

Midewin Volunteer Days and Events June-August 2013

FREE Public Tours and Presentations- Click for details	Volunteer Days for Restoration Volunteer Days for Educators	Volunteer Training Workshops	Special Events	 Children are always welcome, but these activities are more appropriate
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Date	Time	Meeting Location	Activity
15 June Saturday	8:00am – 10:00am	Midewin SO (Welcome Center)	Bird tour: From prairie, to wetland, to woodland, these habitats at Midewin offer opportunities to see varying species of birds. We will look for Grasshopper and Henslow's Sparrows, Dickcissels, Bobolinks, along with Red-tailed Hawks, Northern Harriers and numerous migrating birds.
15 June Saturday 	9:00am – 2:30pm	Midewin SO (Horticulture Bldg)	**General Restoration Volunteer Day
15 June Saturday	10:00am	Midewin SO (Welcome Center)	Midewin Behind the Scenes: Join us for a short half-hour walk around the Welcome Center at Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie. Be introduced to the plants of Midewin; learn how we produce seed to restore the prairie and discover the different habitats for wildlife that Midewin offers. Find out about the recreational opportunities available.
19 June Wednesday 	9:30am – 12:30pm	Midewin SO (Welcome Center)	Buzzing About the Prairie (Pollinator Celebration): Join us to discover why bees, butterflies, other insects and birds are so important to all gardens, including the prairie. Capture some pollinators as we use sweep nets, get a close look at them through magnified insect containers and help plant a pollinator garden.
20 June Thursday	9:00am – 2:30pm	Midewin SO (Horticulture Bldg)	**General Restoration Volunteer Day
22 June Saturday	8:00am – 10:00am	Midewin SO (Welcome Center)	Bird tour: From prairie, to wetland, to woodland, these habitats at Midewin offer opportunities to see varying species of birds. We will look for Grasshopper and Henslow's Sparrows, Dickcissels, Bobolinks, along with Red-tailed Hawks, Northern Harriers and numerous migrating birds.
22 June Saturday 	10:00am – 12:00pm	Midewin SO (Welcome Center)	Midewin 4 Kids: Family Rise and Bike. Kids, bring your bike (and your parents!) to explore Midewin. An interpreter will lead the group on a time warp through Midewin's past, present and future from the back of your bicycle.
25 June Tuesday	1:00pm – 3:00 pm	Midewin SO (Welcome Center)	Botany for Volunteers: Staff scientists lead a casual exploration focusing on botany and plant ID. These sessions are part of a program to train active Midewin volunteers in programs such as ecological monitoring and trail stewards. New recruits welcome!
27 June Thursday	9:00am – 2:30pm	Midewin SO (Horticulture Bldg)	Trail Maintenance: Midewin's trail stewards need some helping hands along our community trails. Join the stewards on the last Thursday of every month.
29 June Saturday	10:00am – 1:00pm	Midewin SO (Welcome Center)	Ghosts of the Ammunitions Plant Tour: In 1940, the U.S. Government acquired over 36,000 acres of land to build and ammunition plant. Why here? How was it built and how did it operate?
4 July Thursday	8:00am – 4:30pm	Midewin SO (Welcome Center)	Independence Day! WELCOME CENTER CLOSED & NO RESTORATION VOLUNTEER DAY. AS USUAL, TRAILS ARE OPEN!
6 July Saturday 	10:00am – 12:00pm	Midewin SO (Welcome Center)	Midewin 4 Kids: Prairie Imagination Stations. Take a hike led by a Naturalist where you will visit stations that get your creative juices flowing! You will make your own photo using the water and sun of the prairie, build (and keep) a "camera" to snap mental images of flowers, wildlife and people of the prairie, and meet a surprise visitor!
11 July Thursday	9:00am – 2:30pm	Midewin SO (Horticulture Bldg)	**General Restoration Volunteer Day
13 July Saturday	1:00pm – 3:00pm	Midewin SO (Welcome Center)	Midewin by Auto: Learn about Midewin's past, present, and future from the comfort of your vehicle. Visit restored wetlands and prairie, observe grassland birds which have returned to these areas, while learning about our restoration efforts. Enter one of the remaining bunkers for a glimpse into the past. This tour takes place on unimproved roads, expect potholes and gravel.
13 July Saturday	6:00pm – 8:00pm	Midewin SO (Welcome Center)	Twilight Bike: Tour open and closed areas of Midewin. Expect to see an abundance of wildlife which may include deer, turkey, grassland birds and maybe a coyote or two. Since at least part of the route will be on gravel surfaces, "fat" tires are recommended.
18 July Thursday	9:00am – 2:30pm	Midewin SO (Horticulture Bldg)	**General Restoration Volunteer Day
18 July Thursday	9:30am – 3:00pm	Contact for details	El Valor Youth Program, New volunteer educators may be interested in shadowing
19 July Friday	9:30am – 3:00pm	Contact for details	El Valor Youth Program, New volunteer educators may be interested in shadowing

