

Benton County IRM Advisory Committee Meeting

2026



Topics Being Covered

- + Steering Committee Guidelines
- + Staff
- + Seasonal Timeline
- + Spraying
- + Seeding
- + Burning
- + Tree/Brush Work
- + Adopt-A-Prairie Program
- + Any other questions



Advisory Committee Members

• John Frazier Private	Term Ends 12/31/28	• Tracy Seeman Board Liaison	Term Ends 12/31/27
• Luke Hennings Private	Term Ends 12/31/27	• Wayne Siela Public	Term Ends 12/31/26
• Ann Jorgensen Private	Term Ends 12/31/27	• Becky VanWey Public	Term Ends 12/31/27
• Zach Parmater Private	Term Ends 12/31/26		
• Jeff Schadle Private	Term Ends 12/31/26		
• Jeffrey Ralston Private	Term Ends 12/31/27		



Steering Committee/BOS Expectations

???How many times do we have to meet???

Iowa Code 314.22 Integrated roadside vegetation management: [The department shall report annually in January to the general assembly regarding its activities](#)

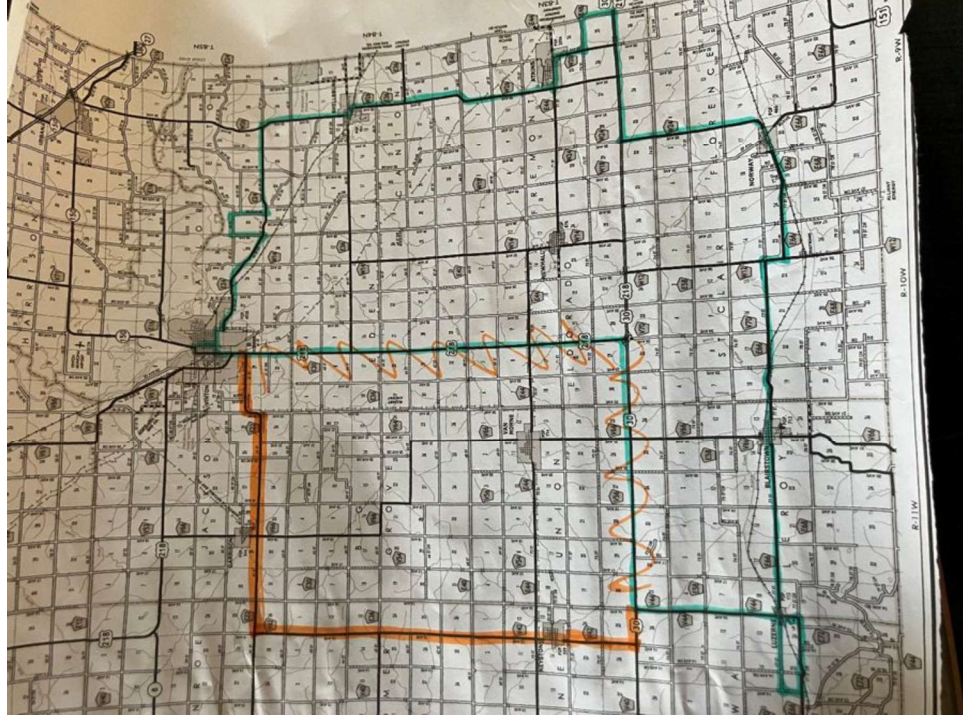
Committees is subject to Chapters 21 and 22 of the Iowa Code concerning open meetings and public records.



Steering Committee Tour

July 22nd 2025 5pm-7pm

- + 65 mile round trip tour
- + 7-10 locations of emphasis
 - + Without getting out of vehicle
- + Better use of time than a trip with 2-3 stops



Employees

Eric Schares (Roadside Manager/Weed Commissioner)

- Hawkeye Community College - AAS in Horticultural Science (2008)
- ISA Certified Arborist (2021)
- Roadside Manager for the City of Waverly (2018-2024)

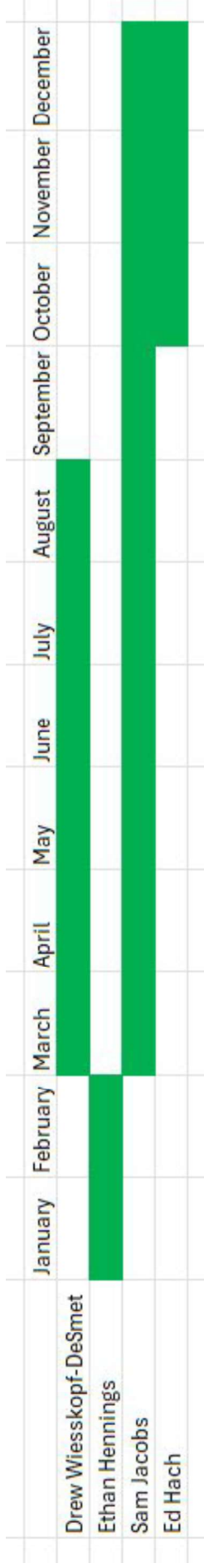
Sam Jacobs (Roadside Technician)

