ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

for

ADMINISTRATIVE SITE

Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie
Will County, Illinois

February 1, 2000

Deciding Officials:
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1. Purpose and Need for Proposed Action

The need for this action was brought about when the 1995 Illinois Land and Conservation Act established the Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie (Midewin NTP) with the transfer of land from the former Joliet Army Ammunition Plant managed under the US Army Department of Defense. On March 10, 1997 the initial transfer of 15,080 acres of land occurred, along with management responsibilities.

A two-story brick farmhouse built in 1940 prior to the establishment of the Joliet Army Ammunition Plant and a garage built in 1978, are the only permanent structures on the 12-acre administrative site. The brick farmhouse has been modified and is now used as the headquarters for the Midewin NTP along with two rental trailers, a double-wide trailer used for conference room and storage, and a rental building located in the town of Wilmington. Currently none of the facilities meet the 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act guidelines for people with disabilities, nor current codes required for public buildings.

The current facilities do not provide adequate space to accommodate the Midewin staff and visitors seeking information or interpretation of prairie natural and cultural resources. There are no storage facilities to house the field equipment necessary for land management.

There is one wastewater tank for the site (the tank was replaced in 1996) and there is no information available on the location or existence of a leach field at the existing site. A new well was drilled in 1996 that provides water to the site. While the water is potable it is not palatable. The flow is adequate to meet the needs of the site but would not be adequate for fire protection.

The desired condition is for a centralized Forest Service office complex that is accessible to all staff and the public.

3. Proposed Action

The Midewin NTP is proposing to construct a new administrative site within the next year. The proposed administrative site is located on approximately 12 acres in Will County, Illinois, in Section 18, Township 33 North, Range 10 East at 30071 S. State Route 53, approximately 2 miles north of Wilmington, Illinois.

The complex would be easily found by the public and have adequate office space for employees, parking, storage for field equipment, shade houses and green houses for growing prairie plant stock. Any new facility would have good telecommunications, adequate utilities, water/wastewater systems and adequate space to provide the public programs as written in the enacting legislation.

3. Decision To Be Made

The Prairie Supervisor will decide whether to develop the administrative site as proposed or to defer any action at this time. The decision on how to use the existing farmhouse and garage will be made at a later date.

4. Significant Issues

Significant issues related to the proposed action were identified by reviewing relevant source materials being used to develop the Land and Resource Management Plan, and by contacting interested and affected members of the public, other federal and state agencies, and USDA Forest Service employees.

A scoping letter was sent to 209 interested citizens or organizations and the Midewin NTP staff, on 11/12/99 with a 30-day comment period. Information on the proposal was also published in the Chicago Tribune on 11/30/99, the Kankakee Journal on 12/1/99, and the Joliet Herald on 12/6/99. Nine comments were received, seven written and two by phone. One comment was from a local consulting firm inquiring about the design work. Their inquiry was not relevant to the purpose of this document and not considered further. Five people commented in support of building the administrative site. Specific comments, issues and concerns were identified from these sources. The interdisciplinary team reviewed the comments and the following significant issues were identified and serve as a basis for evaluating the alternatives.

a) Concern about a high water table and presence of hydric soils
b) Concern about the use and preservation of the existing farmhouse and outbuildings.
c) Concern that the new building should be built to withstand high winds in compliance with FEMA 320 10/98.
d) Concern about whether any sensitive species will be affected by the new construction.
e) Concern that access to and from Highway 53 presents a safety hazard with no existing turn lanes.
f) Concern that an administrative site should address the following considerations:
    1) Site should be easily found by the public
    2) Adequate working space
    3) Adequate parking
    4) Proximity to existing infrastructure
    5) Potential for future expansion
    6) Accessibility for persons with disabilities
    7) Distance from potentially hazardous materials remaining from the Arsenal
    8) Landscape architecture appropriate to the prairie

5. Evaluation Criteria

The following criteria were used to evaluate how each alternative addresses the issues and concerns.

a) Building design considers all the factors listed above.
b) Acres of hydric soil affected.
c) Sensitive species affected.
d) Adequate visitor information and interpretation facilities

