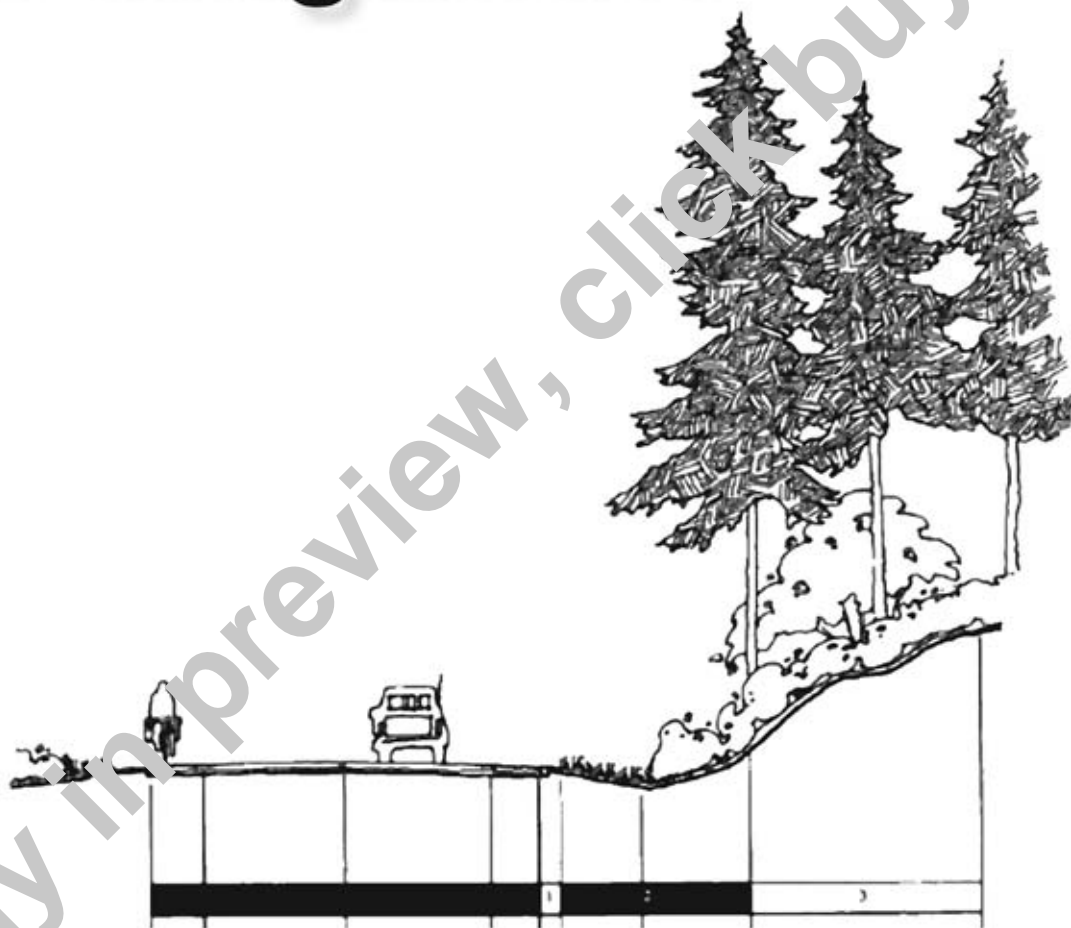


# Guidelines for Vegetation Management



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## FOREWORD

These guidelines will be of interest to local, regional, state and federal officials as well as other transportation professionals who work with them in dealing with roadside vegetation management. They will be of particular interest to those roadside vegetation managers just beginning their careers. The guidelines provide an overview of current agency practices, recent literature findings, and research on roadside vegetation management. Their primary purpose is to assist roadside vegetation managers in integrated roadside vegetation management decision-making processes into highway project planning, design, construction, and maintenance, as well as to document existing research and practice. Roadside vegetation managers are often faced with problems for which information already exists, in the form of reports and documents, or as undocumented experience and practice. This information may be fragmented, scattered, and unevaluated and as a result much of this useful information may go unused by the majority of roadside vegetation managers. These guidelines incorporate the current knowledge and practice of roadside vegetation management. The guidelines also include information extracted from survey responses from 29 state agencies, a glossary that defines technical terms and acronyms, and a compendium of 40 common roadside invasive species, with descriptions of each species, its biology, and common methods of control.

## PREFACE

The impetus to writing these guidelines came about from the realization that there was an enormous amount of practical information on roadside vegetation management available but much of it was not being used because it was scattered and unevaluated. The information was dispersed not only in the mainstream literature, but in localized documents and research reports within government agencies. Upon undertaking this task, it quickly became apparent that another major source of the most current practical information on roadside vegetation management was that of the undocumented experience and expertise of roadside vegetation management practitioners. The unselfish cooperation of these individuals has greatly enhanced the utility of these guidelines. These guidelines provide DOT executive managers, middle managers, and supervising practitioners with a toolbox of effective strategies for planning and executing integrated roadside vegetation management programs.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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# I.0 INTRODUCTION

To the uninitiated, roadside vegetation management may seem a routine job involving mowing, chopping down trees, and chemical applications. This is far from the truth.

Effective roadside vegetation management requires a high level of expertise and resources to plan, design, construct, and maintain the roadside environment. It requires the vegetation manager to make informed choices among management techniques and to integrate different techniques to achieve the greatest benefits. Such management is known as Integrated Roadside Vegetation Management (IRVM). IRVM involves the planting and establishment of sustainable vegetation on roadsides, and maintaining it through the use of cultural, mechanical, biological, and chemical methods (*161, 163, 183*).

The roadside vegetation manager today is faced with dwindling resources, increasing environmental and legal constraints, and increasing public pressure to provide safe and aesthetically pleasing roadsides.

Throughout the United States, and the world, roadside vegetation managers face similar challenges and opportunities. This project draws on the long term experience and expertise of these vegetation managers to create guidelines that provide the basic knowledge required to establish a roadside vegetation management program.

The guidelines are intended for any highway agency/organization, but will be particularly useful to those employees just beginning their career and needing to establish or improve their own vegetation management program. We are greatly thankful to the many roadside vegetation managers (from virtually every state) who provided us with literature and their feedback. The development of these guidelines would not have been possible without them.