
Managing Iowa's Rights-of-Way: A Survey of County Administrators

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Executive Summary

Background & Methods

A mixed-mode approach, including both online and mail-back survey data collection methods, was used to gather information from County Conservation Board Directors and Chairs of County Boards of Supervisors regarding their perceived barriers and benefits to implementing Integrated Roadside Vegetation Management (IRVM) practices in their counties. A list of all County Conservation Board Directors and Chairs of County Boards of Supervisors was provided by the Iowa State Association of Counties. Data collection occurred during June through August of 2017. We received 113 completed questionnaires from 63 Conservation Board Directors and 50 Board of Supervisor Chairs, resulting in a 64% response rate for Conservation Board Directors and a 51% response rate for Board of Supervisor Chairs.

Key Findings

- Roadside vegetation was considered a moderate or high priority for county supervisors by 77% of Board of Supervisor Chairs, and by just 40% of Conservation Board Directors.
- Six of ten Conservation Directors and Board of Supervisor Chairs identified planting of native species as part of their current roadside vegetation management practices.
- Consideration of safety has the greatest influence on roadside vegetation management decision-making for both Conservation Directors and Board of Supervisor Chairs.
- A majority of Conservation Board Directors and Board of Supervisor Chairs agreed that their current roadside vegetation management practices provide attractive roadsides, make roadways safer, maintain or improve water quality, protect soil resources, optimize the effectiveness of weed and pest control practices, and reduce blowing snow.
- One-quarter of Conservation Board Directors and two-thirds of Board of Supervisor Chairs were unsure if their neighboring counties had roadside vegetation managers.
- Strong majorities of Conservation Board Directors and Board of Supervisor Chairs from counties with Roadside Vegetation Managers indicated their counties would definitely continue to have these positions for the next five years.
- Approximately half of Board of Supervisor Chairs and the majority of Conservation Board Directors indicated that they were in favor of exploring shared service agreements for roadside vegetation management.
- The top three barriers to IRVM practice implementation identified by both Board of Supervisor Chairs and Conservation Board Directors were: other concerns being given higher priority, lack of staff capacity/ support, and cost of starting a program.
- A majority of both Conservation Board Directors and Board of Supervisor Chairs attend the Iowa State Association of Counties (ISAC) annual conference.
- Respondents indicated that an in-person presentation at the annual ISAC conference would be a good way to share information about integrated roadside vegetation management practices with county administrators.

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Background & Methods

In 1999, 46 of Iowa's 99 counties had full-time Roadside managers; for the past ten years the number of counties with full-time Roadside managers has remained generally steady at around 35-40 counties. One of the goals of the Integrated Roadside Vegetation Management (IRVM) program is to encourage counties without IRVM programs to participate. In FY2016, a Living Roadway Trust Fund grant supported a survey of county engineers and roadside managers, in counties that participated in IRVM and those that did not, in an effort to better understand perceptions of implementation of IRVM practices, such as using spot spraying or receiving Transportation Alternatives Seed.

The results presented in this report complement the information gathered in the 2016 survey and help to understand the support for IRVM activities at the county advisory level. To help inform the design of this survey, research staff conducted nine in-depth interviews with individuals who recently served as Chair of a County Board of Supervisors or as Director of a County Conservation Board but who have since stepped down from these positions. The subsequent survey assessed County Conservation Board Directors and Chairs of County Boards of Supervisors awareness and perceptions of the IRVM program as well as barriers to their county's participation in the IRVM program. All Iowa counties were included in this survey effort to identify similarities and differences in perceptions of the program among respondents in those counties that have strong IRVM programs, with Roadside managers, and those who do not have a Roadside manager.

A list of 98 County Conservation Board Directors and 99 Chairs of County Boards of Supervisors was provided by the Iowa State Association of Counties. Data collection occurred from late May through August of 2017. A mixed-mode approach, including both online and mail-back survey data collection methods, was used to collect information from County Conservation Board Directors and Chairs of County Boards of Supervisors regarding their perceived barriers and benefits to implementing IRVM practices in their county.

Data collection efforts began with email distribution of invitations to participate in the online survey on May 31, 2017, followed by email reminders to non-respondents on June 12 and June 20. A self-administered mail-back survey was sent July 19 to those individuals who had not responded after the initial email invitation and successive reminders. Data collection was completed on August 30.

Percentages in figures were rounded to the nearest whole number, therefore percentage totals will range from 99% to 101%.

Results

Respondent Characteristics

We received 113 completed questionnaires from 63 Conservation Board Directors and 50 Board of Supervisor Chairs (Figure 1): a 64% response rate for Conservation Board Directors and a 51% response rate for Board of Supervisor Chairs. Approximately three-quarters (73%) of Conservation Board Directors completed the online questionnaire, compared to 56% of Board of Supervisor Chairs (Figure 2).

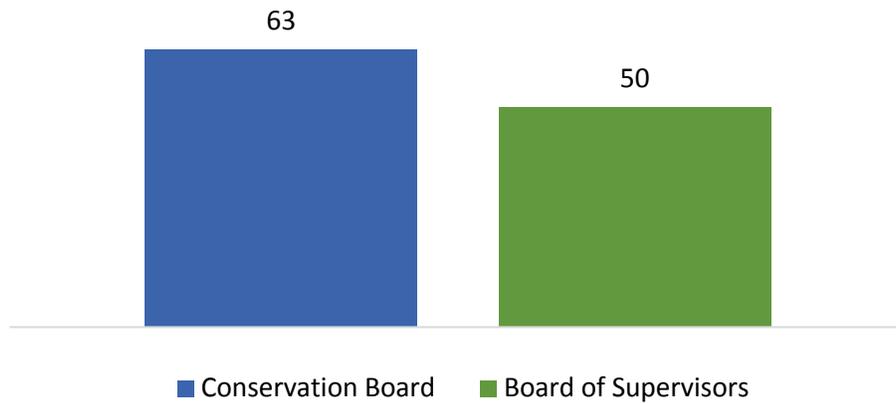


Figure 1. Number of responses from Conservation Board Directors and Board of Supervisor Chairs

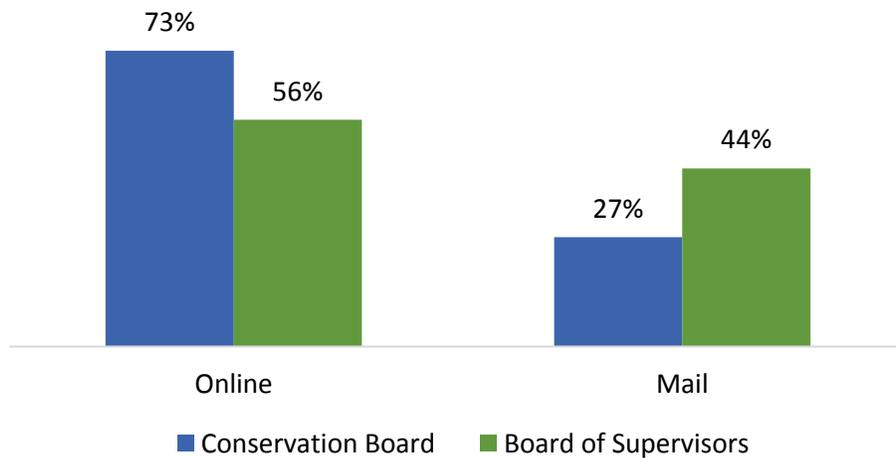


Figure 2. Interviews by survey mode

County Conservation Board Directors reported having served in their roles for 15 years ($\bar{x} = 15.08$), on average, while Board of Supervisors reported having served in their roles for an average of only 5 years ($\bar{x} = 5.07$). The vast majority of both Conservation Board Directors (92%) and Board of Supervisor Chairs (92%) were male (Figure 3).

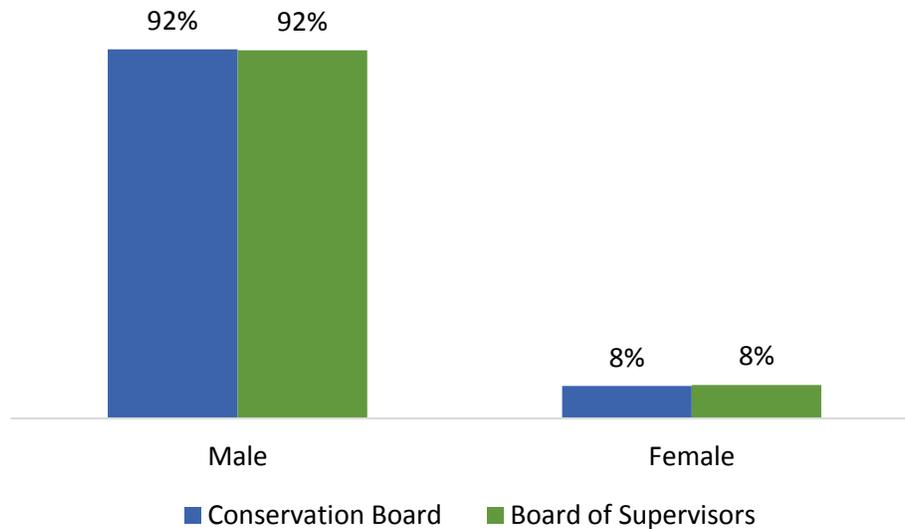


Figure 3. Gender of the respondents

Priority areas for Board of Supervisors

Conservation Board Directors and Board of Supervisor Chairs were both asked to rate the priority given to 11 different issues by their county’s Board of Supervisors. All Directors and Chairs identified “repairing roads and bridges” as a moderate or high priority for their county’s board of supervisors. As shown in Figure 4, the other issues identified most often by both Board of Supervisor Chairs and Conservation Board Directors were: “economic development” (98% and 93%, respectively), “expanding recreational opportunities” (83% and 73%, respectively), “farmland preservation” (82% and 87%, respectively), and “environmental protection/conservation” (84% and 70%, respectively).

The greatest discrepancy was with regard to “roadside vegetation”, considered a moderate or high priority for their county’s board of supervisors by 77% of Board of Supervisor Chairs, and by just 40% of Conservation Board Directors.

