



LEB Updates 2026

A photograph showing a massive colony of bats hibernating in a bridge pier. The bats are clustered together, appearing as small dark shapes against the lighter, textured background of the concrete structure.

Bridge Bat Assessments

2025



Listed Bat Species

- 3 bat species are listed or proposed to be listed as threatened or endangered in Iowa under the Endangered Species Act.
 - Indiana bat
 - Northern Long-eared bat
 - Tricolored bat
- Under the Endangered Species Act, consultation is required with the US Fish and Wildlife Service if there is potential to negatively impact species.
- Bats are known to use bridges and culverts as roost sites.

Bridge/Structure Bat Assessment Form

- Fill-out if within 1,000 ft of bat habitat
 - Even if no impacts to habitat itself

APPENDIX D: Bridge/Structure Bat Assessment Form

Bridge/Structure Bat Assessment Form Instructions

- This form will be completed to document bat occupancy or bat use of bridges, culverts, and other structures. This form shall be submitted to the appropriate personnel within the DOT and USFWS for recordkeeping (or uploaded into the Information, Planning, and Consultation (IPaC) Determination Key for use of the Programmatic Biological Opinion for Transportation Projects in the Range of the Indiana Bat and Northern Long-Eared Bat) prior to conducting: any activities below the deck surface either from the underside or from above the deck surface that bore down to the underside; any activities that could impact expansion joints; any activities involving deck removal on bridges; or any activities involving structure demolition for bridges, culverts, and/or other structures.
- Assessments must be completed within two (2) years of conducting any work (see the above bullet), regardless of whether assessments have been conducted in the past. Assessments must be completed in appropriate weather conditions, suitable for the assessor to observe common signs of bat use.
- Evidence of bat use may include visual observation (live and/or dead), presence of guano, presence of staining, audible observation, and/or odor observation. Presence of one or more indicators is sufficient evidence that bats may be using the bridge, culvert, and/or other structure.
- If bat use of a bridge, culvert, and/or other structure is noted, additional studies may be undertaken during bat active season to identify the specific bat species utilizing the structure, or protected bat species presence can be assumed, in order to comply with threatened and endangered species regulations. Bat active season dates, typically between April and November, vary regionally and by species, so assessors should consult with their local USFWS Field Office for more specific active season dates.
- For use of the Programmatic Biological Opinion for Transportation Projects in the Range of the Indiana Bat and Northern Long-Eared Bat – if the bridge/structure is 1,000 feet or more from suitable bat habitat¹ (e.g., an urban or agricultural area without suitable foraging habitat or corridors linking the bridge to suitable foraging habitat), check the appropriate box and fill out the table below. No further assessment is required.

Date & Time of Assessment	DOT Project #	Route/Facility Carried	County
Federal Structure ID	Structure Coordinates (latitude and longitude)	<input type="checkbox"/> This bridge/structure is 1,000 feet or more from suitable bat habitat ² Name: _____ Signature: _____	

- Any questions pertaining to assessments or this form should be directed to the local USFWS Field Office.

¹ Refer to the USFWS's summer survey guidance for the definition of suitable habitat (<http://www.fws.gov/midwest/endangered/mammals/inba/inbasummersurveyguidance.html>).

² This condition is only for use of the Programmatic Biological Opinion for Transportation Projects in the Range of the Indiana Bat and Northern Long-Eared Bat

Bridge/Structure Bat Assessment Form

- Fill-in appropriate check boxes
- Use form to guide where you look for bats
- Indicate if you found evidence/bats

