Evaluating Vegetation Management Practices Ohio Department of Transportation

Davey Resource Group led field days throughout the state where ODOT staff could visit testing sites and see new equipment demonstrations.

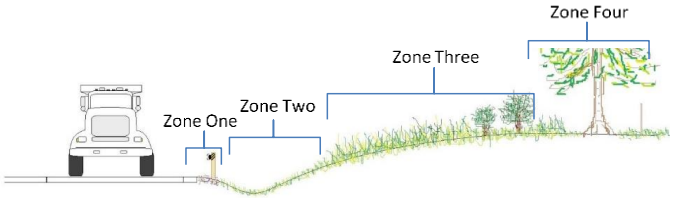
Seven ODOT districts participated in a total of 25 vegetation testing methods.

Challenged with managing vegetation along nearly 43,000 lane miles throughout Ohio's diverse landscapes, ODOT sought to improve and expand its roadside integrated vegetation management (RIVM) program. With a technical advisory committee, ODOT's Office of Statewide Planning and Research developed a research project and solicited assistance through a request for proposal for Evaluating Vegetation Management Practices for Woody and Herbaceous Vegetation.

The research team included Davey Resource Group and the ODOT technical advisory committee. The purpose of the project was to identify and evaluate vegetation management practices ODOT Districts can implement to increase efficiency and cost-effectiveness and simultaneously improve worker safety, foster safe highway use by the traveling public, and improve roadside aesthetics.

Davey Resource Group's project team tested 25 vegetation management methods, held 9 field days that provided ODOT staff with testing updates and new equipment demonstrations, and prepared a guide to assist ODOT staff in identifying and properly controlling prohibited noxious and problematic weeds.

Research recommendations included specific cost-effective methods to safely and effectively maintain ODOT's four vegetation management zones, and educational and management recommendations to encourage a shift from reactive maintenance practices to a proactive vegetation management program.



The Guide for Roadside Integrated Vegetation Management of Prohibited Noxious Weeds in Ohio, developed by Davey Resource Group, is a practical field guide for identifying and controlling Ohio's prohibited noxious weeds and selected invasive plants. Applicator reference materials and worksheets are included to plan for herbicide applications (http://daveytree.uberflip.com/i/795219-odot-guide-for-rivm).

As a result of the research recommendations, implementation of management recommendations includes converting the Guide for RIVM into an App, providing ODOT staff hazard tree and basic tree identification skills during both leaf-off and leaf-on seasons, and preparing selected ODOT staff for the International Society of Arboriculture Certified Arborist test. Implementation of maintenance practices include the use of new cost-effective equipment for tree maintenance and mowing, control of noxious weeds with directed herbicides applications, and use of plant growth regulator and herbicide applications to reduce mowing events.

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