



## Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie Volunteer Position Description

**Title:** Midewin Butterfly Monitor

**Purpose:** All ecological monitors at Midewin play a vital role in monitoring various species and habitats throughout restored and remnant habitats at Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie. The data collected by volunteers is used to evaluate management needs and effectiveness, resulting in better ecological management practices. This data is shared with the Illinois Butterfly Monitoring Network (IBMN). Butterfly monitors help directly with part one of our mission to conserve, restore, and enhance the native populations and habitats of fish, wildlife, and plants.

**Duties and Responsibilities:** Designated areas will be assigned and monitors will be asked to choose a route through as many habitat types as possible. Monitors will record all butterfly species they recognize along their pre-planned route. Monitors are required to survey their area 6 times during butterfly season (June 1- August 7). Volunteer hours and data must be entered online *after each individual survey within 48 hours*. The data gets entered into the Illinois Butterfly Monitoring Network website and the volunteer hours get entered into Volgistics.

**Department and Location:** Under the direction of Midewin's Ecologist, volunteer time and data is contributed to Midewin's Restoration Team. Assigned monitoring areas may be anywhere within Midewin's property of 19,000 acres.

**Qualifications:** Experience is not necessary, but monitors must be willing to learn 25 new butterflies each year. At first, monitors may need to catch and release certain butterflies to confirm their identification. Photography for later identification is encouraged. Peak conditions for butterflies are warmer than 75° and slight to no breeze. Monitors must have flexible schedules to be available for a survey when weather conditions are ideal. Surveys must take place between 10am and 3:30pm. Monitors are responsible for their own transportation. This type of work is easier and safer with a partner, so this should be highly considered (especially for monitors without a cell phone).

**Time Commitment:** Monitors gain more experience every year and therefore data gets more thorough and accurate, so a multiple year commitment is preferred but not required. Monitors are asked to survey their assigned area, over the same route, 6 times during butterfly season (June 1– August 7). Four of these six surveys must take place before July 20. Monitors should spend 1-2 hours each visit in order to thoroughly cover their area.

**Training:** All monitors are required to complete Midewin's in-house orientation and field training that will cover safety, protocols, and available training materials. These usually take place in May, meeting at the Welcome Center. New monitors will be partnered with an experienced monitor for the first season. New monitors need to keep in mind they will be coordinating schedules with their experienced partner(s). Butterfly nets are provided and close range binoculars are available for checkout. Field guides must be purchased. Please visit the IBMN website for more information at <http://www.bfly.org/>. Additional resources including training presentations are available on Midewin's bird monitor webpage at <http://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/midewin/workingtogether/volunteering/?cid=stelprdb5368200>

**Working Conditions/Physical Effort:** Monitors are covered by the Volunteer Agreement (Form 301a) only while monitoring butterflies on their assigned area, or assisting another butterfly monitor, during butterfly monitoring season. Monitors must read, sign and consent to the U.S. Forest Service Job Hazard Analysis, which includes safety requirements and recommended best practices. Monitors may work in variable conditions including:

- Exposure to outdoor weather conditions & allergens
- Walking on uneven ground and/or tall vegetation
- May be working near hazardous plants or insects

**Benefits:** Volunteer monitors further the citizen scientist movement by contributing valuable data. Monitors can observe long-term progress towards the ecological restoration of Midewin. Midewin's volunteer staff receives ongoing recognition from their supervisor and other staff. Volunteers that contribute 15+ hours of service and/or complete their position requirements are invited to an annual volunteer recognition banquet in November (policy currently under review). Midewin's volunteer staff receives the bimonthly Prairie Telegraph. Volunteers may be featured in the telegraph, newspaper articles and/or US Forest Service success stories. Awards can be received for outstanding, innovative and/or long term, core volunteers.

**Related Opportunity:** Lead Butterfly Monitors have additional responsibilities that can include leading communication throughout the season, announcing position related off-site training opportunities or presentations, training new monitors, organizing data and/or writing short articles.

**Please contact the Volunteer Coordinator about this opportunity.**