

General Information

Welcome to Midewin!

Today, about 13,880 acres of Midewin are open to the public, including over 34 miles of trails. About 22 miles of trail are for shared use by hikers, bicyclists, and equestrians. Over 12 miles of interim trails are for hiking only. Bicycles, horses and leashed dogs are restricted to designated trails at all times.



The Midewin Welcome Center is a great place to start your prairie experience. Here you will see exhibits designed to lay the groundwork for your exploration, whether on your own or participating in one of our escorted programs. Staff at the Welcome Center will be glad to answer questions and assist you with planning your visit. Be sure to check out a variety of gifts and outstanding literature in our bookstore, which is operated by the Midewin Interpretive Association, a private, not-for-profit partner of the U.S. Forest Service.



To register for a program or event, please call 815-423-6370 or email Midewin_RSVP@fs.fed.us

Tour Information

Program Duration

Unless otherwise noted, each program will last approximately 2 hours.

Reservations

Advanced registration is required. To register, please either email us at Midewin_RSVP@fs.fed.us or call 815-423-6370.

Cancellation

We will make every effort to offer all activities as scheduled. All tours, but primarily bike and horse tours may be cancelled or rescheduled due to inclement weather or poor site condition. We will contact you as soon as possible in the event of a cancellation. You may also call 815-423-6370 to leave a message after normal business hours, which are 8:00 - 4:30, Monday through Saturday.

Where to Meet

Unless otherwise noted, all programs begin and end at the Midewin Welcome Center located at 30239 S. State Route 53, Wilmington, Illinois - the building with the 3 flagpoles in front.

When to Arrive

All programs begin promptly at the published time. Please plan to arrive 15 minutes early to allow time for check-in.

What to Bring

Auto Caravan Tours

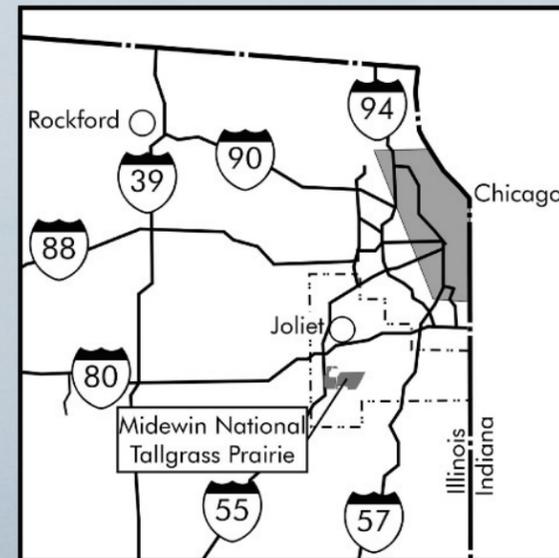
Participants in these activities will drive their own vehicles as part of a staff-led caravan. A number of stops are made along the way with short walks to points of interest. Running commentary can be heard over hand-held radios as the tour moves from point to point. Participants need not leave their vehicles if they do not wish to do so.

Bike and Horse Riders

Participants in these activities must provide their own bike or horse.

Safety

Public safety concerns prevent access to the interior of remaining arsenal buildings on tours.



Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie



Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie
30239 S. State Route 53
Wilmington, IL 60481
(815) 423-6370

<http://www.fs.usda.gov/midewin>



2015 Programs and Events

Events & Programs

Ghosts of the Ammunition Plant

March 28, July 11, August 15, September 5, and October 10, 10:00 AM

In 1940, the U.S. Government acquired over 36,000 acres of land to build an ammunition plant. Why here? And how was it built and operated? Learn about the deadly explosion during World War II. Tour the inside of one of the few remaining warehouses and an ammunition storage bunker. Tour lasts about 3 hours with travel over unimproved roads, including gravel and potholes.



