

# **Mitchell County Roadside Vegetation Management Plan**

**January 2018**

## **Preface**

### **A. Update/Version**

Update No.3 of the Mitchell County IRVM Plan

### **B. Contributors to the Plan**

Andy Taets – Natural Resource Tech./Roadside Manager

Austin Walk – Weed Commissioner

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## **A. Goals**

Implemented properly, IRVM provides structure and means to address both human health and safety needs, as well as additional economic and environmental benefits. The goals of the county IRVM program are to:

- Preserve and provide safe, functional, and environmentally sound travel corridors throughout the county.
- Utilize a long-term, integrated management program that promotes desirable, self-sustaining plant communities. Whenever practicable, native plant communities are incorporated with roadside vegetation plantings.
- Minimize the need and use of herbicides and other chemical controls as methods for managing or eliminating undesirable plants. This includes incorporation of prescribed burning, spot-spraying, and strategic use of herbicides, pesticides and mowing and tree removal.
- Enhance the scenic qualities of roadsides and their value as habitat for wildlife.

## **B. Program History**

Integrated Roadside Vegetation Management was recognized by the state in Mitchell County in 1995. Mitchell Co Conservation Board has maintained an IRVM program in some form since 1988. The program has grown since it was established, but is still rather small due to a single staff and budgetary constraints. Jim Doidge (1988-2010) was the first roadside manager in Mitchell County followed by Mary Jo Burkgren (2010-2012). Andy Taets (2012 –current) is the IRVM manager.

## **C. IRVM Decision Making Process**

In Mitchell County, the IRVM program is under the direction of the County Conservation Board. However, The County Supervisors and County engineer still have authority over the roadsides. The Mitchell County IRVM manager collaborates with the secondary roads department to find or create opportunities for the implementation IRVM practices, and completes projects. The conservation board and secondary road departments' work together to ensure all possible resources are available to the roadside manager. Expenses for the IRVM program come from the conservation budget.

## **D. Executive Summary**

Roadside vegetation performs many functions on the landscape. It is a sustainable method of controlling erosion and sediment delivery and also provides critical habitat and food sources for birds and pollinators. Native vegetation in right of way also ensures safe, visible, attractive roadways across Iowa. According to the Iowa Legislature, Integrated Roadside Vegetation Management (IRVM) refers to a comprehensive program that:

- Maintains a safe travel environment.
- Serves a variety of public purposes including erosion control, wildlife habitat, climate control, scenic qualities, weed control, utility easements, recreation uses, and sustenance of water quality.
- Is based on a systematic assessment of conditions existing in roadsides, preservation of valuable vegetation and habitats in the area, and the adoption of a comprehensive plan and strategies for cost-effective maintenance and vegetation planting.
- Emphasizes the establishment of adaptable and long-lived vegetation, often native species, matched to the unique environment found in and adjacent to the roadside.
- Incorporates integrated management practices for the long-term control of damaging insect populations, weeds, and invasive plant species.
- Builds upon a public education program allowing input from adjacent landowners and the general public.
- Accelerates efforts toward increasing and expanding the effectiveness of plantings to reduce wind-induced and water-induced soil erosion and to increase deposition of snow in desired locations.
- Incorporates integrated roadside vegetation management with other state agency planning and program activities including the recreation trails program, scenic highways, open space, and tourism development efforts. Agencies should annually report their progress in this area to the general assembly.

## **E. Area Map (Attached, Appendix B)**

## **F. Program Type**

The Mitchell County IRVM program is housed and administered through the Mitchell County Conservation Board at 1879-3 Hwy #9, Osage, Iowa 50461

## **Jurisdictional Recognition and Approval**

### **A. Management**

(Insert a copy and paste section from IRVM manual on Management)

### **B. Board of Supervisors (BOS)**

The Board of Supervisors has ultimate Jurisdiction over the roadsides and thus can have a significant impact on an IRVM program. The following responsibilities of the BOS currently have implications for the extent and success of our IRVM program.