Locations to check

Bridge/Structure Bat Assessment Form			
Date & Time of Assessment	DOT Project Number	Route/Facility Carried	County
Federal Structure ID	Structure Coordinates (latitude and longitude)	Structure Height (approximate)	Structure Length
Structure Type (check one)		Structure Material (check all that apply)	
Bridge Construction Style		Deck Material	Beam Material
<input type="radio"/> Cast-in-place	<input type="radio"/> Pre-stressed Girder	<input type="radio"/> Metal <input type="radio"/> None	<input type="radio"/> Concrete
<input type="radio"/> Flat Slab/Box	<input type="radio"/> Steel I-beam	<input type="radio"/> Concrete	<input type="radio"/> Timber
<input type="radio"/> Truss	<input type="radio"/> Covered	<input type="radio"/> Timber	<input type="radio"/> Steel
<input type="radio"/> Parallel Box Beam	<input type="radio"/> Other:	<input type="radio"/> Other:	<input type="radio"/> Stone/Masonry
		<input type="radio"/> Other:	<input type="radio"/> Other: Creosote Evidence
Culvert Type		Culvert Material	
<input type="radio"/> Box	<input type="radio"/> Other Structure	<input type="radio"/> Metal	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
<input type="radio"/> Pipe/Round		<input type="radio"/> Concrete	<input type="radio"/> Unknown
<input type="radio"/> Other		<input type="radio"/> Plastic	<input type="radio"/> Water
Crossings Traversed (check all that apply)		Surrounding Habitat (check all that apply)	
<input type="radio"/> Bare ground	<input type="radio"/> Open vegetation	<input type="radio"/> Agricultural	<input type="radio"/> Grassland
<input type="radio"/> Rip-rap	<input type="radio"/> Closed vegetation	<input type="radio"/> Commercial	<input type="radio"/> Ranching
<input type="radio"/> Flowing water	<input type="radio"/> Railroad	<input type="radio"/> Residential-urban	<input type="radio"/> Riparian/wetland
<input type="radio"/> Standing water	<input type="radio"/> Road/trail - Type:	<input type="radio"/> Residential-rural	<input type="radio"/> Mixed use
<input type="radio"/> Seasonal water	<input type="radio"/> Other:	<input type="radio"/> Woodland/forested	<input type="radio"/> Other
Areas Assessed (check all that apply)			
Check all areas that apply. If an area is not present in the structure, check the "not present" box.			
Document all bat indicators observed during the assessment. Include the species present, if known, and provide photo documentation as indicated.			
Area (check if assessed)	Assessment Notes	Evidence of Bats (include photos if present)	
<input type="checkbox"/> All crevices and cracks:	<input type="checkbox"/> Not present	<input type="checkbox"/> Visual - live #	<input type="checkbox"/> Audible
<input type="checkbox"/> Bridges/culverts: rough surfaces or imperfections in concrete		<input type="checkbox"/> dead #	<input type="checkbox"/> Species
<input type="checkbox"/> Other structures: soffits, rafters, attic areas		<input type="checkbox"/> Odor	
<input type="checkbox"/> Concrete surfaces (open roosting on concrete)	<input type="checkbox"/> Not present	<input type="checkbox"/> Guano	<input type="checkbox"/> Photos
<input type="checkbox"/> Spaces between concrete end walls and the bridge deck	<input type="checkbox"/> Not present	<input type="checkbox"/> Staining	
<input type="checkbox"/> Crack between concrete railings on top of the bridge deck	<input type="checkbox"/> Not present	<input type="checkbox"/> Visual - live #	<input type="checkbox"/> Audible
<input type="checkbox"/> Vertical surfaces on concrete I-beams	<input type="checkbox"/> Not present	<input type="checkbox"/> dead #	<input type="checkbox"/> Species
<input type="checkbox"/> Spaces between walls, ceiling joists	<input type="checkbox"/> Not present	<input type="checkbox"/> Odor	
<input type="checkbox"/> Weep holes, scupper drains, and inlets/pipes	<input type="checkbox"/> Not present	<input type="checkbox"/> Photos	
<input type="checkbox"/> All guiderails	<input type="checkbox"/> Not present	<input type="checkbox"/> Staining	
<input type="checkbox"/> All expansion joints	<input type="checkbox"/> Not present	<input type="checkbox"/> Visual - live #	<input type="checkbox"/> Audible
		<input type="checkbox"/> dead #	<input type="checkbox"/> Species
		<input type="checkbox"/> Odor	
		<input type="checkbox"/> Photos	
		<input type="checkbox"/> Staining	
Name:		Signature:	