6. Description of Alternatives

6.1. Alternatives considered but dropped from detailed analysis.
Brown Circle- This alternative would have utilized the existing Brown Circle Non-Commissioned Officer housing unit built in 1941, as the site and structures for the administrative site. The housing unit had been abandoned for many years and all the utilities to this unit were removed. The buildings were two-story residence that did not meet the Americans with Disabilities Act Requirements. The houses had been used for law enforcement training and vandalized to a point where they were structurally unsound. Retrofitting these buildings into office space or providing other administrative buildings at this site and providing adequate utilities is cost prohibitive. The location is not desirable based on the evaluation criteria. These buildings were removed in January 1999.

6.2. Alternatives considered in detail.

Alternative 1 – No Action
Under this alternative, new facilities for an administration site would not be constructed.

Alternative 2 – Alternative Rental Facilities
Under this alternative different facilities would be found to serve as the administrative complex for Midewin NTP. Buildings that are large enough to provide adequate office, lab and warehouse space are not available in the local community and may not be available in one location in a neighboring community.

Alternative 3 – Proposed Action
The proposal includes constructing an approximately 12,000 square foot office building at the existing administrative site (see attached map, Appendix A). Parking space would be provided for 77 vehicles plus 33 overflow spaces for employee, Forest Service and visitor vehicles. The new office would be designed consistent with a prairie theme (utilizing natural materials and colors as much as possible). The proposal also includes the construction of a 9,000 square foot machine shed (basic metal pole building, unheated) for the storage of the farm equipment used for prairie restoration and a 5,400 square foot multi-use building (two story, heated, office and lab space). Adjacent to the multi-use building will be shade houses and green houses for growing plant stock. The roadways will be a combination of gravel surface (service roads to the machine shed and multi-use

building) and bituminous surface for entry and parking. A site trail and concrete walks will provide the visitor and employees access around the site.

The landscaping would feature native prairie plant species, retention ponds for surface run-off, a wetland wastewater treatment system, new water well and new utility lines into the site. The lines of the existing well will be extended to the machine shed to supply water for cleaning vehicles and watering plant stock.

7. Mitigation Measures

7.1 Wetlands Mitigation

The soil types on this site are Benton and Drummer. Drummer is a soil classification that includes wetland or wet prairie. The area in consideration is not a functional wetland. There is a general absence of hydrophytic vegetation and the hydrology indicates the site is not a wetland per Executive Order 11990. Under the Proposed Action Alternative the wetlands will be enhanced with the planned retention ponds and wetland wastewater treatment system both featuring wet prairie plants.

7.2 Sensitive or Threatened or Endangered Species Mitigation

There are no federally listed threatened or endangered species on this site.

Several bird species utilize this site that are Regional Forester sensitive or Illinois State listed species. The Northern Harrier utilizes this area during the winter months, but not as breeding habitat. The Upland Sandpiper nests in the medium and short structured grasses and forages in the short grasses. The Bobolink prefers to nest in the medium structure grasses but will nest in short grasses. The adjacent grazed fields are used as foraging habitat. The Loggerhead Shrike occasionally forages in this area (the proposed site and adjacent grazed fields) in the fall. Those few birds that use the site will be directly affected by the construction, but the population overall on Midewin will not be impacted. The adjacent grazed allotment, while reduced by 9.33 acres, is still of sufficient size (approximately 115 acres) to provide habitat for the Upland Sandpiper and the Bobolink.

There is a small population (approximately 100 plants) of Sullivant's Coneflower (*Rudbeckia fulgida* var. *sullivantii*) on this site. While this plant is considered rare and uncommon locally and is listed as G3 nationally by the Nature Conservancy, it is locally common at Midewin. Other subpopulations occur along State Route 53. The seeds from these plants have been collected and the potential for transplanting these plants will be evaluated. Attempts are being made to propagate this plant species for restoration, using this subpopulation as one source of plant materials. However, the loss of the small subpopulation on this site is not significant due to the number of subpopulations nearby.