- Approve or deny construction projects, ditch cleanouts, and other projects proposed by the county engineer.
- Ensuring that all laws pertaining to roadsides are actually enforced.
- The BOS has the authority to require permits for citizens who wish to spray weeds in the roadsides.
- BOS sets the total budget for both the conservation board and the secondary road departments.

Since the conservation board is autonomous and is responsible for IRVM funding it is up to them to decide how the total budget granted by the BOS is specifically allocated.

### **C. Iowa Code and Administrative Rules-State Laws and Regulations**

Section 314.22 Integrated Roadside Vegetation Management  
Section 314.17 Mowing Law – No mowing before July 15th  
Section 317.11 Weeds on Roads - Harvesting of Grass  
Section 318.3 Obstructions in ROW / Destruction of plants placed in ROW / Crops in ROW  
Chapter 317 Iowa Weed Law – Noxious Weeds and Enforcement Procedures

### **D. Local Laws and Regulations**

Local Laws, Regulations, and Policies pertaining to IRVM in Mitchell County reflect that of the Iowa Code (see Iowa Code and Administrative Rules), as well as any other State and Federal Regulations that are specific to management activities that occur within the jurisdiction of the Mitchell County Secondary Roads System. These include but are not limited to:

Iowa Code Chapter 314.22 – IRVM. Iowa Code Chapter 317 – loosely governs county noxious weed spraying program and Weed Commission actions.

No Spray Requests – allows landowners to opt out of roadside spraying adjacent to their property in the form of a request (not a permit or agreement).

#### **E. Permits**

The Board of Supervisors does not currently require permits. They allow anyone to spray as seen fit and/or upon request.

### **Program Organizational Structure**

#### **A. Staff Organization Chart**

Board of Supervisors

County Engineer

Secondary Roads Department

Weed Commissioner

Roadside Manager and Natural Resource Technician

The secondary roads department is under the direction of the County Engineer. The Roadside Manager is under the direction of the conservation board director.

#### **B. Staffing Needs**

Ideally it would be in the County's best interest to have a full time roadside manager with at least two full time employees. The requirements of this job are but not limited to: holding Iowa Pesticide certification Category 6 – Right of Way, S 130 – S 190 - S290 burn certifications, CPR and basic first aid, weather spotter, grant writing, and record keeping. Updates are an annual requirement. Currently, the roadside manager and weed commissioner are titles not held by the same person. A secondary road staff member holds the position of the weed commissioner.

### **Inventory and Analysis**

#### **A. Natural Resources**

##### **1. Tools**

Paper records – Ditch clean out from secondary roads

- The conservation board will keep a seeding and project site map.

## 2. Vegetation inventory

There is no recent record in Mitchell County at this time.

### **B. Equipment**

Finn Hydro seeder (2002) Good condition

Endoraplas fire tank (2010) Good condition

Kawasaki Mule 4010 (2014) Good condition

2-Truax Native Seed Drills (unknown) Fair condition

### **Program Operations**

#### **A. Annual Operations & Calendar of Activities**

March – Attend AFIRM winter meeting & write grant

April -- Complete prescribed fire management, and notifies weed commissioner of any noxious weed problems.

May – Pick up TAP seed

July – Attend LRTF application review

September-Fall roadside meeting

October – December – Fall seeding

January – Final seed report

#### **B. Work Area Types**

Rural-Rural adjacent agriculture – Native seed mixes

Rural adjacent non-agricultural – Native seed mixes

Rural adjacent homestead – Cool season grasses if they mow

Urban- No urban areas

#### **C. Vegetation Types for Specific Uses**

Non-Residential ROW – native tallgrass prairie – Areas where the Roadside Manager deems long-term establishment and persistence of tallgrass prairie feasible

## **D. Special Projects**

Typically do not do special projects; the secondary road department does them. Secondary roads installs erosion control mats where needed and handles brush control.

