



12.11.09

Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie

Winter Welcome Center Hours 8 am-4:30 pm (Mon-Fri)

30239 South State Route 53

Wilmington, IL 60481

Phone: 815-423-6370

<http://www.fs.fed.us/mntp>

Midewin Meadowlark Messenger December 2009

Here's what the bird is bringin'

Click title or scroll through

- ☆ [Calendar of Volunteer Workdays and Events for Dec-Jan](#)
- ☆ [Reminiscing the Last Couple Months with the Volunteer Staff](#)
- ☆ [Have You Ever Thought You Would Make a Great Teacher?](#)
- ☆ [Free Herbicide Training & Testing Workshop 2010](#)
- ☆ [2009 Midewin Volunteer Awardees](#)
- ☆ [Just a Few Year End Highlights](#)

☆ Calendar of Volunteer Workdays/ Events for Dec-Jan

Date and Day	Time	Meeting Location	Activities
9 December 2009 Wednesday	10:00 am – 3:00pm	Midewin SO (Horticulture Bldg)	Cleaning seed and planting seed in flats.
9 January 2010 Saturday	9:00am – 2:30pm	Midewin SO (Horticulture Bldg)	Seed cleaning, mixing or planting (in flats).
14 January 2010 Thursday	10:00am – 2:00pm	Midewin SO (Horticulture Bldg)	Brush clearing; in extreme weather conditions, this workday will be canceled. PLEASE CALL AHEAD.
14 January 2010 Thursday	9:30 am – 11:30am	Midewin SO Welcome Center	Training Workshop: Mighty Acorns Youth Education Instructors, New Volunteers Welcome: Details below.
21 January 2010 Thursday	7:00pm	Midewin SO Welcome Center	Lecture Series #1: Sears Kit Homes in Will County <i>presented by Britany Block</i>
23 January 2010 Saturday	9:00am – 2:30pm	Midewin SO (Horticulture Bldg)	Seed cleaning, mixing or planting (in flats).
28 January 2010 Thursday	10:00am – 2:00pm	Midewin SO (Horticulture Bldg)	Brush clearing; in extreme weather conditions, this workday will be canceled. PLEASE CALL AHEAD.

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.

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.

Weekday Workdays Move to Thursdays!

Because of conflicts, we've moved the weekday workdays to Thursdays. Start and finish time vary with time of year and activities. There will be only one activity planned for each workday, but winter activities will include: cutting and treating invasive brush (only volunteers with pesticide license can apply herbicide); removing fences, and cleaning/planting seed (indoors). Because outdoor workdays may be cancelled because of inclement weather, PLEASE CALL AHEAD!



[Click this icon for Driving Directions](#)

☆ **Reminiscing the Last Couple Months with the Volunteer Staff**

Volunteers helped staff keep up with fall harvest from Midewin's seed production gardens and wild populations.



Volunteer Mighty Acorn Instructor, Carol Ference teaches students to harvest Sullivant's Coneflower



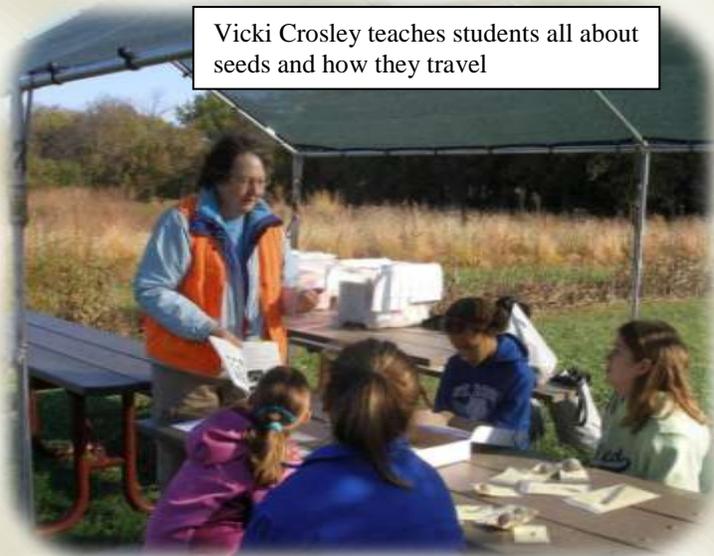
It's never too early to teach stewardship of the land



One of the largest seed harvesting workdays is the annual National Public Lands Day, Sept 26.



