



Prairie Telegraph

A Newsletter of the Midewin Tallgrass Prairie Alliance for its Members and Midewin Volunteers

Volume 15, No. 1

Midewin Borrows Tree Cookie

From Marta Witt, USDA Forest Service

The winter session of the Mighty Acorns environmental education curriculum at Midewin needed a hands-on sample for its "Tree Cookies" segment on tree physiology. Midewin Biological Technician Jeff Butler came to the rescue with a prized possession – a 50-inch round slice of Bur Oak that lived for over 466 years along the Fox River before falling down in a storm.



Jeff was working for the Illinois DNR as a Heritage Biologist when the tree fell in Silver Springs State Park in late 2008. Recognizing an awesome example of this majestic oak, Jeff kept his eye on the downed tree and was able to secure a piece when it was sawed up. The small area of heart rot prevents an exact count of the tree's annual growth rings, but at 466 years plus, this tree sprouted long before any Europeans ventured into the Illinois wilderness. The dark areas at about 2 o'clock and 8 o'clock on the face of the "tree cookie" (see arrows) indicate that it also survived major fires during those centuries.

Jeff Butler with slice of 466+ year-old bur oak. The arrows point to fire scars acquired before Illinois became a State, and also demonstrate to the perimeter, fire suppression that came with settlement.

Also in this Issue.....

Happenings at Midewin: **Lecture Series...Page 6, \$8000 Grant Received...Page 7, Volunteer Awards...Page 2**

Volunteer Opportunities at Midewin: **Frog Monitoring...Page 4, Plants of Concern...Page 6, Volunteer Workdays...Page 3**

Alliance News: **Mark Your Calendar...Page 4, Membership Application...Page 6, Native Plant Sale...Page 5**

ANNUAL VOLUNTEER AWARDS

From Allison (Hedden) Cisneros , Volunteer Coordinator, MNTP

The U.S. Forest Service presented awards to several outstanding volunteers and groups for their exceptional efforts at Midewin during the past year. The night consisted of a silent auction, dinner, drinks, and presentations for over 130 guests. This annual dinner is sponsored by ExxonMobil and hosted by the Midewin Tallgrass Prairie Alliance.

The awards were as follows:

Lifetime Achievement Award: Bob Jones of Orland Park, has donated his time and ideas to the restoration and education program since 1997. Bob officially retired from the volunteer program this year. Midewin appreciates his service for the past 13 years!



Bob Jones received the Lifetime Achievement Award for his work in restoration and education since 1997.

Heritage Award: John Reddy from Joliet, his experience as an employee at the Joliet Ammunition Plant has made him a great asset to Midewin's heritage tour program.

Heritage Award: Emily Durkin from Manhattan, curated artifacts collected at a historic farmstead on Midewin.

Public Services Award: Carol Ference of Homewood, contributed over 250 hours of volunteer service this year, mostly as a Welcome Center host.

Restoration Awards: Kim Bumpus of Braidwood, Larry Costain of Naperville and Kirk Frazier of Frankfort, for their assistance in restoring the prairie by processing seed and planting, among other activities. Teachers, **Debra Pohlmann and Joe Kamper** also accepted the award on behalf of the **Plainfield Central High School BioExplorations Club**.

Ecological Monitoring Award: Margaret Kelly of Joliet, is a jack of all trades when it comes to ecological monitoring. She monitors butterflies, birds, vegetation and rare plants, and she is a Midewin trail steward.

Special Recognition: Kim Meyer-Ramirez of Frankfort received special recognition from the Midewin Tallgrass Prairie Alliance for her design and implementation of the Bobolinking Program and motivating youth involved scientific research.

Trinity Services, Network 2 Drop-in of Wilmington received an award for their contribution to the native landscaping around the Welcome Center since 2007. Program Coordinator, Tabitha Schafer and Trinity clients Mike Gilbert and Margaret Embry accepted the award on behalf of their group.

Midewin volunteers contributed over 8,200 hours; the value of these efforts represents over \$171,000! Volunteers are essential assets in restoring almost 20,000 acres of a prairie under construction. Thank you to all our volunteers for a successful year! We look forward to working with you again in the future and welcoming new volunteers.

