

## Allamakee County

# Integrated Roadside Vegetation Management Plan



Version 2024.01

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# Allamakee County IRVM

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## **Executive Program:**

### Definition

Integrated Roadside Vegetation Management (IRVM)

A long term approach to vegetation management that:

Systematically evaluates areas to be managed.

Determines which plant communities best fit the area.

Develops procedures that will encourage, enhance, or reestablish desirable plant communities.

Provides self-sustaining, diversified, visually interesting vegetation.

Keep safety and an improved environment as priorities.

Utilizes the most beneficial methods to prevent or correct undesirable situations caused by disturbance or less than optimum vegetation ground cover.

### Summary

The IRVM plan will be outlined in the following report for Allamakee County. Road corridors that exist in the county are designed to transport people and goods safely and efficiently from one location to another. The primary purpose of roadside vegetation along these corridors is to hold soil in place without creating hazards. This plan integrates cost effective techniques to manage the roadsides of Allamakee County. Through the use of IRVM, we will strive to meet the prime purposes, provide a safe corridor for travel and address other desirable uses for roadside vegetation.

### History

Allamakee IRVM was established in 1999 to fill the need for establishing a vegetation management program. Our first Roadside Vegetation Technician was Troy Ulrich followed by Matt Sherman, Ken Winke, Nick Winter, and Cory Huinker has been the current Roadside Vegetation Technician since 2021.

## Allamakee County IRVM

### Goals

Allamakee County's vegetation management goals must meet certain safety and functional requirements before aesthetic, recreational, or economic considerations can be addressed.

These goals are to attempt to maintain a clear zone area, meet minimal sight distance requirements and provide for erosion control. We are also required by Iowa law to mow or otherwise control noxious weeds.

The goals of the Integrated Roadside Vegetation Management Plan are to:

Preserve and provide safe, functional, and environmentally improved corridors of travel throughout the county.

Utilize a long-term integrated management program that promotes desirable self-sustaining plant communities. Encourage those plants communities that are native to Iowa through preservation and reestablishment when practical.

Make more efficient and effective use of chemicals as a control method of undesirable brush and plants.

Enhance the scenic qualities of the roadsides and their value as roadside habitat when practical.

### IRVM Decision Making Process

Cory Huinker manages the program under the supervision of the County Engineer.

### Area Map

See the Appendix for a map of the county

### Program Type

The IRVM of Allamakee County is operated and housed within the Secondary Roads operation.

## **Jurisdictional Recognition and Approval**

### Management

The IRVM is managed within the Secondary Roads Department. Therefore the County Engineer along with the Maintenance Superintendent may suggest areas that may need addressed.

### Board of Supervisors

The Board of Supervisors accepts the IRVM plan and approves its expenditures through the Secondary Roads during their weekly meetings.

### Iowa Code and Administrative Rules-State Laws and Regulations

See Iowa Codes 314 and 317

<https://coolice.legis.iowa.gov/Cool-ICE/default.asp?category=billinfo&service=IowaCode&ga=83&input=314>

<https://coolice.legis.iowa.gov/Cool-ICE/default.asp?category=billinfo&service=IowaCode&ga=83&input=317>

Section 314.22 of the Iowa Code, Integrated Roadside Vegetation Management states: *It is declared to be in the general public welfare of Iowa and a highway purpose for the vegetation of Iowa's roadsides to be preserved, planted, and maintained to be safe, visually interesting, ecologically integrated, and useful for many purposes.*

### Local Laws and Regulations

The Allamakee IRVM program is regulated under local regulations and the Iowa Code.

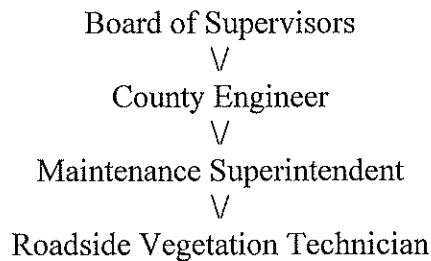
### Permits

Permits available from the county include but are not limited to:

- No spray sign program
- No mow sign program
- Driveway Entrance Permit
- Work within Right of Way Permit
- Utility within Right of Way Permit
- Manure line permits
- Snow ordinance

## Program Organizational Structure

### Staff Organizational Chart



### Staffing Needs

Needs are met by help from the Secondary Roads Department.