20 July Saturday	10:00am	Midewin SO (Welcome Center)	Midewin Behind the Scenes: Join us for a short half-hour walk around the Welcome Center at Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie. Be introduced to the plants of Midewin; learn how we produce seed to restore the prairie and discover the different habitats for wildlife that Midewin offers. Find out about the recreational opportunities available.
25 July Thursday	9:00am – 2:30pm	Midewin SO (Horticulture Bldg)	Trail Maintenance: Midewin's trail stewards need some helping hands along our community trails. Join the stewards on the last Thursday of every month.
26 July Friday	6:00pm – 8:30pm	Central Park	Manhattan Police and Fire Community Event
27 July Saturday	10:00am – 12:00pm	Midewin SO (Welcome Center)	Midewin 4 Kids: Critter Hike. Join interpreters on a hike and learn about some of the most beautiful and misunderstood creatures in the natural world. With net in hand, you'll gently capture, explore, investigate (and release!) butterflies, spiders, beetles and more!
27 July Saturday	4:30pm - 6:30pm	Iron Bridge Trailhead	Midewin by Horseback: Join equestrian volunteers for an interpretive ride through portions of Midewin not yet open to the public. Learn about the history and how the land is being managed today. PLEASE NOTE: horse and rider will have to cross bridges, and share the trail system with cattle. Participants must bring their own horses.
1 August Thursday	9:00am – 2:30pm	Midewin SO (Horticulture Bldg)	**General Restoration Volunteer Day
3 August Saturday	8:30am – 10:30am	South Arsenal & Chicago Road	Midewin by Horseback: Join equestrian volunteers for an interpretive ride through portions of Midewin not yet open to the public. Learn about the history and how the land is being managed today. PLEASE NOTE: horse and rider will have to cross bridges, and share the trail system with cattle. Participants must bring their own horses.
3 August Saturday	10:00am – 1:00pm	Midewin SO (Welcome Center)	Ghosts of the Ammunitions Plant Tour: In 1940, the U.S. Government acquired over 36,000 acres of land to build and ammunition plant. Why here? How was it built and how did it operate?
8 August Thursday	9:00am – 2:30pm	Midewin SO (Horticulture Bldg)	**General Restoration Volunteer Day
8 August Thursday	9:30am – 3:00pm	Contact for details	El Valor Youth Program, New volunteer educators may be interested in shadowing
9 August Friday	9:30am – 3:00pm	Contact for details	El Valor Youth Program, New volunteer educators may be interested in shadowing
10 August Saturday	10:00am – 12:00pm	Midewin SO (Welcome Center)	Midewin by Auto: Learn about Midewin's past, present, and future from the comfort of your vehicle. Visit restored wetlands and prairie; observe grassland birds which have returned to these areas, while learning about our restoration efforts. Enter one of the remaining bunkers for a glimpse into the past. This tour takes place on unimproved roads, expect potholes and gravel.
10 August Saturday	10:00am – 12:00pm	Midewin SO (Welcome Center)	Midewin 4 Kids: Hawk Talk. Join Raptor Handler Tanja of Prairie State Nature Programs for a very exciting interactive program where you will meet one of Illinois' native birds-of-prey: a red-tailed hawk. Learn about their diet, habitat and why hawks are such an important part of the prairie ecosystem.
10 August Saturday	6:00pm – 8:00 pm	Midewin SO (Welcome Center)	Twilight Bike: Tour open and closed areas of Midewin. Expect to see an abundance of wildlife which may include deer, turkey, grassland birds and maybe a coyote or two. Since at least part of the route will be on gravel surfaces, "fat" tires are recommended.
15 August Thursday	9:00am – 2:30pm	Midewin SO (Horticulture Bldg)	**General Restoration Volunteer Day
17 August Saturday	10:00am	Midewin SO (Welcome Center)	Midewin Behind the Scenes: Join us for a short half-hour walk around the Welcome Center at Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie. Be introduced to the plants of Midewin; learn how we produce seed to restore the prairie and discover the different habitats for wildlife that Midewin offers. Find out about the recreational opportunities available.
22 August Thursday	9:00am – 2:30pm	Midewin SO (Horticulture Bldg)	**General Restoration Volunteer Day
24 August Saturday	9:00am – 2:30pm	Midewin SO (Horticulture Bldg)	**General Restoration Volunteer Day
29 August Thursday	9:00am – 2:30pm	Midewin SO (Horticulture Bldg)	Trail Maintenance: Midewin's trail stewards need some helping hands along our community trails. Join the stewards on the last Thursday of every month.

