IOWA HABITAT AND ACCESS PROGRAM PROCESS

Iowa’s Habitat and Access Program (IHAP) is an initiative by USDA’s Farm Services Agency and the DNR’s wildlife bureau to improve wildlife habitat on private lands through monetary incentives in exchange for public hunting access to these managed lands.

Individual landowners or land managers, with 40 acres or more, interested in learning more about the Iowa Habitat and Access Program should contact their local DNR private lands staff person (see map and contact info link). The enrollment process is as follows:

- DNR staff person conducts a field visit to determine wildlife habitat needs for the property based on wildlife species expected to be hunted on the site.
- A wildlife habitat plan for the property is developed by DNR and landowner.
- Based on wildlife habitat plan, DNR staff person completes and submits program application. Applications are ranked and reviewed with all other applications submitted within the same 30-day period.
- Landowners are notified of their acceptance within 30 days.
- Selected landowner signs IHAP contract with DNR, detailing DNR and landowner commitments including habitat work to be completed.
- State of Iowa signs a contract with a qualified contractor (which may or may not be the landowner) to complete habitat work outlined in IHAP contract.
- DNR staff person is involved during habitat installation process, including payment to the contractor upon completion of habitat work. DNR covers 100 percent of landowner’s cost to complete habitat work. Unless the landowner is the contractor, they do not receive a direct payment.
- DNR places “open for public hunting September 1 through May 31” signs on boundaries by August 31.
- DNR monitors site throughout contract period to ensure habitat improvement projects are successful and what additional habitat work may be needed.
- As with wildlife management areas, DNR conservation officers patrol IHAP sites and enforce applicable laws and regulations.

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