7.3

7.4 Hazardous Materials Mitigation

Confirmatory sampling was conducted over the 12-acre site. Lab results indicate the presence of arsenic in excess of apparent background associated with former fence lines at the site. Sampling efforts have shown that when arsenic is present, it is not widespread but situated at the fence line. As a result, the mass of arsenic present appears to be small. The samples, which have been analyzed for the site, do not indicate arsenic present in excess of accepted Illinois EPA limits for construction worker exposure. No mitigation measure will be required.

7.5 Cultural or Historic Resources Mitigation

A heritage resource inventory was conducted for the proposed construction site. No archaeological sites were recorded during the survey. Therefore, there will be no project-related impacts to mitigate on the heritage resources base as a result of implementing the actions proposed in Alternatives 1 through 3.

8. Affected Environment and Environmental Consequences

8.1 Environmental effects on recreation and heritage resources.

Current situation – There are no heritage resources on the current site. The demonstration beds on site are used in the educational programs at Midewin for visitors and children from the local schools. The seedbeds provide an opportunity for folks to become familiar with the variety of native species, prairie plants that will be restored throughout the prairie. The children involved in the educational programs and the volunteers assist Midewin in the management of the seedbeds through weeding of invasive species and collecting of seed for future plantings.

Alternative 1 – A decrease in recreational opportunities would result, since this alternative cannot be selected as the Action Alternative due to code requirements for public buildings.

Alternative 2 – Maintaining the seedbeds at this location would need to be evaluated if rental facilities for administrative use were located in adjacent communities. The recreational opportunities would decrease under this alternative.

Alternative 3 – The development of the site, under this alternative, includes a visitor information area in the office building and a site trail that will provide for day use opportunities. The site trail would provide the visitor an opportunity to view the demonstration beds as well as the additional features of the site, for instance, the wetland wastewater treatment system and the retention ponds, which feature wet prairie plants.

Cumulative effects – There would be no effects on heritage resources in any alternative. There would be a decrease in recreational opportunities with Alternative 1 or 2. An increase in recreational opportunities will be realized in Alternative 3.

8.2 Environmental effects on visual resources.

Current situation – The Visual Quality Objective (VQO) and the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) will be determined as part of the Land and Resource Management Plan. Two and a half acres of the 12-acre site are the original homestead for the farmhouse that is utilized for office space. The remainder of the site is unmanaged and overgrown with vegetation.

Alternative 1 – No change from current situation.

Alternative 2 – No change from current situation.

Alternative 3 – The design of the new office complex will be consistent with prairie-style architecture. The buildings will blend naturally with the surrounding environment and utilize native materials and naturally occurring colors. The landscaping will include native prairie plants, retention ponds and a wetland wastewater treatment system, which will enhance the visual quality of the site.

Cumulative effects – Approximately 3 years ago, large rotting trees were removed from the site. No other visual-related activities occurred in the recent past. The office and landscaping proposed in Alternative 3 will enhance the visual quality of the site.

8.3 Environmental effects on soil, water and air.

Current situation – the existing condition has potential impacts on soil and water from the leach fields associated with the septic system for the buildings. The location, age and condition of the leach field are unknown. In addition, confirmatory sampling in the soil and testing of the water well were done on this site to determine the presence of hazardous materials in the soil and water. Arsenic tests were also taken in the old fence line. While some levels of contaminants of concern were found they were below background or anticipated clean up levels for the soil and water.

Alternative 1 – No change to the current situation. Since the existing administrative facilities cannot be used for the long-term, the discontinued use of these facilities may have a positive effect on soil and water.

Alternative 2 – A positive effect may be realized if different facilities are rented in lieu of new construction. Discontinuing the use of the existing facilities may have a positive effect on soil and water.

Alternative 3 – Under this alternative, a positive effect on soil and water may be realized, since a new septic system would be installed with the new construction. If feasible, the existing septic system for the farmhouse would be connected to the new wetland wastewater treatment system. If not feasible, the old septic system would be abandoned in accordance with applicable state regulations. Retention ponds and a wetland wastewater

treatment system would provide adequately for surface runoff, the natural treatment of wastewater and inhibit any potential erosion.