To RSVP for Volunteer Days: Please contact Allison Cisneros, Volunteer Coordinator, by phone at 815-423-2149, email amcisneros@fs.fed.us or use the Volgistics system.

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

**** General Restoration Volunteer Days-** The activities for these days will be based on need and weather conditions. Activities 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 Volunteer Day.

For Volunteer Days: Midewin will provide tools, safety gear, and water. Please bring your own lunch. Dress in layers with sturdy field boots. Volunteer Days and Events do fill up. Knowing how many volunteers or visitors will attend, allows our staff to better organize the event and we can inform you of Changes or Cancellations.

Volunteer Activities

Conservation Educator – An important part of Midewin's mission is to provide opportunities for environmental learning. Students of all ages, from early elementary to college, come to Midewin to participate in environmental education activities and conservation service projects. For many of these students, a trip to Midewin may be their first outdoor learning experience. Volunteer educators assist by leading small group discovery activities and supervising stewardship activities such as planting, seed harvest, and invasive plant removal.

Prairie Restoration Assistant – Restoration volunteers work in the native seed beds planting, weeding, mulching and harvesting seed. Cleaning seed, planting plug trays, clearing encroaching shrubs from prairie and herbiciding are other tasks that you can find restoration volunteers performing. Restoration Volunteer Days are scheduled on every Thursday and occasional Saturdays year round. Check the website for a calendar of events.

Ecological Monitors – Monitoring is an important part of the restoration process. Land managers need to know the health of plant and animal populations in an area before, during, and after a restoration project. Volunteer monitors, working independently or with Midewin staff, collect and record data on specific plant or animal populations using scientifically based methods. This data is used to plan and evaluate each restoration area. Existing Midewin monitoring programs include birds, frogs, butterflies, streams, rare plants and floristic quality in restored areas.

Interpreters – Volunteer Interpreters work with staff to deliver programs via escorted tours; bike and horse rides; hikes; and special programs. These programs are designed to promote awareness; knowledge and understanding of the natural and cultural history of Midewin; to provide insight into the native habitat restoration process; and to promote the mission of the US Forest Service. Welcome Center Host duties include meeting and greeting visitors, answering questions and distributing information about Midewin. Responsibilities also include handling gift shop sales. This position is great for outgoing volunteers that don't mind being indoors for a 4 or 8 hour shift.

Trail Maintenance/Stewards –Midewin's trail systems are being extended and improved every year. Recreation sites such as trailheads, picnic sites, accessible viewing platforms, and interpretive waysides are being developed. Trail maintenance volunteers, working in teams or with Midewin staff will perform routine maintenance on these trails and facilities. Maintenance activities may include mowing; brush removal and herbiciding; repairing bridges and other structures; installing signs, benches, and tables; and other tasks all intended to contribute to a quality recreation experience and ensure public health and safety. Trail stewards are assigned designated sections to monitor for safety and manage the trail surface and 10 foot areas to each side.

PLEASE CONTACT THE VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR FOR MORE INFORMATION

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