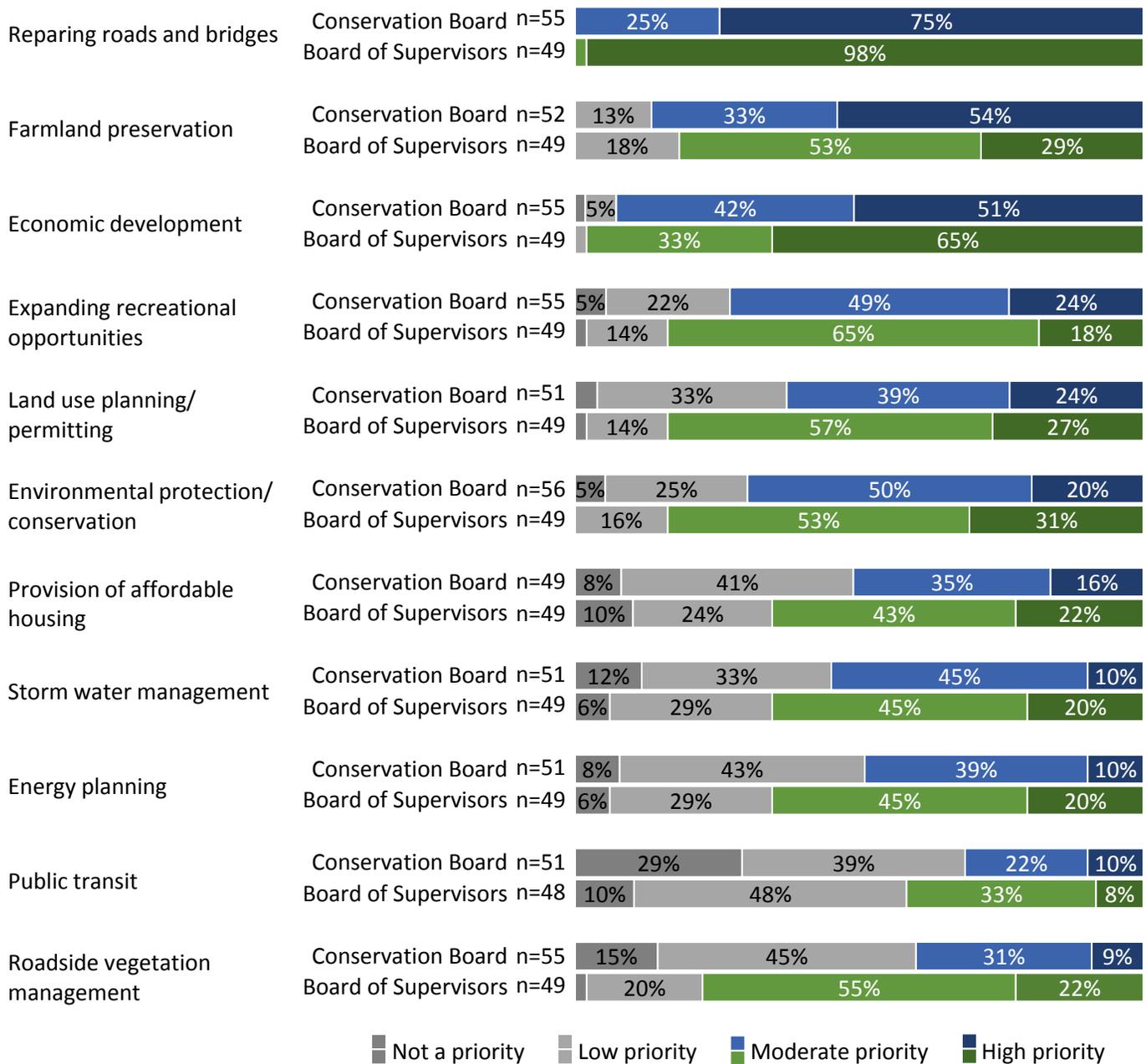


Figure 4. Priority areas for Board of Supervisors

Roadside Vegetation Management Practices

When asked what practices their county used to manage roadside vegetation, Board of Supervisor Chairs and Conservation Board Directors selected “spot-spraying of weeds with herbicides”, “spot mowing of weeds”, and “planting of native species” as the most common practices. Specifically, over 80% of interviewees in both groups mentioned “spot-spraying of weeds with herbicides”. Board of Supervisor Chairs identified “spot mowing of weeds” as a practice for roadside vegetation management more often (76%) than did Conservation Board Directors (57%). “Planting of native species” was indicated by almost six out of ten interviewees in both groups (Figure 5).

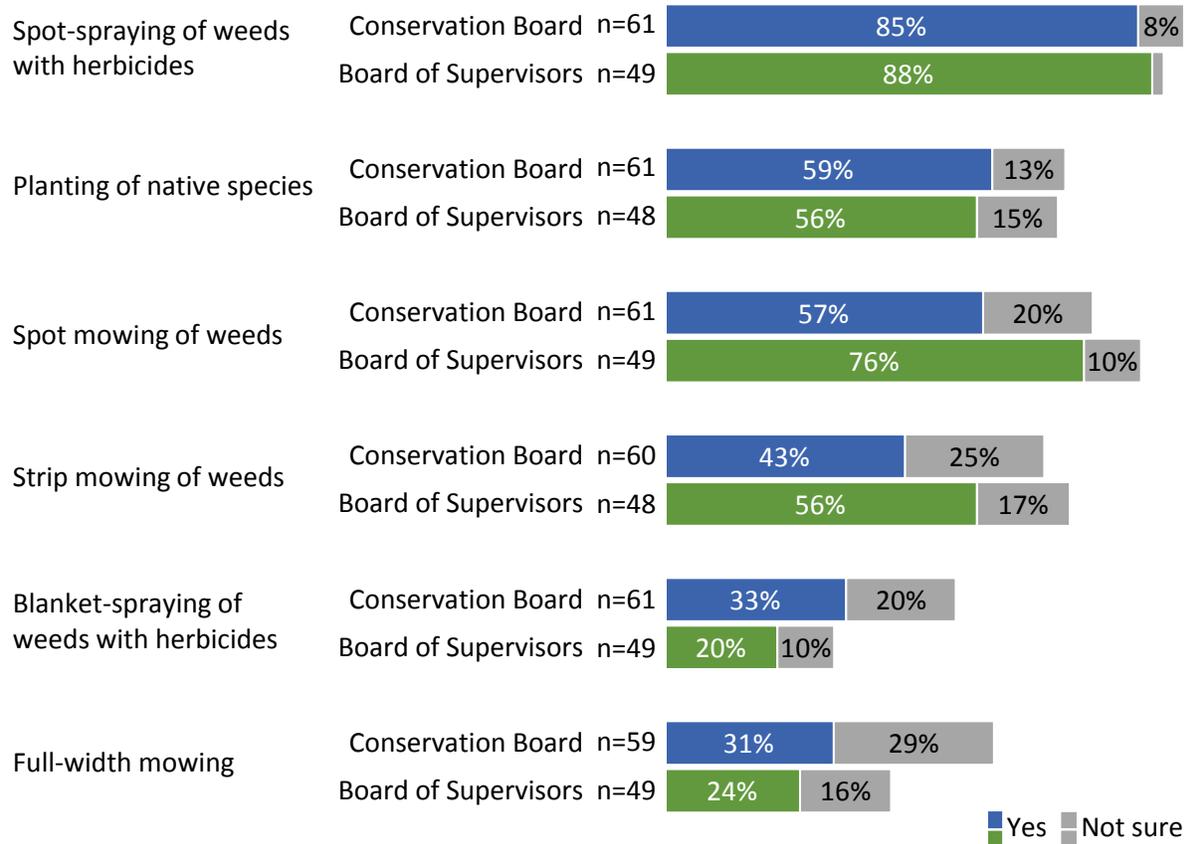


Figure 5. Practices currently used to manage roadside vegetation

Barriers in the use of native species

Members of both groups were asked to assess the degree to which a number of possible barriers have been or currently are barriers to the use of more native species in their counties land management projects (Figure 6). Approximately one out of four respondents in both groups (24% of Board of Supervisor Chairs and 25% of Conservation Board Directors) identified the “cost of desired material and/or available agency funding” as a significant barrier. One in five Conservation Board Directors also saw “acceptance/education internally or among contractors” as a significant barrier for the use of native species. A majority of Conservation Board Directors identified issues with “adjacent landowners mowing” (55%) or “spraying the plantings with herbicides” as moderate to significant barriers for the use of native species. Approximately one-third of both groups identified the “use of fire in management of native grasses” as a moderate to significant barrier.

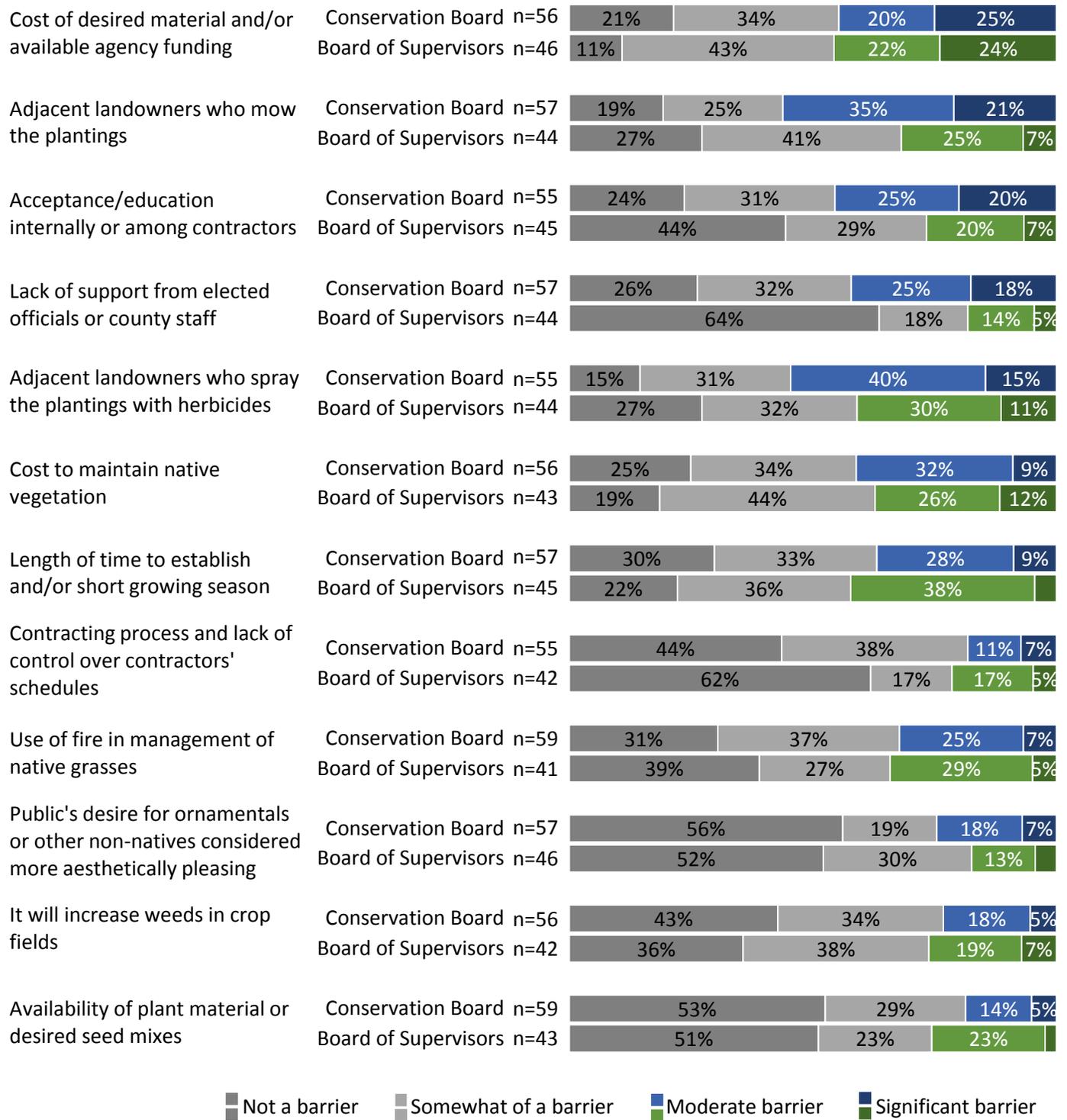


Figure 6. Barriers in the use of native species

The main concerns regarding local prescribed burns for Board of Supervisor Chairs and Conservation Board Directors were “damage to private property”, “liability”, and the “levels of smoke” (Figure 7). A majority of Board of Supervisor Chairs (55%) and four in ten Conservation Board Directors (41%) expressed moderate or great concern about the damaging effect of prescribed burns to private property. Similarly, 54% of Board of Supervisor Chairs and 47% of Conservation Board Directors showed moderate or great concern about the levels of smoke produced by prescribed fires. Board of Supervisor Chairs expressed more concern than Conservation Board Directors about “soil erosion”, “loss of wildlife habitat”, “harm to wildlife”, “loss of forage”, “reduced scenic quality”, and “risk to human safety.”

