

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Oakalla Covered Bridge

Other names/site number: _____

Name of related multiple property listing:

N/A

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

2. Location

Street & number: County Road 375 West over Big Walnut Creek.

City or town: Greencastle State: IN County: Putnam

Not For Publication:

Vicinity:

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

national statewide local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

A B C D

<p>_____ Signature of certifying official/Title: <u>Indiana DNR-Division of Historic Preservation and Archaeology</u> State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</p>	<p>_____ Date</p>
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<p>In my opinion, the property <input type="checkbox"/> meets <input type="checkbox"/> does not meet the National Register criteria.</p>	
<p>_____ Signature of commenting official:</p>	<p>_____ Date</p>
<p>_____ Title :</p>	<p>_____ State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</p>

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4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private:
- Public – Local
- Public – State
- Public – Federal

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Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

- Building(s)
- District
- Site
- Structure
- Object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	buildings
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

TRANSPORTATION: road-related

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

TRANSPORTATION: road-related

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7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

OTHER: Covered Burr arch-truss

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: STONE: Limestone
walls: WOOD: Weatherboard

roof: METAL
other:

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

The Oakalla Covered Bridge, built in 1898 in Madison Township, Putnam County, has a span of 174 feet over Big Walnut Creek. The single-span Burr arch truss sets atop cut limestone abutments. The bridge has vertical plank siding and features a metal roof. The bridge continues to carry vehicular traffic on County Road 375 West.

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Narrative Description

The Oakalla Covered Bridge (photo 01) was built in 1898 by J. J. Daniels. The single-span bridge is 174 feet long with Burr arch truss (photo 04) that rests on cut limestone abutments rising approximately 30' above Big Walnut Creek below (photo 08). The bridge is approximately 20' wide with a portal approximately 16' wide. The bridge is 19' tall from the deck to the ridge. The bridge is positioned in a north/south alignment over Big Walnut Creek and carries County Road 375 West just south of its intersection with County Road 200 West. The general terrain around the bridge is flat surrounded with agricultural land and wooded creek bank. Modern metal guardrails are installed to each side of the road in front of the portals. The road approaches to the bridge are asphalt. The cut limestone abutments that support the bridge are approximately 9' tall with nine courses of rusticated stone (best seen in photo 07).

The heavy oak timber frame is composed of sawn lumber with the Burr arches spliced together (photo 04). Sixteen panels of oak timber X-bracing are below the bridge deck and overhead in each span (photos 04, 09). Floor boards composing the bridge deck are perpendicular with the flow of traffic. Wood runners, parallel with the flow of traffic, form a wide lane atop the deck boards. Wood rails are attached to the braces in the walls about two feet above the deck. The bridge's sides are covered with vertical planks, painted red (photos 01, 03). The top of the walls are left open for ventilation. Two openings are located in each side of the bridge. They have pent roofs supported by braces with metal on the roofs. Each end wall that forms the portal for the bridge has a gabled wall. The portal is shaped with a segmental arched top (photos 02, 06). The end walls are also covered with boards and battens. Rafters and spaced boards form the understructure of the roof on which the metal roof is installed. The bridge closed in 2022 to vehicular traffic on County Road 375 West.

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- B. Removed from its original location
- C. A birthplace or grave
- D. A cemetery
- E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F. A commemorative property
- G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

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Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

ENGINEERING

TRANSPORTATION

Period of Significance

1898-1932

Significant Dates

Significant Person (last name, first name)

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder (last name, first name)

Daniels, Joseph J.

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Period of Significance (justification)

The period of significance begins when the covered bridge was constructed in 1898. While the bridge continues to be used for local vehicular traffic, the period of significance ends in 1932, the year that an improved connector road leading southwest from Greencastle was proposed. This, along with the lost vitality of the village of Oakalla, lessened the use of Oakalla Covered Bridge.

Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

Oakalla Covered Bridge, 1898, is a fine example of a wooden Burr arch bridge and is one of nine covered bridges extant in Putnam County. Oakalla Covered Bridge is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places based on two criteria. Criterion A is applicable under transportation as an area of significance. The bridge, which created an important crossing on County Road 375 West over Big Walnut Creek in Madison Township, embodies the importance bridges served to the early development of transportation in the county. Criterion C is applicable with engineering as an area of significance. The bridge represents the development of the Burr arch in wood form prior to the use of steel or concrete for bridge construction had been in full development. The relative rarity of surviving examples of covered bridges further establishes the significance of the Oakalla Covered Bridge.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

ENGINEERING & TRANSPORTATION

Oakalla Covered Bridge is an example of the Burr arch (photo 04) incorporated into a single-span covering 174' rising about 30' above Big Walnut Creek (photos 08-09). The Burr arch was the invention of Theodore Burr (1771-1822), an inventor-engineer from Connecticut, who patented the design on April 4, 1817 (patent no. 2769). The Burr arch functions in tandem with king post trusses for rigidity in the span. While there is some debate as to which member functions for loading versus providing rigidity, the arch or king truss, it is understood that the members must function together. The arch is generally capable of the span and load, but not without failure if not compensated with additional members for rigidity. The bridge type was used in the developing western part of the country and enjoyed significant use in Indiana.

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The oldest extant covered bridge in Indiana is thought to be the Ramp Creek Bridge that crosses Raccoon Creek at the entrance to Brown County State Park. The Burr arch bridge was built between 1836 and 1838 in Putnam County and moved to the park in 1932. This was one of two dual-lane bridges thought to be the first covered bridges constructed in Putnam County with public funds. The bridges were located on the New Albany-Crawfordsville Turnpike which is modern-day U.S. 231. The Ramp Creek Bridge spanned Ramp Creek near Fincastle near the Putnam-Montgomery County Line while the other bridge spanned Big Raccoon Creek near the small village of Raccoon.¹ There are estimated to have been 31 covered bridges constructed in Putnam County from the time the dual-lane bridges were constructed until 1922 when the last one was built over Little Walnut Creek.² While generally thought of as a mid-19th century method for bridge construction, Putnam County Commissioners continued to commission covered bridges into the first two decades of the 20th century. Today, the county retains nine of its historic covered bridges dating from 1880 to 1922.

These are the following:

Cornstalk Covered Bridge (1917), