

June thoughts

The warmer temps indicate that summer is here to stay and with all of the precipitation earlier this spring the weeds are coming on strong. The Box Butte County Road Department has started mowing some of the oil roads but hasn't made as much headway as we would like. Many of you may know that as of August 24, 2017 Nebraska State Statute 39-1811 was revised, it now reads;

Nebraska State Statute 39-1811 - Weeds; mowing; duty of the landowner; neglect of duty; obligation of county boards; cost; assessment and collection.

(1) It shall be the duty of the landowners in this state to mow all weeds that can be mowed with the ordinary farm mower to the middle of all public roads and drainage ditches running along their lands at least twice each year, namely, sometime in July for the first time and sometime in September for the second time.

(2) This section shall not restrict landowners, a county, or a township from management of (a) roadside vegetation on road shoulders or of sight distances at intersections and entrances at any time of the year or (b) snow control mowing as may be necessary.

(3) Except as provided in subsection (2) of this section, no person employed by or under contract with a county or township to mow roadside ditches shall do such mowing before July 1 of any year.

(4) Whenever a landowner, referred to in subsections (1) and (5) of this section, neglects to mow the weeds as provided in this section, it shall be the duty of the county board on complaint of any resident of the county to cause the weeds to be mowed or otherwise destroyed on neglected portions of roads or ditches complained of.

(5) The county board shall cause to be ascertained and recorded an accurate account of the cost of mowing or destroying such weeds, as referred to in subsections (1) and (4) of this section, in such places, specifying, in such statement or account of costs, the description of the land abutting upon each side of the highway where such weeds were mowed or destroyed, and, if known, the name of the owner of such abutting land. The board shall file such statement with the county clerk, together with a description of the lands abutting on each side of the road where such expenses were incurred, and the county board, at the time of the annual tax levy made upon lands and property of the county, may, if it desires, assess such cost upon such abutting land, giving such landowner due notice of such proposed assessment and reasonable opportunity to be heard concerning the proposed assessment before the same is finally made.

The changes made were directed more toward habitat (or it's preservation) for pollinators and game birds, among other things. The property owner and county can mow before July 1 as stated in item 2 but there shall be no contracts for this work. We are mowing the oil roads so there is a place to pull over should there be a need for a motor vehicle assist. As time permits the mowers will move onto other roads focusing on intersections that may have restricted sight distances at entrances due to weeds or planted crops.

Another item to note is that Box Butte County does not charge for mowing though one of our neighboring counties does; I do not know if this is a trend but it is certainly a possibility and we encourage all property owners to mow the right-of-way running along their land.

The Box Butte County Road Department is also looking for help; in particular one part-time temporary worker to assist with mowing, patching asphalt, tires... and one full-time motor grader operator. If you are interested in either position, please stop by the office at 101 Howard Street for an application. As always; if you have any questions or concerns, please call the office at 762-6797. Have a safe summer.