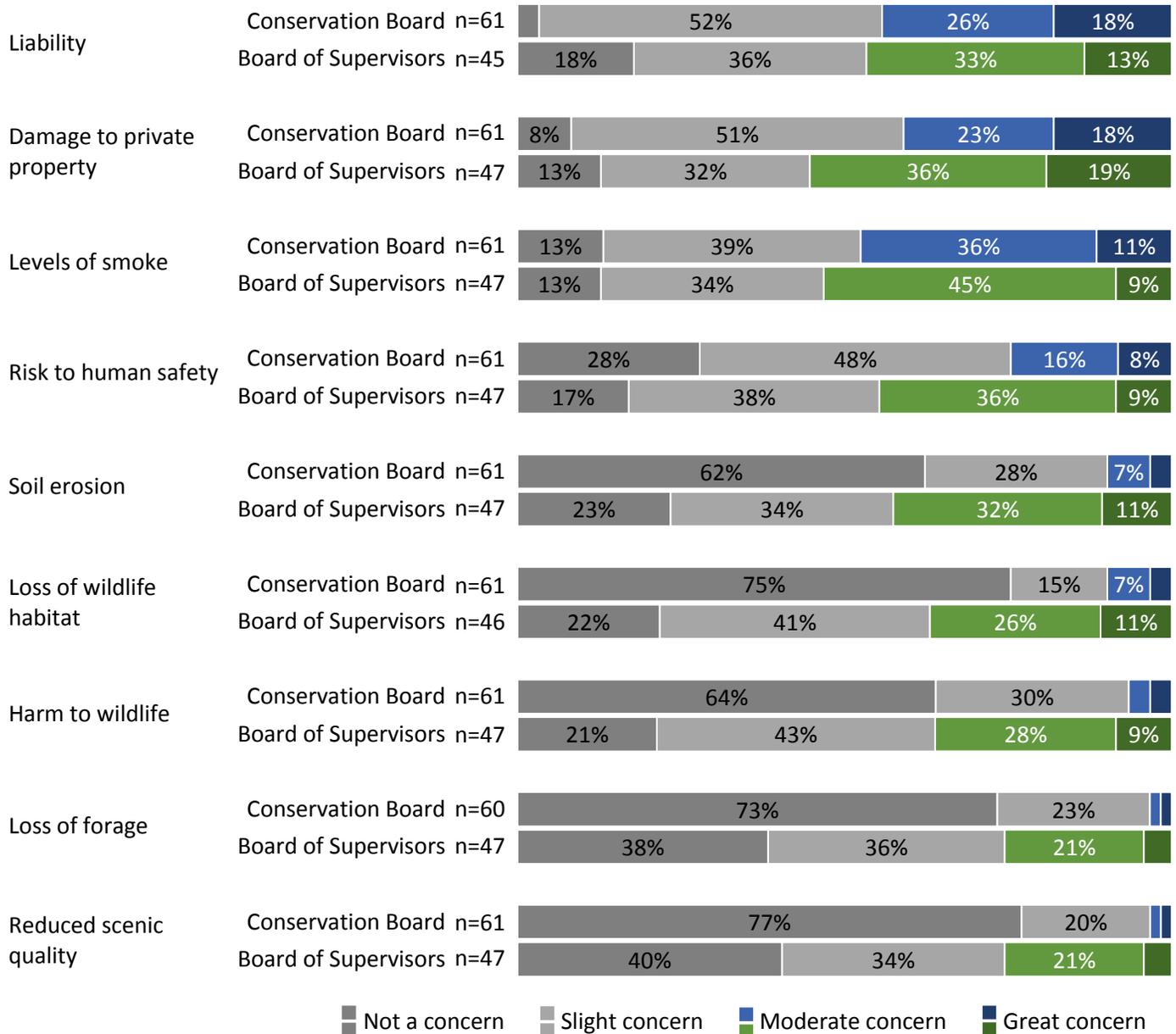


Figure 7. Concern over possible effects of local prescribed burns

Despite the barriers mentioned above, 86% of Conservation Board Directors and 42% of Board of Supervisor Chairs indicated that their counties have increased the use of native species in land management projects other than roadside management (Figure 8).

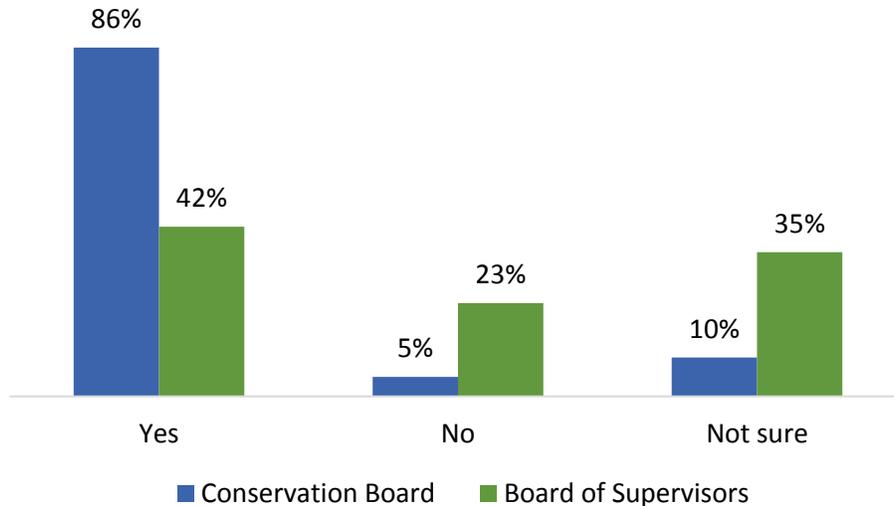


Figure 8. Increased use of native species in any land management projects other than the roadside management

Roadside Vegetation Management Decision-Making

Conservation Board Directors and Board of Supervisor Chairs were asked to identify the impact that a number of possible influences have upon roadside vegetation management decision-making in their counties. The two influences that were identified most often by both groups as having quite a bit of impact were “consideration of safety” and “maintenance cost savings” (Figure 9). Two-thirds of Board of Supervisor Chairs (67%) and 61% of Conservation Board Directors identified “consideration of safety” as having quite a bit of impact on roadside vegetation management decision-making in their county. Slightly over half (53%) of respondents in both groups indicated the same for “maintenance cost savings”. Board of Supervisor Chairs identified “soil erosion concerns” as having quite a bit of impact (64%) more often than did Conservation Board Directors (33%). Finally, the practices identified most often as having no impact were “pollinators and other wildlife” for Conservation Board Directors (15%) and “storm management regulations” for Board of Supervisor Chairs (9%).

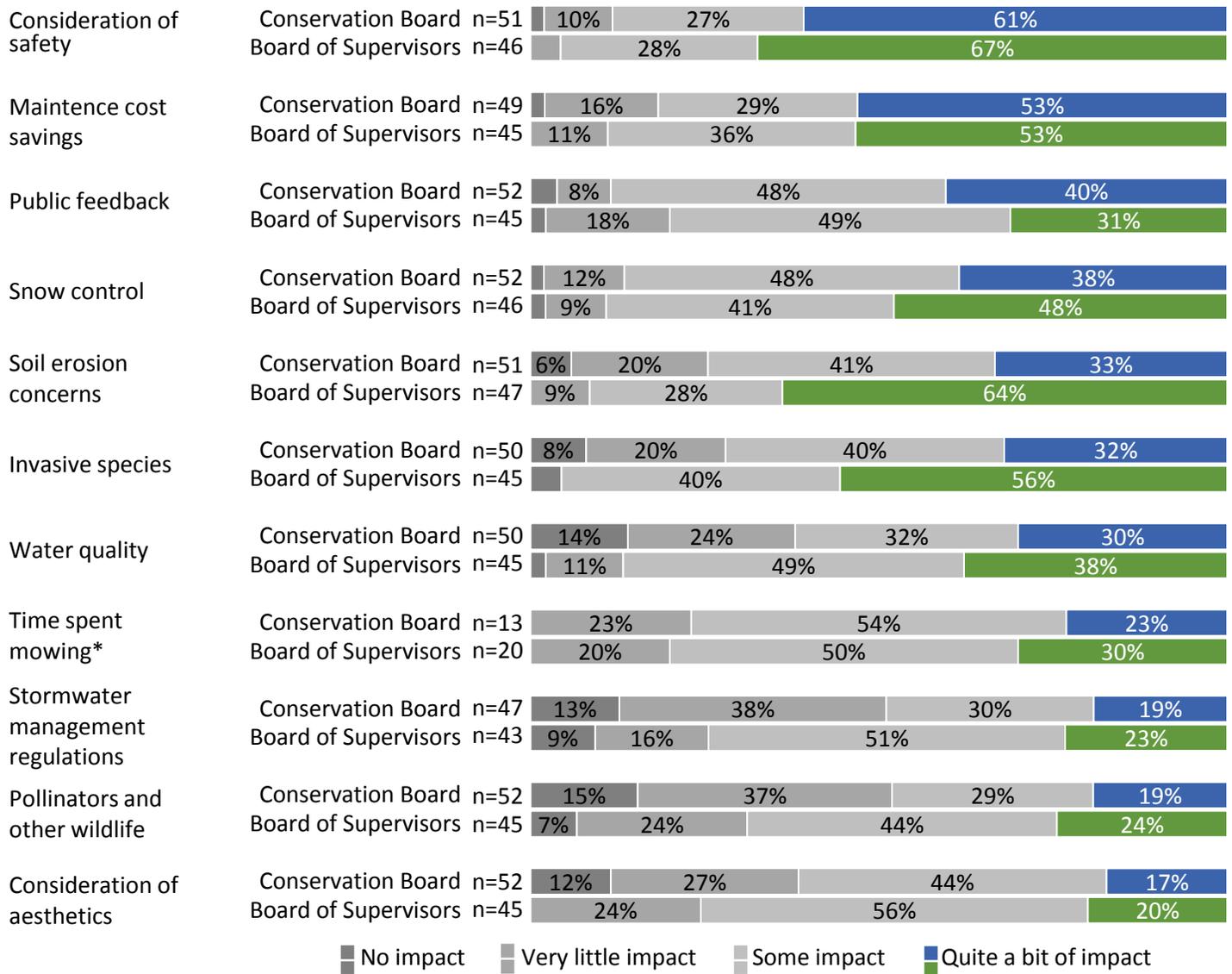


Figure 9. Impact of possible influences on roadside vegetation management decision-making
*Only asked on the mail survey

A majority of Conservation Board Directors and Board of Supervisor Chairs agreed or strongly agreed that their current roadside vegetation management practices “provide attractive roadsides”, “make roadways safer”, “maintain or improve water quality”, “protect soil resources”, “optimize the effectiveness of weed and pest control practices”, and “reduce blowing snow” (Figure 10). Both groups agreed the least with statements about their current roadside vegetation management practices “enhancing biodiversity”, “reducing the spread of invasive species”, and “promoting partnerships with other organizations.” Overall, Board of Supervisor Chairs agreed more often than did Conservation Board Directors that current roadside vegetation management practices were providing a multitude of listed benefits.

