



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.usda.gov/midewin>

Midewin Meadowlark Messenger December 2011

Here's what the bird is bringin'

- ☆ [Calendar of Volunteer Workdays and Events for December](#)
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☆ Calendar of Workdays/ Events for December

Tours/presentations

Volunteer workdays

Training workshops

Special Events



Children are always welcome, but these are more appropriate activities

Date and Day	Time	Meeting Location	Activity
3 December Saturday 	9:00 am – 2:30pm	Midewin SO (Horticulture Bldg)	Seed cleaning or planting
5 December Monday	10:00 am -2:00pm	Midewin SO Welcome Center	Mighty Acorns Training for youth group instructors. <i>New Volunteers Welcome!</i>
8 December Thursday	9:00 am - 12:30pm	Midewin SO (Horticulture Bldg)	Brush control, or cleaning seed and planting seed in flats
14 January 2012 Saturday			Details not determined yet

Half days are optional for certain workdays, please call and ask.

For more information about the events listed or **to RSVP** contact Gemma Guenther, Assistant Volunteer Coordinator at 815-423-2148 or gguenther@fs.fed.us.

Knowing how many volunteers or visitors will attend an event allows Midewin staff to better organize the event, and we can inform you of any Changes or Cancellations. Midewin will provide tools, safety gear, and water. Please bring your own lunch. Children are welcome, but must be accompanied and supervised by a parent, guardian. Youth groups must come with chaperones. Please do not bring pets to workdays.

[Click for Directions:
Supervisors Office \(SO\)
and River Road Seedbeds](#)

☆ New Midewin Alliance website

<https://sites.google.com/site/midewinalliance/>

☆ Reminiscing with the Volunteer Staff: Fall Activities



We rely on the volunteer staff to keep up with the annual seed harvest at Midewin, especially in the fall season.

Thanks to our core volunteers and community groups for helping us collect hundreds of pounds of seeds including nodding onion, white prairie-clover, purple prairie-clover, pale purple coneflower, downy sunflower, stiff sunflower, oxeye sunflower, wild bergamot, wild quinine, foxglove beardtongue, yellow coneflower, sweet coneflower, compass plant, prairie dock, culver's root any many more!



These groups were determined to work rain or shine. It inspired me to capture the diversity of rain boots that day.

Well Done to Joliet Job Corps (below) and the Prairie School of DuPage (left)!



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☆ Reminiscing continued....



Luckily there was no shortage of volunteer help on National Public Lands Day either. We put over 90 volunteers to work on 6 different projects including trail work, sandbagging and seed harvest. Thanks to Lewis University for providing nearly 1/3 of our work force!



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National Day of Service started off very foggy, but that didn't discourage 25 volunteers from showing up at Midewin ready to work. The fog revealed all the fascinating spider web designs and that orange jelly fungus you can only see when things are moist. Volunteers planted about 850 plants including dense blazing star, mountain mint, wild bergamot and wild strawberry. We also harvested seeds of canada wild rye, false sunflower, cream wild indigo and prairie clovers. Good Times!



Because of our volunteer educators (below), Midewin is able to host about 900 students- 3 times a year from local elementary schools to learn nature activities and provide helping hands. We are looking for more lead educators, so we encourage you to watch a few sessions without any commitment. This fall, the kids harvested seed which they will come back and plant in trays in the winter. They also learned many ways seeds travel around and practiced those ways via relay race. The kids really express their bravery while collecting insects, including their favorite...the praying mantis!



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☆ **2011 Volunteer Awards**



Education and Interpretation Awardees (L to R), Trish DeLucas, Jack McNamara, Don Clavey, Lee Witkowski and John Baxter
Trish, Jack, Don and Lee make unforgettable impacts on the Mighty Acorns students with their enthusiasm and leadership. Also Lee and John are here in a moments notice for many bird watching tours



Ecological Monitoring Awardees (L to R), Penny Vanderhyden, Carol Smith and Christine Riley
Penny and Carol are two of Midewin's most valued and dedicated butterfly monitors. Christine is a very familiar face around here because of her many hours with monitoring Plants of Concern and restoration sites. She has a tireless craving for knowledge.



Ecological Monitoring Awardees (L to R), Mike Rzepka, Larry Lottino and Jim Pustz
These three have been monitoring stream health, including aquatic insects at Midewin for over a decade for the Riverwatch program.



Restoration Awardees John Field and Mary Lou Jordan
Mary Lou loves her weekly responsibilities as a horticulture assistant. John rarely misses a workday. They both make a huge difference!!



Julie Kastel received the Extraordinary Effort award for her broad impacts within butterfly and frog monitoring, youth education, and as a very valued ambassador



Eric Ulaszek received a staff award for being an Extraordinary Leader. He is a very popular workday leader because of his generosity of knowledge, kindness and dedication. He is very grateful for the volunteer staff.

☆ A Shared Vision for Restoration at Midewin

Recently the National Forest Foundation has been working with Midewin staff and partners to develop a shared vision for prairie restoration at Midewin over the short and long term.

This includes topics like how much does it cost and what's the timeline for demolition of dilapidated infrastructure, reintroducing or retaining several hundred prairie species, invasive removal, wetland and stream restoration, developing all trails and installing a tram and making sure natural processes continue such as prescribed fire and grazing. And yes, Bison grazing is being discussed. So far this only means that we may have an experimental herd of 75 bison or so within the next couple of years.

The link below leads to the complete pamphlet for a closer look at the vision.

Table of contents include:

- Intro
- Conservation Vision
- From Vision to Action
- Overarching Strategy (Reconnecting, Removing, Restoring)
- Cost Projections
- Project Timeline and Sequence
- Closing Thoughts

[Link to Shared Vision Pamphlet](#)

[Link to Midewin Video](#)

☆ Mighty Acorns: Youth Education Dates

We invite you to observe several Mighty Acorn sessions if you think you may be a good fit as an activity instructor. The times below include 1 hour for set-up and 1 hour for clean-up; the students are typically here about 2 hours. Please RSVP to Gemma at 815.423.2148 or gguenther@fs.fed.us

DATE	TIME	SCHOOL	# OF STUDENTS	Meeting Location
December 5	9:00- 3:00	Mighty Acorns Training for volunteer instructors		All sessions meet at Midewin's Welcome Center
December 9	9:00- 1:00	Hufford	65 kids	
December 12	11:00- 2:45	Gompers	75 kids	
December 14	11:00- 2:45	Gompers	85 kids	
December 19	11:00- 2:45	Gompers	85 kids	
December 21	11:00- 2:45	Gompers	50 kids (bilingual)	
January 23	11:15- 3:15	Stevens	58 kids	
January 24	8:30- 12:30	St. Rose	12 kids	
January 27	9:00- 12:45	Hadley	100 kids	
January 30	9:00- 12:45	Hadley	100 kids	
January 31	11:15- 3:15	Stevens	58 kids	
February 1	9:00- 12:45	Hadley	100 kids	
February 3	9:00- 12:45	Hadley	100 kids	

Thanks for all the hard work this fall.

I hope to see you soon at upcoming events.

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