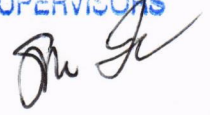


APPROVED

✓ SEP 26 2023

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS



**DES MOINES COUNTY**  
**INTEGRATED ROADSIDE VEGETATION**  
**MANAGEMENT**  
**COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**  
**2023**



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**Des Moines County Engineers Office**

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## **INTEGRATED ROADSIDE VETETATION MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVE STATEMENT**

The Integrated Roadside Vegetation Management (IRVM) program was created to better serve the public using an environmentally safe approach to vegetation maintenance in Des Moines County and statewide.

Des Moines County's IRVM objective, is to control the vegetation along county right-of-way by judicious plantings of desirable species. This allows us the opportunity to establish and maintain a safe, stable, low maintenance roadside that is attractive and healthy for all life and a legacy for future generations to enjoy.

By using the various management techniques described in this document and specifically the re-introduction of warm season native prairie plants, many roadsides can now be inexpensively managed in a positive and sensitive approach.

## **INTRODUCTION AND HISTORY OF IRVM IN IOWA**

Roadsides exist for a variety of reasons, but their primary function is to handle surface water from adjacent land the road surface. Because of steep sloping land and poor soil conditions in many roadsides, weed invasion and soil erosion are constant problems in Iowa. To address these issues, a committee was formed in Black Hawk County in 1985. They found that it wasn't the poor soil conditions that caused weed invasion, but rather the improper establishment and maintenance of Eurasian grasses and legumes. This committee proposed the establishment of native prairie vegetation in roadsides and the integration of various vegetation management techniques to maintain a dominate plant community (Eli, UNI).

IRVM techniques produce a roadside that is resistant to weed invasion and soil erosion yet requires little or no maintenance. At present, 47 counties across Iowa have adopted this approach to vegetation management, as well as state transportation departments across the Midwest. The approach is attracting attention from special interest groups throughout the U.S. because of our strict dedication to environmental concerns.

## **DES MOINES COUNTY IRVM**

With the growing concerns over environmental issues dealing with vegetation management in the right-of-ways, the Des Moines County Conservation Board voted by resolution on February 7<sup>th</sup> of 1990 to approve the integrated roadside vegetation management program for this county. The plan was endorsed by the Des Moines County Board of Supervisors during regular session on February 12, 1990.

To join the trend of IRVM counties statewide, Des Moines county hired a Roadside Biologist in May of 1990 to assume responsibility for the maintenance of vegetation along 610 miles of secondary roads or 3,050 acres of manageable habitat. The vast majority of right-of-ways are 40 to 66 feet wide. These areas all have special needs and will be controlled by IRVM techniques.