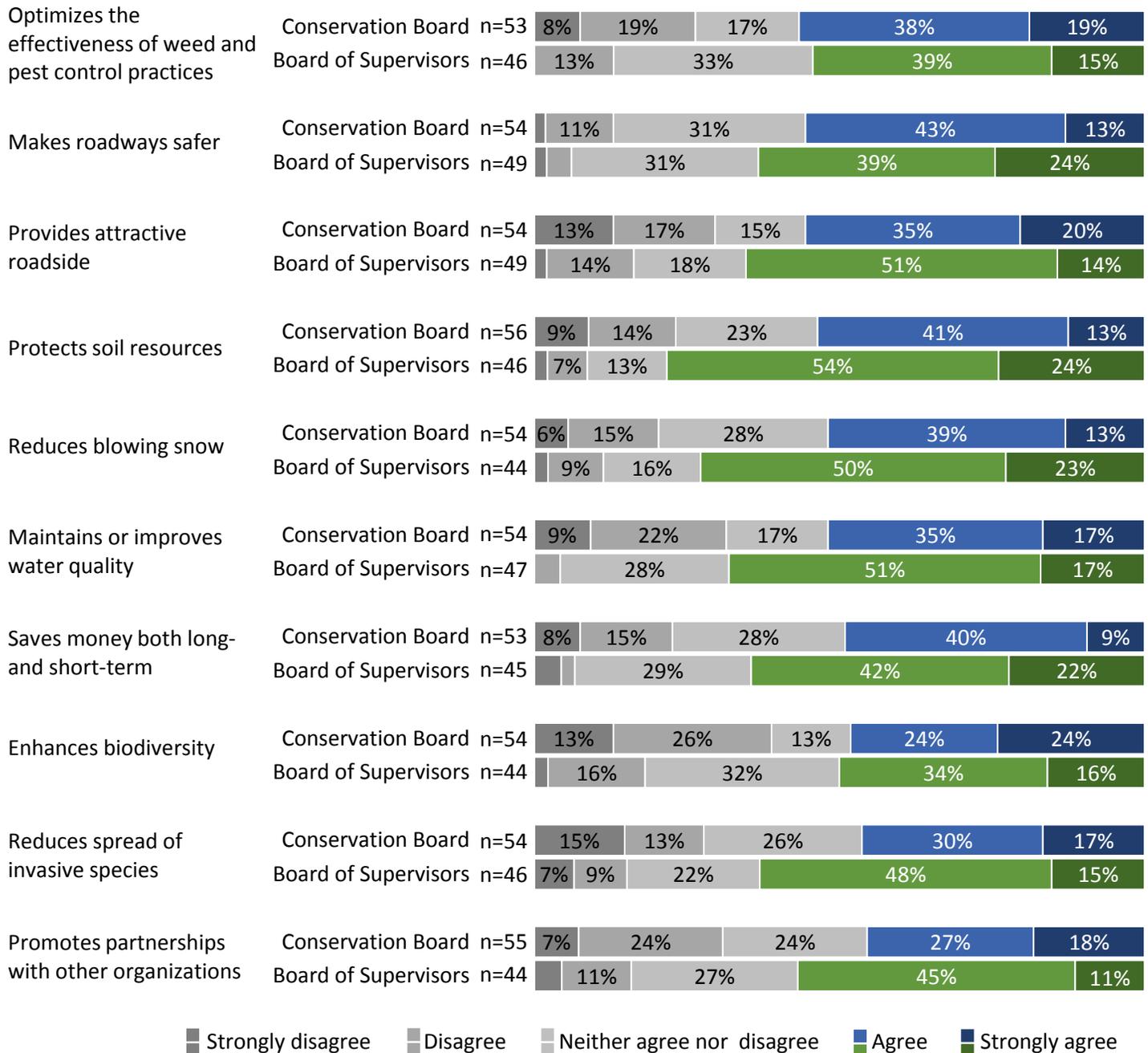


Figure 10. Benefits of current roadside vegetation management practices

Integrated Roadside Vegetation Management (IRVM) program

Conservation Board Directors were more familiar with the IRVM program than were Board of Supervisor Chairs. Specifically, 61% of Conservation Board Directors and 16% of Board of Supervisor Chairs responded that they were very familiar with this program (Figure 11).

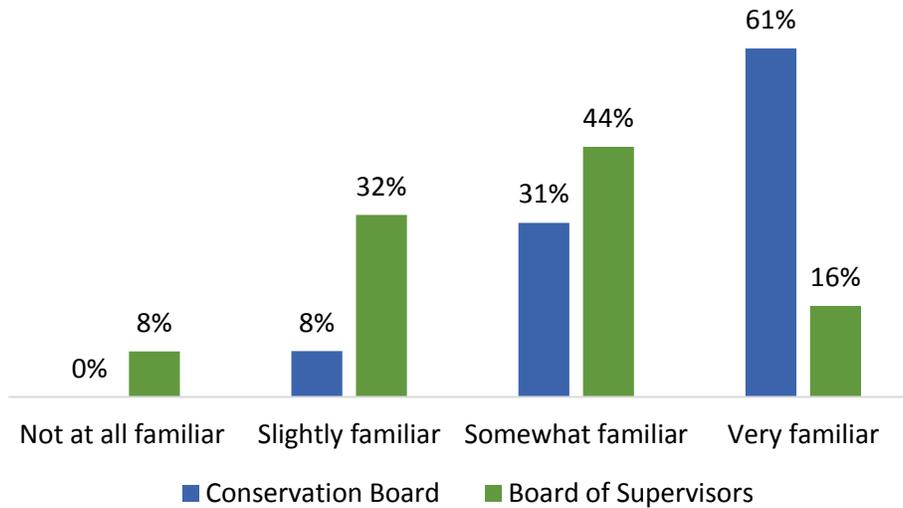


Figure 11. Familiarity with the IRVM Program

Although Conservation Board Directors indicated more familiarity with the IRVM program, pluralities of both Conservation Board Directors (42%) and Board of Supervisors Chairs (45%) reported uncertainty regarding whether their county has an IRVM plan filed with the Iowa DOT (Figure 12).

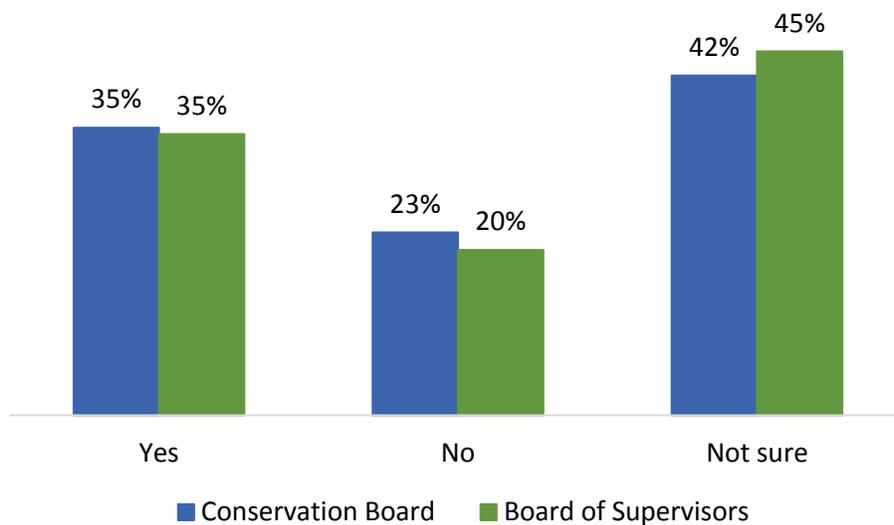


Figure 12. Existence of an IRVM plan filed with the Iowa DOT

Board of Supervisor Chairs and Conservation Board Directors were asked to identify the impact that IRVM practices have on multiple dimensions of secondary roads. The dimensions that both groups saw as improving the most were “soil health”, “water quality”, “roadside aesthetics”, “plant biodiversity”, and “native plant use” (Figure 13). Board of Supervisor Chairs and Conservation Board Directors viewed “short-term costs” as the most negative impact of implementing IRVM practices.

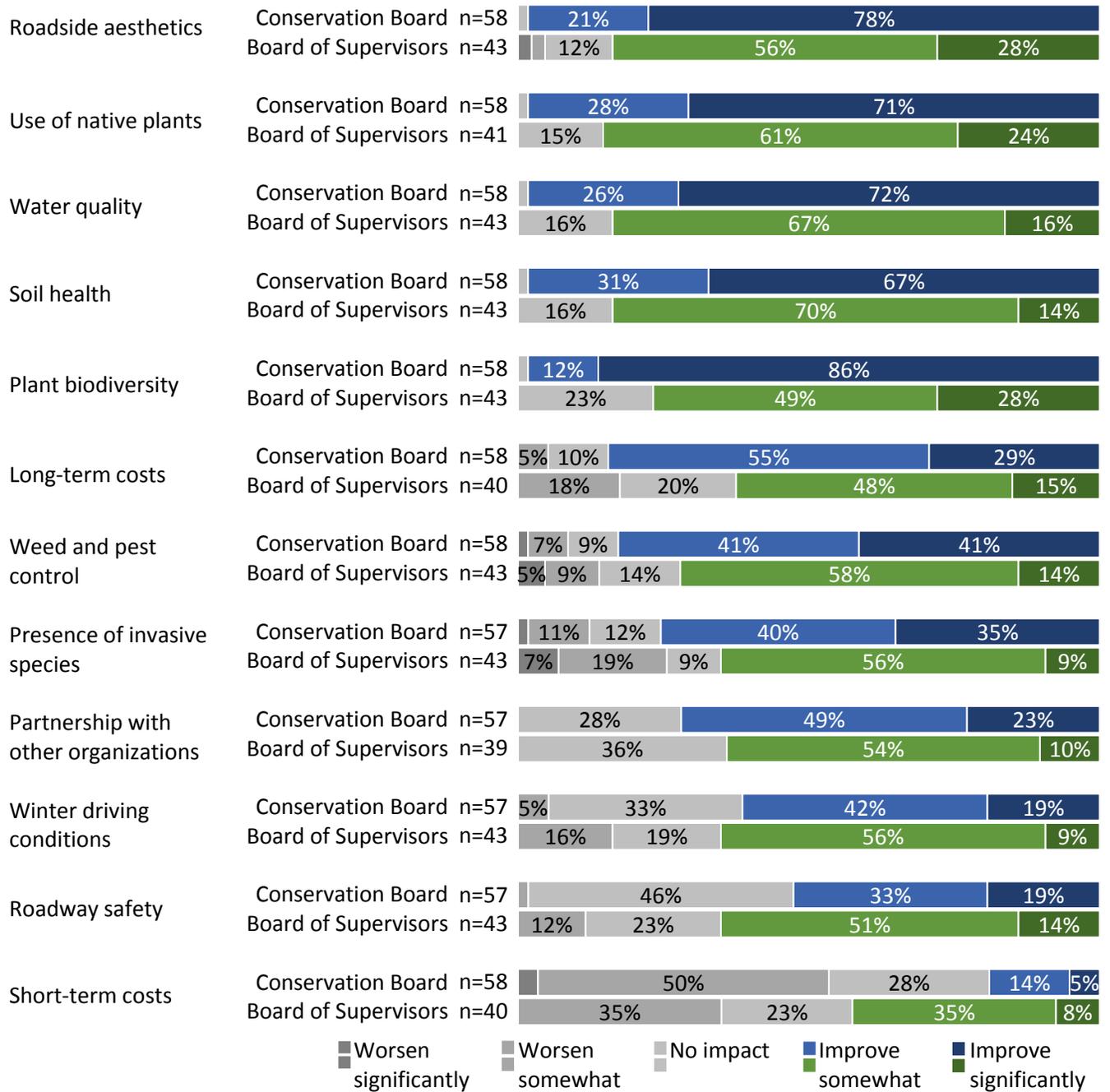


Figure 13. Effect of IRVM practices on several dimensions

Conservation Board Directors indicated the presence of barriers to the implementation of IRVM practices in their counties more often (42%) than did Board of Supervisor Chairs (19%). However, a large percentage of both groups expressed uncertainty by indicating that they were not sure regarding whether there were or have been barriers to their counties implementation of these practices (Figure 14).

