

CHAPTER 465A OPEN SPACE LANDS

Referred to in [§306D.1](#), [456A.24](#), [481A.1](#)

This chapter not enacted as a part of this title;
transferred from chapter 111E in Code 1993
Intent that highway scenic routes program
be coordinated with open space program, [§306D.1\(2\)](#)

465A.1	Statement of purpose — intent.	465A.3	Funding sources.
465A.2	Statewide open space acquisition and protection program — objectives and agency duties.	465A.4	Payment in lieu of property taxes.

465A.1 Statement of purpose — intent.

1. The general assembly finds that:

a. Iowa’s most significant open space lands are essential to the well-being and quality of life for Iowans and to the economic viability of the state’s recreation and tourism industry.

b. Many areas of high national significance in the state have not received adequate public protection to keep them free of visual blight, resource degradation, and negative impacts from inappropriate land use and surrounding development. Some of these areas include national park service and United States fish and wildlife service properties, national landmarks and trails, the Des Moines river greenbelt, the great river road, areas where interstate highways enter the state, cross major rivers, and pass by other areas of national significance, major state park and recreation areas, unique and protected water areas, and significant natural, geological, scenic, historic, and cultural properties of the state.

c. While state and federal funds are generally available for the acquisition and protection of fish and wildlife areas and habitats as well as boating access to public waters, funding programs for public open space acquisition and protection have not been adequate to meet needs.

d. Relative to other midwestern states, Iowa ranks last in the proportion of land acquired and protected for public open space.

2. A program shall be established to:

a. Educate the citizens of the state about the needs and urgency of protecting the state’s open spaces.

b. Plan for the protection of the state’s significant open space areas.

c. Acquire and protect those properties on a priority basis through a variety of appropriate means.

[87 Acts, ch 174, §1](#)

[CS87, §111E.1](#)

[C93, §465A.1](#)

[2011 Acts, ch 25, §120; 2023 Acts, ch 109, §25](#)

Referred to in [§465A.2](#)

465A.2 Statewide open space acquisition and protection program — objectives and agency duties.

1. The department of natural resources has the following duties in undertaking programs to meet the objectives stated in [section 465A.1](#).

a. Prepare and conduct new education and awareness programs designed to create greater public understanding of the needs, issues, and opportunities for protecting the state’s significant open spaces. The department shall incorporate the recommendations of other state agencies and private sector organizations which have interests in open space protection. The department may enter into contracts with other agencies and the private sector for preparing and conducting these programs.

b. Prepare a statewide, long-range plan for the acquisition and protection of significant open space lands throughout the state as identified in [section 465A.1](#). The department of transportation, the economic development authority, private organizations, county conservation boards, city park and recreation departments, and the federal agencies with

lands in the state shall be directly involved in preparing the plan. The plan shall include, but is not limited to, the following elements:

(1) Specific acquisition and protection needs and priorities for open space areas based on the following sequence of priorities:

- (a) National.
- (b) Regional.
- (c) Statewide.
- (d) Local.

(2) Identification of open space acquisition and protection techniques available or needed to carry out the plan.

(3) Additional education and awareness programs which are needed to encourage the acquisition and protection of areas identified in the plan.

(4) Management needs including maintenance, rehabilitation, and improvements.

(5) Funding levels needed to accomplish the statewide open space programs.

(6) Recommendations as to how federal programs can be modified or developed to assist the state's open space programs.

c. Acquire and protect open space properties as identified by priority in the plan as funding is made available for this purpose. In acquiring and protecting open space, the department shall:

(1) Accept applications for funding assistance from federal agencies, other state agencies, regional organizations, county conservation boards, city park and recreation agencies, and private organizations with an interest in open spaces.

(2) Obtain the maximum efficiency of funds appropriated for this program through the use of acquisition and protection techniques that provide the degree of protection required at the lowest cost.

(3) Encourage the provision of supporting or matching funds; however, the absence of these funds shall not prevent the approval of those projects of clear national importance.

2. The department may enter into contracts with private consultants for preparing all or part of the plan required under [subsection 1](#), paragraph "b". The plan shall be submitted to the general assembly by July 1, 1988. Prior to submission of the plan to the general assembly, the department shall request comments on the proposed plan from state and federal agencies and private organizations with interests in open space protection. The comments shall be submitted to the general assembly.

3. The department may initiate pilot acquisition and protection projects prior to completion of the open space plan if the pilot projects have high national significance as identified in section 1, [subsection 2](#).

[87 Acts, ch 174, §2](#)

CS87, §111E.2

C93, §465A.2

[2011 Acts, ch 118, §85, 89; 2012 Acts, ch 1021, §85; 2023 Acts, ch 19, §2121](#)

465A.3 Funding sources.

1. To achieve the purposes of [this chapter](#), the department, other state agencies, political subdivisions of the state, and private organizations may use funds from the following sources:

- a. Appropriations by the general assembly.
- b. Private grants and gifts.
- c. Federal grants and loans intended for these purposes.

2. The department may enter into agreements with other state agencies, political subdivisions of the state, and private organizations for the purposes of carrying out this natural open space program or specific elements of the program.

[87 Acts, ch 174, §3](#)

CS87, §111E.3

C93, §465A.3

465A.4 Payment in lieu of property taxes.

As a part of the budget proposal submitted to the general assembly under [section 455A.4, subsection 1](#), paragraph “c”, the director of the department of natural resources shall submit a budget request to pay the property taxes for the next fiscal year on open space property acquired by the department which would otherwise be subject to the levy of property taxes. The assessed value of open space property acquired by the department shall be that determined under [section 427.1, subsection 18](#), and the director may protest the assessed value in the manner provided by law for any property owner to protest an assessment. For the purposes of [chapter 257](#), the assessed value of the open space property acquired by the department shall be included in the valuation base of the school district and the payments made pursuant to [this section](#) shall be considered as property tax revenues and not as miscellaneous income. The county treasurer shall certify taxes due to the department. The taxes shall be paid annually from the departmental fund or account from which the open space property acquisition was funded. If the departmental fund or account has no moneys or no longer exists, the taxes shall be paid from funds as otherwise provided by the general assembly. If the total amount of taxes due certified to the department exceeds the amount appropriated, the taxes due shall be reduced proportionately so that the total amount equals the amount appropriated. [This section](#) applies to open space property acquired by the department on or after January 1, 1987.

[87 Acts, ch 174, §4; 89 Acts, ch 135, §52](#)

CS87, §111E.4

C93, §465A.4

Referred to in [§455A.19](#)