Cumulative effects – There have been no activities affecting soils, water or air in the recent past. Some activities occurred as a result of the arsenal operations, such as the application of an arsenical-based herbicide in the 1960s. This practice was discontinued once the effects were known. While arsenic remains immobile in soil, the levels present were found to have a minimal effect on the site. A positive effect to soil, water and air may be realized in each alternative, if the use of existing facilities and septic system are discontinued.

8.4 Environmental effects on vegetation and wildlife, including threatened, endangered and sensitive species.

Current situation – There are no federally listed threatened or endangered species existing on the current site. Several Regional Forester sensitive and State listed species occur, but will be mitigated (see Section 7.2). Two years ago the site was fenced in preparation for the new administrative site. Approximately 9.33 acres was added to the existing farmhouse site. This 9.33 acres had been actively grazed, thus maintaining short grasses for certain grassland birds. Removing 9.33 acres from grazing has had some effects on Upland Sandpiper and Bobolinks. The effects are the following: reduced foraging habitat for Upland Sandpiper but increased nesting habitat for the Bobolink. Both species utilize the acreage, as it now exists. While the specific birds that utilize the site will be affected, there will be no effect on the population as a whole on Midewin. Conversion to short grass habitat elsewhere on Midewin NTP will offset this potential loss of habitat.

Alternative 1 – No change to the current situation unless the site is abandoned for administrative use entirely and returned to grazing. This may have a positive effect on the Upland Sandpiper, which prefers short grasses and a potential negative effect on the Bobolink, which prefers medium structured grasses.

Alternative 2 – Same as Alternative 1.

Alternative 3 – The topsoil on this site will be stripped and many cubic yards of fill material will be required to construct the new facilities. The existing sensitive plants will be lost if they can't be transplanted. Efforts have been made to minimize this effect by harvesting the seed. Other subpopulations exist nearby and the population of this species will be maintained in other areas. The utilization of native species in the landscaping of this site will enhance the restoration of the prairie and continue to provide bird habitat.

Cumulative effects – The habitat has been altered in the recent past which had the potential to affect habitat for sensitive grassland birds. These effects have been mitigated in adjacent areas through changes in management (approximately 400 acres of grassland habitat has been added since 1997). The surrounding area provides adequate

unfragmented habitat for the species of concern. Cumulative effects of Alternatives 1 through 3 are minimal.

8.5 Economic Factors:

Current situation – The existing farmhouse was modified to house Midewin staff as a temporary situation until new up-to-date facilities were available. As the staff increased additional temporary office space was added including rental trailers and rental buildings. Current cost of these facilities is $13,000 per year. These buildings are not suitable for long-term office facilities. Code requirements for public buildings are not being met under the current situation.

Alternative 1 – Long-term use of existing facilities is not feasible with so many building code violations.

Alternative 2 – Under this alternative, Midewin would continue to pay rent for facilities to house employees and volunteers. New rental accommodations would be required that meet all necessary codes for public buildings. Based on rental rates from a local Real Estate company, the total cost of this option, considering a 20-year amortization, no inflation and no increase in rental rates ranges from $3.0 million to $3.4 million (See Economic Comparison, Appendix B). There are no office buildings in the Wilmington area comparable in size to the proposed new office. Machine shed type buildings are available locally, but it would require several buildings to provide the needed space per the Proposed Action Alternative. The type of building comparable to the multi-use building is not available, but the estimated rental (for this comparison) is an average of the cost for the office and machine shed. Some economic effects would result from moving the administrative services to another community. Negative effects may result in the local community and comparable positive effects realized in the receiving community. However, they would be minimal with the exception of the rental fees. The ability to manage existing programs currently established with the local schools and partners may be affected. Administrative costs would increase for staff commuting from the office (in an adjacent community) to the field. The desired location would be on Midewin NTP lands, in proximity to the work on the ground.

Alternative 3 – The new office complex is estimated to cost approximately 2.5 million dollars. This is a one time capital investment (See Economic Comparison, Appendix B). The total cost of this alternative considering a 20-year amortization, no inflation, maintenance and salvage value, is $1.5 million. Efficiency and cost savings will be gained by having one centralized location for all staff. Storage of field equipment in a storage building will reduce wear and tear.

