out and use the facility and to the men and women of the fire department, its all on them and I know they [firemen and women] got a lot out of that class," Captain Friddle said.

The location of the training was arranged with the help of Hommes, who is in charge of the farmhouse demolition. Hommes said that arraigning for the fire departments to use the facility was a team effort. Not only did he consult with Prairie Supervisor Logan Lee, but he also contacted Sharpie Construction, who will be tearing down the farmhouse in the near future.

"I believe that having the training night at Midewin helped us to foster a relationship with our community, and it gave the firefighters a chance to get the last bang out of the firehouse before its demolition," Hommes said.



‘Fawning’ Over Wildlife All in a Day’s Work at the Hoosier’s SO

“The family had just spotted the fawn along the highway running back and forth and were afraid it would get hit by another passing car,” recalled Janet Farless, a receptionist at the Hoosier National Forest’s Bedford office. She said the couple reported that they’d stopped and caught the little fawn before discovering the mother’s body nearby in the ditch.

“They knew it wouldn’t survive there long with its mother dead, so they loaded the fawn in the back of the truck with their son and brought him to our office,” Farless said.

The little fawn was kept in the conference room on that early June morning while Forest employees thanked the Good Samaritans and called Wild Care Rehabilitators, Inc. Wild Care specializes in tending to injured and orphaned wildlife, and preparing them for a return to their native habitat. Their responders soon came down and picked up the little critter.

They estimated the age of the fawn to be about three weeks.

“The rehab people said it was the ninth fawn they’d received this spring,” Farless reported. “It was a bit older than the others they had.”

She said they told her they’d clean up the fawn’s scratches, remove the ticks, and give the youngster a full physical checkup.

“They asked me a lot of questions,” she continued. “They wanted to know exactly where the fawn had been found because they try to release the animals back as close to the area they were found as possible.”

She said the fawn would be released at about three months old, while it still had its spots.

Farless—who has worked for the Hoosier National Forest under the SCSEP program for nearly a year—said having the fawn in the office for a couple hours was an interesting event.

“People come in with all kinds of nature-related items and questions,” she said. “I think it’s great they look to us as an office where they can come for answers and that we’ll know what to do.”



LEI Officer Lafayette Chamberlain held the orphaned fawn at the Hoosier Supervisor’s Office .



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