- Hawkeye Community College - AAS in Natural Resource Management (2022)
- Upper Iowa University- Bachelors in Wildlife Management (Early Spring 2024)
- Pheasants Forever “Wildlife Tech.” (Spring 2024-Spring 2025)

Ed Hach (Roadside Technician)

- Hawkeye Community College - AAS in Natural Resource Management (2019)
- ISA Certified Arborist (2024), ISA Tree Risk Assessment Qualification (2025)
- North Unit Park Ranger with Benton County Conservation (2021-2025)

Employee Timeline



- + June 11th Sam gets his CDL
- + July 7th Drew gets his CDL
- + August 8th Drew's last day

2025 Timeline

- January & February
 - Tree work in ROW's using Bucket truck, Hand cutting, Skid mowing, Treating stumps
- March
 - Started Hydroseeding, equipment work, prescribed burns, helped Conservation with projects
- April
 - Hydroseeding and Burning
- May
 - Spray truck setup and calibration, started roadside spraying operation
- June
 - Roadside spraying, Non-selective spraying on guardrails and maintainer sheds, weed complaints started coming in, submitted LRTF Grant
- July
 - Roadside spraying, weed complaints, spot sprayed harder to kill invasives, management of newly seeded areas

2025 Timeline (Continued)

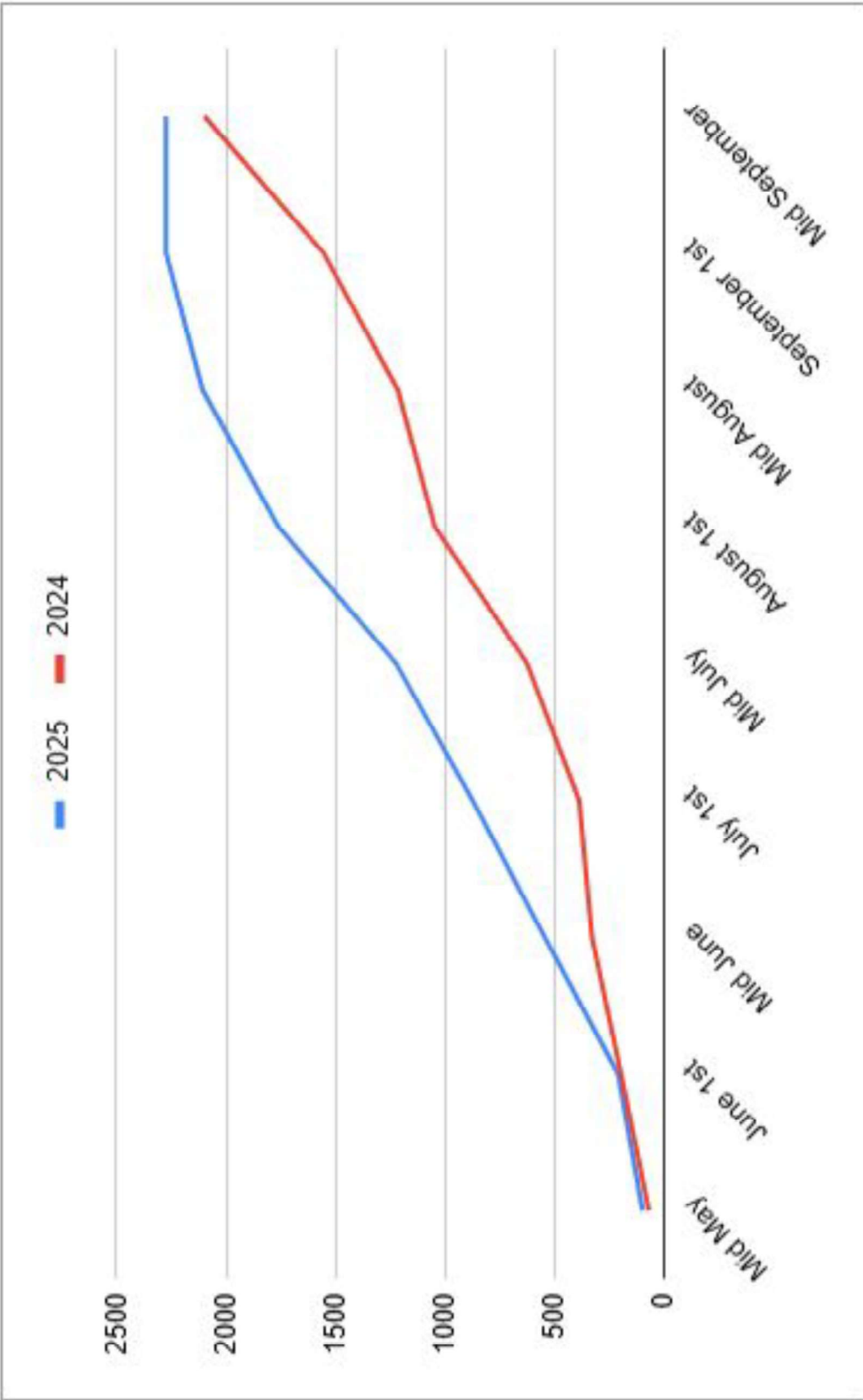
- August
 - Roadside spraying, spot sprayed harder to kill invasives, management of newly seeded areas, prepping future seeding areas
- September
 - Roadside spraying, spot sprayed harder to kill invasives, management of newly seeded areas, prepping future seeding areas
- October
 - Roadside Conference, skid mowing woody plants, prescribed burning, hydroseeding
- November
 - Prescribed burning, hydroseeding, snow removal, pesticide recertification training
- December
 - Equipment maintenance, snow removal, started cutting brush in ROW's again

