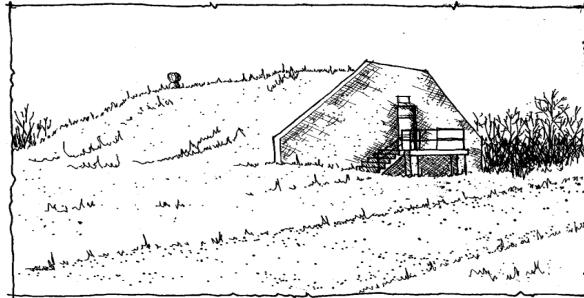




Welcome to Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie

(Pronounced “mid-DAY-win”)

The Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie was established in 1996 and is the first national tallgrass prairie in the country. It is administered by the US Forest Service, with the support of hundreds of volunteers and partner agencies, businesses, and organizations. Created from the former Joliet Army Ammunition Plant, Midewin remained largely closed to the public for many years while the Army cleaned up contamination remaining from decades of TNT manufacturing and packaging.



Today, about 19,000 acres of Midewin are open to the public, including 30 miles of trails. 22 miles of trail are for shared use by hikers, bicyclists, and equestrians. 8 miles of trail are for hiking only. Bicycles, horses, and leashed dogs are restricted to designated trails at all times. Midewin public lands are open from 4 am until 10 pm daily.

Picnic tables and portable toilets are available at all trailheads. There are currently no sources of water at Midewin other than at the Midewin Welcome Center. Bulletin boards located at all trailheads are regularly updated with important information. Please check for the latest news before heading out on the trail. Enjoy your visit.



Means check out this Point of Interest.

River Road Trailhead			
Prairie Creek Woods Loop		1.5-mile loop trail through restored prairie savanna woodlands.	
Henslow Trail		5.2-mile trail through restored South Patrol Restoration Project. Continues to Iron Bridge Trailhead.	
Blodgett Marsh Trail		4.5-mile mowed trail that loops through the Blodgett Marsh Restoration Project.	
River Road Seedbeds		Largest native seed production area at Midewin.	
South Patrol Road Restoration		500 acres of restored tallgrass prairie.	

Driving Directions to River Road Trailhead: From the Midewin Welcome Center, turn left on Route 53 for one mile to River Road. Turn right on River Road and continue for 2.2 miles to Kankakee River Drive and turn right onto gravel road. Parking area will be on your right, seed beds will be on your left. Trail and prairie access is through the pedestrian gate north of the parking area.



Explosives Road Trailhead

Prairie Glacial Plains Restoration		1,800-acre tallgrass prairie restoration site that began in 2016. Can be accessed and explored by foot.
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Driving Directions to Explosives Road Trailhead: From the Midewin Welcome Center, turn right on Route 53. After 1.7 miles, turn left onto Explosives Road and follow to the trailhead and parking area.

Iron Bridge Trailhead

Group 63 Trail		3.5-mile loop around Group 63 bunker field.
Open Bunker		A bunker is open for exploration, located at the West end of the Group 63 Spur Trail, near the Arsenal Worker Statue and Wayside Exhibit.
Henslow Trail		5.2-mile trail crosses the Iron Bridge over State Route 53/ Historic Route 66 and continues to River Road Trailhead.
Route 53 Trail		2.6-mile trail parallel to bison pasture, from Henslow Trail south to the Welcome Center.
Southwest Bison Overlook		Concrete benches and spotting scopes for viewing the bison pasture.

Driving Directions to Iron Bridge Trailhead: From the Midewin Welcome Center turn right on Route 53. After 2.4 miles and passing under overpass, turn right onto the gravel road to parking area and trailhead.

Hoff Road Trailhead

Twin Oaks Trail		5.82-mile loop trail.
Bailey Bridge Trail		1.8-mile trail crosses over a WWII era portable bridge and connects Midewin to the Wauponsee Glacial Trail.
Hedgeapple Trail		1.5-mile hiking trail connecting Twin Oaks Trail and Group 63 Trail on the north.
Turtle Pond		0.3-mile mowed trail around pond.
Chicago Road Seedbeds		Small native seed production area.

Driving Directions to Hoff Road Trailhead: From the Midewin Welcome Center, turn right on Route 53 and continue 3.6 miles to Hoff Road. Turn right and continue 2 miles to the parking area and trailhead.



Midewin NTP Welcome Center

Open from 8 am until 4:30 pm Monday through Friday and on Saturdays in season. There are displays about the natural and cultural history of Midewin, an information counter for maps and questions, and a small bookshop.

Dogs

Dogs are welcome at Midewin as long as they are kept on a maximum 6-foot leash and on a trail.

Livestock

Cattle are helping maintain grassland bird habitat at Midewin. Their curiosity or maternal instincts may cause them to approach visitors. Please keep you distance from the cows and keep pasture gates closed.

Hunting

Midewin is open for spring turkey hunting and for fall deer hunting under special restrictions. During firearm seasons, all non-hunting visitors to Midewin must stay on trails. Check the Midewin website for more information on hunting.

Traffic

Heavy equipment uses the roads at Midewin for demolition, restoration, or farming. Operators may not be able to hear or see you. Stay away from operating equipment and watch for road traffic.

Motor Vehicle Use

The map displays what types of motor vehicle are currently allowed and where. Only designated routes shown on the map are open to motorized use, and all motorized vehicles must be street legal under Illinois state law. Snow is not removed on these routes.

In Case of Emergency

Call 911 for medical emergencies. Otherwise, contact the US Forest Service at (815) 423-6370.

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Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie
30239 South State Route 53
Wilmington, IL 60481
(815) 423-6370
www.fs.usda.gov/midewin