

# Auto Caravan Tours

Saturdays in September	
<b>September 3</b>	10:00 am – 1:30 pm: Ghosts of the Ammunition Plant (School Bus)
<b>September 10</b>	8:00 – 10:00 am: Birds East 8:30 – 10:30 am: Midewin by Horse ( <b>south gate Trailhead</b> ) 10:15 – 11:45 am: Woods & Wetland Walk 5:00 – 7:00 pm: Bike by Twilight
<b>September 17</b>	10:00 am – 12:00 pm: Cow Watching 3:00 – 5:00 pm: Cemetery Tour (Maple Hill & Klinger)
<b>September 24</b>	1:00 – 3:00 pm: War Plants to Prairie Plants ( <b>River Road Trailhead</b> )

Saturdays in October	
<b>October 1</b>	10:00 am – 12:00 pm: Midewin by Horse ( <b>south gate Trailhead</b> )
<b>October 8</b>	10:00 am – 1:30 pm: Ghosts of the Ammunition Plant (school bus)
<b>October 22</b>	5:00 – 7:00 pm: Cemetery at Dusk (Starr's Grove & Chicago road)
<b>October 29</b>	5:00 – 8:00 pm: Musical Trick-or-Treat Bunker Style

**Birds East and West** - Bring binoculars and camera to see the birds that make Midewin their home. Watch the dew burn off the grass during this early morning hike. Meet at the *Welcome Center*.

**Cow Watching** - Cattle serve a very useful purpose at Midewin and will continue to be part of the future of the property. Meet some of the cattle, learn about the differences between the breeds and discover how these domestic animals benefit certain types of rare Midewin wildlife.

**Ghosts of the Ammunition Plant** - In 1940 the U.S. Government acquired over 36,000 acres of land near the confluence of the Kankakee and Des Plaines rivers to build an ammunition plant. Why here? What was the impact of the local economy? How was it built and how did it operate? These are all questions addressed on this tour of the former Elwood Ordnance Plant. Many of the remaining structures will be viewed, and you will step into the past as you enter a 1940's ammunition storage igloo. This tour takes approximately three hours and is offered by bus or auto caravan. Routes vary slightly.

**War Plant to Prairie Plant (Intro to Midewin)** - Discover Midewin's past, present and future from the comfort of your vehicle. Tour stop points include the river road seedbeds, a 400 acre prairie restoration area and a bunker complete with authentic ammunition plant artifacts. Meet at the River Road Seedbeds.

**Cemeteries** - Whether amateur historian or genealogist, many are interested in cemeteries. Join Midewin tour guides in an exploration of area historic cemeteries. Learn about how the cemeteries came to be and about the lives of some of the farmers and merchants, settlers and soldiers, associated with those cemeteries. Maple Hill and Klinger cemeteries will be visited on the "North" tour, and Chicago Road and Starr's Grove cemeteries on the "South" tour.

## Walks & Rides

**Bike Tour** - Learn about the ins and outs of Midewin over the crackle of your tires on the gravel path. You must provide and transport your own bicycle. Heavier tread tires are recommended, as the route includes both paved and rough gravel surfaces. Meet at the *Welcome Center*.

**Midewin by Horse** - See and learn about Midewin, its history and management, from the back of your horse. Join equestrian volunteers for a ride through portions of Midewin not yet open for public use as you learn more about how the area is being managed today. Participants must bring their own horse. Call for specific directions to the starting point for this activity.

**Woods & Wetland Walk** - On this 1 1/2-hour (1 1/2 mile) guided tour of Midewin's rustic Prairie Creek Woods Trail, you will visit secluded Buttonbush Pond, an old-growth oak tree grove, and a restored wetland. Expect to see a variety of woodland flowers and species of woodland, wetland, and grassland birds. Participants are encouraged to bring binoculars and cameras.

**Musical Trick-or-Treat Bunker Style** - Visit with characters from Midewin's past, present and future as they perform music of their era. You can sing along (or not!) with characters such as Woodsy Owl, Smokey Bear and a trio of female vocalists ("Vintage Vocals") singing 1940's "big-band" style music, reminiscent of the World War II era history of this property. Campfire, drinks and treats provided. Meet at the Iron Bridge Trailhead.

## General Tour Information

**Cost:** All programs in 2011 are free unless otherwise noted. Some special group tours involve a fee.

**Program Duration:** Unless otherwise noted each program will last approximately 2 hours.

**Reservations:** Advanced registration is required. Leave a message at (815) 423-2170 or email [erbender@fs.fed.us](mailto:erbender@fs.fed.us). Please leave contact info in case we need to contact you about cancellations or changes to the tour schedule.