Cumulative effects – The cost to the taxpayer of the Proposed Action Alternative is roughly half the cost of Alternative 2 when analyzed over a 20-year period. Additional savings will be realized by having the administrative functions located in close proximity to the work on the prairie.

8.6 Social Factors

Current situation – There are three trailers and a farmhouse on the existing administrative site, plus a rental facility in the city of Wilmington that serve as office space for the Midewin staff. Often this is confusing to the public, who is not always sure which office to call or visit for information. In addition, since all the support services are at the farmhouse office, the staff located in the Wilmington rental often make many trips per day. None of the existing buildings used for office space at Midewin are accessible for persons with disabilities. The existing farmhouse has 27 code violations regarding buildings for public use. Some of these code violations cannot be rectified. Public health and safety standards will not be met. The No Action Alternative cannot be selected. A change from the current situation will be required as identified in Alternative 2 or 3.

Alternative 1 – Under this alternative, no new facilities would be built. Since existing facilities do not meet the applicable code requirements for public buildings or accessibility requirements, use of these facilities as public buildings must be discontinued.

Alternative 2 – Under this alternative, no new facilities would be built. Different office accommodations would be rented in order to house the staff needed to manage the prairie and provide for public health and safety. Warehouse space will be rented to store field equipment and office/lab space will be needed to compliment the shade houses and green houses needed for the prairie restoration work. These facilities would be located in adjacent communities (not necessarily one community or one location), since no rental facilities are available locally that meet the administrative needs of the prairie. All rental facility would meet code requirements for public buildings.

Alternative 3 – This alternative would add three permanent buildings to the site. This would facilitate better communication with the public and enhance the ability of Midewin to continue and expand environmental education and volunteer programs. All facilities would be accessible to persons with disabilities and meet code requirements for public buildings. The existing rental trailers would be removed once the new office is completed. Increased opportunities for visitors will be provided through the visitor information area and the site trail.

Cumulative effects – There have been no activities with a social impact in the recent past at the Midewin administrative site. Alternative 1 cannot be selected, as it cannot meet the requirements for public buildings. Alternative 2 and 3 provide for office facilities that would meet the requirements for public buildings. If Alternative 2 is selected the administrative functions for Midewin NTP would be in adjacent communities removed from the lands managed by Midewin. This may not alleviate public confusion. Selection of Alternative 3 would be the least confusing to the public. The proposed site of Alternative 3 is adjacent to the current administrative office of Midewin. A “presence” in the community and prairie parkland area has been established. The ability to continue and expand the programs currently established with local schools and partners would be enhanced under this alternative. Additional opportunities for the public would be available.

8.7 Irreversible and Irretrievable Commitment of Resources

The administrative building complex will occupy a 12-acre site. Approximately 1/3 of the acres will be vegetated with grasses and prairie plants. The remaining acreage will be part of the permanent infrastructure of the site (buildings, roads, trails).

9. Analysis of Significance

The USDA Forest Service is required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 to analyze the significance of the effects. The alternatives were evaluated as to whether they may individually or cumulatively with other activities, have significant environmental effects, as referred to in the NEPA regulations 40 CFR 1508.27.

9.1. Context

The geographic and social context of the environmental effects of the proposed administrative site development, considered either singly or cumulatively, are limited to the locality on which they occur and to the specific persons interested in the specific resources. Resource-specific areas of analysis and extent of effects (both short and long term) are described in this document and in specialist reports in the Project Record at Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie headquarters office.

9.2. Intensity

The severity of the environmental effects of the proposed administrative site development, considered alone or cumulatively with others, were tested against the following ten criteria listed in the NEPA regulations 40 CFR 1508.27:

9.2.1. The impacts that may be both beneficial and adverse. The anticipated environmental effects and their intensity have been disclosed for each alternative in this environmental assessment. The severity of any adverse impacts was viewed in the wider contexts of time and space.

9.2.2. The effects on public health and safety. Public health and safety were considered in the social and economic impacts as it applies to Building Code requirements for public buildings. Potential safety issues regarding access off State Route 53 will be identified in cooperation with Illinois Department of Transportation and will be dealt with through appropriate standards and guidelines.