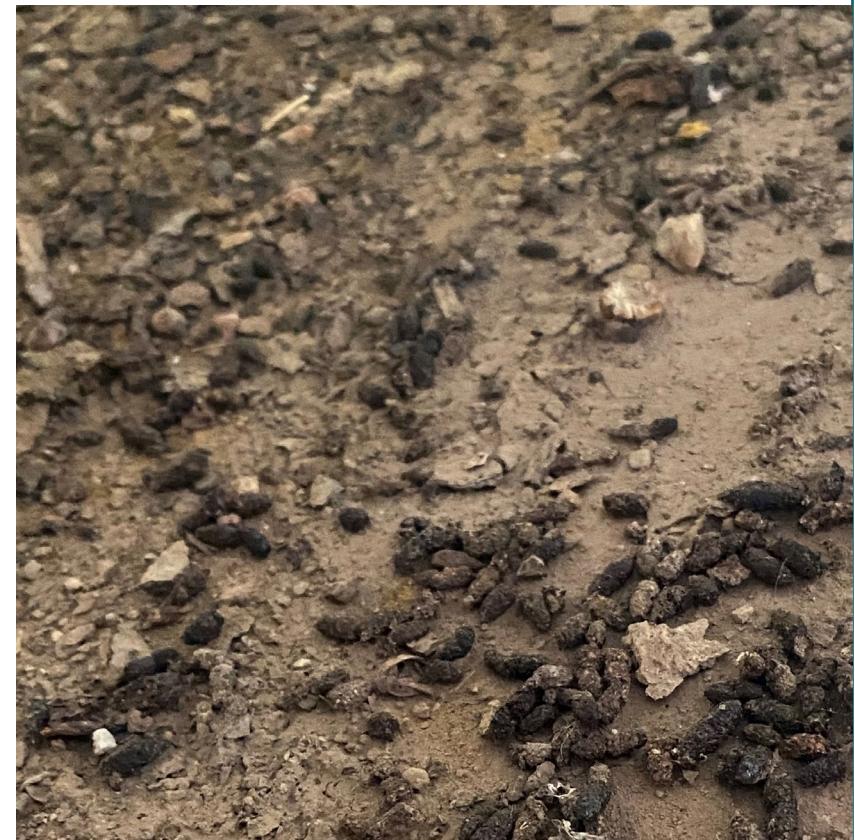
Bat Roosting Indicators - Guano

Bats

- Round ends
- Lumpy/segmented
- Easily crumbles

Mice

- Tapered ends
- Smooth
- Remains solid



Bat Roosting Indicators - Guano



Bat Roosting Indicators - Staining

- Typically light to dark brown in color.
- Occurs in drips, streaks, or splotches beneath roost locations.
 - Seeping from cracks/crevices.
 - On support beams and walls below the ceiling.
 - Beneath joints.
- Often guano is present below the staining or stuck to the surface where the staining is.



Guano below staining

Bat Roosting Indicators - Staining



Bat Roosting Indicators - Bats



Questions?

Cultural Resources Recommendations

- Plan Accordingly → if you need ROW, you may well need to complete an archaeological survey
- Don't be caught off guard if we recommend survey



Sioux Co.



Monona Co.

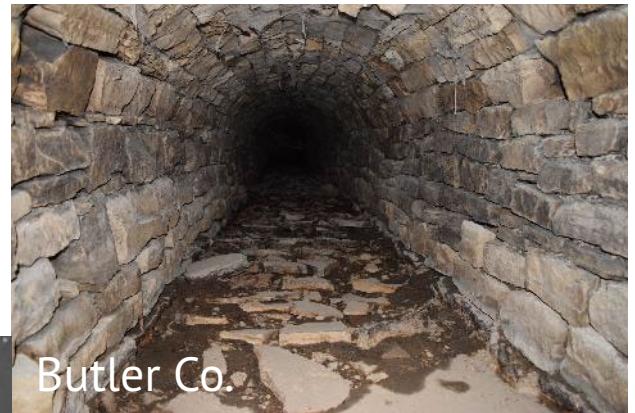
Cultural Resources Recommendations

- **Know that cultural resources work is seasonal → it's often impossible to excavate with when we have snow and frost (we are field season dependent)**