Volunteers teach Mighty Acorn students nature activities and stewardship year round.



Vicki Crosley teaches students all about seeds and how they travel



John Baratka collects lawn bags full of coneflower seeds harvested by students



Trish DeLucas shows students that as quantity and quality of land decrease there is not enough room for wildlife



Don Clavey goes over the instructions for the nature scavenger hunt

Midewin's RiverWatch monitors have gone through additional training to do some more comprehensive stream monitoring every two weeks.

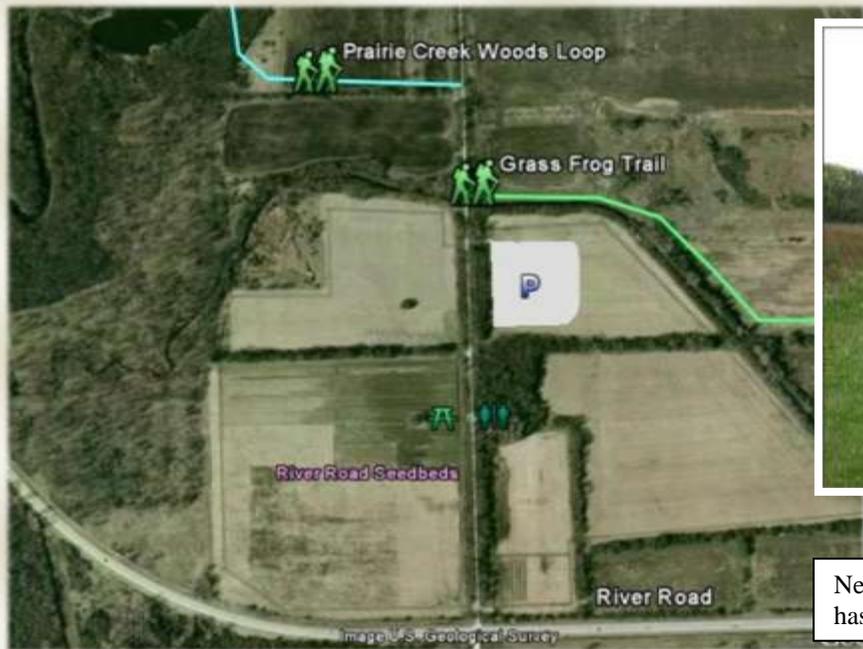


Volunteers have cleaned up some headstones in Starr's Grove Cemetery



Pam Hunte made sure that names will continue to be legible

Volunteer Marcia Baumgartner led a great workday on National Public Lands Day



New Grass Frog Trail has been started



The American Indian Center of Chicago provided many helping hands to transfer tender baby plants to winter shelter.



☆ Have You Ever Thought You Would Make a Great Teacher?

Midwin is always looking for volunteer instructors for The Mighty Acorns Youth Program. This is your chance to take on the role of a teacher, but for only 2.5 hours a day as often as you choose each season. This program provides children with knowledge and activities that will encourage them to connect with nature. Students from local schools participate in activities based on education, restoration, exploration, and stewardship. These activities are led by volunteer instructors that truly see the value in passing it on. This is a fantastic way to get generations together to share stories and learn from each other. We must keep the children excited about and invested in nature.



There is no experience necessary to be an instructor because we provide a training workshop for new volunteers. Volunteers are encouraged to shadow the trained volunteers until they feel more comfortable to lead.

