

# IOWA HABITAT & ACCESS PROGRAM

PRACTICE INCENTIVE PAYMENT FOR HABITAT IMPROVEMENT IN EXCHANGE FOR HUNTER ACCESS

Imagine improving the quality of habitat on your property with the help of DNR private lands wildlife biologists while receiving incentive payments for the habitat improvements.

DNR private lands wildlife biologists will work with you to create a wildlife plan providing technical assistance to improve the quality of wildlife habitat on your land. The Iowa Habitat and Access Program (IHAP) will provide financial incentive payments to you for the completion of those wildlife habitat improvements.

## WHO'S ELIGIBLE?

Eligible landowners (or those who have legal authority to sign a land contract for a landowner) must have at least 40 acres of land with adequate or the potential for adequate wildlife habitat that the landowner is willing to open to the public for walk-in hunting from Sept. 1 through May 31. The length of contracts vary from 3 to 10 years.



*Private lands wildlife biologists will develop a wildlife plan for the IHAP property based on the wildlife species expected to be hunted.*

## WHAT'S THE LANDOWNER'S COMMITMENT?



Landowners enter into a cooperative agreement with Iowa DNR to allow the posting of public access areas, hunters to hunt the land and Iowa conservation officers to patrol it.

In return, a private lands biologist will walk the land to determine the quality of the landowner's wildlife habitat and provide a plan to improve it for the species to be hunted.

Landowners have the choice to do the work themselves or select the contractor of their choice to complete the work described in the contract. A sample IHAP agreement is available on the DNR website at [www.iowadnr.gov/ihaplndowner/](http://www.iowadnr.gov/ihaplndowner/) or your local private lands biologist will share a copy with you.

*\*This is a summary of Code of Iowa 461C Public Use of Private Lands and Waters as it pertains to the Iowa Habitat and Access Program contracts with landowners. Contact the DNR's legal department for further explanation at 515-725-8200.*

## WHAT ASSURANCES DO LANDOWNERS GET IN IHAP ENROLLMENT?

Liability for hunters is an important landowner concern. Under Iowa law, an IHAP property landowner has “limited liability.” This means the landowner bears no liability for injuries suffered by the public allowed access to hunt on the landowner’s IHAP property, except that the public should be given notice of all known and foreseeable dangers, such as a large unplugged well hidden by the landscape.

The liability protection law was drafted, and recently amended, specifically to encourage public access on private lands without worry of financial ruin from lawsuits, and is required by the terms of the law to be construed liberally and broadly in favor of IHAP enrollees.

Hunters are only allowed use of legal bows and firearms as permissible under Iowa hunting regulations. It is illegal to discharge a firearm within a 200-yard buffer around occupied dwellings — homes, livestock buildings and open animal feedlots.

No trapping or fishing is allowed.

Hunting is walk-in only — no vehicles are allowed on IHAP property. Vehicles must be parked in a designated area or along the road.

IHAP lands are patrolled and hunting seasons and regulations are enforced by DNR conservation officers.



If a hunter threatens the health, safety or property of the landowner or the landowner’s family members, that hunter may be denied access. The local DNR conservation officer will be available for assistance.

Contact information is available for private lands wildlife biologists at [www.iowadnr.gov/ihaplandowner/](http://www.iowadnr.gov/ihaplandowner/) or call the main DNR office in Des Moines at 515-725-8200 to get the name and phone number for your local private lands wildlife biologist.

*Wildlife dependent recreation spurs rural economic opportunities.  
With only one percent of Iowa’s area available for public hunting, your  
voluntary enrollment in IHAP will help open additional acres in  
support of the Iowa tradition of hunting and associated  
economic opportunities in rural Iowa.*

