

Planting 15 – Bluestem Bottoms Lower Planting – Spring 1994

This large field was in corn in 1993. In the spring of 1994 we hand broadcast mesic forbs and tall grasses. I don't think that we were harrowing in at that point. We did have some seed planted with a seed drill, including some red top grass.

The planting came up in very tall giant ragweed and wasn't mowed until the weed was at its tallest in the summer of 1994. And then, we only mowed three sections out of six in a checkerboard pattern.

We tried a burn in spring of 1995 and 1996 which were marginal. The burn in spring of 1998 was very good (80 degree day in April).

Lots of dandelions and then Queen Anne's Lace came up, but eventually lots of *Ratibida pinnata*, Indian, Big Bluestem, and Canada rye came up. There is the occasional other interesting forbs such as obedient plant, Monarda, sawtooth sunflower, and *Penstemon digitalis*. There is a lot of balsam ragwort in the spring. Weed problems are Canada thistle and white sweet clover, reed canary grass and in the west end, birdsfoot trefoil. Cattails also are in the wettest area. All these weeds, except the cattails, have been under a control program of mowing and/or herbiciding.

Erosion had been occurring just south of Wade Creek in the north central portion of the planting, much sand was carried and deposited near the far west power post H. Effort were made with silt fence in 1994 or 1995 to slow this down without much success. The plants seem to have finally slowed this erosion down by 1999, however there is still a vertical drop in the land.

Drainage tile was removed in the Fall of 1996 from the west end and planted with wetland seed (several good ones are growing profusely, especially sedges). Skunk cabbage was also planted which has yet to show up as of 1999).

Plans are to do major erosion control and wetland re-creation in 2000 and 2001. The 1830's land survey notes and the 1870's atlas show no creek where there is one now (we think it was a dug ditch to drain the field). The only water way showing in the atlas starts just south of the Lee and Ogle county line, between "Les Lep Knob" and "Ed's Knob" as a spring and "branch" heading south/southwest, where it looks like Wade Creek come into its own around where now is power post H.