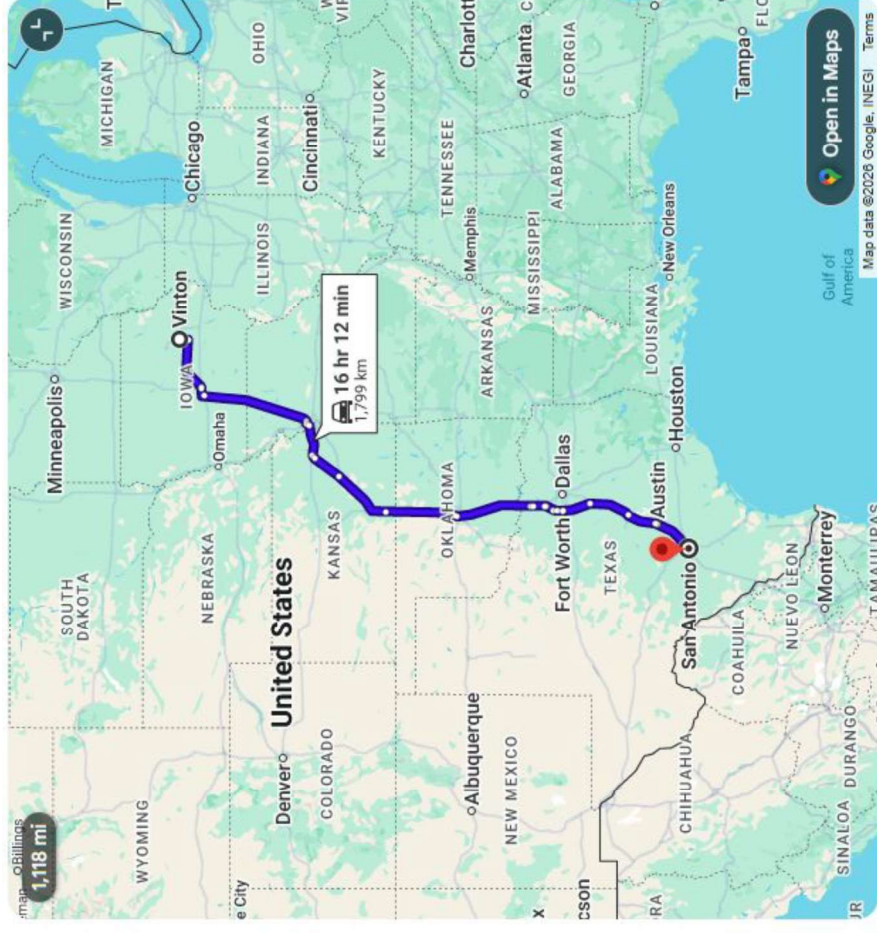
Spraying Stats

- + May 6th first day spraying
- + 91% of the county ROW's got sprayed (2,273 of 2,498 miles)
- + The majority of the 225 miles skipped were dirt roads on wet days
- + 173 more miles sprayed this year than last
- + 63 total days sprayed from May 6th-September 2nd
 - + Only 82 non holiday and weekend days in that span on the calendar and that doesn't even account for rainy and windy days

Plan to utilize 3 trucks next season, but that 3rd truck will be used to spray woody plants.
Can be used to spray herbaceous weeds too

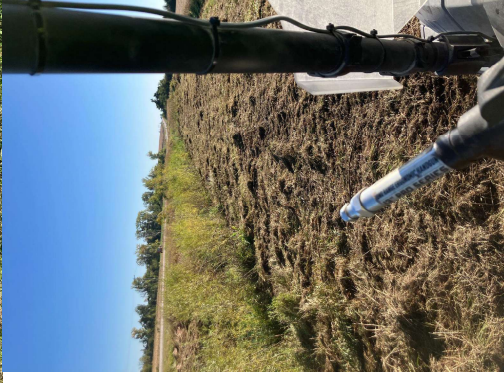
Major advantage to having a smaller truck now to spray with is you don't need a CDL to operate that rig. Just need Category 6 spraying license. It also has an extra chemical hopper to carry a second chemical