9.2.3. The unique characteristics of the geographic area. There are no unique characteristics of the geographic area that will be significantly affected by the selected actions.

9.2.4. The degree to which the effects on the quality of the human environment are likely to be highly controversial. The administrative site development proposed in the

Proposed Action Alternative would not significantly affect the quality of the human environment, and effects are unlikely to be highly controversial in a scientific sense.

9.2.5. The degree to which the possible effects on the human environment are highly uncertain or involve unique risks or unknown risks. Surveys of the area did not find physical evidence of hazardous materials, except the presence of arsenic along security fence lines. The effects of the proposed administrative site development on wildlife and plant habitats, visual quality, recreation, cultural resources, soils, watershed, air quality and socio-economic concerns have been analyzed to the best of our present knowledge and are disclosed in this document. No unique risks are involved, and there is no basis for suspecting unknown risks.

9.2.6. The degree to which the action may establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects or represents a decision in principle about a future consideration. No precedents are established as a result of the decision being made or of the Proposed Action. The site development is specific to the Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie. Future proposals within the area or in surrounding areas can be analyzed on their merits and implemented or not, independent of the action currently proposed.

9.2.7. Cumulative significant effects of actions. Section 8 of this EA summarizes the potential cumulative effects of past, present and reasonably foreseeable actions on particular resources. The interdisciplinary team determined that there would be no significant cumulative effects associated with the proposed alternatives.

9.2.8. The degree to which the action may adversely affect districts, sites, highways, structures, or objects listed in or eligible in the National Historic Register or Historic Places, or may cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural or historical resources. The proposed site was professionally surveyed for heritage resources. No sites were found. Therefore, no significant effects are foreseen, and no loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural or historic resources is anticipated.

9.2.9. The degree to which the action may adversely affect an endangered or threatened species or its habitat that has been determined to be critical under the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended. Possible effects on federally listed species and on Forest Service sensitive plant and wildlife species were analyzed and evaluated. No federally listed species exist on the site of the Proposed Action Alternative.

9.2.10. Legality of the action. None of the alternatives would violate Federal, State or local laws or regulations imposed for the protection of the environment. However, under the no action alternative, the Forest Service would fail to comply with the building code requirements for public buildings and the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.

10. Monitoring

The following resources will be monitored if the Proposed Action Alternative is selected for implementation. Midewin NTP personnel and volunteers will conduct the monitoring using standard monitoring techniques.

10.1 Wastewater system - a new system will be installed if the wetland wastewater system doesn't meet state requirements.
10.2 Water usage, well testing monthly
10.3 Site use, visitors, trail users,

11. Response to public comments received during scoping on the proposed administrative site development at Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie.

1. Comment: Will the proposed construction affect the high water table and are hydric soils present?

1. Response: Drummer soil classification is common to wetland or wet prairie by description. However, there is a lack of hydrology or hydrophytic vegetation that is necessary to determine hydric soils. There is a high water table on the proposed site, which is common to the Benton and Drummer soil classification. Large quantities of fill material would be required to construct this site and provide the essential drainage. Construction on this site would not affect the high water table or opportunities for wet prairie establishment.

2. Comment: The parking lot should be blacktop surface.

2. Response: Under the proposed action alternative, there would be a combination of gravel surface and bituminous surface roads. The roads and parking lots associated with the prairie visitors and employees would be bituminous surfaced.

3. Comment: Keep the brick farmhouse for future use.

3. Response: The future use of the brick farmhouse is not part of this environmental assessment.

4. Comment: Encourage building a wind resistant building according to FEMA 320 regulations 10/98.

4. Response: Any new construction would be build in accordance with all current, applicable national, state and local codes.

5. Comment: Is the new facility needed?

5. Response: Yes, current facilities do not meet the required codes for use as public buildings. Relocation to a different community limits the ability to maintain and expand existing and/or planned programs with local schools and volunteers.

Adequate facilities on the existing site, enhances the ability of Midewin staff to serve the public.

