

## Why Does the DOT Need Access to My Land?

The Iowa DOT or consultants hired by us may need access to your property to:

- Inspect for previously recorded or unrecorded cultural resources
- Identify water resources
- Identify threatened and endangered species and other unique habitats.

This work is necessary for us to follow state and federal laws. The inspection ensures we find any known environmental constraints near a proposed project.

The information we gather helps us choose a preferred improvement alternative that balances environmental and social issues.

## Will This be the Only Time I'm Contacted by the DOT?

We try to minimize the time we need to be on your property, but sometimes our studies require us to make a return trip to collect more information. If you have requested to be notified, DOT staff or consultants will reach out before returning to your property.



## Questions?

Contact the Location & Environment Bureau

☎ 515-239-1225

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DEPARTMENT OF  
**TRANSPORTATION**



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# Environmental Field Surveys

What to Expect When  
the DOT Needs Access  
to Your Land



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## What Surveys Will be Conducted on My Property?

### What is the DOT looking For?

We are looking for any environmental constraint that may affect transportation decisions, such as:

#### Cultural Items


Archaeological sites, historic properties/districts, cemeteries, or standing structures like historic barns.

#### Threatened or Endangered Species

Any plant or animal species listed on the United States Fish and Wildlife Service or the Iowa Department of Natural Resources lists of threatened or endangered plant and animal species, or any habitat that may have a protected species living in it.

#### Water Resources

Anything that may hold or carry water at any time during the year, including wetlands, ponds, rivers, streams, ditches, ravines, seeps, and springs.

 Any other unique habitat such as remnant native prairie or woodland.

### Will This Affect How My Property is Managed?

No. The information we collect is only used for making transportation-related decisions. Occasionally, we are required to report findings to other state agencies, such as when pioneer cemeteries and/or protected species are found.

We attempt to return the property to the condition we find it. In cases where crops are damaged, the DOT will pay for lost yields. The type of survey will depend on the specific test we are completing. The following are a few items we may be looking for.

#### Cultural surveys may include:

- A walk-through of the property to inspect for cultural artifacts.
- In floodplains and river terraces, we look for evidence of artifacts by digging holes in the ground every 50 ft. Holes are typically about the size of a basketball and can vary in depth from 3-6 ft. We backfill the holes immediately.
- If we find artifacts, a more intrusive survey may be required. We would discuss this with the landowner before any further testing.
- In rare cases, we may use a technique of deep soil boring or ground penetrating radar to locate potential underground structures.

#### Threatened and endangered species surveys may include:

- A survey of your property to document and map the presence of threatened and endangered species.
- A preliminary survey of the plants, topography, soils, and natural features in the area for a potentially suitable habitat.
- If we find a threatened or endangered species or identify a potentially suitable habitat, we may need to conduct a more intensive survey.

#### Wetland surveys may include:

- A survey of your property to document and map the presence of water resources.
- Surveys for rivers and streams require an inspection of features on the ground surface, while surveys for wetlands require wetland delineation.
- Wetland delineations are done by collecting data on vegetation, soils, and the presence of water at one or several spots on the property. This involves:
  - Listing the dominant plant species within a specific area.
  - Listing the physical signs of water above and below the soil surface.
  - Observing soil profiles, which is done using a soil probe or by digging a shallow soil pit. We backfill soil pits immediately once the delineation is complete.
- In rare cases we may use a technique of deep soil boring or ground penetrating radar is used to locate potential subsurface structures.

#### Learn More Here:

<https://iowadot.gov/leb-videos>