Cultural Resources Recommendations

- **Include the following information in your concept submittal**
 - 1. Will utilities be impacted by the project? If so, what is the age of the system(s)?**
 - 2. What are the materials used?**
 - 3. What is the diameter of the system(s)?**



Cultural Resources Recommendations

- **You get what you pay for**
 - Ensure familiarity with state guidance
 - Look for reputable work in the state
 - Ask for past project successes (i.e. SHPO concurrence of report results)



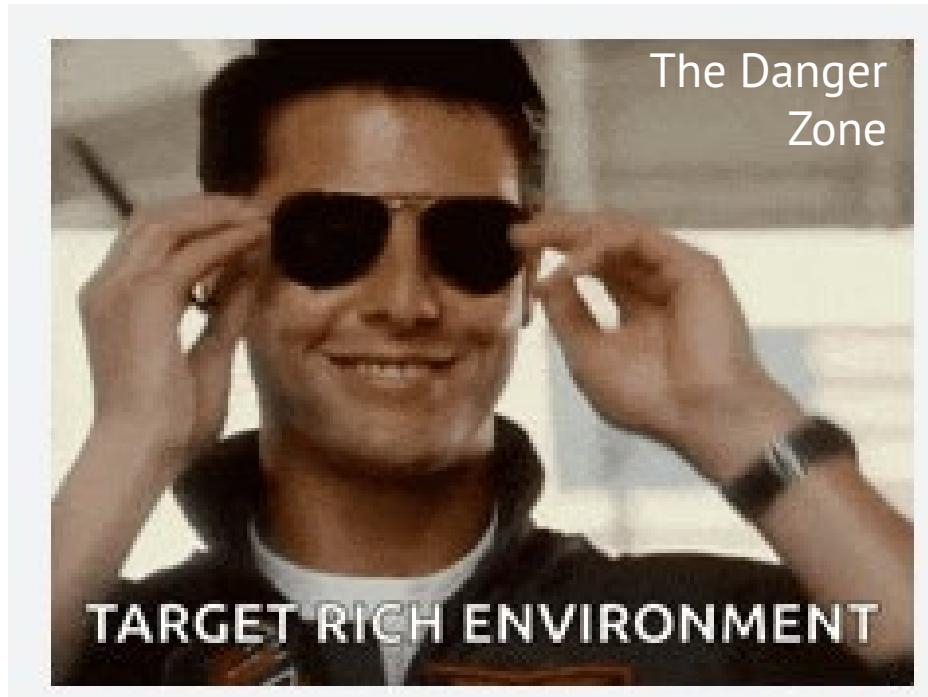
Cultural Resources Recommendations

- Standing structures require a high degree of investigation → i.e. if project needs include demolition (and its over 45 years in age), we will likely need a National Register evaluation



Cultural Resources Recommendations

- **Project development timelines are directly dependent upon resource complexity**



