

Wildlife Preservation Fund
Canebrake re-creation at Shellbark Bottoms Natural Heritage Landmark, Lawrence County (02-15W)
Final Report

INTRODUCTION

Prior to widespread European settlement, extensive canebrakes (*Arundinaria gigantea*) were once rather common of the floodplains of the lower Wabash and Ohio Rivers in Illinois. Canebrakes of varying sizes could be found as far north as Lawrence County. Since that time, clearing of forests, overgrazing of livestock, and conversion land to crop fields have dramatically reduced the size and distribution of the canebrakes.

Shellbark Bottoms Natural Heritage Landmark is a privately owned 405-acre parcel with a large portion of the site being located in the floodplain of the Embarras River. It is located near a small extant population of native cane. The site provides habitat for the copperbelly water snake, the state-endangered eastern ribbon snake, bobcats, and swamp rabbits. A canebrake restoration project was initiated by the landowner to provide addition cover and forage habitat for these species.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

A total of 40 *Arundinaria* plants in one or two gallon pots was ordered from various suppliers and transplanted into the project area during the 2001 growing season (Figure 1). Twenty-five plants totaling \$1,050.00 were purchased using proceeds from the Illinois Wildlife Preservation Fund. Fifteen additional plants totaling \$450.00 were purchased by the landowner (see attachments). The transplants were mulched heavily to reduce competition and conserve soil moisture and periodically watered. The mulch and labor to transplant the plants were provided by the landowner. Monitoring was conducted in the fall of 2001 and summer of 2002 to determine survivability.

RESULTS

All 40 plants survived through the fall of 2001 and 38 had survived through the summer of 2002 (Photo 1-5). Many of the surviving plants had produced lateral rhizomes; some of which extended for nearly a meter beyond the parent plant.

SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

Arundinaria appears to have very high survival rates for healthy transplants that arrive at the project site one or two gallon pots. With heavy mulch and average precipitation the plants required minimal care in order to survive. Although the process used in this project may be labor and cost prohibitive for larger-scale projects greater than 10 acres in size, the process appears to work reasonably for smaller projects such as at Shellbark Bottoms.

