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DATE: March 27, 1995

TO: Jim Nissen
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Randy Urich
Corp. of Engineers

Dick Marco
Brice Prairie Conservation Alliance

FROM: Marc A. Schultz 
Resource Agent
La Crosse County University Extension

RE: 1994 Swamp White Oak Project

This memo is to summarize the activities of the various agencies and organizations involved in the Swamp White Oak Project for 1994 and is also a summary of the data which were collected on the Swamp White Oak plantings in 1994.

Again in 1994 the project established a nursery seed bed which grew in 1994. This year the seedlings showed less vigor and less survival than in previous years. After the middle of July seedlings began showing symptoms of anthracnose which was traced to several ash trees near by. Most of the seedlings survived and because of the mild fall it is expected that most of them will make it alive into their second growing season. As in 1993, 1994 was a year in which the Brice Prairie Conservation Association, Fish & Wildlife Service and the Corp. of Engineers each contributed to purchasing tubes from Tubex for use in planting. In total 180 4 foot tubes and 200 quill tubes were obtained for the project.

On May 4, 228 quill tubes were planted with acorns on three dredge disposal sites, two of the sites are adjacent to Bullet Chute and one is adjacent to No Name Chute. These sites are essentially sandy, unvegetated areas used for dredge spoil disposal in the past. June of 1994 was extraordinarily hot and dry during the very critical period when the acorns were sprouting and sending forth the initial shoot and root in the sand environment. Consequently, out of the 228 planted only 62 acorns made it to seedling stage. Forty-eight on the Bullet sites and 14 on the No Name site. The unsuccessful quill tubes were all collected, cleaned and stored for use next spring. In 1995 the quill tubes that successfully germinated will be replaced with larger stake tubes. In addition there were 10 seedlings transplanted into stake tubes at the three disposal sites.

On the 17th of May 170 trees were transplanted out to 4 sites, 27 trees with staked tubes were planted on the Upper Blind site, 26 trees with tubes were planted on the Underplant site, 115 trees with tubes were planted at No Name II, and 12 trees with tubes were planted on Gibbs II. In addition, on May 5, Marc Shultz and Dick Marco replaced trees that had died in the 1993 flood, 7 trees on Gibbs I were replaced, 12 trees on Birthday Cake were replaced, 7 on Swamp White were replaced, 11 on Shelter were replaced, 13 on No Name were replaced, 1 on the Black River Confluence was replaced. It should be noted that Turtle Island, and Swamp White Forest Island have been abandoned and the Upper Black Sandbar has not been monitored since 1993, due to willow encroachment. Randy Urich and Marc Schultz noted that on No Name II after the burn there was still substantial willow encroachment on some of the site and that this may need to be taken care of in 1995.

In any case, 1994 was a much friendlier year for growing conditions on the islands on the Mississippi and Black Rivers. Most of the seedlings did well and grew vigorously in the tubes. Those trees that had gone through the 1993 flood showed a varying response, a few did not make it, a number showed a normal response, some were visibly reduced in vigor and several trees were very vigorous. The overall data for the trees since the beginning of the project can be found in the attached Table 1. Also noted in the fall of 1994 was a lot of activity by microtines (voles) and any of the tubes that were not firmly sealed into the soil surface could potentially have an access route for voles to damage or destroy the young seedlings. It is important that during planting care be taken to establish firm contact between the tube and the soil surface. 1995 will be a telling year for survival of the 1993 seedlings. Hopefully with 1995 two good back to back growing seasons will yield a strong growth response for swamp whites.

In 1995 acorns in quill tubes; seedlings in large tubes; as well as replacement of quill tubes from last year are the objectives.

MAS/vg/666