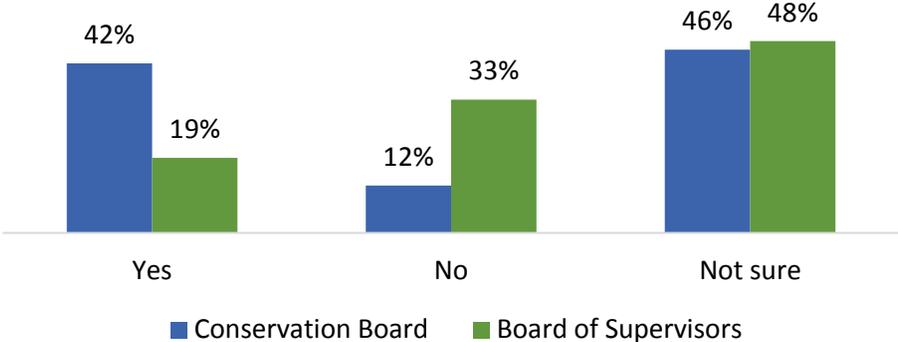


Figure 14. Presence of barriers to the implementation of IRVM practices

Respondents who indicated the presence of barriers were asked to identify the most important from a list of ten potential obstacles (Figure 15). The top three barriers identified by both Board of Supervisor Chairs and Conservation Board Directors were: “other concerns being given higher priority” (46% and 32%, respectively), “lack of staff capacity/ support” (31% and 44%, respectively), and “cost of starting a program” (31% and 28%, respectively).

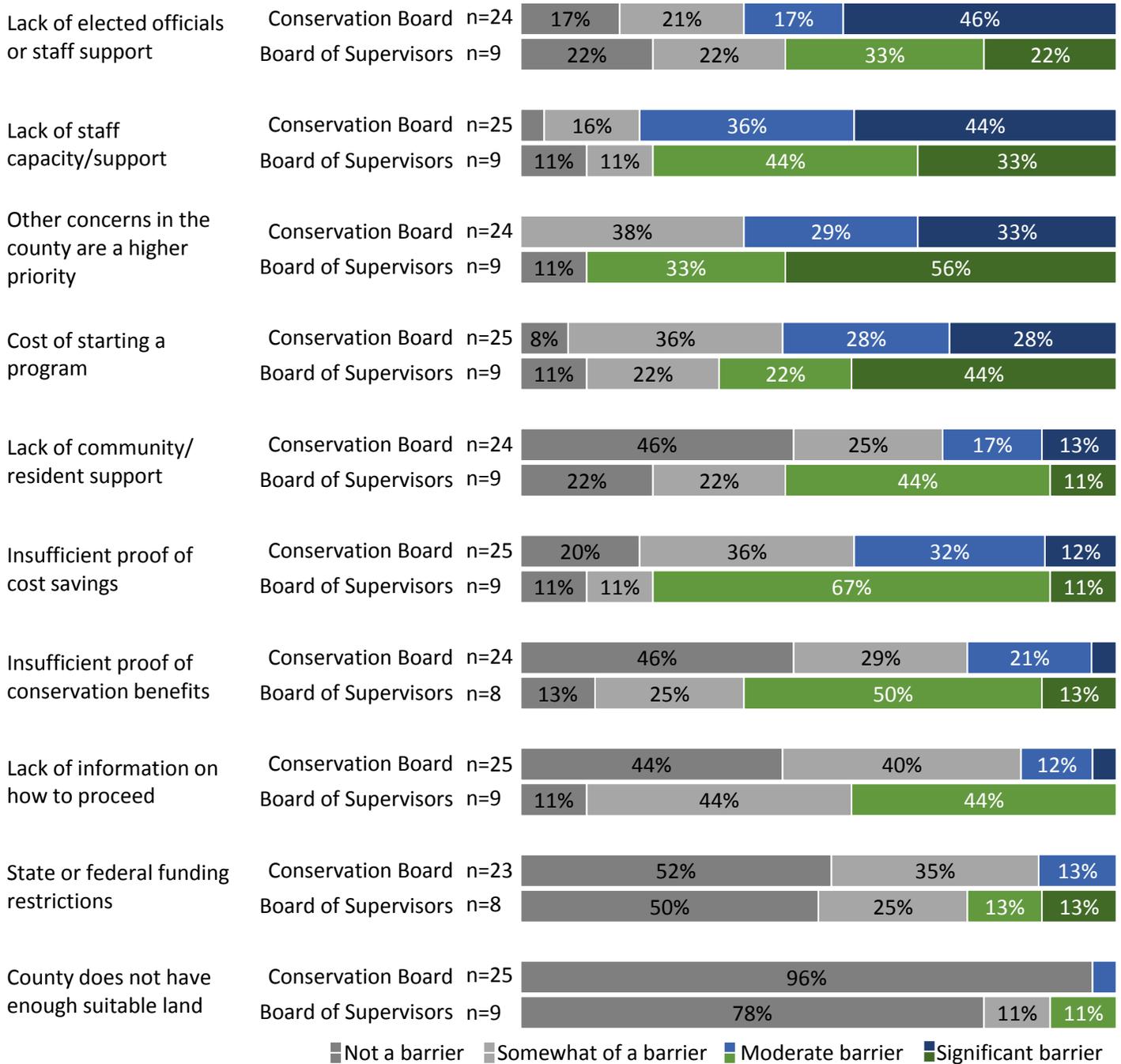


Figure 15. Barriers to the implementation of IRVM practices

Respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which different groups supported or opposed the implementation of IRVM practices in their counties. As shown in Figure 16, Conservation Boards and hunters were seen as having very supportive views toward IRVM implementation by both Board of Supervisor Chairs and Conservation Board Directors. In contrast, farmers were viewed as opposing implementation of IRVM practices. Specifically, 15% of Board of Supervisor Chairs and nearly half of Conservation Board Chairs (48%) indicated that farmers moderately or strongly oppose IRVM practice implementation in their counties. Finally, commuters and neighbors were seen as having the most neutral views toward IRVM implementation.

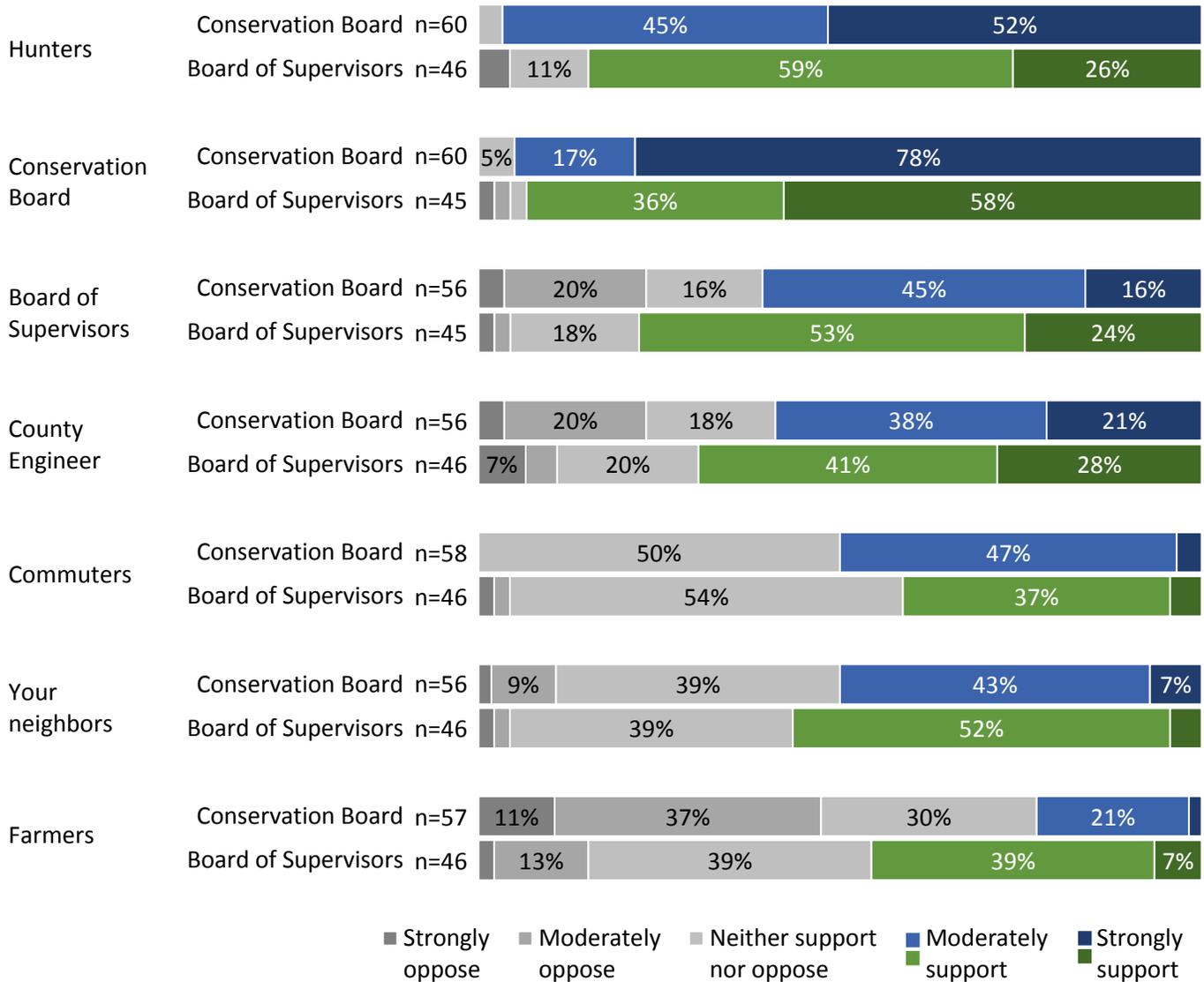


Figure 16. Perceived support for or opposition to IRVM practice implementation

Roadside Manager

Nearly half of Conservation Board Directors (48%) and Board of Supervisor Chairs (49%) indicated that their county had a designated roadside manager (Figure 17). In contrast, nearly all respondents from both groups indicated their county had a weed commissioner (Figure 18).

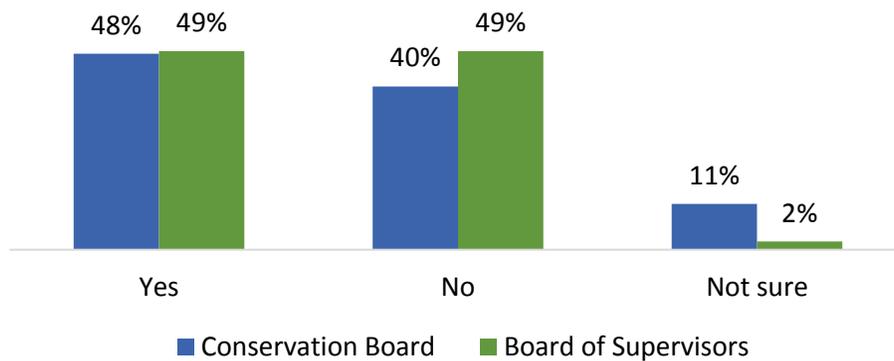


Figure 17. Counties with roadside vegetation manager position

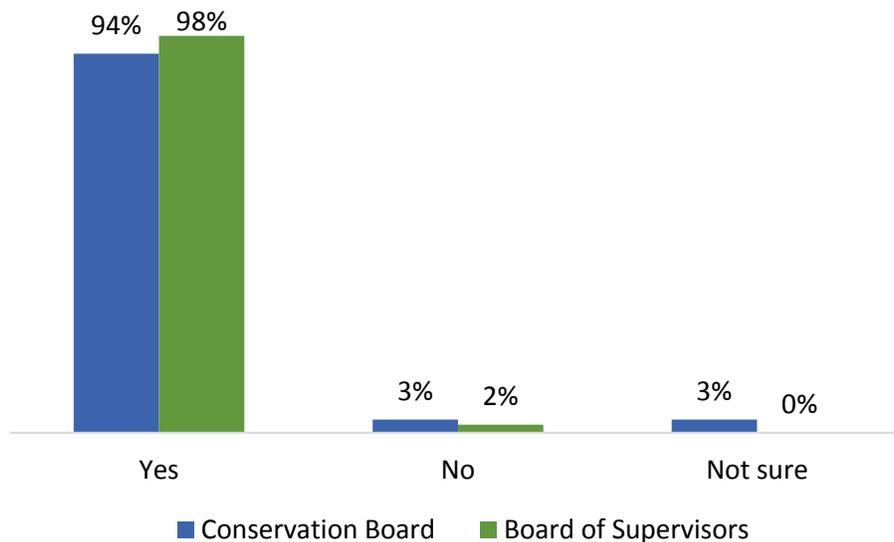


Figure 18. Counties with weed commissioner

Those respondents who indicated that their county did not have a roadside vegetation manager were asked if they thought their county would consider participating in the IRVM program in the upcoming

five years. Conservation Board Directors were less likely than Board of Supervisor Chairs to indicate that their county would participate, with one quarter (25%) saying their county would not consider participating (Figure 19).