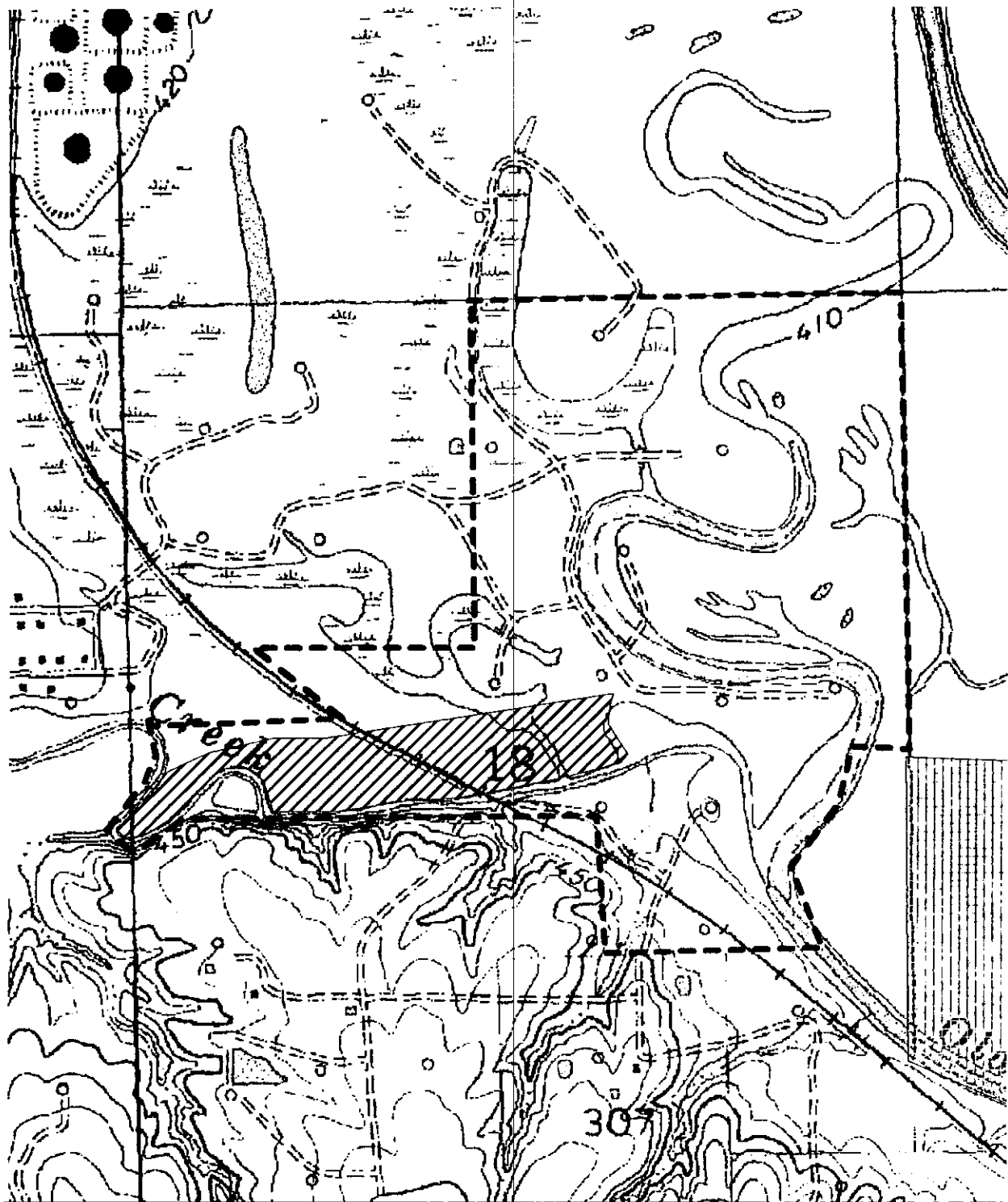


Figure 1. Map showing the location of the canebrake project within the Shellbark Bottoms, Natural heritage Landmark, Lawrence County, IL.



Photo 1. Photo of cane cluster at Shellbark Bottoms Natural Heritage Landmark, Lawrence County, Illinois. Date of photo: January 3, 2003.



Photo 2. Photo of cane plants at Shellbark Bottoms Natural Heritage Landmark, Lawrence County, Illinois. Date of photo: January 3, 2003.



Photo 3. Cane plants at Shellbark Bottoms Natural Heritage Landmark. Date of photo: January 3, 2003



Photo 4. Cane plant at Shellbark Bottoms Natural Heritage Landmark. Date of photo: January 3, 2003.



Photo 5. Cane plant with lateral shoots at Shellbark Bottoms Natural Heritage Landmark, Lawrence County, Illinois.
Date of photo: January 3, 2003.



Photo 6. Cane plant at Shellbark Bottoms Natural Heritage Landmark, Lawrence County, Illinois.
Date of photo: January 3, 2003.

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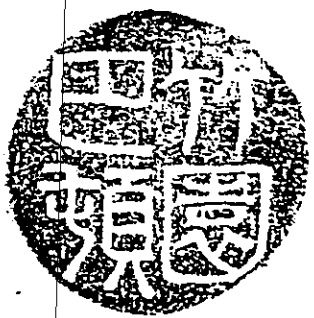
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15	15	#2 ARUNDINARIA GIGANTEA "RIVER CANE"		30.-	450.-
		Shipping N.C.			
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Photo 1. Photo of cane cluster at Shellbark Bottoms Natural Heritage Landmark, Lawrence County, Illinois. Date of photo: January 3, 2003.



Photo 2. Photo of cane plants at Shellbark Bottoms Natural Heritage Landmark, Lawrence County, Illinois. Date of photo: January 3, 2003.



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02-015W



Photo 5. Cane plant with lateral shoots at Shellbark Bottoms Natural Heritage Landmark, Lawrence County, Illinois.
Date of photo: January 3, 2003.



Photo 6. Cane plant at Shellbark Bottoms Natural Heritage Landmark, Lawrence County, Illinois.
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