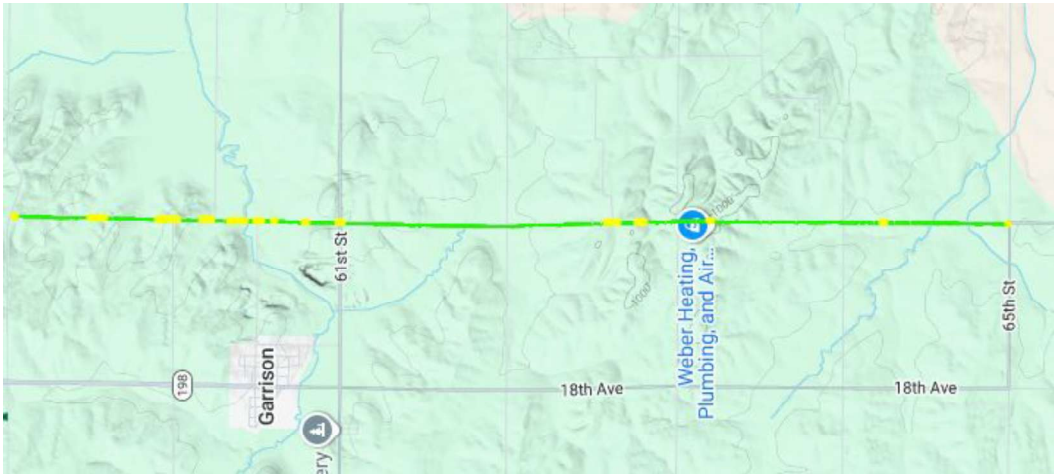




2,273 Miles would take you from Vinton to the South side of San Antonio Texas and back

Spraying Pictures



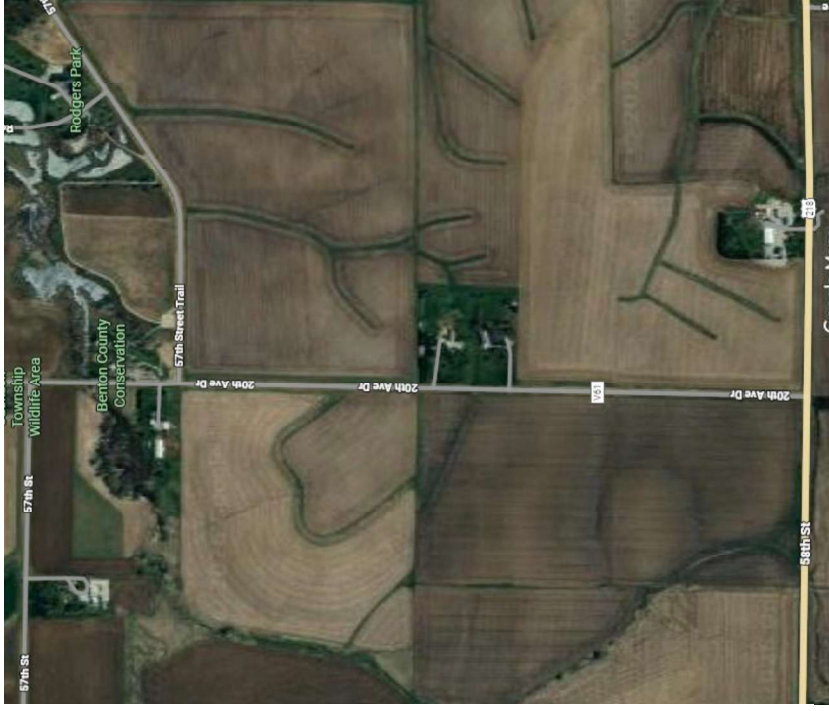




Seeding Stats

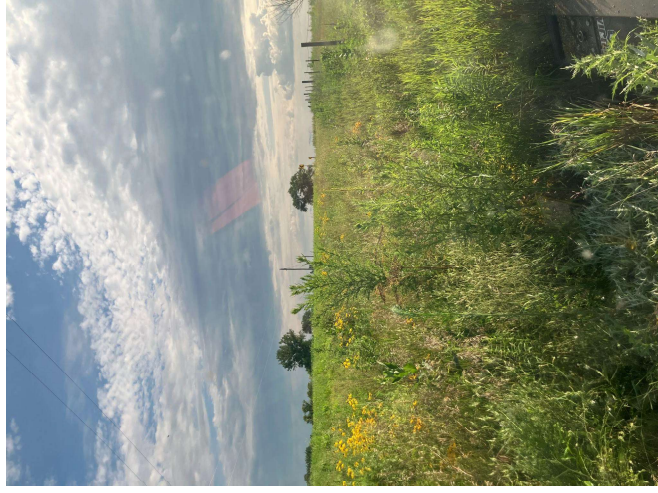
- + 28.5 acres planted to natives in 2025
 - + Only 13.9 acres in 2024
- + It takes approximately 57 tanks of hydroseed to cover 28.5 acres
 - + On a good day you can get about 4 tanks out, so that's 3 straight weeks worth of spraying hydroseed
- + 22.75 of 28.5 acres was ROW converted from Brome to Natives
 - + This means all those areas needed multiple non-selective herbicide apps, burning to remove the duff, and some light soil prep
- + The remaining 5.75 acres was ditch cleanouts where no site prep is performed

Example of your standard ROW. Left picture is 20th Ave Drive in front of the Nature Center. The west side ROW of that road from 57th street to 58th street is about 98,000 sq ft or about 2.25 Acres



The 28.5 acres we seeded this year would equate to us doing 12.5 miles of ROW that size with plans to do more acres next year