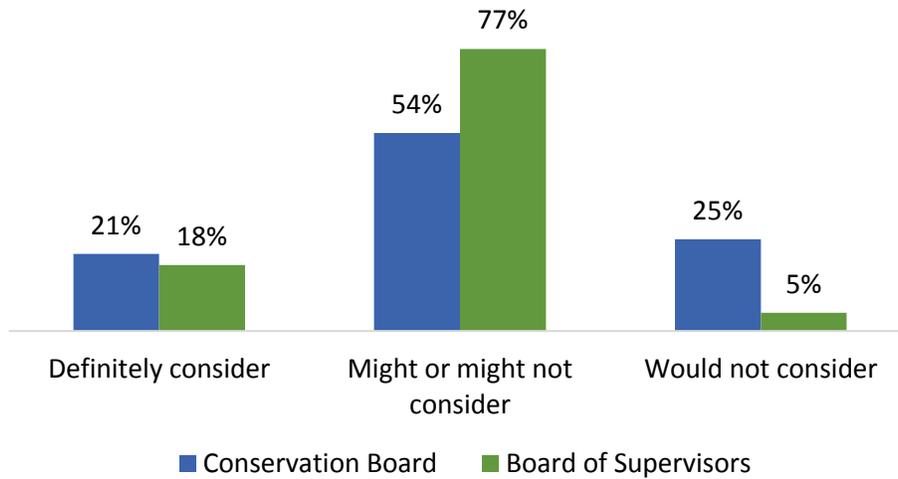


Figure 19. Non-participating counties’ consideration of participation in IRVM in the next 5 years

Those who responded affirmatively to having a roadside manager were asked if they thought their county would continue to have this position for the next five years. A strong majority of both Conservation Board Directors (78%) and Board of Supervisor Chairs (91%) indicated their counties “definitely will” continue to have roadside managers for the next five years (Figure 20). Notably, no respondents who were asked this question selected the response option “No, definitely will not”.

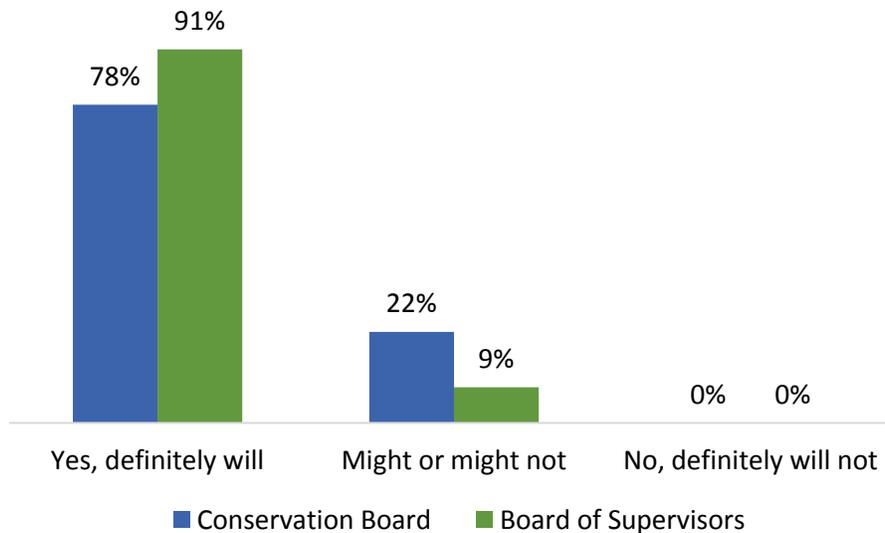


Figure 20. County plans for having a roadside manager position in the next five years

When asked for the factors that influenced their county's decision to hire a roadside manager, a majority of both Conservation Board Directors and Board of Supervisor Chairs identified “improving the community” and “leadership of local staff” as the most significant factors (Figure 21). A greater percentage of Conservation Board Directors (63%) than Board of Supervisor Chairs (48%) identified “environmental stewardship” as a driving factor, while Board of Supervisor Chairs (57%) identified the “leadership of local elected officials” as a significant factor more often than did Conservation Board Directors (44%).

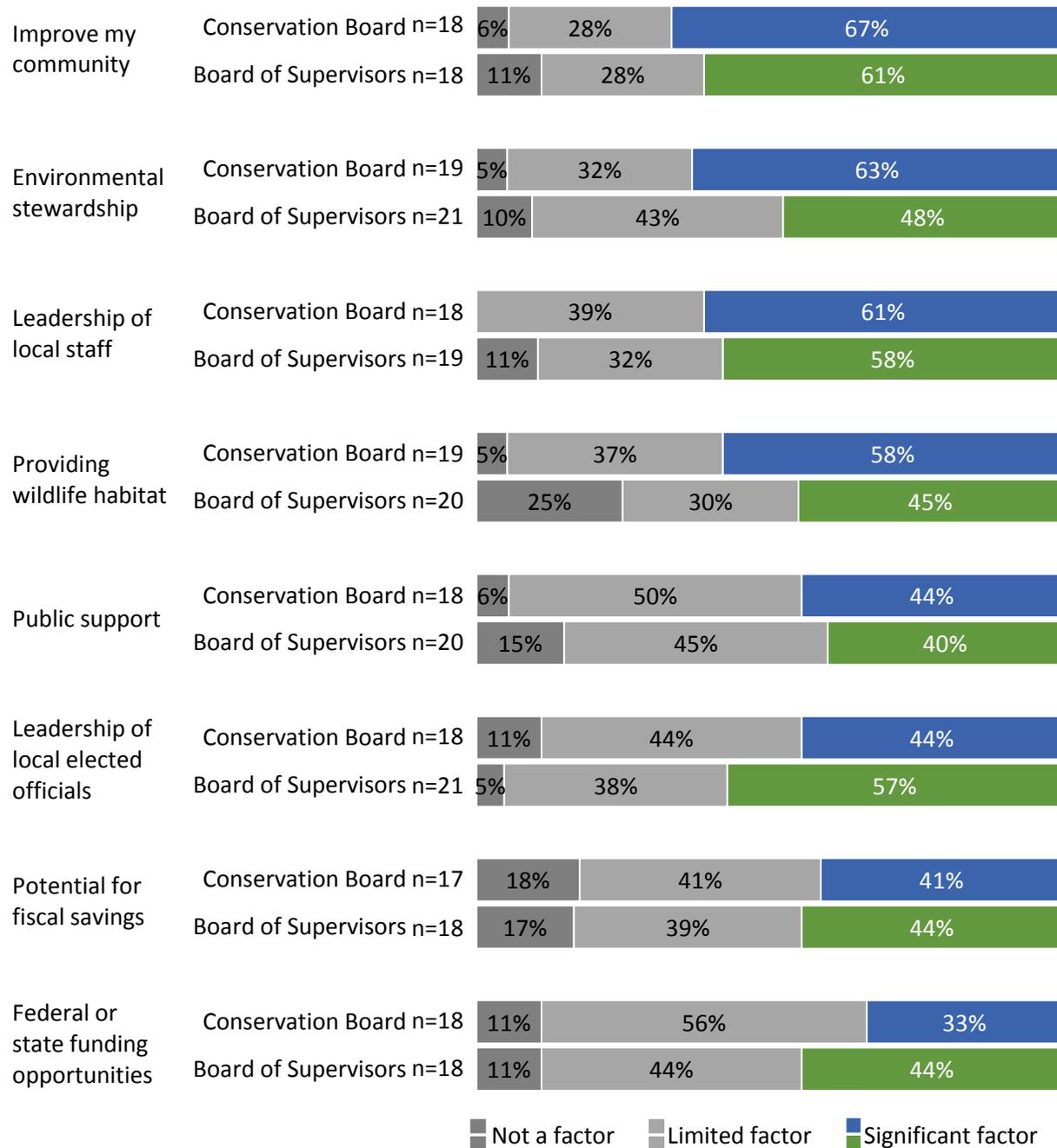


Figure 21. Factors leading to hiring of roadside manager

While the majority of respondents in both groups reported knowing whether or not their county had a designated roadside manager (Figure 22), the level of uncertainty was higher when considering other Iowa counties. Approximately one quarter of Conservation Board Directors (26%) and two-thirds of Board of Supervisor Chairs (67%) expressed uncertainty regarding whether counties adjacent to their own had a designated roadside manager.

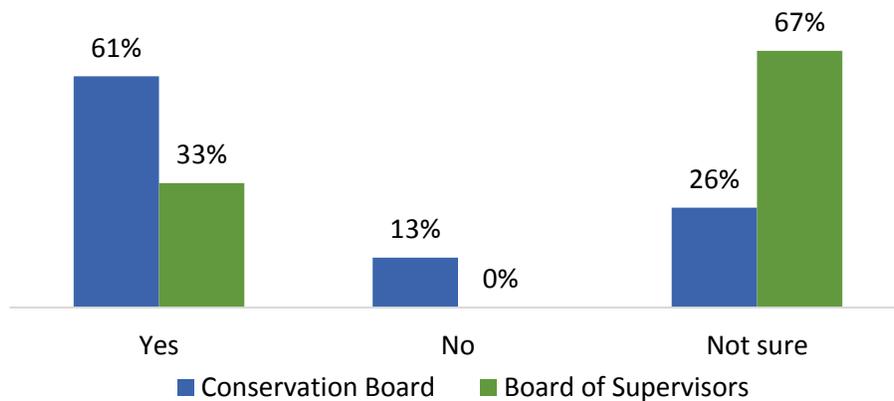


Figure 22. Designated roadside managers in adjacent counties

When asked where the position of roadside manager should be housed in their counties, over half of Board of Supervisor Chairs (55%) and just over a third of Conservation Board Directors (36%) believed that it should be housed in “secondary roads department.” A small percentage of Board of Supervisor Chairs (13%) and Conservation Board Directors (19%) reported that roadside managers should be housed in the “conservation department.” Three in ten Board of Supervisor Chairs (30%) and four in ten Conservation Board Directors (42%) indicated that a roadside manager position should be housed in “both the secondary roads and conservation departments” (Figure 23).

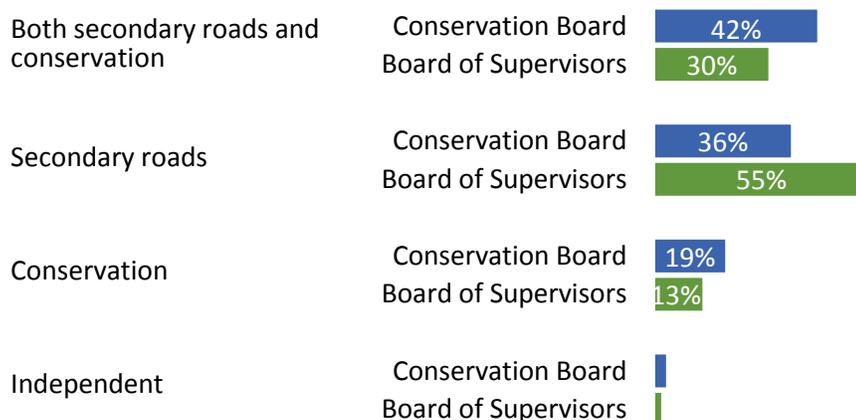


Figure 23. Department for housing roadside vegetation managers

Individuals who indicated their county had a roadside manager were asked which source of funds the county used to finance the position. The top three sources of funding for roadside managers identified by Conservation Board Directors and Board of Supervisor Chairs were: “secondary road fund”, “rural basic fund”, and “County Conservation Board” (Figure 24).

