



SECONDARY ROADS DEPARTMENT

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For Immediate Release

IOWA MOWING LAW DESIGNED TO PROTECT ROADSIDE HABITATS

Johnson County, Iowa – The County's Integrated Roadside Vegetation Management (IRVM) program reminds residents, landowners and local road maintenance crews to protect roadside habitat for nesting game birds and song birds this spring and early summer.

According to Iowa Code 314.17, mowing roadside ditches is restricted until July 15, to protect young pheasants and other ground-nesting birds until they are ready to fledge. The law, which applies to county secondary roads as well as state primary and interstate highways, also protects habitat for pollinators and other beneficial insects, including crop-pest predators.

Exceptions for visibility and weed control are built into the law, but non-essential mowing—including cutting for hay—is prohibited.

The law reads: Mowing roadside vegetation on the rights-of-way or medians on any primary highway, interstate highway, or secondary road prior to July 15 is prohibited, except as follows:

- Within 200 yards of an inhabited dwelling
- On right-of-way within one mile of the corporate limits of a city
- To promote native species of vegetation or other long-lived and adaptable vegetation
- To establish control of damaging insect populations, noxious weeds, and invasive plant species
- For visibility and safety reasons
- Within rest areas, weigh stations, and wayside parks
- Within 50 feet of a drainage tile or tile intake
- For access to a mailbox or for other accessibility purposes
- On right-of-way adjacent agricultural demonstration or research plots

Iowa's roadsides provide a valuable refuge for wildlife. The mowing law serves as a reminder to only mow shoulders during the critical nesting season and leave the rest of the roadside for the

birds. For more information, see a brochure called "Iowa's Mowing Law for Roadsides," available at www.tallgrassprairiecenter.org/irvm-brochures.

Visit the Secondary Roads page at www.johnson-county.com/roads and click on Roadside Vegetation Management for more information on the County's IRVM program.

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