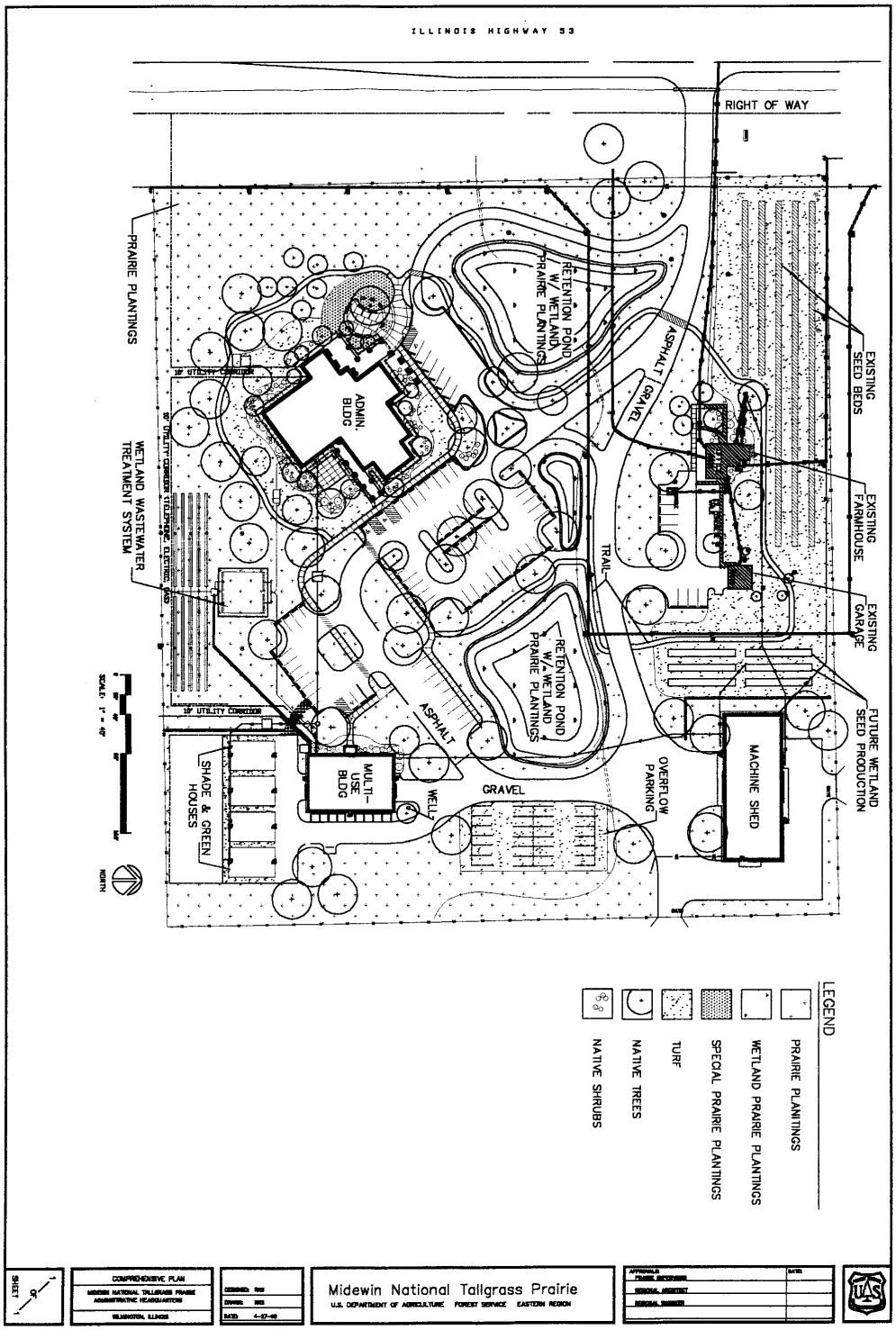
6. Comment: Will the new facility include a visitor center?
6. Response: There will be an information area in the new building that will serve that function and interpretive opportunities will be available on site.

7. Comment: What is the location of the administrative site.
7. Response: The proposed site is located along State Route 53, approximately 2 miles north of Wilmington, Illinois in Will County, and adjacent to the farmhouse that currently serves as the administrative office for Midewin NTP. A new fence was erected in 1997 around the proposed 12-acre site.