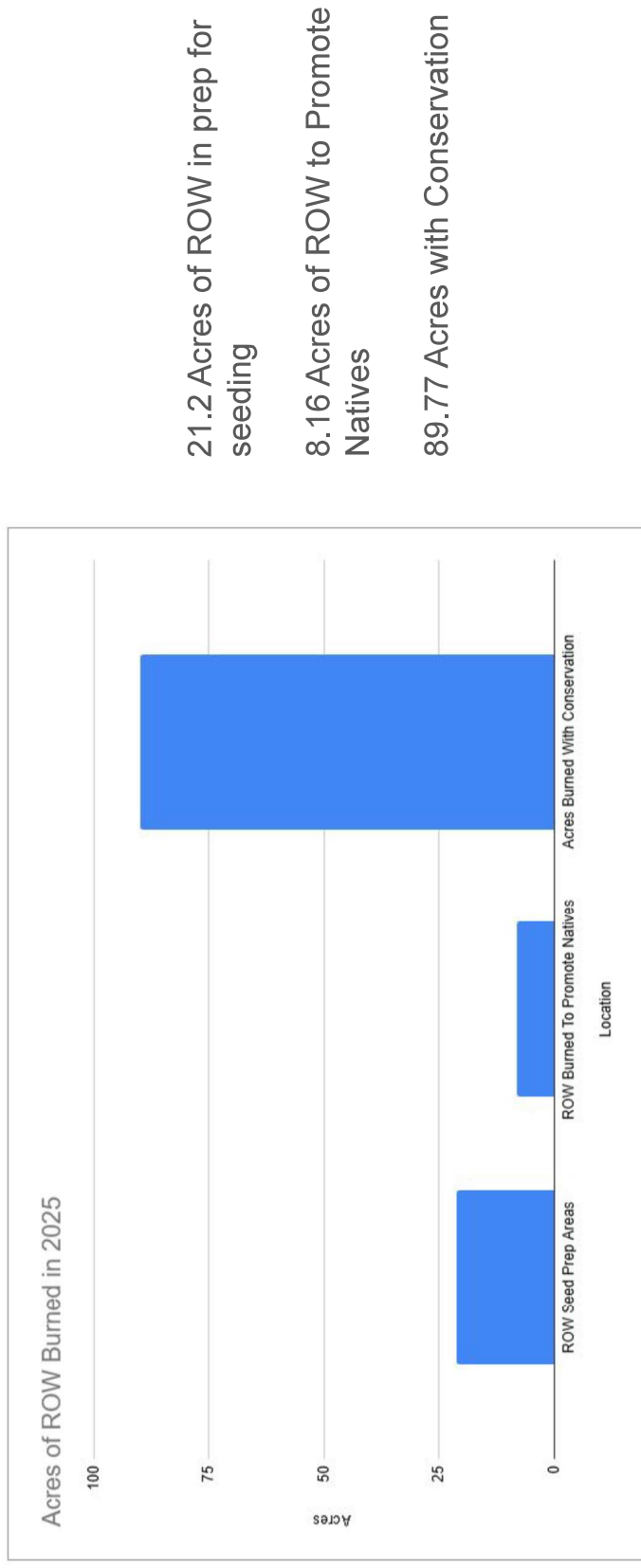
Seeding Pictures



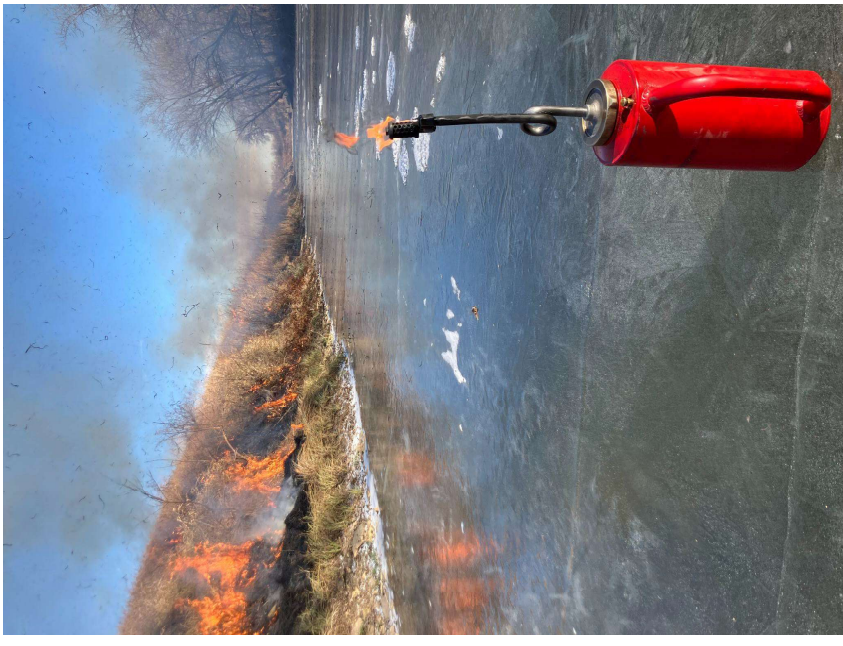


Burning Stats

119 Total Acres burned in 2025



Burning Pictures