## **Methods**

### **A. Vegetation Establishment**

#### **Site preparation:**

Site prep is often done with an excavator by secondary roads. We mainly seed areas that have been excavated for ditch cleanouts but will seed into areas that have been sprayed. We will work on other construction projects initiated by our secondary roads department.

#### **Seed mixes**

|                        |                        |
|------------------------|------------------------|
| Native Switch Grass    | Big Blue Stem          |
| Side Oats              | Indiangrass            |
| Canada Wild Rye        | Rough Drop Seed        |
| Dark Green Blurush     | Prairie Purple Clover  |
| Fox Sedge              | Black-eyed Susan       |
| Filed Oval sedge       | Gray-headed coneflower |
| Prairie Sedge          | Showy tick trefoil     |
| Round Headed Bush      | Rough blazing Star     |
| Clover                 |                        |
| Partridge Pea          | Hoary Vervain          |
| Stiff Goldenrod        | New England aster      |
| Sneezeweed             | Pale purple coneflower |
| Lead Plant             | White Wild Indigo      |
| Foxglove beardtongue   | Canadian Milk Vetch    |
| Ox-eye Sunflower       | Wild Bergamont         |
| Golden Alexander's     | Rattlesnake Master     |
| Virginia Mountain Mint | Buttfly Milkweed       |
| Ohio Spiderwort        | Compass Plant          |

The species and amounts are both subject to change with the statewide TAP seed purchase annually. The rates change every year with amount of seed received. All seed gets mixed together and bagged in equally distributed bags.

**Seeding Techniques:**

We seed according to the guidelines in the IRVM tech manual using: Hydroseeder with native seed or with a cover of oats or winter wheat added.

Truax drill

Finn Hydro seeder

**Erosion and sediment control:**

Cover crop is added if needed

**Vegetation Establishment Maintenance:**

Secondary roads and the Conservation department work together on this.

First and second year mowing of annual weeds on new projects

Permanent seed (native)

Prescribed burning

Selective spot spraying

**Planting Evaluation and Documentation:**

Documentation is completed at the end of each year in the form of a map showing the areas that were seeded. This also includes the seed used and the date that it was seeded.

**B. Ongoing Maintenance**

Burning as time allows through the conservation board.

The secondary roads department manages brush cutting and spraying.

**Material Procurement****A. Sourcing**

Each year the conservation board receives TAP seed and secondary roads purchases the mulch and chemicals for spraying.

**B. Material Handling and Storage**

The seed is stored in a steal-shipping container, owned by the conservation board, usually from May until it is used in October or December.

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County Conservation Board Director

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Date

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Roadside Manager/Natural Resource Tech.

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Date

---

County Engineer

---

Date

---

Mitchell Co Conservation Board Chair

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Date

---

Board of Supervisor Chair

---

Date

# Mitchell County -- JOB DESCRIPTION

**Department:** Mitchell County Conservation Board    **Updated:** 2/2/17

**Title:** Roadside Manager and Resource Technician

**Compensation:** \$21.97/hr. County benefits include: Health Insurance, vacation, sick time, deferred compensation, and IPERS.

**Work Hours:** Tuesday-Friday: 7 a.m. to 5 p.m.  
Additional hours as assigned by the Director.  
[FLSA: Non-exempt -- over 40 hr/wk compensated at 1.5 times hourly rate.]

**Immediate Supervisor:** Conservation Board Director

**Job Description:** Plans, schedules, coordinates, and completes work related to Roadsides within Mitchell County; including: assisting with planning and implementation of new and existing trail projects, maintenance, repair, construction, and other services to the public; under supervision of the Director.

Keeps Roadsides open, safe, attractive and free of noxious weeds. Strives to implement and maintain Native Vegetation in concurrence with IRVM practices. Removes hazards cuts and trims grass, trees and shrubs using hand, power tools, mowers and other equipment.

Performs chemical applications of pesticides, herbicides, and fertilizers for control of noxious weeds, invasive species, and diseases problems.

Participates in habitat restoration and wildlife management such as planting prairie, prescribed burning, planting trees and shrubs, food plots, and other conservation practices for prairies, wetlands, and woodlands on County owned property.

Patrols Parks and works additional hours, nights, holidays, and weekends as needed

Helps incorporate environmental education into roadside and wildlife area projects. Conducts public programs, and Initiates various public relation programs, including, recreational opportunities, talks on flora and fauna, matters of historical interest, etc. prepares various forms and reports.

**Knowledge/ Abilities/Skills:** Knowledge of IRVM, IRVM funding, safety & signage.

Experience writing grants, fundraising, and developing community relationships are a plus.

Experience with landscaping, park design, and ADA requirements.

Ability to deal with public in both common, and during heated situations, resolve conflicts, and display sound judgment.

Ability to operate a wide variety of equipment such as: tractors & implements, skid loader, backhoe, dragline, sprayers, pumps, small engines chainsaws, power tools, and hand tools and perform routine equipment/vehicle maintenance and repairs to keep equipment in good working condition.

Ability to work outside under any type of weather conditions and to withstand

physically demanding work such as lifting, stooping, and bending.

Ability to establish and maintain effective working relationships with other employees, other agencies, and the general public.

**Essential Duties:** While performing the duties of this job, the employee is regularly required to stand, walk, sit, use hands to finger, handle, or feel objects, tools, or controls, reach with hands and arms, speak and hear. The employee is frequently required to stoop, kneel, or crouch. The employee is required to climb and balance.

The employee must regularly lift or move up to 100 pounds. Specific vision abilities required by this job include close vision, distant vision, color vision, peripheral vision, depth perception, and the ability to adjust focus. The employee must also be able to stand for two hours without a break.

**Work Environment:** The work environment characteristics described here are representative of those an employee encounters while performing the essential functions of this job. Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform the essential functions.

While performing the duties of this job, the employee may work near moving mechanical parts. Work will occur outside in all weather conditions. The employee may be exposed to fumes or airborne particles. The noise level in the work environment may be loud.

**Qualifications:** Minimum education requirement: Graduation from an accredited four-year college or university with a Bachelor's Degree in Biology, Ecology, Environmental Science or other Natural Resource related field. Candidates with a two-year degree in Natural Resources and 3-5 years' experience in the field may also be considered.

**Special Requirements:**

- Possession of a valid Iowa driver's license.
- Possession of, or ability to obtain Class A CDL within three (3) months of hire date.
- Certification, or ability to obtain, a certified Iowa Pesticide Applicator's License within six (6) months of hire date with Categories 1A, 2 and 6.
- Must be able to obtain a Wild land Firefighter Certificate with minimum requirements S-130 and S-190 within six (6) months from start date.

**Equal Opportunity Employer:** Mitchell County is an Equal Opportunity Employer. In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, the County will provide reasonable accommodations to qualified individuals with disabilities and encourage prospective employees and incumbents to discuss potential accommodations with the employer. Veterans preference will be honored.

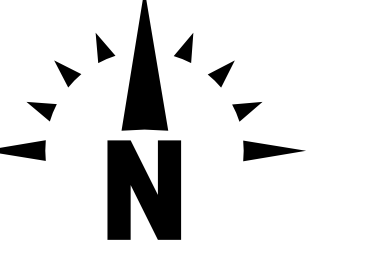
Applications will be accepted until **5:00pm Friday December 2nd, 2016.**

Applications can be found at <http://www.mitchellcoia.us/employment.html> or can be picked up at the Milton R. Owen Nature Center 18793 Highway9 Osage, IA 50461 for questions call 641-732-5204.

