



United States Department of Agriculture

Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie Lecture Series 2017

30239 S. State Route 53, Wilmington, Illinois 60481

Please join us for the Midewin Lecture Series this winter. Lectures take place at The Midewin Welcome Center on Thursday evenings at 7:00 PM. Doors open to the public at 6:30pm. Please reserve your spot by calling 815-423-6370 or by emailing Midewin_RSVP@fs.fed.us.

Thursday, January 12, 2017 ***“The Whos, Whats, Wheres and Whys of the Midewin Bison Herd”***

Kelly Gutknecht, Range Management Specialist, The Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie

In October 2015, a small herd of bison was introduced at Midewin as a 20-year experiment in prairie restoration. The herd is a conservation herd, and their grazing pattern is helping to create a more diverse ecosystem for prairie plants, birds and other wildlife as volunteers, staff and other partners work together to restore what was once native Illinois prairie. The long-term goal, which will take decades, is to hopefully one day be able to show people what the Illinois prairies might have looked like hundreds and thousands of years ago. What is the history behind the introduction of the Midewin bison herd? Where did they come from? What was the main purpose in bringing the bison to Midewin and what changes have been noted to date? Gutknecht will provide an update on the progress of using the herd as a restoration tool.

Thursday, January 26, 2017 ***“Safer Passages for Migratory Birds”***

Annette Prince, Director, Chicago Bird Collision Monitors

It is estimated that more than a billion migratory birds die in North America each year from collisions with buildings. From residential structures to high-rise buildings, collision deaths are ranked as one of the greatest threats to bird populations after habitat loss. Chicago Bird Collision Monitors (CBCM) is a conservation project working since 2003 to address the problems that lights and building designs pose to birds that pass through urban areas. Volunteers recover thousands of dead and injured birds in the Chicago region from 170 species each spring and fall. The project raises awareness, educates and advocates for bird safety measures. Learn about efforts and methods to protect migratory species from the hazards of lights and glass at our homes and in our communities.

Thursday, February 9, 2017 ***“Freshwater Ecosystems: Streaming with Life”***

Scott Meister, Ecologist, The Forest Preserve District of DuPage County

Healthy lakes, ponds, rivers and streams are vital to our own well-being. This presentation will focus on the importance of our aquatic ecosystems, explain how humans have altered these systems, provide examples of local efforts to clean and restore rivers and streams, and discuss how residents can become involved.

Thursday, February 23, 2017 "Insects, What good are they?"

Jim Louderman, Collections Assistant in Insect Collections, The Field Museum

Learn how Midewin's mission fits in with these local, regional and global conservation projects. This is a hands-on experience to learn about the physiology and behavior of insects and their importance to humans and the environment. Louderman will share and discuss preserved and live specimens from The Field Museum's collection of insects taken from localities in the Midwest and from around the world. Participants will learn about the results of some local conservation projects and bio-blitzes. A BioBlitz is an event that focuses on finding and identifying as many species as possible in a specific area over a short period of time.

Thursday, March 9, 2017 "Prehistory on the Prairie: Archaeological Explorations at The Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie"

Mark Schurr, Professor of Anthropology University of Notre Dame and Maddie McLeester, Archeologist, University of Chicago

In August 2016, archaeologists and Midewin volunteers conducted archaeological investigations at the Middle Grant Creek site located within Midewin. The dig uncovered an interesting array of late prehistoric artifacts along with preserved plant and animal remains. Discover what was uncovered and learn about plans for more work at the site to reveal more about life on the prairie around A.D. 1600. Hear about how some of the latest technology was used to identify the best places to dig.

Thursday, March 23, 2017 "Window on an Ancient World: The Milton Sanderson Dominican Amber Collection"

Dr. Sam Heads, Curator of Paleontology, University of Illinois, Champaign

Amber has been admired by people since antiquity. Today, we know that amber is the fossilized resin of ancient trees, yet its allure is still as strong and it continues to instill a sense of wonder. The plants and animals preserved within the amber provides a unique window into the distant past. The Milton Sanderson collection of Dominican amber, housed at the Illinois Natural History Survey, University of Illinois, is one of the oldest, largest, and most significant collections of Dominican amber in the world. In this talk, paleontologist Dr. Sam Heads, tells the story of its discovery and rediscovery, and outlines the historic and scientific significance of this uniquely important collection.

Thursday, April 6, 2017 "Illinois Peregrines - From Decline to Recovery"

Mary Hennen, Director-Chicago Peregrine Program, Bird Division, The Field Museum

Once on the Endangered Species List and extirpated in Illinois from 1951 until 1986, the Peregrine Falcon population is now past historic levels. Mary's presentation will take us through the recovery of the Peregrines in Illinois. As the majority of the population now lives in an urban habitat, learn what it means to live in close proximity to this remarkable bird.