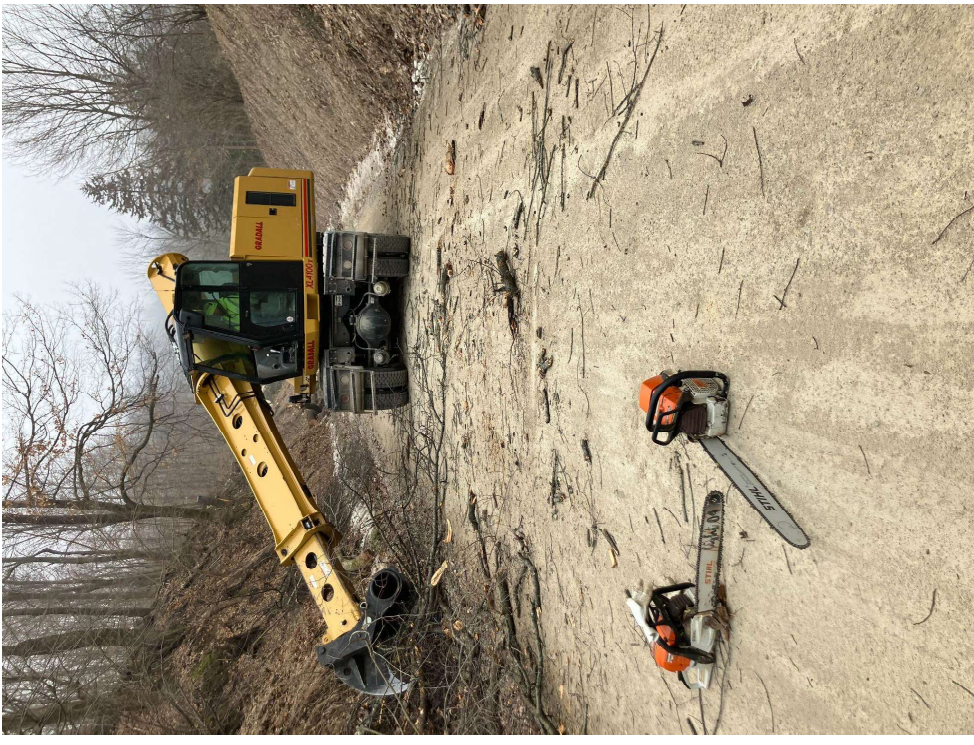
Tree/Brush Work Stats

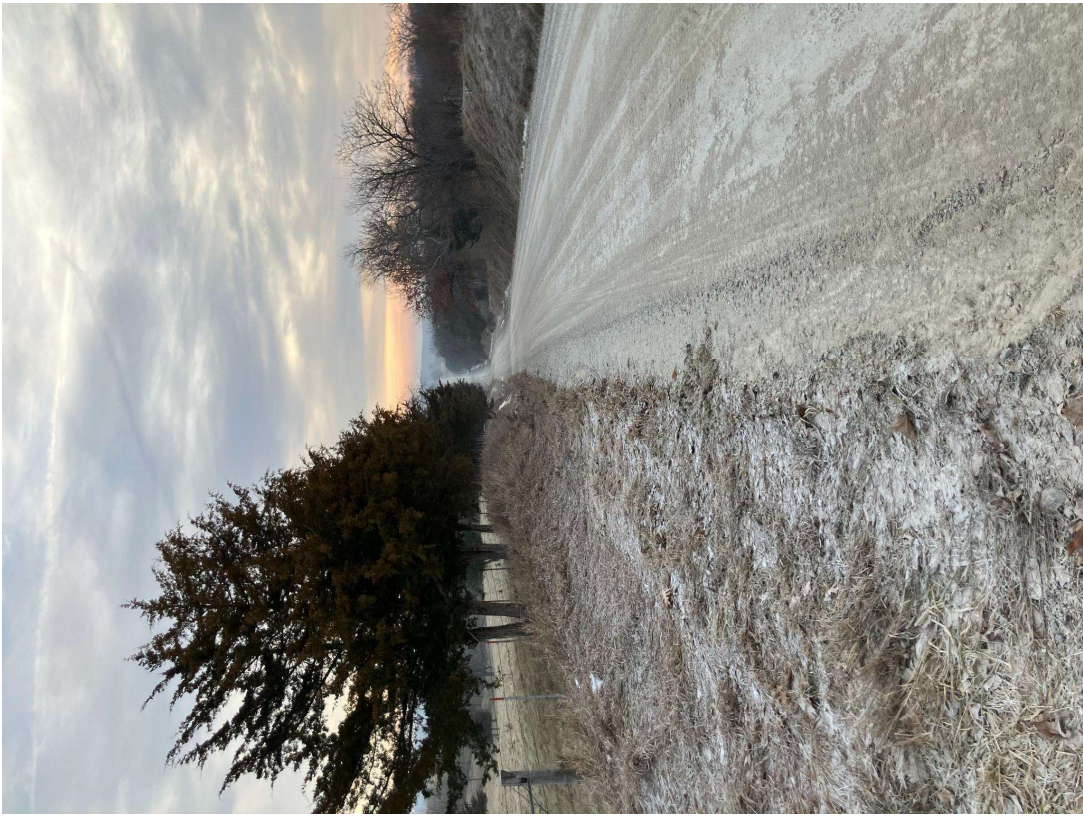
232 hours spent January-February cutting brush in the ROW, bucket truck work, skid mowing tree saplings