The winter training session is scheduled for Thursday, January 14 at 9:30am. Meet at the Welcome Center at the Midwin headquarters. If you are not available, there are other ways to get experience with the Mighty Acorns program so please inquire. Shifts are on weekdays and you may sign up for as many shifts you wish. For more

information or to RSVP, please contact Allison Hedden at 815.423.2149 or email ahedden@fs.fed.us.

☆ Free Herbicide Training & Testing Workshop 2010

Thursday, February 11, 8:00 am-4:00 pm

Organized by The Nature Conservancy and Co-sponsored by the Brookfield Zoo

Interested in becoming certified and licensed to use herbicides on public lands? All volunteers are invited to attend this annual one-day clinic that includes General Standards training (for Operator's license) in the morning and (Operator's and Applicator's license) testing in the afternoon.

-To be certified as an **Operator** (a person who uses herbicides and who is "sponsored" by a licensed Applicator), volunteers must pass the *General Standards* test.

-To be certified as an **Applicator** (the person in an organization who has responsibility for all Operators licensed under him/her with regard to the use of herbicides), volunteers must pass both the *General Standards* test and one or more Category exam. Those category exams most appropriate to stewardship work are listed here; choose the one you think is the most applicable to the herbicide application you will be doing:

Right-of-way pest control: chemical weed control on noncrop sites such as parking lots, along roads, in access rights-of-way, and in fence lines. [This is the license that most volunteers acquire.]

Aquatic pest control: herbicide use for weed control in standing or running water.

Please bring a photo ID and calculator (please note: PDA's and Palm Pilots are not allowed) for the testing session. The clinic is scheduled for Thursday, February 11 from 8:00 am - 4:00 pm. Sign-in registration starts at 8:00 am. The training will run from 8:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. (lunch on your own); the testing will run from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. The workshop is located at the Brookfield Zoo in the Discovery Center. **Please register with Karen Tharp, VSN Coordinator, by phone at 866-VSN-LINE (876-5463) or email at ktharp@tnc.org by Wednesday, February 3, 2010.**

☆ Free Herbicide Training & Testing continued...

When registering, please relay the following information: your name and mailing address, phone number, email (if available) your landowner/sponsoring agency and/or volunteer site, your volunteer title (i.e. Steward, Co-Steward, volunteer, etc.), what test(s) you are taking (if just operator, what is the name of the person with the applicator license you will be working under), and if you are planning on attending the morning training session or just the test in the afternoon.

The training will only be an overview of "General Standards", therefore, we recommend that you purchase and review the training materials **BEFORE** the workshop.

If you are testing to apply herbicide on Midewin specifically, we will provide you the required study materials.

Otherwise:

Study materials are available by phone, fax, or mail order. Call 1-800-644-2123 for phone orders. Fax your order to 217-244-3469. To order by mail, write to the University of Illinois, PAT Program, 1201 S Dorner Dr., Urbana, IL. 61801. Specify when ordering which study materials you would like (i.e., for the General Standards exam and/or for one of the Category tests). Allow 1-2 weeks for delivery.

☆ 2009 Midewin Volunteer Awardees

The Volunteer Recognition Banquet is a way to celebrate and reminisce over yearly accomplishments specifically on account of our tremendous volunteer staff. I must say I am also amused to see the volunteer staff without their dirty jeans, gloves and bandanas. The night consisted of a silent auction, dinner, drinks, and presentations for 130 guests. We are grateful to ExxonMobile because a banquet of this fashion would not be possible without their annual sponsorship. Thank you also to the Midewin Alliance for hosting and much of the coordination.

The US Forest Service staff makes challenging decisions each year to narrow down volunteer awardees in each department. On November 7, we confidently presented 25 beautiful photo tiles (examples below) to volunteers for their exceptional efforts at Midewin during 2009. Please view photos of these awardees on the Midewin website.