Cemetery Tour

April 4, 10:00 AM

Join Midewin tour guides in an exploration of two historic cemeteries. Learn about the early farmers, merchants, soldiers, pioneers, and their family members.



Geology of Midewin

April 11, May 16, and October 3. 9:30 AM

15,000 years ago, a one-mile thick glacial ice sheet moved over Illinois leaving its mark on Midewin. Environments in prehistoric times included tropical swamplands and subtropical oceans. View the rocks, hills and plains of Midewin that still bear evidence of these vastly different environments. Tour lasts 2-1/2 hours and takes place on unimproved roads; gravel and potholes can be expected.



Spring into Hiking

April 18, 9:00 AM

Shake off the winter blues with a hike into a wooded area of Midewin. Discover spring flowers nestled into these hidden prairie woodlands. See these ephemeral flowers up close and learn about them.



Equestrian Tours

May 2, 10:00 AM

June 6, September 12, October 3, 9:00 AM

July 4, 8:30 AM

Join equestrian volunteers for an interpretive ride through portions of Midewin not yet open to the public. Learn about the history of the land and how it is being managed today. PLEASE NOTE: horse and rider will have to cross bridges and share the trail system with cattle. Participants must bring their own horses. All riders meet at South Arsenal and Chicago Roads.



Echoes of Liberty - 150th Anniversary Observance of the Lincoln Funeral Train

May 2, 7:30 PM - 9:00 PM

On the night of May 2nd/3rd, 1865, the train bearing Lincoln's body on its' journey to Springfield passed through what is now Midewin. Join us as we commemorate the 150th anniversary of this historic event. Listen to a brass band playing music of the era and meet local citizens who lined up along the tracks to pay their final respects.



Exploring Midewin by Auto

May 9, June 6, July 11, August 22, September 19, 10:30 AM

Explore Midewin by car caravan to view restored wetlands, prairie and observe wildlife. Find out why ecological restoration is so important, while experiencing some of Midewin's best examples of restored prairie. Learn how Midewin will change and what that will mean for wildlife and recreation. Visit one of the remaining ammunition bunkers for a glimpse into the past. This tour takes place on unimproved roads; expect potholes and gravel.



Midewin for Kids - Bullies in our Environment

May 16, 9:30 AM

Do you wonder why some plants and animals are bullies? Come learn the answers to your questions. This is an indoor/outdoor event, so wear long sleeves and pants, closed footwear and bring gloves if you have them. Child(ren) must be accompanied by an adult.



Memorial Day Tour

May 23, 1:00 PM

Celebrate Memorial Day Weekend on this tour as we honor our veterans and delve into the origins of Memorial Day. Learn about the lives of local soldiers and the conflicts in which they engaged as we visit local cemeteries on or near Midewin. Find out about the role the former Joliet Arsenal played in supporting their wartime efforts, as we stop and enter one of the old ammunition storage bunkers.



Birds of Midewin

June 6 and June 20, 8:00 AM - West Side

June 13 and June 27, 8:00 AM - East Side

After another long winter, the migratory birds have finally arrived! Join us for some of our most popular tours as we explore prairie, woodlands, wetlands, and other habitats of Midewin to see various species of birds. We will look for Grasshopper and Henslow's Sparrows, Red-tailed Hawks, Northern Harriers and numerous migrating birds. Learn about the Loggerhead Shrike and why it is known as the "Butcher Bird."



Twilight Bike Tour

June 13, July 11, August 22, 6:00 PM

Tour open and closed areas of Midewin by bicycle. Expect to see an abundance of wildlife which may include deer, turkey, grassland birds, and may be a coyote or two. Since at least part of the route will be on gravel surfaces, "fat" tires are recommended.



Midewin for Kids - Buzzing About the Prairie

June 17, Wednesday, 9:30 AM

It's National Pollinator Week, so please join us to discover why birds, bees, butterflies, and other insects are so important to all gardens, not just the prairie! Capture some pollinators as we use sweep nets, look at them through magnified containers and release them before helping to plant a pollinator garden. You can transfer your new-found knowledge and skills to your own garden!



Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie

Midewin for Kids - Prairie Detective

June 24, 10:00 AM

Come use your detecting skills. Go deep into the heart of the prairie. Use scientific techniques to discover secrets of this tallgrass prairie. Unearth what hides in the rarest ecosystem on earth, if you dare.



Welcome Home, Boys in Blue!

150th Anniversary

June 27, 11:00 AM

Midewin's Civil War Sesquicentennial events conclude this year on a celebratory note. The war to save the Union has come to an end and the local citizen soldiers are coming home. Join with friends and family as they gather on the prairie to welcome home their Boys in Blue and remember those who shall not be returning.



Evening on the Prairie

July 8, 6:00 PM

Find out what is blooming this time of year. Hear the wind rustle through prairie grass as the sun begins to set. Enjoy the scents only encountered on an evening stroll on the prairie.



Midewin for Kids - Kids Going Batty!

August 8, 10:00 AM

Have you been going a little batty this summer? Ready to explore the world of bats? Learn about the types of bats found in the local area and why they are a special part of the ecosystem. Touch and examine bat skeletons, bring home an awesome bat craft and a bat box for your yard (one per family).



Midewin for Kids - Can You Dig It?

August 29, 10:00 AM

People have lived on this land for thousands of years. How did the people of "prairie past" use the land to live and what can we learn from them? Join "Archaeologist Joe" to make maps, learn about the tools an archaeologist uses, and get out in the field to investigate a site from the 1800's. Do you like to dig in the dirt and solve mysteries? Maybe you're an archaeologist too!



Trick or Treat - Midewin Style!

October 18, 5:00 PM - 8:00 PM

Our Annual Halloween Event returns! Join us and discover Midewin's past, present and future as we meet and greet old friends and new. Drinks and treats will be provided at our campfire. Whether you are in costume or not, you won't want to miss one of our most popular events, so please register early. Meet at the Iron Bridge Trailhead. Guided tours depart the campfire ring every 30 minutes and last over an hour.



German Heritage Tour

October 31, 10:00 AM

The small rural cemeteries of Midewin attest to the many German speaking immigrants who came to this country in the 1800's to start a new life. Learn about the difficulties these early settlers overcame in their new land, and their patriotic zeal during the American Civil War.



MONTHLY SCHEDULE OF PROGRAMS, EVENTS & TOURS

March:	28: Ghosts of the Ammunition Plant
April:	4: Cemetery Tour 11: Geology of Midewin 18: Spring Into Hiking
May:	2: Equestrian Tour Lincoln's Funeral Train 9: Exploring Midewin by Auto 16: Geology of Midewin Bullies in Our Environment 23: Memorial Day Tour
June:	6: Bird Tour - West Side Equestrian Tour Exploring Midewin by Auto 13: Bird Tour - East Side Twilight Bike Tour 17: Buzzin' About the Prairie 20: Bird Tour - West Side 24: Prairie Detectives 27: Bird Tour East Side Welcome Home, Boys in Blue!
July:	4: Equestrian Tour 8: Evening on the Prairie 11: Ghosts of the Ammunition Plant Exploring Midewin by Auto Twilight Bike Tour
August:	8: Kids Going Batty! 15: Ghosts of the Ammunition Plant 22: Exploring Midewin by Auto 29: Can You Dig It?
September:	5: Ghosts of the Ammunition Plant 12: Equestrian Tour 19: Exploring Midewin by Auto
October:	3: Equestrian Tour Geology of Midewin 10: Ghosts of the Ammunition Plant 24: Trick or Treat Bunker Style 31: German Heritage Tour

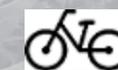
SYMBOL KEY



Birding



Trail Ride



Bicycling



Car Caravan



Geology



Midewin for Kids
Attend 3 and get a prize



Hiking



History/Heritage