**Cancellations:** We will make every effort to offer all activities as scheduled. All tours but primarily bike rides and campfire programs may be cancelled or rescheduled due to weather. Changing site conditions and staff availability may require changes to the schedule. Call (815) 423-2170 for a recorded message regarding current program information. You may also leave a message at this number.

**Where to Meet:** Unless otherwise noted all programs begin and end at the *Midewin Welcome Center* located at 30239 South State Route 53, Wilmington, Illinois -- the building with the 3 flagpoles in front.

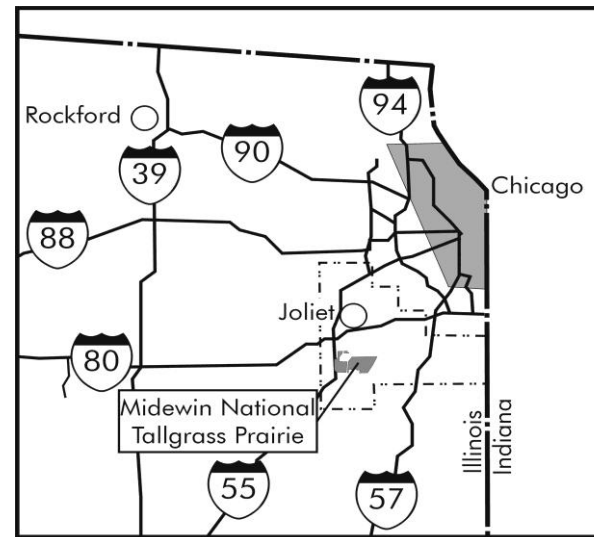
**When to Arrive:** All programs begin promptly at the published time. Please plan to arrive 15 minutes early to allow time for registration.

**What to Bring:** Come dressed for the weather, wearing shoes suitable for walking over easy to moderately uneven ground. Bring water, sun protection, and insect repellent. Cameras and binoculars are encouraged.

**Auto Caravan Tours:** Participants in these activities will drive their own vehicles as part of a staff led caravan. A number of stops are made along the way with short walks to points of interest. Running commentary can be heard over your vehicle radio as the caravan moves from point to point. Participants need not leave their vehicles if they do not wish to do so.

**Bike and Horse Rides:** Participants in these activities must provide their own bike or horse.

**Safety:** Public safety concerns prevent access to the interior of remnant arsenal buildings on tours.



**From I55:** Look for exit 241, Wilmington. At the top of the ramp (both northbound and southbound), turn left. Travel 3.5 miles on New River Road to the intersection with State Route 53 and turn left. Follow Route 53 for 1.0 mile to the Midewin Supervisor's Office, on the right side of the highway.

**Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie**  
30239 S. State Route 53  
Wilmington, IL 60481  
(815) 423-6370  
[www.fs.fed.us/mntp/](http://www.fs.fed.us/mntp/)

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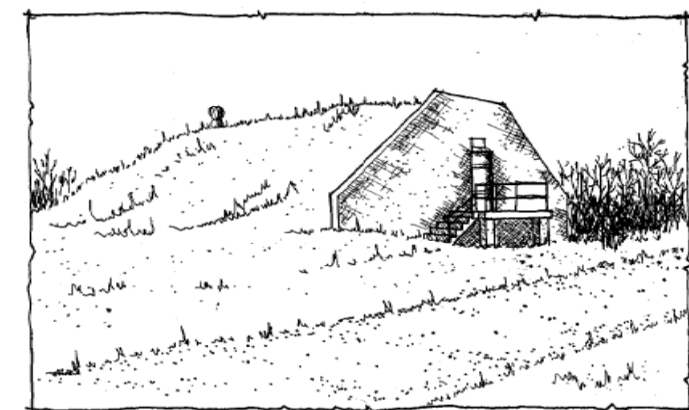
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## General Information

For the visitor to Midewin, there are currently 7,200 acres open to unescorted public access. There are about 22 miles of interim trails available for public use. Several rustic day use recreation sites are also available. These sites offer picnic table and portable toilets.

The *Midewin Welcome Center*, located at 30239 South State Route 53, two miles north of Wilmington, IL is the place to start your Midewin visit. Here you will see exhibits designed to lay the groundwork for your own exploration of Midewin, whether on your own or participating in one of our escorted programs. Staff at the *Welcome Center* can assist you with planning your visit. A small bookstore operated by the Midewin Interpretive Association, a private not-for-profit partner of the Forest Service, is also located in the *Welcome Center*.



# Tour Schedule

## September / October

### 2011

