

Walnut Tree Harvesting Q/A

Thank you for taking the time to submit questions regarding the recent black walnut harvest. We appreciate the community's interest and want to provide clear information.

- Why was the environmental team not included, especially regarding the ecological and environmental considerations of this harvest?

Our environmental department currently consists of one staff member. Funding for that position is only for water testing, which is why they were not directly involved in this.

- How do we know this harvest is less than 5% of the population of black walnut on the reservation? Did someone survey the trees? Who?

We had three different contractors come and look at the land. They all stated that the harvested trees would be a very small percentage of the total walnut trees on our lands. Some areas have more harvestable trees than others. Some areas have been previously harvested, and some have not.

- Are more harvests planned for the future? If so, when and how many more? Where at? If, for financial reasons, have other options been discussed?

Yes, we are working with The Nature Conservancy in Nebraska to develop a long-term harvesting and land management plan. Any future activity will be guided by that plan.

- It was my understanding that grant money is used to purchase land; is that incorrect? How much money is being made off the trees?

In the past, we have used CARES and ARPA, which are COVID relief funds to acquire land, and those funding sources are no longer available.

This current harvest is not being done solely for revenue generation. While we will receive funds, the goal is to support ecosystem health and biodiversity. The value of the harvested trees varies significantly based on size and quality.

Responsible harvesting:

Includes maintaining the long-term health of the forest. This includes not removing all trees of a single species in an area, only harvesting what is necessary, and ensuring that a healthy stand of trees remains to support wildlife and future growth.

Reforestation:

We will allow Hina Maya to reforest the areas, if invasives species take root in preventing tree growth, we will ensure they are managed.