<http://www.fs.fed.us/mntp/volunteers/2009Banquet.pdf>

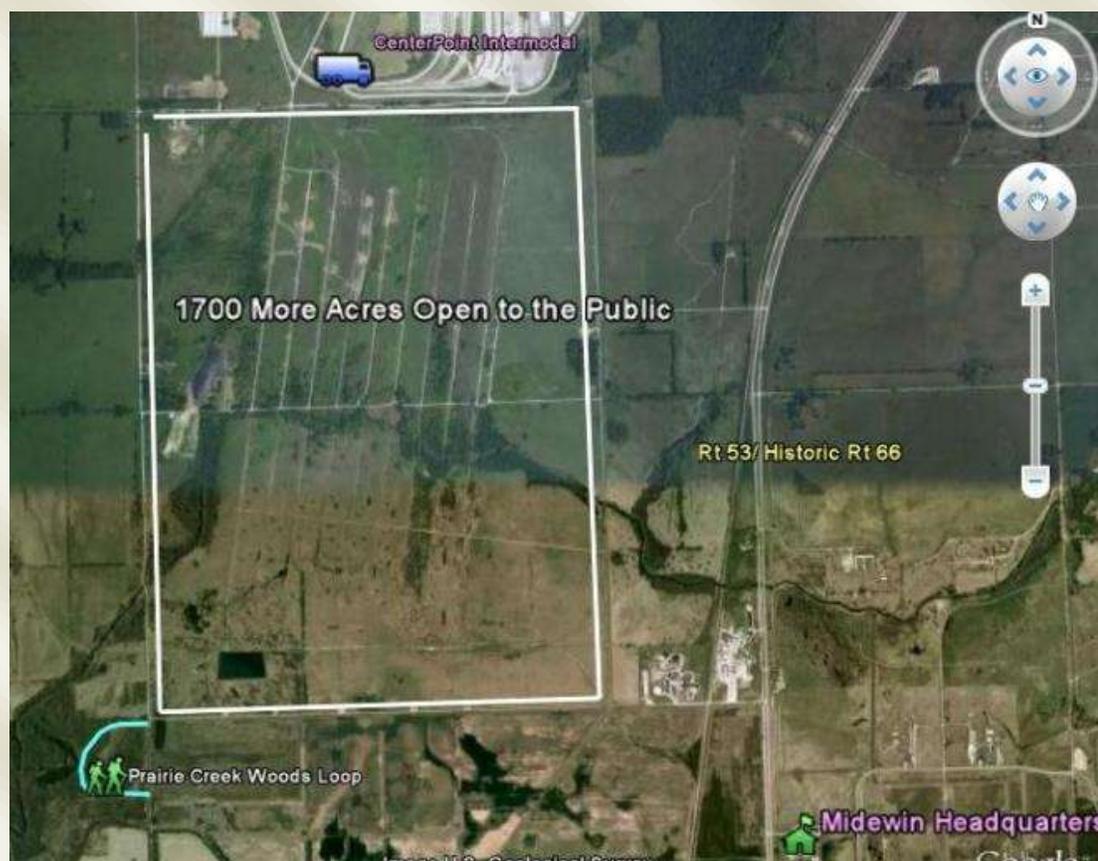


☆ Just a Few Year End Highlights

The following accomplishments have been made this year with the help of volunteers, staff, and contractors.

- An additional 120 acres have been seeded
- More than 600 pounds of native seed harvested
- Over 60,000 native plugs planted
- Invasive plants have treated in some fashion on 6000 acres
- 1080 acres have been burned despite the very wet season
- 3 miles of railroads and 1.5 miles of roads have been removed
- 8 new interpretive signs for trails and trailheads have been funded by Donnelly Foundation
- About 1700 acres have been opened to the public (See below)
- The Grass Frog Trail has been started
- The winning concept from the design firm Wheeler Kearns has been selected for a new Prairie Learning Center
- 3 bridges and an overlook have been built to enhance trails
- Volunteers contributed over 8600 hours of service (that's 4.0 full time staff)
- Midewin's Volunteer Program received Forest Service National Recognition.

Well Done Everyone!



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

Ecological Monitoring

Cemetery maintenance

Invasive control

Research

Landscaping

Office Assistant

Art/Design

Photography

Editing documents

Oral History Recorder

And more...



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