The *Prairie Telegraph* is published bimonthly by the Midewin Tallgrass Prairie Alliance, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that serves as an advocate and "Friend of Midewin" by supporting prairie restoration and promoting the many volunteer, research, educational, and recreational opportunities at Midewin. Contact information for:

- Midewin Alliance – Jerry Heinrich, president email: g.heinrich@sbcglobal.net
- *Prairie Telegraph* – Marianne Hahn, co-editor email: mariannehahn@sbcglobal.net or Jolie Krasinski, co-editor email: joliek@adimonte.com
- Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie website: www.fs.fed.us/mntp

Opinions expressed in articles are not necessarily endorsed by the Alliance Board or the U.S. Forest Service.

Volunteer Workdays for January and February 2011

Prairie Restoration and Horticulture

From Bill Glass, Jennifer Durkin, Delane Strohmeyer, and Eric Ulaszek, USDA Forest Service, Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie

Date and Day	Time	Meeting Location	Activities
6 January 2011 Thursday	9:00 am – 3:00 pm	Midewin SO (Horticulture Bldg)	Seed cleaning, mixing, or planting in flats.
8 January 2011 Saturday	9:00 am – 2:30 pm	Midewin SO (Horticulture Bldg)	Seed cleaning, mixing, or planting in flats.
13 January 2011 Thursday	9:00 am – 3:00 pm	Midewin SO (Horticulture Bldg)	Brush clearing in the morning, seed cleaning/planting in the afternoons. In extreme weather conditions, we will clean seed all day. PLEASE CALL AHEAD.
20 January 2011 Thursday	9:00 am – 3:00 pm	Midewin SO (Horticulture Bldg)	Seed cleaning, mixing or planting in flats.
22 January 2011 Saturday	9:00 am – 2:30 pm	Midewin SO (Horticulture Bldg)	Seed cleaning, mixing, or planting in flats.
27 January 2011 Thursday	9:00 am – 3:00 pm	Midewin SO (Horticulture Bldg)	Brush clearing in the morning, seed cleaning/planting in the afternoons. In extreme weather conditions, we will clean seed all day. PLEASE CALL AHEAD.
10 February 2011 Thursday	9:00 am – 3:00 pm	Midewin SO (Horticulture Bldg)	Brush clearing in the morning, seed planting in the afternoons. In extreme weather conditions, this workday <u>will be canceled</u> . PLEASE CALL AHEAD.
17 February 2011 Thursday	9:00 am – 3:00 pm	Midewin SO (Horticulture Bldg)	Brush clearing in the morning, seed planting in the afternoons. In extreme weather conditions, we will plant all day. PLEASE CALL AHEAD.

The next workday is Thursday at 9:00 am, March 10, 2011. Meet at the Midewin Supervisor's Office, for invasive shrub control (weather depending).

All January and February workdays will meet at Midewin Headquarters. See last page for directions.

January and February Workday Activities Please note that start and finish times vary with day and activities. Winter activities will include cutting and treating invasive brush (only volunteers with pesticide license can apply herbicide), cleaning/planting seed indoors, and sharpening/cleaning tools, also indoors. Because workdays may be canceled because of poor travel conditions, please call ahead!

Greenhouse Activities With the greenhouse up and running, we'll have some workdays planting seed in plug trays and transplanting seedlings. On a sunny but cold winter day, the greenhouse is a pleasant place to remind yourself of the coming spring and summer.

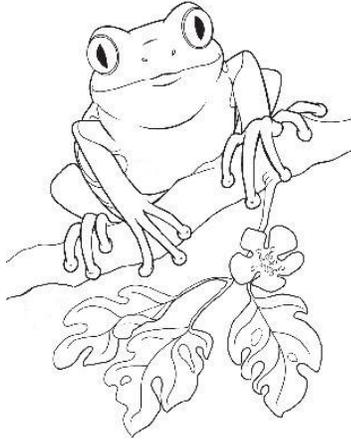
Please contact Allison (Hedden) Cisneros, Volunteer Coordinator, if you plan on attending workdays (telephone 815-423-2149). Knowing how many volunteers will attend a workday allows Midewin staff to better organize the workday, and we can inform you of any changes. If you plan on staying for the entire workday, please bring your lunch. As always, Midewin will provide tools, safety gear, and water for volunteers.

Children are welcome, but must be accompanied and supervised by a parent, guardian or chaperones (for educational groups). Volunteer groups are welcome to join our workdays; many hands make for light work! Please call ahead to schedule your group's visit, so Midewin staff can plan ahead and provide an appropriate activity for your group's size and abilities. Please do not bring dogs or other pets to workdays.