8. Comment: The Forest Service should use existing buildings and parking lots in lieu of new construction.
8. Response: In the initial transfer of property, the Forest Service received many building structures. Most of the structures were concrete bunkers or warehouses. This type of structure is not conducive to the needs of employees, volunteers and partners as Midewin moves forward in the restoration efforts. The locations and the condition of these buildings will not meet the needs for administration of Midewin NTP. There are no utilities, water or wastewater facilities available and providing the basic infrastructure is cost prohibitive. Health risks, due to rodent infestation, are present. While there are parking areas available around the site, they are not located in areas that would be used for an office complex. Due to lack of maintenance, reconstruction of these parking lots would be required. Other adaptive reuse opportunities for buildings and other infrastructure are being evaluated as part of the Land and Resource Management Plan. Adequate access for employees and the public does not exist. The evaluation criteria would not be met if existing structures and parking lots were used.

APPENDIX A

PROPOSED SITE DEVELOPMENT MAP – ALTERNATIVE 3


ILLINOIS HIGHWAY 53
RIGHT OF WAY
EXISTING SEED BEDS
EXISTING FARMHOUSE
EXISTING GARAGE
FUTURE WETLAND SEED PRODUCTION
MACHINE SHED
OVERFLOW PARKING
TRAIL
ASPHALT
GRAVEL
RETENTION POND W/ WETLAND PRAIRIE PLANTINGS
RETENTION POND W/ WETLAND PRAIRIE PLANTINGS
ADMIN. BLDG
MULTI-USE BLDG
WELL
SHADE & GREEN HOUSES
WETLAND WASTEWATER TREATMENT SYSTEM
PRAIRIE PLANTINGS
10' UTILITY CORRIDOR
SCALE: 1" = 40'
NORTH
LEGEND
PRAIRIE PLANTINGS
WETLAND PRAIRIE PLANTINGS
SPECIAL PRAIRIE PLANTINGS
TURF
NATIVE TREES
NATIVE SHRUBS
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
MIDEWIN NATIONAL TALLGRASS PRAIRIE
ADMINISTRATIVE HEADQUARTERS
WILMINGTON, ILLINOIS
Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE FOREST SERVICE EASTERN REGION
SHEET 1

APPENDIX B

ECONOMIC COMPARISON

Economic Comparison

Rental price of office space based on current rentals in Wilmington area:

Office: $7.00 to $9.00/square foot annually plus utilities
Metal pole building: $3.37/square foot annually; USE $3.50/SF
(Unheated, 200 Amp service, minimal lighting and outlets, concrete floor)
Metal sided, heated, office/lab building: estimate $6.00/square foot

Assumptions:

20-year amortization
No inflation
No increase in rental rates
Maintenance for 20 years
Salvage value
Furnishings for both alternatives is assumed to be equal and not included in the comparison

Rental Option:

Office: 12,000 SF	@$7.00/SF=	$ 84,000	@$9.00/SF=	$108,000
Pole building: 9,000SF	@$3.50/SF=	$ 31,500		$ 31,500
Multi-use: 5,400 SF	@$6.00/SF=	$ 32,400		$ 32,400
Total:		$147,900		$171,900
Cost over 20 years:		$3.0 million		$3.4 million

Maintenance: None (All maintenance to be completed by property owner).
Salvage Value: None

Total cost of renting: $3.0 to $3.4 million
NOTE: This does not include any costs to retrofit an existing rental for FS needs, i.e. computer wiring, etc

New Construction:

Office complex including all site work: $2.0 to $2.5 million
Maintenance: $135,300*
Salvage value: $1.1 million (Assume 60% of the cost of the buildings, no salvage assumed on the site work or roads).

Total cost of Proposed Action: $1.54 million

*Maintenance: water tests: $240 annually; septic pump: $125 annually; well disinfection: $200 annually; furnace: $200 annually; paint, exterior: $5,000 every 5 years; paint, interior: $5,000 every 5 years; carpet replacement: $5,000 every 5 years; road maintenance (lift of gravel every 10 years @ $10,000, repaint stripes every 2 years @ $2,000, patching blacktop every 5 years @ $5,000): $60,000