Cultural Resources Recommendations

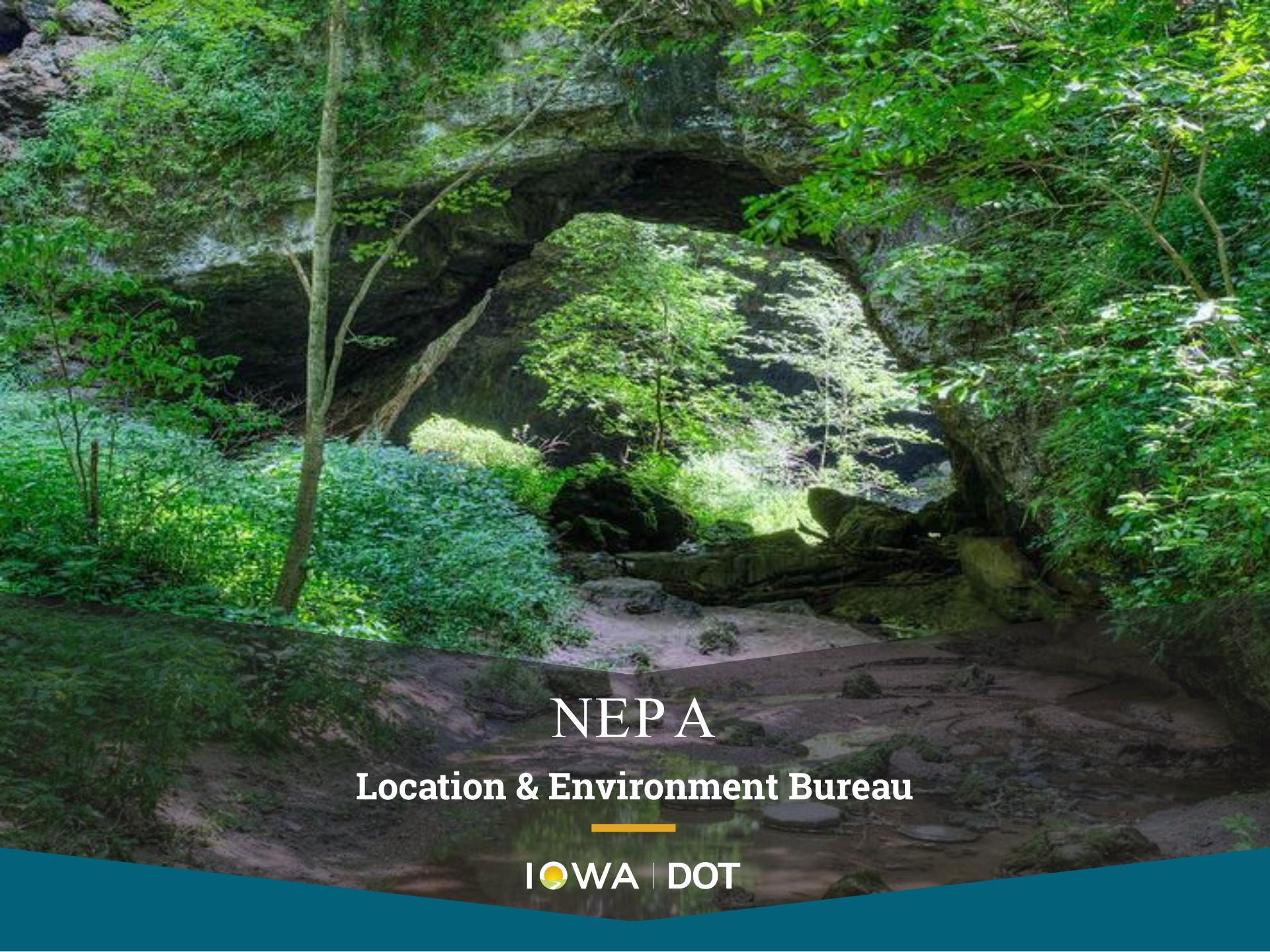
- **Facilitating landowner access can provide substantial time savings**
(i.e. help your consultant, help you)



Cultural Resources Recommendations

- **Get to know your local historic preservation commission/historical society → They can be extremely helpful when you have a project that requires mitigation**





NEPA
Location & Environment Bureau



NEPA Completion Statistics

Average PCE Completion by Project Type:

Table 12: Duration in months for Local Systems and Enhancements for Part B Certifications

	Total Projects	Total Months	Average in Months
Bridge/Culvert	123	720	5.9
Fence, traffic signal, etc	5	16	3.2
Intelligent Traffic Systems	1	1	1.0
Resurface, rehab, recon, etc	53	168	3.2
Safety Improvement	1	2	2.0
Trail	19	136	7.2
Total	202	1043	3.7

Average CE Completion by Project Type:

- Trail – 8 months
- Bridge/culvert – 18.4 months
- Reconstruction – 10.5 months
- **Total Average – 14 months**

National Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) Land

What is it?