# MITCHELL COUNTY IOWA

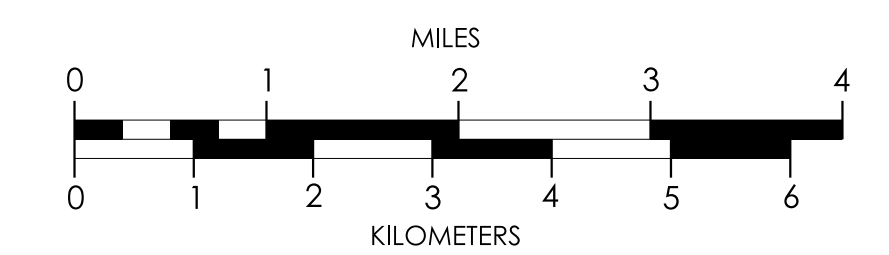


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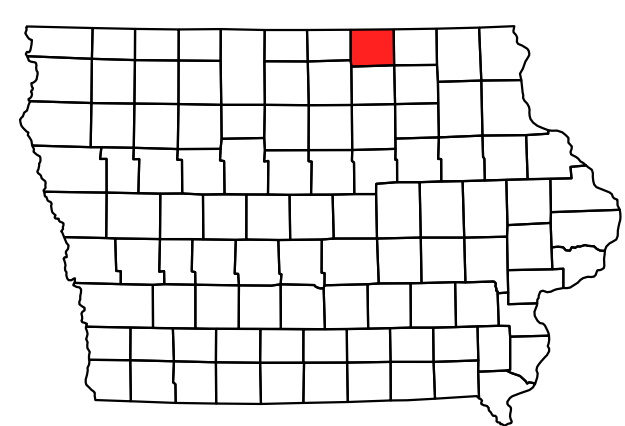
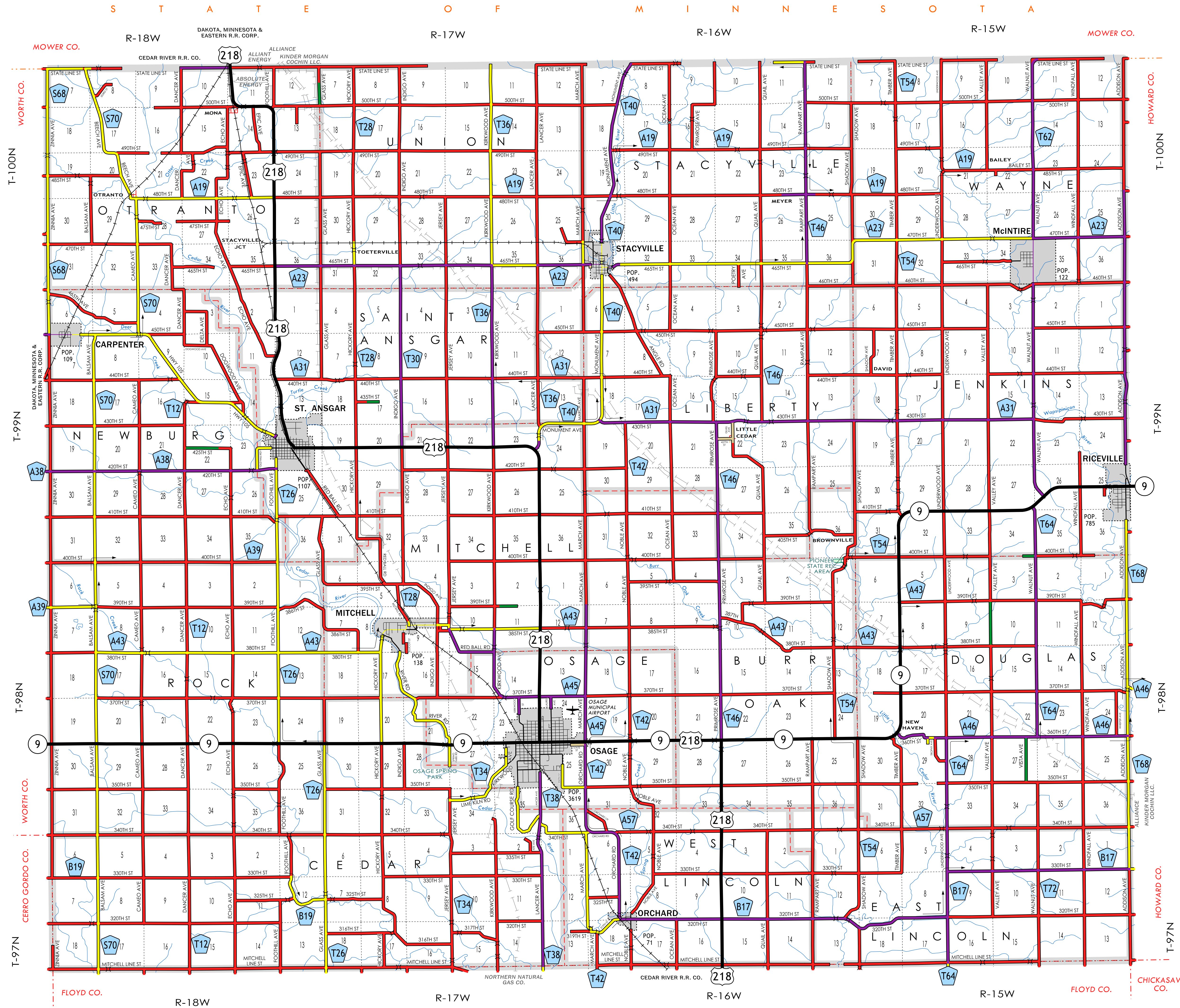
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**United States  
Department of Transportation**

