

Princeton Township - Policy for Roadside Ditch Mowing

It is the Policy of the Princeton Town Board to mow the first 8' away from the road surface, or from the shoulder if one exists, 2 times each season. The first mowing will take place from late spring through early summer. The second mowing will take place in the fall of the year.

Spot mowing may be done for safety reasons where sight distance may be an issue; and may be done as needed throughout the year. Any mowing that's done outside of the first 8' away from the road surface, or from the shoulder if one exists, will be done in August and clipping no lower than 12 inches above the ground.

The sections below were copied from, <https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/roadsidesforwildlife/index.html> for the full document click the link.

— Roadside Mowing Law

160.232 Mowing ditches outside cities.

(a) To provide enhanced roadside habitat for nesting birds and other small wildlife, **road authorities** may not mow or till the right-of-way of a highway located outside of a home rule charter or statutory city except as allowed in this section and section [160.23](#).

(b) On any highway, the first eight feet away from the road surface, or shoulder if one exists, may be mowed at any time.

(c) An entire right-of-way may be mowed after July 31. From August 31 to the following July 31, the entire right-of-way may only be mowed if necessary for safety reasons, but may not be mowed to a height of less than 12 inches.

(d) A right-of-way may be mowed as necessary to maintain sight distance for safety and may be mowed at other times under rules of the commissioner, or by ordinance of a local road authority not conflicting with the rules of the commissioner.

(e) A right-of-way may be mowed, burned, or tilled to prepare the right-of-way for the establishment of permanent vegetative cover or for prairie vegetation management.

(f) When feasible, road authorities are encouraged to utilize low maintenance, native vegetation that reduces the need to mow, provides wildlife habitat, and maintains public safety.

(g) The commissioner of natural resources shall cooperate with the commissioner of transportation to provide enhanced roadside habitat for nesting birds and other small wildlife.

HIST: 1985 c 127 s 2; 1986 c 398 art 27 s 1; 1989 c 179 s 1; 1Sp2005 c 1 art 2 s 137

2019 Minnesota Statutes

160.23 MS 1953 [Repealed, [1957 c 943 s 72](#)]

160.23 DESTRUCTION OF NOXIOUS WEEDS.

Road authorities, including road authorities of cities shall cause all noxious weeds on their respective highways and streets to be cut down or otherwise destroyed or eradicated as often as may be necessary to prevent the ripening or scattering of seed and other propagating parts of such weeds.

History: [1959 c 500 art 1 s 23](#); [1973 c 123 art 5 s 7](#)

— Recommendations

Delay roadside mowing of the ditch bottom and back slope until after August 1st.

Reason: Each species of wildlife has its own nesting habits including when and how many times they rear young each year. As a result, undisturbed roadside cover receives almost continuous nesting use from spring until late summer. By delaying roadside disturbance until after August 1, nests for most species can hatch successfully. A mowed strip along the shoulder is not damaging to nesting wildlife because most nests occur in the ditch bottom or back slope. Other disturbance factors which should be avoided include "blanket" spraying, vehicle and tractor encroachment, and grazing. If possible, leave roadsides undisturbed year around.

Use spot treatment to manage sites for noxious weed control, safety, and snow drifting.

Reason: Where noxious weed control is needed, spot-spraying is preferred because it leaves cover intact, is less costly, and there is less chance of causing nest destruction or abandonment. Spot mowing and/or shoulder mowing may be necessary for improved sight-distance or snow drift control. Complete roadside mowing is costly and often unnecessary.

Avoid indiscriminate roadside burning.

Reason: Under prescribed conditions, burning can be an effective wildlife management tool. However, widespread and indiscriminate burning of roadsides may remove much needed residual cover as well as valuable roosting and escape cover.

Roadsides mowed after September 1st should be clipped "high".

Reason: A minimum of 10 to 12 inches of erect, residual cover is vitally needed for next year's early nesters. Residual can also provide some roosting and escape cover.

Urge your local road management officials to adopt policies that will preserve and enhance roadsides for wildlife.

Free Roadsides for Wildlife Signs

This sign will help preserve an important wildlife nesting habitat -- rural roadsides. They are available for placement on private property along roadsides managed as wildlife cover.

The sign notifies passers-by that this roadside is left undisturbed for nesting wildlife, such as pheasants, gray partridge, waterfowl, and grassland songbirds. Undisturbed nesting cover is especially crucial during the nesting period of May, June, and July.

Sign should be faced perpendicular to the roadway and be mounted on a post, private fence, etc. At least 4 feet from the ground to assure good visibility.*

*Do not place signs within any portion of the road right-of-way including the roadside ditch nor on any fences owned by the road authority. If you have any questions about placement, please contact your local road officials.