### Public Involvement:

#### Education and Outreach

As part of the county's new IRVM plan, it will:

- Develop public awareness to gain support for integrated management through media, established organizations, seminars, and brochures.
- Obtain educational and informational material on IRVM to be presented in seminars and distributed to adjacent landowners, the general public, and consultants, and contractors.
- Provide guidelines and directives for contractors and others who seed, plant, and maintain roadsides.
- Prepare and distribute instructions on preservation of desirable areas and treatment of areas that need improvement.
- Gather, develop, and distribute information with other jurisdictions to seek and share information with other counties.
- Encourage research in aspects of IRVM, i.e.; road design for improving IRVM, planting methods, management practices, seed sources, seed rates, seed mixes, planting equipment, etc.
- Encourage use of native seeds and plant materials native to Iowa.

## **Inventory and Analysis:**

### Natural Resources

- Tools include: Aerial photography, GIS, GPS, and paper records. These tools are essential to complete the daily activities of the program.
- Vegetation Inventory: Our inventory consists of taking a look at the surrounding area as a project needs arise and note what species exist and what would be a good addition to the area.

### Equipment

- 1999 Sterling L9513 Dump truck with a bed mounted 1200 gallon tank with induction chemical handling.
- 2000 Finn T90T –II Hydra Seeder
- Tractor mounted rear three-point hitch seeder.
- 2010 Dodge 2500 4 x 4 pickup
- 2002 John Deere 7210 with side and rear mower
- Pull type drag
- Excavator mounted mulch tucker
- Hand seeder

## **Program Operations:**

### Annual Operations / Annual Calendar of Activities

January-March- Cut brush and trees in problem locations, service and repair equipment, assist with road snow and ice removal operations, present Annual Report to Weed Commissioner, order spring inventory of herbicides, cover crops, lawn seed, mulch, and fertilizers.

April-October- maintenance and construction area seeding operations, erosion and sedimentation mitigation, bare ground applications on shoulders and guardrails, brush and noxious weed applications, address noxious weed and roadside visibility complaints, Adopt A Roadway Program and Roadside Maintenance Agreement Program management, service and repair equipment, attend training and educational seminars.

November-December- cut brush, finalize maintenance seeding, winterize equipment, and begin snow removal operations as needed.

## Work Area Types

- Rural – When working around crops extra care is needed to not damage crop establishments.
- Urban – Special care is taken to not damage private property.

## Vegetation Types for Specific Uses

Our main concern is to control erosion as soon as possible in our steeper topography. We use seed mixes that establish thick root systems to help reduce erosion.

## Special Projects

We work with the special needs of the County Conservation as they arise.

## **Methods:**

### Vegetation Establishment/ Ongoing Maintenance

#### Cultural Methods

Cultural controls can be achieved through the introduction and management of desirable plants or to control noxious weeds and other undesirable plants. Many native plants are poor competitors in their early stages of growth, but once established they crowd out some other plants with minimum management.

Controlled burning is recognized as a valuable tool for enhancing and maintaining native plant communities. At the same time, Allamakee County recognizes the potential for creating possible problems when burning roadside vegetation. Therefore areas identified in the roadside inventory as showing potential for prairie restoration will be burned only under the safest atmospheric conditions by personnel trained in the use of fire, with some assistance from the County Conservation.

#### Mechanical Methods

This involves anything from tractor mowers for cutting down weeds and managing road shoulders to pruning shears, chainsaws and boom mowers for controlling brush and maintaining clear zone.



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### Biological Methods

This involves the use of animals, insects, bacteria, or viruses to control plant growth. Natural enemies of noxious weeds could possibly be used in the ROW if necessary. Further research will be needed on other possible biological controls before the county will recommend them.

### Chemical Methods

Selection of chemicals to be used shall be based on their label constraints and residual effects on the environment. They will be monitored to document their effectiveness and impacts upon target and non-target species.

There are several new herbicides with very specific effects on specific plant species. These herbicides can be valuable tools for controlling undesirable plants on a short-term and long-term basis.

## **Material Procurement:**

### Sourcing

For small projects Allamakee County spreads out purchases to different vendors throughout the County and with larger quantities we take quotes on items to ensure the funds are spent wisely.

### Material Handling and Storage

The seed for Allamakee IRVM is stored in the Engineer's office basement which is climate controlled and free of moisture. All other items are stored in a cold storage shed or outside.

**Conclusion:**

The Allamakee County IRVM is a flexible plan that requires common sense interpretations with changes as necessary to fit the ever-changing complex circumstances realized in roadside vegetation management. Allamakee County looks to continue to improve the right of way for all roadways in the county by utilizing the IRVM plan.

Approval



County Engineer



Allamakee County Roadside Vegetation Technician