**JANUARY 1, 2017**



## LEGEND

- INTERSTATE HIGHWAY
- PRIMARY HIGHWAY-DIVIDED
- PRIMARY HIGHWAY
- PORTLAND CEMENT CONCRETE ROAD
- ASPHALT ROAD
- BITUMINOUS ROAD
- GRAVEL ROAD
- EARTHEN ROAD
- INTERSTATE HIGHWAY
- UNITED STATES HIGHWAY
- STATE HIGHWAY
- COUNTY HIGHWAY
- RAILROAD
- PIPELINE
- AIRPORT
- HYDROLOGY
- BRIDGE
- STATE BOUNDARY
- COUNTY BOUNDARY
- CORPORATE BOUNDARY
- TOWNSHIP LINE
- SECTION LINE
- ROAD NAMES
- UNINCORPORATED PLACE
- STATE PARKS
- STATE INSTITUTIONS
- FEDERAL LAND



## Mitchell County LRTF Funding History through FY 2018

| DOT Project Number                         | Applicant                          | Award        | FiscalYear | Description                                   | Type   |
|--|------------------------------------|--------------|------------|---|--------|
| 90-66-LRTF-601                             | Mitchell County                    | \$ 5,000.00  | 1996       | Seed  | County |
| 90-66-LRTF-801                             | Mitchell County                    | \$ 9,592.30  | 1998       | Equipment - Drill                             | County |
| 90-66-LRTF-201                             | Mitchell County                    | \$ 9,950.00  | 2002       | Equipment - Hydro seeder                      | County |
| 90-66-LRTF-601                             | Mitchell County Conservation Board | \$ 2,020.00  | 2006       | Equipment - Sprayer unit for controlled burns | County |
| 90-66-LRTF-001                             | Mitchell Co. Conservation Brd.     | \$ 2,943.00  | 2010       | Equipment - Slip-In fire rig                  | County |
| 90-66-LR14-(316)                           | Mitchell County Conservation Board | \$ 8,000.00  | 2014       | Equipment - UTV                               | County |
| 90-66-LR15-(327)                           | Mitchell County Conservation Board | \$ 600.00    | 2015       | Electronic equipment - Digital camera         | County |
| Total LRTF Funding Awarded FY1990 - FY2018 |                                    | \$ 38,105.30 |            |   |        |