Frog Monitoring Training

From Gemma Guenther, Assistant Volunteer Coordinator, MNTP

Frog (anuran) monitoring grants the opportunity for a citizen scientist to record valuable data while experiencing Midewin's nightlife. March through July, monitors go out after dark to a designated site to identify and record mating calls during a 10 minute period. Each monitor usually visits their plot three to five times a



season. It offers a flexible schedule that you create yourself. You can start learning the mating calls of 11 frogs and a toad at <http://www.habitatproject.org/frogsurvey/>

Our workshop for new monitors will be held **Thursday, March 3, 2011 from 7:00 to 9:00 pm.** Meet at the Welcome Center. If you have any questions or would like to register for the workshop, please contact Volunteer Coordinator, Allison (Hedden) Cisneros at 815-423-2149. If you are a returning monitor and choose not to attend the workshop, please call in advance to arrange a time to pick up your materials. Thanks again to all of our monitors who put so much effort into making this program a success.

Mark Your Calendar! Midewin Alliance Events

By Jerry Heinrich, President, Midewin Tallgrass Prairie Alliance

With another holiday season behind us, it's time to begin marking our calendars with things to see and do in 2011. The members of the Midewin Alliance Executive Board sincerely look forward to seeing you at one or more of the upcoming scheduled 2011 Midewin Interpretive Series Programs and/or Midewin Work Days. (See separate articles for listings)

January through March - 2011 Native Plant Sale See separate native plant sale article in this issue of the *Prairie Telegraph*.

January 30, 2011 - Put on your Winter Hiking Boots or XC Skis Are you looking for a reason to celebrate the end of January? Join some of the more hardy members of the Alliance for an invigorating hike or cross-country ski on Midewin's West Side Trail (roughly 4 miles round trip). We will meet at the Iron Bridge Trail Head at 10:00 am and finish with lunch at Hayden's Crossing in Wilmington. To RSVP or for more information, contact Jerry Heinrich at 815-476-6171 or g.heinrich@sbcglobal.net

2011 Special Projects Team - Midewin Calendar The Midewin Alliance is looking for a team of individuals that are interested in photography and would be interested in helping create an annual Midewin Photo Calendar. While the Alliance has access to many existing "good" photos, the number of interesting "great" photos is limited. The special projects team will be self-directed and will meet periodically as needed to determine direction and assess progress. The team will select an annual theme for the calendars that might include prairie landscape, wildlife, historical sites, artistic and seasonal photos, recreation, and workday activities. If you think you might be like to be a member of this special project team, contact Jerry Heinrich at 815-476-6171 or g.heinrich@sbcglobal.net

2011 Annual Native Plant Sale Midewin Tallgrass Prairie Alliance Fundraiser

To receive a Native Plant Order Form and detailed plant and pricing information, contact Jerry Heinrich at 815-476-6171 or g.heinrich@sbcglobal.net or visit the Midewin website at www.fs.fed.us/mntp

Place your order early to ensure availability, preferably before the end of March. Plant offerings include:

Forbs (Wild flowers)

Butterfly Weed	<i>Asclepias tuberosa</i>
White Wild Indigo	<i>Baptisia leucantha</i>
Smooth Blue Aster	<i>Aster laevis</i>
New Jersey Tea	<i>Ceanothus americanus</i>
Showy Tick Trefoil	<i>Desmodium canadense</i>
Shooting Star	<i>Dodecatheon meadia</i>
Rattlesnake Master	<i>Eryngium yuccifolium</i>
Wild Geranium	<i>Geranium maculatum</i>
Prairie Alum Root	<i>Heuchera richardsonii</i>
Prairie Blazing Star	<i>Liatris pycnostachya</i>
Great Blue Lobelia	<i>Lobelia siphilitica</i>
Wild Lupine	<i>Lupinus perennis</i>
White Prairie Clover	<i>Petalostemum candidum</i>
Prairie Phlox	<i>Phlox pilosa</i>
Mountain Mint	<i>Pycnanthemum virginianum</i>
Black-Eyed Susan	<i>Rudbeckia hirta</i>
Royal Catchfly	<i>Silene regia</i>
Common Spiderwort	<i>Tradescantia ohioensis</i>
Culvers Root	<i>Veronicastrum virginicum</i>

