Supervisory Public Affairs Specialist Position

USDA Forest Service
Eastern Region
Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie
Wilmington, Illinois 60481
http://www.fs.usda.gov/midewin

Outreach Responses are requested by March 4, 2015

The Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie will soon be advertising to fill one permanent full time Supervisory Public Affairs Specialist position.

This position serves as a Supervisory Public Affairs Specialist is located on Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie. The incumbent is responsible for providing leadership for planning, designing, and executing a comprehensive public affairs program for communicating the organization’s programs, policies, and activities to the surrounding news media, congressional members and their staffs, partners, stakeholders, Tribes, local county and state governments, US Regulatory Agencies, other external interested parties, as well as internal audiences.

The official duty station is Wilmington, Illinois located about 45 miles southwest of Chicago.

Position Duties
The incumbent specializes in communicating internally and externally with the full range of Forest Service stakeholders and partners by executing a broad-based public affairs program. The following is only a summary of the position duties:

- Serves as the Public Affairs Officer at the unit level (with intense and complex public affairs issues) with responsibilities to the Prairie Supervisor for planning, coordinating and directing public affairs support for all natural resource program areas on the unit to include community relations; media operations and facilitations; information strategies; liaison between local organizations, federal/state/local government officials, special interests groups, the public; legislative liaison, tribal governments, etc.
- Principal staff advisor and spokesperson to the Prairie Supervisor and senior staff on all matters involving public issues
- Serves as a key member of the unit’s Leadership Team and provides public affairs advice and counsel to leadership
• Leads a unit wide public affairs team in environmental education, cultural resources, visitor services, architecture, and community connections to ensure that the information and education program aligns closely with the overall information and outreach strategy
• Performs supervisory duties and plans the work to be accomplished by the unit, assigns work to employees, and establishes production or quality standards for the unit’s work
• Performs administrative and human resources management functions for the unit; provides advice, counsel or instruction on both administrative and work matters; and assures full compliance with safety regulations
• The political environment and social atmosphere is intense and management issues often receive frequent regional and national attention
• The fast-paced and dynamic nature of the social and political environment, and large urban population, there is keen public interest and scrutiny of management practices, policies, and issues
• Initiates and directs a positive internal and external information program and environmental education program to meet the various information needs in consonance with the overall mission and policies
• Offers insight to managers on how to respond to the media during a crisis situation or how to proactively communicate about a non-crisis issue
• Plans a total coordinated information program, environmental education, cultural resources, visitor services, architecture, community connections and social media/ web-based programs plus maintain forest website, facebook, twitter and other accounts
• Provides information, promotes and maintains effective working relationships with representatives of government, members of Congress, civic organizations, partnerships, stakeholders, and other agencies, and with representatives of the media and special interest groups
• Responds to internal and external media queries (in writing and verbally) to include issues of a sensitive nature or that may be subject to misunderstanding if not properly explained, or that may draw adverse public attention
• Develop news releases, displays, brochures, newsletters, briefing papers, key messages, talking points, communications plans and other internal-use products to ensure consistency and clarity of message designed to promote the Prairie
• Prepares, reviews or coordinates speeches, presentations, and written and electronic information materials for general and targeted audiences
• Competently and professionally uses a wide variety of communications and outreach tools, mediums and platforms including, but not limited to, social media, news releases, internal and external websites, public meetings, door-to-door visits, personal phone calls, small and large group presentations, feature articles, field trips, and photography/videography in order to communicate key messages and program information

Government Schedule Pay Range and Grade

GS-12 has a starting salary around $76,919 per year
OR
GS-13 has a starting salary around $91,467 per year

Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie Area

Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie was established in 1996 as part of the peace time conversion of the former Joliet Army Ammunition Plant and is administered by the USDA Forest Service. It is also the largest open space in the six-county Chicago metropolitan area. Midewin is implementing its first Land and Resource Management Plan to accomplish the four purposes outlined in the establishing legislation:
• To manage the land and water resources to conserve and enhance native populations and habitats of fish, wildlife, and plants;
• To provide opportunities for scientific, environmental, and land use education and research;
• To allow continued agricultural use under certain conditions; and
• To provide a variety of recreation opportunities.

Midewin operates in an unusually integrated manner with a wide variety of partners. It is the largest contiguous open space, at approximately 19,000 acres in northeastern Illinois. Check out our website at www.fs.fed.us/mntp/ to gain an overview of what's current and planned at Midewin.
Midewin is located 45 miles southwest of Chicago, the third largest metropolitan area in the country, a rural atmosphere predominates throughout the small to mid-sized farming communities that surround Midewin. There are numerous schools, hospitals, doctors, churches, and communities to choose from and cultural opportunities are nearly limitless.

Wilmington, Illinois is a full service community with a population of 5,000 and is located adjacent to the Kankakee River. Fishing is quite popular along the Kankakee and throughout various other rivers and small lakes that surround the area. The climate in this area is defined by four distinct seasons. Summer temperatures can reach over the 90’s, accompanied with, high humidity and heat index in the 100s or more. Spring and fall have average temperatures in the 60’s and 70’s. Winter temperatures will frequently dip below freezing and it is not unusual to see several inches of snow covering the ground November through March.

The Midewin headquarters is located along State Highway 53, two miles north of the town of Wilmington, Illinois. Midewin team members live in many area communities, ranging from the more urban Joliet, population 83,000, to smaller communities tucked around the surrounding farm fields, like Essex, 500, or nearby Elwood, 1,000. For more information on Wilmington, there is a community website available at http://www.wilmington-il.com/. Many options for residing in larger communities are available within an easy half hour commute. There is no public transit available to the Midewin office. The closest Metra station providing access to Chicago is in Joliet.

Medical facilities are plentiful, including easy access to nationally-recognized institutions in Chicago. Cultural events range from performances at the historic Rialto Square Theater in Joliet, to playhouses at local universities, to a variety of festivals celebrating local heritage, to the wide theater, restaurant, and museum options of Chicago.

**If you are Interested**

I am certain you will find a refreshing approach to leadership in natural resource management. If you are looking for an opportunity to do ground-breaking, nationally recognized work please respond to this outreach by **March 4, 2015** using one of the following methods:

Please respond by using the Web-based Response Form located at:

- [https://fsoutreach.gdcii.com?id=888FCBA1135A4798B85C4019E76A4A29](https://fsoutreach.gdcii.com?id=888FCBA1135A4798B85C4019E76A4A29)

Or

Send the completed Candidate Response Form to one of the following places:

- Mail to: Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie, 30239 S. State Route 53, Wilmington, IL 60481
- Or Email to: wspang@fs.fed.us
- Or FAX to: (815) 423-6376

**For additional information about this position, please contact:** Wade Spang, Prairie Supervisor by phone at (815) 423-6370 or by email at wspang@fs.fed.us