



4.17.2012

Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie

Welcome Center Hours 8 am-4:30 pm (**Monday-Saturday**)

30239 South State Route 53

Wilmington, IL 60481

Phone: 815-423-6370

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

Midewin Meadowlark Messenger April-May 2012

Here's what the bird is bringin'

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☆ Reminiscing with the Volunteer Staff: Winter



Our volunteer construction crew made good use of our new hot chocolate thermos on a couple of windy November days. You can see this new pedestrian gate along the Blodgett Marsh Trail on Midewin's west side. It was designed by Jerry Heinrich (not shown), the Midewin Alliance president. It is a pedestrian walk through gate consisting of a sliding gate to ensure that the gate can never be left partially open. This assures us that our cattle and calves cannot wander into a different field.



This didn't quite feel like the traditional winter brushcutting workday without the snow. Nonetheless the invasives must go!!



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☆ Reminiscing continued.....

On upland prairie restorations the seasonal crew is able to use equipment attached to all terrain vehicles to broadcast native seed. But, on wet restoration areas or uneven terrain, volunteers can disperse native seed mixtures by hand or by using these seed slingers.



Not all seed gets broadcasted directly on Midewin's restoration areas. Hundreds of plugs get planted by the Mighty Acorn youth volunteers (above, right). These plugs will grow for a couple of years until they form a strong root system that will increase their success on the prairie.

(above) Diane Kurtz, volunteer educator, demonstrating the very popular method of removing fluff from milkweed seeds. Just light it on fire!

☆ Join the Plants of Concern (POC) Team

Team POC is making a difference for endangered and threatened native plants all over NE Illinois, SE Wisconsin, NW Indiana by monitoring their populations that helps land managers adapt their management techniques. Plants of Concern is coordinated through the Chicago Botanic Garden by Susanne Masi.

Read this article and decide for yourself if this opportunity fits your conservation interests.



http://www.fs.fed.us/wildflowers/rareplants/conservation/success/midewin_plants_of_concern.shtml

Contact Susanne Masi at smasi@chicagobotanic.org for more info or to get on the email list for 2012 monitoring dates.

☆ Volunteer Spotlight: Julie Kastel

Environmental Educator, Frog and Butterfly Monitor

Written by Gemma Guenther, Asst. Volunteer Coordinator

As the world becomes more urban, there are fewer children who have access to open space and recreational opportunities. This, coupled with our culture's dependence on technology, leaves concerned nature lovers struggling to find a cure for what author Richard Louv coined "nature-deficit disorder." As youth spend more time inside and plugged in, environmental educators are answering the call to reverse the trend.

Midewin volunteer Julie Kastel sees things a little differently. She grew up in the heart of Chicago with a "postage-stamp" backyard. Now she is part of a team that brings nature into the lives of over 1,000 elementary school students each year.

Her favorite activity is the fall insect hunt. "There are kids who have never caught one, never touched one... They run up with their jar and they open it up and they touch a woolly bear caterpillar for the first time."

Like many nature lovers, Julie spent time outdoors at a young age. Although she lived in a crowded urban neighborhood, her family's appreciation for nature became a major influence in adulthood. Julie says that her parents, grandmother and aunt taught her to see the smaller things in life. "We would look at a spider web or the ant or the bird. They paid more attention to the yard than the inside. My parents saw Chicago as being valuable."

Julie joined Midewin's team in 2008 when she began as a butterfly monitor. After moving to Wilmington, she drove by the prairie and was intrigued. "I thought I would love to be a part of that one day." In the years since she started, her easygoing enthusiasm has allowed this former city girl to connect to diverse audiences from underserved Chicago youth with El Valor to kids growing up on the outskirts of northeastern Illinois' largest open area. With younger generations spending less time outdoors than their predecessors, volunteers like Julie provide a vital educational experience not only to students, but to their teachers and parents.

Her efforts have not gone unnoticed. In 2011, she was given an Environmental Education/Interpretation award at the volunteer recognition banquet. Her real reward comes in teaching the next generation to appreciate the outdoors so that they will want to protect it. It's a mammoth task, but she is planting the seeds so that these children will take her role one day. She knows she has made an impact when she runs into past students at the grocery store, and they tell her they remember the fun they had (and lessons they learned) in the great outdoors.

"I want to be part of something bigger than that postage size backyard. It's a bigger world out there."

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☆ Calendar of Workdays/ Events for April-June

