



Contact us

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**WHY DOES THE IOWA DOT NEED TO
ENTER MY PROPERTY?**
a guide to understanding field studies

Federal and state laws prohibit employment and/or public accommodation discrimination on the basis of age, color, creed, disability, gender identity, national origin, pregnancy, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, or veteran's status. If you believe you have been discriminated against, please contact the Iowa Civil Rights Commission at 800-457-4416 or Iowa Department of Transportation's affirmative action officer. If you need accommodations because of a disability to access the Iowa Department of Transportation's services, contact the agency's affirmative action officer at 800-262-0003.



Exhibit 1: Cultural resource investigation searching for artifacts.



WHY DO IOWA DOT STAFF OR CONSULTANTS NEED ACCESS TO MY LAND?

Access to your property is needed to investigate for cultural resources, to identify water resources, threatened or endangered plant or animal species, or other unique habitats. This work is a necessary step for the Iowa Department of Transportation to comply with state and federal laws and identify any known environmental issues near or within a proposed project. This information is used to help the Iowa DOT select a preferred improvement alternative.



WHAT ARE IOWA DOT STAFF OR CONSULTANTS LOOKING FOR WHEN CONDUCTING A SURVEY?

Iowa DOT staff or consultants are looking for any environmental issues, such as:

- Cultural resources (e.g., archaeological sites, historic districts, standing structures, including historic barns or cemeteries).
- Water resources, (e.g., wetlands, ponds, rivers, streams, ditches, ravines, seeps, springs).
- Threatened or endangered species, including any plant or animal species listed on the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's or Iowa Department of Natural Resources' lists of threatened or endangered species, or any habitat that may have a protected species living in it.
- Any other unique habitat, such as native prairie or woodland.

WHAT SURVEYS MAY BE CONDUCTED ON MY PROPERTY?



Archaeological studies

• A survey of the property to inspect for archaeological resources. In areas of floodplains and river terraces, holes are dug approximately every 50 feet looking for artifacts. Typically, holes are about the size of a basketball and can vary in depth 3 to 6 feet. Soil from each hole is sifted through a screen and then the holes are back-filled immediately (exhibit 1).



Exhibit 1



Historic architecture studies

- The exterior of standing buildings are photographed and measured when needed.
- Sometimes more in-depth studies are needed. This would be discussed with the landowner before any further work occurs.



Threatened or endangered studies

- A walk through to look for threatened or endangered plant or animal species. Plant and animal habitats are also examined.
- Sometimes more in-depth studies are needed. This would be discussed with the landowner before any further work occurs.



Water resource studies

- A walk through to look for water resources, such as rivers, streams, wetlands, and ponds.
- Wetlands are defined by collecting information on plants, soils, and water at one or several spots on the property. This involves use of a 3/4-inch diameter soil probe or digging a shallow soil pit with a spade (exhibit 2). All soil pits are backfilled immediately once the work is complete.



Exhibit 2: Wetland delineation tools.



Other possible studies

- Land surveys or soil borings.
- Noise study to determine sound levels and traffic noise.
- Other surveys as needed.

Iowa DOT staff and consultants will attempt to return the property to the condition it was before the survey work began. In cases where crops are damaged, the Iowa DOT will reimburse for lost yields.



WILL THIS AFFECT HOW MY PROPERTY IS MANAGED?

No. The information collected by the Iowa DOT or our consultants is only used for analysis in making transportation-related decisions. On occasion, the Iowa DOT is required to report findings to other state agencies, such as when pioneer cemeteries are found.



WILL THIS BE THE ONLY TIME I AM CONTACTED BY THE IOWA DOT?

The Iowa DOT tries to minimize the time needed to be on your property, but sometimes studies require a return trip to collect more information or to conduct additional investigations, such as geotechnical borings. Iowa DOT staff or consultants will always contact you before coming on your property.

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