- Part of the U.S. Department of Agriculture
- Offer technical and financial assistance to integrate conservation practices into croplands, grazing lands, forests, urban farms and other land uses
- Farmers can apply to put unfarmable land into NRCS conservation land

How it functions?

- Offer conservation programs to help agricultural producers address natural resource concerns while strengthening their operations

Why we want to avoid it?

- They have their own process that must be followed which includes their own NEPA review in addition to FHWA requirements
 - Their process adds years on the timeline – greatly affect your schedule
- If you make a modification of the easement for your project, you're responsible for finding that mitigation land

Navigating to NEPA Website

Steps to navigate to NEPA documents:

1. Go to <https://iowadot.gov/>
2. Enter “NEPA Compliance” into the search bar
OR
1. Go to <https://iowadot.gov/>
2. Scroll down to “Vendors & Partners” and Select “Transportation Development”
3. Scroll down to “Project Development” and select “Location and Environment”
4. Select “NEPA Compliance”

NEPA Website -
<https://iowadot.gov/transportation-development/location-environment/nepa-compliance>

NEPA Compliance

Local and Primary Projects

Transportation projects vary in type, size, complexity, and potential to affect the human and natural environment. To account for the variability of project impacts, three basic "classes of action" are allowed and determine how compliance with NEPA is carried out and documented.

- Environmental Impact Statement
- Environmental Assessment
- Categorical Exclusions
- Section 4(f)
- Reevaluation

Home

- Driver's Licenses & IDs
- Registration & Plates
- Modes of Travel
- Motor Carriers
- Travel Tools

Section 4(f) Documents and Guidance

Can be found on the [NEPA website](#)

- Newer guidance on how to complete Section 4(f) Documentation
- NEPA is working on more updates and guidance that will aid you in the Section 4(f) process
- Ensuring they align with federal regulations to aid you in the NEPA process

NEPA Compliance

Guidance Documents

- P
▪ H
▪ S
▪ W
▪ O
▪ T
▪ T
▪ L
▪ d
▪ d
▪ D
- **Programmatic Section 4(f)**
 - Historic Bridges [.docx](#)
 - Minor Involvement with Parks, Recreational Areas and Waterfowls and Wildlife Refuges [.doc](#)
 - Minor Involvement with Historic Sites [.doc](#)
 - Net Benefit to a Section 4(f) Property [.doc](#)
 - Independent Walkway and Bikeways Construction Projects [.doc](#)
- **Additional**
 - Parks Plus - Section 4(f) Decision Process [.docx](#)
 - Historic Sites - Section 4(f) Decision Process [.docx](#)
 - Document Distribution [.docx](#)

Key Clearance Items

- Show estimated work limits both permanent and temporary easements
Include all areas of potential disturbance
- Complete Determination of Effect Form for T&E
- Complete Determination of Effect for Cultural Resources
- Complete Section 4(f) reviews and determinations
 - Provide impacts or use of any land that is currently a park, trail, or other recreational area
 - Blocking an entrance for any period of time is considered a temporary impact and will require OWJ concurrence
 - Complete DNR PERMT for paddling routes or PERMT submittal email if coordination is not complete (if applicable)
 - Coordination with all OWJ of Parks Plus properties



NEPA Reevaluation

Triggers for Reevaluation

- NEPA Clearance over three years old
- Change in Scope
- Change in Design
- Change in Affected Environment
- Change in Applicable Requirements

Process

1. Reevaluation need is identified
2. Complete the Reevaluation Form documenting all changes from original decision document and provide supporting attachments
3. Submit to Local Systems or Grants Team with notification of reevaluation
4. Local Systems/Grants Team will forward to NEPA

Iowa DOT NEPA Section Contacts

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