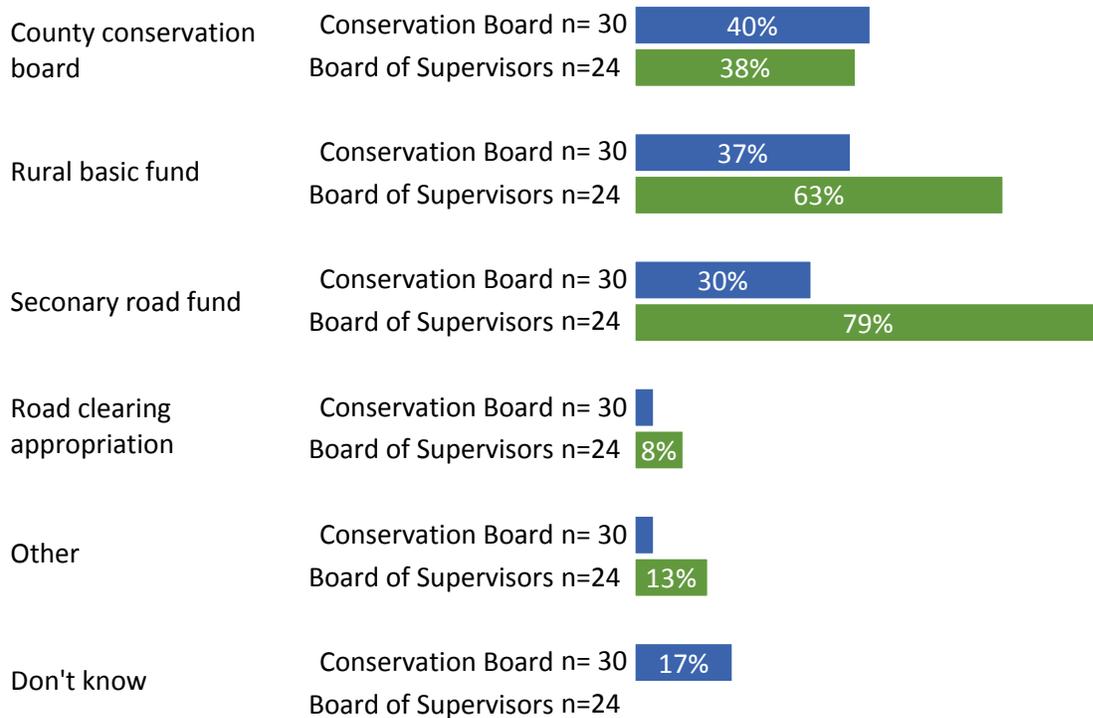


Figure 24. Funding sources for roadside vegetation manager positions

As another potential source of funding, respondents were asked about their familiarity with the Iowa DOT Living Roadway Trust Fund and the grants available to counties who have filed an IRVM plan with IDOT since 2015. Familiarity with these grants was higher among Conservation Board Directors when compared to Board of Supervisor Chairs. Eighty percent (80%) of Conservation Board Directors and 50% of Board of Supervisor Chairs indicated they were somewhat or very familiar with these grants. However, one in five Board of Supervisor Chairs responded that they were not familiar at all with the LRTF grants (Figure 25). Moreover, a higher percentage of Conservation Board Directors (48%) than Board of Supervisor Chairs (38%) reported that their county had applied for LRTF grants. Three in ten members of both these groups, 29% of Conservation Board Directors and 28% of Board of Supervisor Chairs, indicated uncertainty as to whether their county applied for Living Roadway Trust Fund grants.

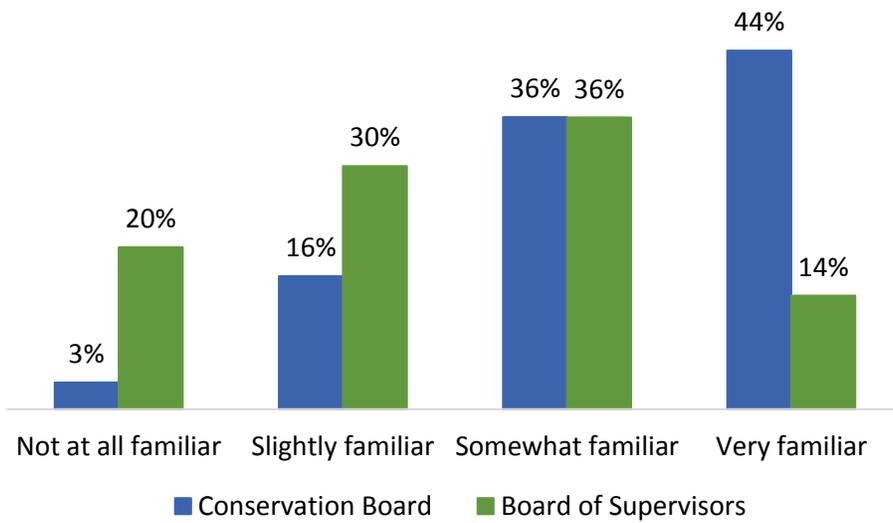


Figure 25. Familiarity with the Iowa DOT Living Roadway Trust Fund grants

All respondents were asked whether, in the interest of conserving resources, they would favor exploring shared service agreements for roadside vegetation management with county departments, not-for-profits, or outside organizations. Approximately half of Board of Supervisor Chairs (48%) and the majority of Conservation Board Directors (54%) indicated that they were in favor of exploring these shared service agreements for roadside vegetation management (Figure 26).

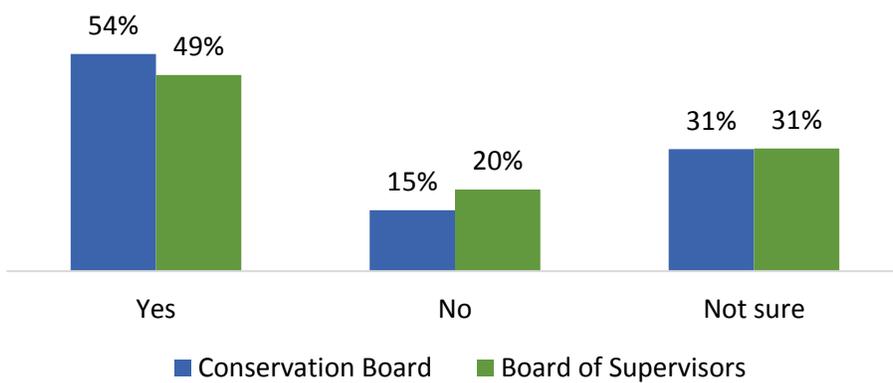


Figure 26. Willingness to explore shared service agreements for roadside vegetation management

Additional cost savings measures for sourcing materials may be available to counties, however nearly half of Conservation Board Directors (48%) and Board of Supervisor Chairs (50%) reported uncertainty regarding whether their county received Federal Highway Administration native seed mixes (Figure 27).

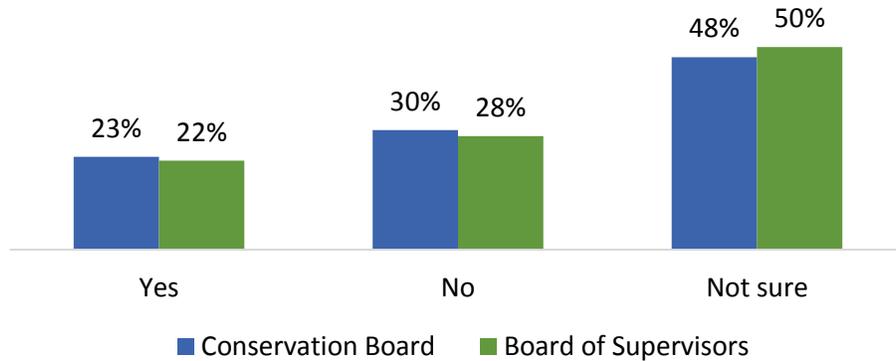


Figure 27. Receive Federal Highway Administration native seed mixes

Information about IRVM

Half of the Board of Supervisor Chairs (50%) and Conservation Board Directors (51%) indicated that they were interested in receiving more information about IRVM practices (Figure 28), with most preferring to receive information by email.

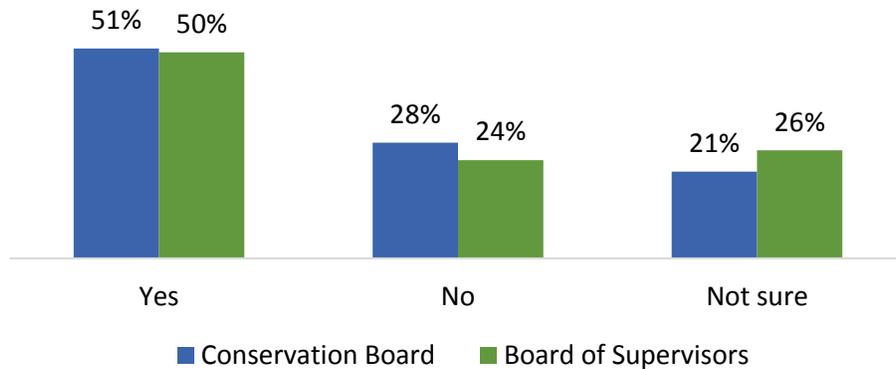


Figure 28. Interest in receiving more information about IRVM practices

County Conservation Board Directors and Board of Supervisor Chairs were asked in an open-end question where they would go for information on IRVM practices. The most common responses were to websites of organizations such as Iowa Department of Transportation, Iowa Department of Natural resources, or the University of Northern Iowa. Some also mentioned reaching out to neighboring counties or their own county roadside managers or engineers.

Respondents were also asked in an open-end question format how they thought information about IRVM practices would best be communicated to their county’s officials. Suggestions included creating quality information resources, including pamphlets, brochures, newsletters, emails, or websites that could be shared with County Supervisors as well as Conservation and Secondary Roads Departments. Additional suggestions included in-person presentations at county meetings or annual workshops, including at the Iowa State Association of Counties annual conference.

A majority of both Conservation Board Directors (57%) and Board of Supervisors (61%) indicated that they typically attend the ISAC annual conference (Figure 29).

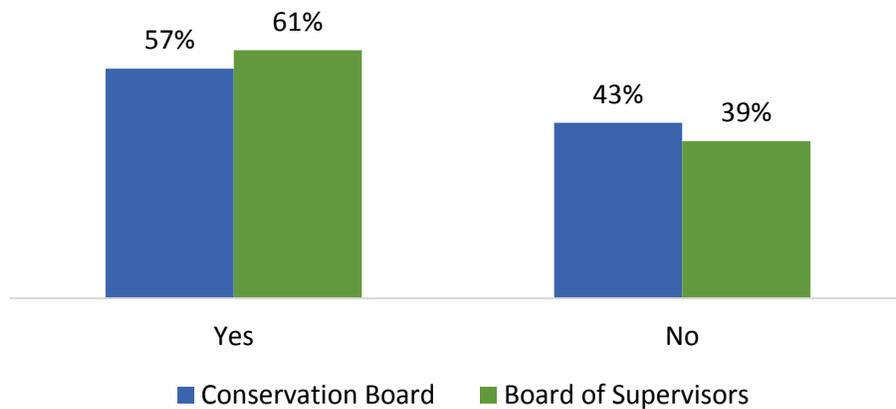


Figure 29. Attendance at the Iowa State Association of Counties (ISAC) annual conference

Appendix: Mail Survey



Dear Conservation Board Director,

The University of Northern Iowa Tallgrass Prairie Center is working with the Center for Social and Behavioral Research at the University of Northern Iowa to gather information regarding county-level management of Iowa's right-of-ways in an effort to better understand how to successfully implement Integrated Roadside Vegetation Management (IRVM) activities in Iowa. This survey is funded by the Iowa Living Roadway Trust Fund.