100 hours spent September-November skid mowing and spraying sumac/saplings in ROW

About a week into cutting brush/bucket truck work for this winter

Tree/Brush Work Pictures

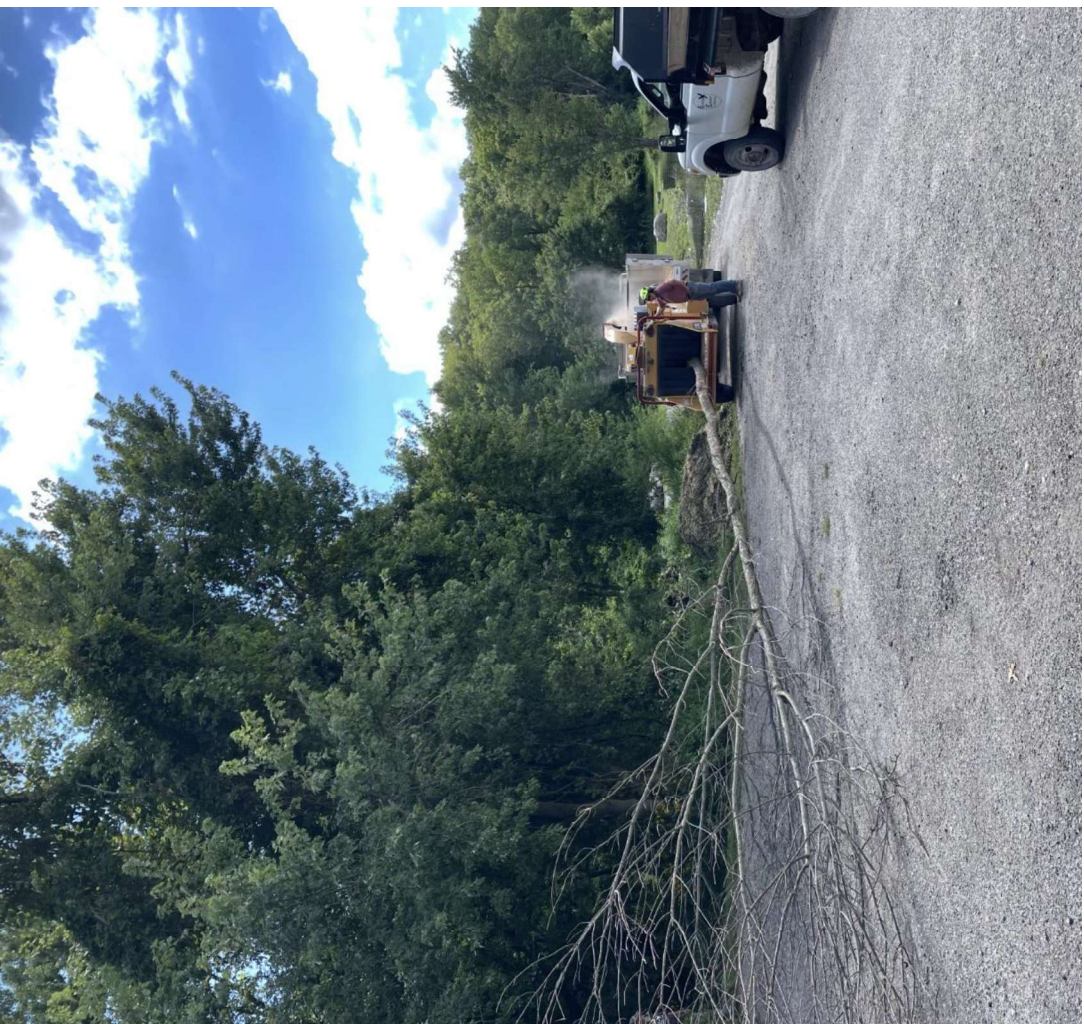


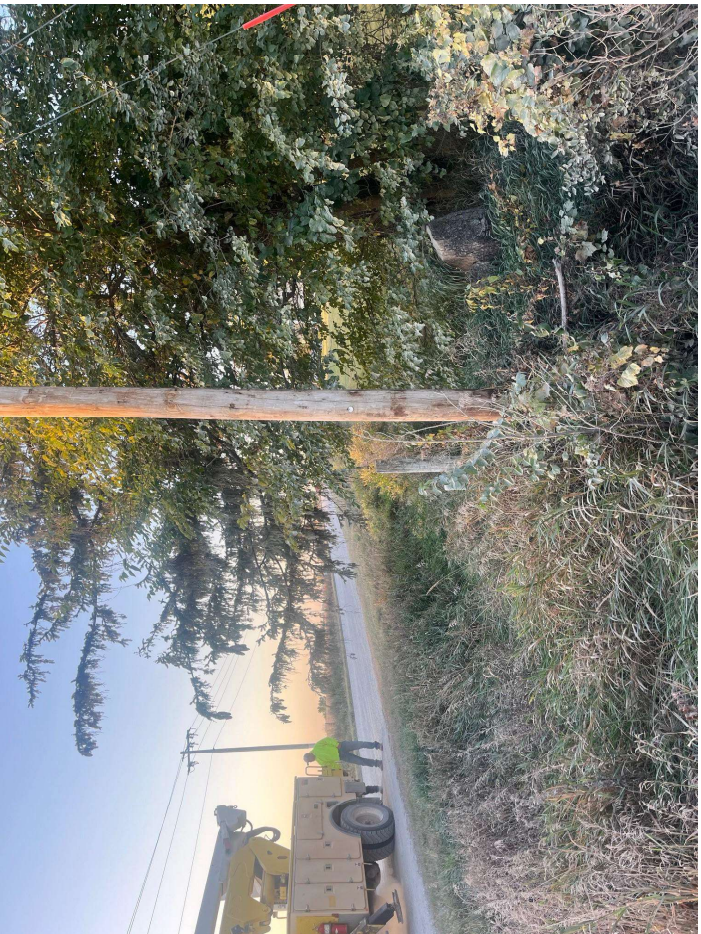












Adopt-A-Prairie

ADOPT-A-PRAIRIE STANDARDS

What is the Benton County Adopt-A-Prairie Program

Benton County has been fortunate enough to receive native seed from the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) Federal Grant. The Benton County Roadside Department is looking to collaborate with landowners around rural Benton County who would be interested in teaming up to provide a suitable location to establish native plants in the right-of-way.

Who qualifies for this program

Any landowner in rural Benton County who would like a native planting in their adjacent, Benton County-managed right-of-way and is willing to follow some basic guidelines on maintaining it with the help of county roadside staff. Rights-of-way that are managed by the Iowa DOT or within city limits are not eligible for this program.

PROCEDURES FOR ROADWAY PRAIRIE ADOPTION

- + All applications are subject to approval by the Benton County Roadside Vegetation Manager.
- + Upon approval of an applicant, the county will meet with the landowner and discuss the work plan and the projected prairie reconstruction date.

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

IRM Staff

- + Establishing if the area is suitable to sustain a native planting
- + Total vegetation removal through non selective herbicide and prescribed fire
- + Seedbed preparation
- + Seeding of native plants and a cover crop
- + Sign installation
- + Establishment mowing or burning as needed through the first 3 years

Landowner

- + Complete and sign Established Prairie Continued Management Agreement
- + Weeding and mowing as needed after year 3 within contract guidelines
- + Pay the associated \$50.00 fee after application is approved and prior to planting

Benton County IRM is only able to take on a limited number of applications in a growing season depending on weather, length of seeding window, workflow, and staff availability. With that in mind, your site is not guaranteed to be selected for this program. IRM Staff will look to pick the sites best suited to maximize success of plantings and acres covered.

Characteristics of a good site for selection

- + Large Areas
 - + Ease of access for large equipment
 - + Proper drainage in selected area
- Characteristics of a site not likely to be selected