Grasses & Sedges

Side-oats Grama	<i>Bouteloua curtipendula</i>
Prairie Oval Sedge	<i>Carex bicknellii</i>
Gray's Sedge	<i>Carex grayii</i>
Little Bluestem	<i>Schizachyrium scoparium</i>
Prairie Dropseed	<i>Sporobolus heterolepis</i>

Shrubs

Black Chokeberry	<i>Aronia melanocarpa</i>
Buttonbush	<i>Cephalanthus occidentalis</i>
American Filbert	<i>Corylus americana</i>
Dwarf Honeysuckle	<i>Diervilla lonicera</i>
Wahoo	<i>Euonymus atropurpureus</i>
Spicebush	<i>Lindera benzoin</i>
Ninebark	<i>Physocarpus opulifolius</i>
Chokecherry	<i>Prunus virginiana</i>
Fragrant Sumac	<i>Rhus aromatica</i>
Wild Black Current	<i>Ribes americanum</i>
Pasture Rose	<i>Rosa carolina</i>
Illinois Rose	<i>Rosa setigera</i>
Purple Flower Raspberry	<i>Rubus odoratus</i>
Maple Leaf Viburnum	<i>Viburnum acerifolium</i>
Nannyberry Viburnum	<i>Viburnum lentago</i>
Blackhaw Viburnum	<i>Viburnum prunifolium</i>

Note: Other shrubs may be available upon request

Trees (smaller)

Juneberry (Alleg. Shad.)	<i>Amelanchier laevis</i>
Red Bud	<i>Cercis canadensis</i>
Prairie Crab	<i>Malus ioensis</i>
American Plum	<i>Prunus americana</i>
Bald Cypress	<i>Taxodium distichum</i>

Special Plant Kit For dry-mesic to mesic sunny locations (well drained but retains some moisture)

This kit (\$60.00) consists of 28 plants and will include 2 plants each of the following:

Lead Plant	<i>Amorpha canescens</i>	Wild Quinine	<i>Parthenium integrifolium</i>
Butterfly Weed	<i>Asclepias tuberosa</i>	Purple Prairie Clover	<i>Petalostemum purpureum</i>
Side-oats Grama	<i>Bouteloua curtipendula</i>	Foxglove Beardtongue	<i>Penstemon digitalis</i>
Prairie Coreopsis	<i>Coreopsis palmata</i>	Prairie Phlox	<i>Phlox pilosa</i>
Pale Purple Coneflower	<i>Echinacea pallida</i>	Wild Petunia	<i>Ruellia humilis</i>
Rattlesnake Master	<i>Eryngium yuccifolium</i>	Royal Catchfly	<i>Silene regia</i>
Rough Blazing Star	<i>Liatris aspera</i>	Little Bluestem	<i>Schizachyrium scoparium</i>

Note: Plant pick-up and sale of donated and extra plants will be on Saturday, May 21, 2011 at Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie.

Volunteers Needed for Monitoring Endangered and Threatened Plants

From Susanne Masi, Chicago Botanic Garden

Plants of Concern (POC) is an exciting volunteer citizen science program entering its 11th year. More than 550 volunteers have worked with this program region-wide, monitoring 225 species at 275 sites including Midewin and nearby sites in Will County! Receive training in POC monitoring techniques, meet land managers, talk with seasoned monitors, or refresh your skills for the new growing season by attending one of the following workshops near you:

Sunday, April 3, 2011 at Danada House, Danada Forest Preserve, Wheaton, DuPage County;

Saturday, April 9, 2011 at Plum Creek Nature Center, Goodenow Grove Forest Preserve, Beecher, IL, Will County;

Saturday April 16, 2011 at Barker House, Barker Woods, Michigan City, IN;

Saturday, April 30, 2011 at the Chicago Botanic Garden, Glencoe, Cook County.

All workshops will be held from 9:30 am to 3:00 pm, and are free of charge.

One workshop is required for all new POC monitors and we ask any former monitors who have never been to a workshop to attend. Morning refreshments will be served, but bring a lunch. Registration is required. A confirmation will be sent after registration, and directions will follow shortly before the workshop date. Please visit www.plantsofconcern.org to register **after February 1**, or contact Greg Hitzroth at ghitzroth@chicagobotanic.org or call 847-835-6856. Plants of Concern is coordinated through the Chicago Botanic Garden by Susanne Masi.

Winter 2011 Lecture Series Begins with Bats and Barn Owls, Oh My!