Tours and Presentations	Volunteer Workdays	Training Workshops	Special Events	 Children are always welcome, but these activities are more appropriate
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Date	Time	Meeting Location	Activity
April 16- May 17	4:00am- 1:00pm	Midwin Open Areas	TURKEY HUNTING SEASON East side hunting on even calendar days. West side hunting on odd calendar days. (in reference to Route 53)
21 April Saturday 	9:00 am – 2:30pm	Midwin SO (Horticulture Bldg)	EARTH DAY CELEBRATION: Garlic Mustard pulling in Bluebell Woods. Only 5 openings left.
21 April Saturday	10:00 am – 1:00pm	Midwin SO (Welcome Center)	Public Tour: Ghosts of the Ammunitions Plant Car caravan led by volunteer interpreters Marcia Baumgartner and Lorin Schab.
21 April Saturday	2:30 pm – 4:30 pm	Midwin SO (Welcome Center)	War Plants to Prairie Plants Tour Training – New interpreters welcome!
26 April Thursday	9:00 am – 3:00 pm	Midwin SO (Horticulture Bldg)	**General Restoration Workday
29 April Sunday	Noon – 2:00pm	Midwin SO (Welcome Center)	Cemetery Tours Training – New interpreters welcome!
1 May Tuesday	6:30pm	Midwin SO Welcome Center	Bird Monitoring Training- New monitors welcome!
3 May Thursday	9:00 am – 3:00 pm	Midwin SO (Horticulture Bldg)	**General Restoration Workday
5 May Saturday	10:00 am – Noon	South Arsenal & Chicago Roads	Public Tour: Midwin by Horse (South Side) Horseback ride led by volunteer interpreters Mike & Trish DeLucas and Donna & Greg Malanca. Participants must bring their own horses.
16 May Wednesday	9:00 am – 3:00 pm	River Road Seedbeds	Seedbed Management: Planting & Weeding
19 May Saturday	10:00 am – 3:00 pm	Midwin SO (Horticulture Bldg)	Midwin Alliance Plant Sale
19 May Saturday	10:00 am – 4:00 pm	Konow Farm (Homer Glen)	Village of Homer Glen Earth Day/Arbor Day Come and visit the Midwin booth!
24 May Thursday	9:00 am – 3:00 pm	Midwin SO (Horticulture Bldg)	**General Restoration Workday
26 May Saturday 	9:00 am – 3:00 pm	River Road Seedbeds	Planting at River Road
26 May Saturday	10:00 am – Noon	Midwin SO (Welcome Center)	Public Tour: Lincoln's Boys in Blue Car caravan led by volunteer interpreters Marcia Baumgartner and Lorin Schab.
26 May Saturday 	10:00am – Noon	Midwin SO (Welcome Center)	Midwin for Kids: Wonders of Water Journey for Brownies
26 May Saturday	6:00 pm – 8:00 pm	Midwin SO (Welcome Center)	Bike Tour Training – New interpreters welcome! Participants must bring their own bikes (fat/hybrid tires recommended).
28 May Monday	8:00 am – 4:30 pm	Midwin SO (Welcome Center)	(Welcome Center CLOSED) MEMORIAL DAY HOLIDAY
31 May Thursday	9:00 am – 3:00 pm	Midwin SO (Horticulture Bldg)	**General Restoration Workday
2 June Saturday	8:00 am – 10:00 am	Midwin SO (Welcome Center)	Public Tour: Birds of Midwin Car caravan led by volunteer interpreters John Baxter and Lee Witkowski.
2 June Saturday	8:30 am – 10:30 am	South Arsenal & Chicago Roads	Public Tour: Midwin by Horse (South Side) Horseback ride led by volunteer interpreters Mike & Trish DeLucas and Donna & Greg Malanca. Participants must bring their own horses.
2 June Saturday	10:00 am – 1:00 pm	Midwin SO (Welcome Center)	Public Tour: Ghosts of the Ammunitions Plant Car caravan led by volunteer interpreters Marcia Baumgartner and Lorin Schab.
7 June Thursday	9:00 am – 3:00 pm	Midwin SO (Horticulture Bldg)	**General Restoration Workday

9 June Saturday	8:00 am – 10:00 am	Midewin SO (Welcome Center)	Public Tour: Birds of Midewin Car caravan led by volunteer interpreters John Baxter and Lee Witkowski.
9 June Saturday	9:00 am – 3:00 pm	River Road Seedbeds	NATIONAL GET OUTDOORS DAY!! Planting at River Road Seedbeds
14 June Thursday	9:00 am – 3:00 pm	Midewin SO (Horticulture Bldg)	The Wetlands Initiative Corporate Workday. Restoration planting. All volunteers welcome.
16 June Saturday	8:00 am – 10:00 am	Midewin SO (Welcome Center)	Public Tour: Birds of Midewin Car caravan led by volunteer interpreters John Baxter and Lee Witkowski.
16 June Saturday	10:00 am – Noon	Midewin SO (Welcome Center)	Midewin for Kids: Make a Prairie Fairy House
21 June Thursday	9:00 am – 3:00 pm	River Road Seedbeds	**General Restoration Workday
23 June Saturday	9:00 am – 3:00 pm	River Road Seedbeds	Family Workday to REACT (Restoration and Education for Adults and Children Together) – Restoration planting, invasive removal, wetland activities with insects and frogs Coordinated by Midewin and The Wetlands Initiative.
23 June Saturday	10:00 am – Noon	Midewin SO (Welcome Center)	Public Tour: Cemeteries (Maple Hill & Klingler) Car caravan led by volunteer interpreter Marcia Baumgartner.
23 June Saturday	6:00 pm – 8:00 pm	Midewin SO (Welcome Center)	Public Tour: Midewin by Bike Bike ride led by volunteer interpreters Connie & Jerry Heinrich. Participants must bring their own bikes (fat/hybrid tires recommended).
28 June Thursday	9:00 am – 3:00 pm	Midewin SO (Horticulture Bldg)	**General Restoration Workday
30 June Saturday	8:00 am – 10:00 am	Midewin SO (Welcome Center)	Public Tour: Heron Rookery Car caravan led by volunteer interpreters John Baxter and Lee Witkowski.

To RSVP for Tours: Advance registration is recommended to **guarantee** your spot either by calling our main number 815/423-6370 or at Midewin_RSVP@fs.fed.us.

To RSVP for workdays: Please contact Gemma Guenther, Assistant Volunteer Coordinator, by phone at 815-423-2148 or email gguenther@fs.fed.us

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

****General Restoration Workday**

The activities for these days won't be planned until a couple days beforehand and will be based on need and weather conditions. Activities will contribute to the overall restoration of Midewin and may include seed cleaning, brush cutting, herbicide treatment, invasive plant pulling, seed broadcasting, and greenhouse planting. Please be prepared for outdoor or indoor work, as we may do more than one activity on a workday.

Directions & Map:

[Supervisors Office \(SO\) and River Road Seedbeds](#)



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