- + Overly small areas
 - + Steep slopes
 - + Poor drainage
 - + Landowner having conflicts with the establishment process

The applicant agrees that if granted a permit to do said work the following stipulations shall govern.

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DISCLOSURE STATEMENT: The information furnished on this form will be used by Benton County to determine approval or denial of the application. Failure to provide all information will result in denial of the application. Information furnished is public information and copies may be provided to the public upon request.

Benton County Roadside Department Established Prairie Continued Management Agreement

Applicant

Name of Individual or Company

Telephone

Mailing Address

Planting Address

Email

Approval is hereby requested to complete work described as follows:
BY SIGNING BELOW, applicant agrees and acknowledges to ALL the terms and conditions within this application including the work proposed in compliance with the stipulations and attachments. Applicant further agrees and acknowledges through their signature that failure of applicant to abide by the foregoing terms, shall render this agreement as null and void.
Date of Application _____ Date the Landowner takes primary management responsibility _____
Applicant Signature _____
Type or Print Name _____
Application Approved By _____
Authorized Benton County Representative _____ Date _____

Notice of intention to commence previously agreed upon maintenance activities on the highway rights-of-way shall be submitted by the applicant a minimum of 24 hours prior to actually commencing the activities as herein granted by this approved application:
Notice is to be given to the following Benton County Representative
Benton Roadside Department 111 E 4th Street STE 2, PO Box 759, Vinton, IA 52349
Phone: (319) 472-2040 Email: eschaes@bentoncountyiia.gov

Application

Benton County Adopt-A-Prairie Application Form

Below is a form to gather potential planting locations for our Adopt-A-Prairie Program.

Upon approval, **applicants will also be responsible to pay \$50** to cover the cost of 2 signs and posts payable by check to be made out to the Benton County Treasurer.

This Application is only good for Right of Ways adjacent to land owned by the applicant.

When you submit this form, it will not automatically collect your details like name and email address unless you provide it yourself.



12"x18"= \$40-\$46

24"x32"= \$120-\$135



12"x12"

Questions, Comments, Other
Expectations?