We are asking all of Iowa's Chairs of County Boards of Supervisors and Executive Directors of County Conservation Boards to complete this questionnaire. The questionnaire should take 15-20 minutes to complete and you are free to skip any question you would prefer not to answer or select a provided "prefer not to respond" option.

Participation is voluntary and your responses will be kept confidential to the degree permitted by the technology used. Each questionnaire has a unique number that is used to indicate when it has been returned, so that we do not burden those who have responded with additional mailings. Though special precautions have been established to protect the confidentiality of your responses, no guarantees can be made regarding the interception of data transmitted electronically. In reporting, no identifying information will be stored with your responses. There are no direct benefits for participating; however, your participation in the study is very important to us, as your answers will be combined with others to better understand roadside vegetation management in Iowa. Risks are minimal and similar to those typically encountered in day-to-day life.

If you have questions about this study, please contact Dr. Kristine Nemec, IRVM Program Manager at the Tallgrass Prairie Center, at 319-273-2813 or kristine.nemec@uni.edu, or Dr. Mary Losch, Director of the Center for Social and Behavioral Research, at 319-273-2105 or csbr@uni.edu. Questions about your rights as a research participant should be directed to the UNI IRB Office at 319-273-6148.

Thank you very much for your participation!



1. How much of a priority are each of the following to your county's Board of Supervisors?

	Not a priority	Low priority	Moderate priority	High priority	Prefer not to respond
Economic development	1	2	3	4	9
Land use planning/permitting	1	2	3	4	9
Energy planning	1	2	3	4	9
Provision of affordable housing	1	2	3	4	9
Farmland preservation	1	2	3	4	9
Environmental protection/conservation	1	2	3	4	9
Repairing roads and bridges	1	2	3	4	9
Expanding recreational opportunities	1	2	3	4	9
Storm water management	1	2	3	4	9
Public transit	1	2	3	4	9
Roadside vegetation management	1	2	3	4	9

2. Please, indicate whether your county uses the following practices to manage roadside vegetation.

Blanket-spraying of weeds with herbicides	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Not Sure	<input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to respond
Spot-spraying of weeds with herbicides	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Not Sure	<input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to respond
Spot mowing of weeds	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Not Sure	<input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to respond
Strip mowing of weeds	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Not Sure	<input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to respond
Full-width mowing	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Not Sure	<input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to respond
Planting of native species	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Not Sure	<input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to respond

3. How much impact does each of the following items have on your county's decisions about roadside vegetation management? (**Circle one number for each item**)

	No impact	Very little impact	Some impact	Quite a bit of impact	Don't Know	Prefer not to respond
Invasive species	1	2	3	4	7	9
Pollinators and other wildlife	1	2	3	4	7	9
Water quality	1	2	3	4	7	9
Consideration of aesthetics	1	2	3	4	7	9
Soil erosion concerns	1	2	3	4	7	9
Stormwater management regulations	1	2	3	4	7	9
Snow control	1	2	3	4	7	9
Consideration of safety	1	2	3	4	7	9
Maintenance cost savings	1	2	3	4	7	9
Time spent mowing	1	2	3	4	7	9
Public feedback	1	2	3	4	7	9

4. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding your county's current approach to roadside vegetation management?

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Don't Know	Prefer not to respond
Makes roadways safer	1	2	3	4	5	7	9
Enhances biodiversity	1	2	3	4	5	7	9
Saves money both long- and short-term	1	2	3	4	5	7	9
Optimizes the effectiveness of weed and pest control practices	1	2	3	4	5	7	9
Protects soil resources	1	2	3	4	5	7	9
Maintains or improves water quality	1	2	3	4	5	7	9
Reduces spread of invasive species	1	2	3	4	5	7	9
Provides attractive roadsides	1	2	3	4	5	7	9
Promotes partnerships with other organizations	1	2	3	4	5	7	9
Reduces blowing snow	1	2	3	4	5	7	9

5. Which of the following have been or currently are barriers to your county using more native species in any land management projects?

	Not a barrier	Somewhat of a barrier	Moderate barrier	Significant barrier	Prefer not to respond
Cost to maintain native vegetation	1	2	3	4	9
Use of fire in management of native grasses	1	2	3	4	9
It will increase weeds in crop fields	1	2	3	4	9
Availability of plant material or desired seed mixes	1	2	3	4	9
Cost of desired material and/or available agency funding	1	2	3	4	9
Public's desire for ornamentals or other non-natives considered more aesthetically pleasing	1	2	3	4	9
Length of time to establish and/or short growing season	1	2	3	4	9
Acceptance/education internally or among contractors	1	2	3	4	9
Contracting process and lack of control over contractors' schedules	1	2	3	4	9
Lack of support from elected officials or county staff	1	2	3	4	9
Adjacent landowners who spray the plantings with herbicides	1	2	3	4	9
Adjacent landowners who mow the plantings	1	2	3	4	9
Other (specify):	1	2	3	4	9

6. Has your county increased its use of native species in any land management projects other than roadside management?

- Yes
 No
 Not Sure
 Prefer not to respond

7. How familiar are you with the Integrated Roadside Vegetation Management (IRVM) program in Iowa?

Not at all familiar	Slightly familiar	Somewhat familiar	Very familiar	Prefer not to respond
1	2	3	4	9

8. How familiar are you with the Iowa DOT Living Roadway Trust Fund and the grants available to counties who have filed an IRVM plan with IDOT since 2015?

Not at all familiar	Slightly familiar	Somewhat familiar	Very familiar	Prefer not to respond
1	2	3	4	9

9. Does your county...

a)... have a designated Weed Commissioner?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Not Sure	<input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to respond
b)... apply for Living Roadway Trust Fund grants?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Not Sure	<input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to respond
c)... receive Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) native seed mixes?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Not Sure	<input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to respond
d)... have an IRVM plan that was filed with the Iowa DOT since 2015?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Not Sure	<input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to respond

10. Does your county have a designated Roadside Manager? Yes No Not Sure Prefer not to respond

10a. If "No", do you think your county would consider participating in the IRVM program in the next 5 years?

Definitely consider Might or might not consider Would not consider Prefer not to respond

If your county does not have a Roadside Manager, please skip to 16.

11. Approximately, how long has your county had a Roadside Manager? (If less than 1 year, put 1 year) _____ year(s)

12. What do you see as the primary benefits of having a Roadside Manager in your county? _____

13. To what degree did the following factor into your county's decision to hire a Roadside Manager?

	Not a factor	Limited factor	Significant factor	Don't Know	Prefer not to respond
Potential for fiscal savings	1	2	3	7	9
Leadership of local elected officials	1	2	3	7	9
Leadership of local staff	1	2	3	7	9
Federal or state funding opportunities	1	2	3	7	9
Environmental stewardship	1	2	3	7	9
Providing wildlife habitat	1	2	3	7	9
Improve my community	1	2	3	7	9
Public support	1	2	3	7	9
Other (specify):	1	2	3	7	9

14. What source(s) does the county use to fund the Roadside Manager position? **(Check all that apply)**

- Secondary road fund
- Road clearing appropriation
- County conservation board
- Rural basic fund
- Other (please specify) _____
- Don't know
- Prefer not to respond

15. Do you think your county will continue to have a Roadside Manager in the next 5 years?

- Yes, definitely will
- Might or might not
- No, definitely will not
- Prefer not to respond

16. Where do you believe the position of Roadside Manager should be housed in your county? **(Select only one)**

- Secondary roads
- Conservation
- Both secondary roads and conservation
- Independent

17. Do any of the Iowa counties which share borders with your county have a designated Roadside Manager?

- Yes
- No
- Not Sure
- Prefer not to respond

18. To conserve resources, do you favor exploring shared service agreements for roadside vegetation management with county departments, not-for-profits, or outside organizations?

- Yes
- No
- Not Sure
- Prefer not to respond

19. Are there, or were there, any barriers to your county's implementation of IRVM practices?

- Yes
- No **(skip to 21)**
- Not Sure **(skip to 21)**
- Prefer not to respond **(skip to 21)**

20. Which of the following have been or currently are barriers to your county's implementation of IRVM practices?

	Not a barrier	Somewhat of a barrier	Moderate barrier	Significant barrier	Prefer not to respond
Lack of information on how to proceed	1	2	3	4	9
Insufficient proof of cost savings	1	2	3	4	9
Cost of starting a program	1	2	3	4	9
Lack of staff capacity/support	1	2	3	4	9
County does not have enough suitable land	1	2	3	4	9
State or federal funding restrictions	1	2	3	4	9
Other concerns in the county are a higher priority	1	2	3	4	9
Insufficient proof of conservation benefits	1	2	3	4	9
Lack of community/resident support	1	2	3	4	9
Lack of local elected officials or staff support	1	2	3	4	9
Other (specify):	1	2	3	4	9

21. Please indicate, how you believe IRVM practices affect each of the following dimensions of secondary roads.

	Worsen significantly	Worsen somewhat	No impact	Improve somewhat	Improve significantly	Prefer not to respond
Roadway safety	1	2	3	4	5	9
Plant biodiversity	1	2	3	4	5	9
Short-term costs	1	2	3	4	5	9
Long-term costs	1	2	3	4	5	9
Weed and pest control	1	2	3	4	5	9
Soil health	1	2	3	4	5	9
Water quality	1	2	3	4	5	9
Presence of invasive species	1	2	3	4	5	9
Roadside aesthetics	1	2	3	4	5	9
Partnerships with other organizations	1	2	3	4	5	9
Winter driving conditions	1	2	3	4	5	9
Use of native plants	1	2	3	4	5	9

22. How do you think information about IRVM practices would best be communicated to county officials in your county?

23. Where would you go for information on IRVM practices? _____

24. Are you interested in more information about IRVM practices?

Yes No Not Sure Prefer not to respond

24a. If “Yes,” How would you prefer to receive information about IRVM? _____

25. In your view, how much do each of the following support or oppose IRVM practice implementation in your county?

	Strongly oppose	Moderately oppose	Neither support nor oppose	Moderately support	Strongly support	Prefer not to respond
Farmers	1	2	3	4	5	9
Commuters	1	2	3	4	5	9
Hunters	1	2	3	4	5	9
Conservation Board	1	2	3	4	5	9
County Engineer	1	2	3	4	5	9
Board of Supervisors	1	2	3	4	5	9
Your neighbors	1	2	3	4	5	9

26. How concerned are you about the following possible effects of local prescribed burns?

	Not a concern	Slight concern	Moderate concern	Great concern	Prefer not to respond
Liability	1	2	3	4	9
Damage to private property	1	2	3	4	9
Loss of wildlife habitat	1	2	3	4	9
Soil erosion	1	2	3	4	9
Risk to human safety	1	2	3	4	9
Harm to wildlife	1	2	3	4	9
Loss of forage	1	2	3	4	9
Levels of smoke	1	2	3	4	9
Reduced scenic quality	1	2	3	4	9

27. Do you typically attend the Iowa State Association of Counties (ISAC) annual conference? Yes No

28. With what group have you interacted directly when working with other counties? (**Check all that apply**)

- County Supervisor(s)
- County Engineer
- County Roadside Manager
- County Conservation Board Executive Director
- Other (specify): _____

29. How many years have you served as the Conservation Board Director?

(If less than 1 year, put 1 year) _____ year(s)

30. How do you identify yourself?

- Male
- Female
- In another way

END OF SURVEY

**Thank you very much for your participation!
Please provide any additional comments you may have on the next page.**

