

MEMO

To: Tribal Citizens, Iowa Tribe of Kansas and Nebraska

From: Executive Committee, Iowa Tribe of Kansas and Nebraska

Subject: Responsible Harvesting of Black Walnut

JK NP RH AF MS

The Executive Committee is aware of conversations in the community about timber harvesting activity on Tribal lands. We would encourage citizens who have concerns or would like to know more about any topic to reach out to us at executivecommittee@iowas.org. Email is the best way to officially contact the Executive Committee, rather than attempting communication through personal Facebook pages which are not monitored or archived by the Tribe. We do thank the citizens for their vigilant land stewardship. Protecting Hína Máyaⁿ (Mother Earth) is a responsibility that the Executive Committee can't and shouldn't do alone.

The Tribe is harvesting some Black Walnut trees from a few locations on the Reservation. The estimated number of black walnut trees harvested will be well less than 5 percent of the walnut trees on our lands using responsible harvesting practices which is significantly more stringent than logging industry best practices. No trees will be removed from Tribal National Park lands until a Harvesting Plan can be created and published for citizen input. There will be no cutting or disturbing of trees that are known to contain active nests or dens. The entire tree will be used and will not go to waste. These trees will have the following impact on our community:

- Parts of trees that are good for firewood will be cut and stacked for use by Tribal Elders and in ceremony;
- The financial resources gained from these logs will be used for our landbank initiatives; and
- Remaining parts of the trees will be used as habitat for small animals alongside our farm lands in an effort to increase habitats and biodiversity.

The Tribe has communicated with the Nebraska Natural Resource Conservation Department about the various tracts we were given and the necessary stewardship practices to maintain them. During the conversation, the Conservation Department mentioned that the lands would benefit from the harvesting of some of the mature timber. Responsible harvesting encourages timber harvesting with a goal of supporting ecosystem health. Responsible timber harvesting, using selective harvesting techniques, has numerous positive impacts. Selective harvesting:

- Creates gaps in the canopy allowing more light, improving seedling survival rates and triggering natural sprouting, which can enhance biodiversity while creating diverse habitats for wildlife.
- Allows younger smaller trees to grow which absorbs carbon more efficiently than the larger trees creating increased carbon sequestration.
- Reduces fuel buildup that causes more intense wildfires while slowing the spread of pests and pathogens. The effects of pests are easily witnessed on the Reservation today with the devastation caused by the Emerald Ash Borer which almost completely wiped out our Ash population.

The Tribal government does not take the harvesting of our plant and animal relatives lightly, and are always exploring ways we can improve honorable harvesting practices. It is only with citizen input that we can continually review approaches to achieve wapána (balance). Please reach out to executivecommittee@iowas.org with any input or thoughts you have on this issue or any issue in the future.