From Wendy Tresouthick, Environmental Education Specialist, MNTP

On Thursday, January 20, 2011, at 7:00 pm at the Midewin Welcome Center, Sharon Peterson of Incredible Bats will give a talk on the conservation and management of bats and share with the audience the many benefits of these misunderstood and sometimes feared creatures. Sharon is an elementary school teacher/librarian and has been trained by Bat Conservation International. Come and meet Sharon and the live Egyptian Fruit Bats she will be displaying at the program.

On Thursday, February 3, 2011, at 7:00 pm at the Midewin Welcome Center, Dan Thompson,

Ecologist at DuPage County Forest Preserve will share with visitors the ins and outs of the Barn Owl Reintroduction Program at DuPage County Forest Preserve. From rearing the birds to radio tagging to releasing, Dan will captivate the audience with his stories, the research, and the connection Midewin has with this project, by being the chosen site for more than one of the released owls this year. Just the kind of results the reintroduction program is seeking!

The topic for the February 17, 2011 program will be announced in the next edition of the *Prairie Telegraph*.

Membership Application

 If you are already a member, tell a friend!

Yes, I (or my organization) would like to become a member of the Midewin Tallgrass Prairie Alliance (MTPA).

Enclosed is my check for annual membership: () \$15 for individuals, or () \$25 for organizations

Optional donation: _____ Total enclosed: _____

MTPA is incorporated as a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Your contribution is tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.

Name(s): _____ email: _____

Name of organization and your title (if applicable): _____

Street address: _____ City: _____

State & zip code: _____ Phone: _____

Send to: Midewin Tallgrass Prairie Alliance, P.O. Box 2026, Joliet, IL 60434

National Forest Foundation and The Wetlands Initiative Support Midewin Volunteer Efforts

From Laura Urban, Development Director, The Wetlands Initiative

Midewin's volunteer program received a big boost in 2010 through a grant from the National Forest Foundation and The Wetlands Initiative. The \$8,000.00 grant funded new waterproof boots for Midewin volunteers to wear in wetland areas, loppers, trowels, saws, and a tool cart to transport tools to work areas. Volunteers also received new safety equipment, such as glasses, hard hats, and vests, including equipment in youth sizes for students, Scout troops, and homeschool groups. The youth gear will be a great help for the Mighty Acorns program, which brings 900 kids to Midewin three times a year to participate in brush cutting, seed harvesting, and planting. Without this new gear, we had just been making do with adult-sized items.

Midewin's Ambassador Program received a new laptop for volunteers to take on the road to share the mission, history, and photos of Midewin to community groups. The grant also funded commemorative "2010 Volunteer" t-shirts for 240 volunteers to recognize them for their work and send the Midewin message out around town.

The grant was provided by The Wetlands Initiative (TWI), a Chicago-based nonprofit organization dedicated to restoring the wetland resources of the Midwest to improve water quality, increase wildlife habitat and biodiversity, and reduce flood damage. TWI has partnered with the U.S. Forest Service since 1997 to help restore more than 2,000 acres at Midewin.

Funds were made available by the National Forest Foundation, which was created by Congress in 1991 to be the official non-profit partner of the USDA Forest Service. The Foundation accepts and administers private gifts of funds and land for the benefit of the National Forests.



In her new volunteer t-shirt, Marcia Baumgartner safely removes invasives with new gloves, hard hat and loppers, all purchased with funds from the grant.

Midewin Tallgrass Prairie Alliance
P.O. Box 2026
Joliet, Illinois 60434

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Directions to Midewin

From I-55: Take exit 241 at Wilmington and at the top of the ramp, turn left (east). Go 3.5 miles on New River Road, turn left (north) on State Route 53, and proceed 1 mile to the site.

From I-80: Take exit 132, State Route 53 (Chicago Street), and turn right (south) at the end of the ramp. Go south about 15 miles to the Headquarters. For the Seed Beds, go about 1 mile further and turn right (west) on River Rd.

From I-57: Take exit 327 at Peotone and turn left (west) from the northbound ramp, or right (west) from the southbound ramp. Go about 15 miles to State Route 53, and turn right (north). Go about 1.5 miles, passing River Rd., to the Headquarters.

River Road Seed Beds: The entrance is on the north side of River Rd., across from Boathouse Road, about 2.5 miles west of Route 53 or about 1.3 miles east of I-55.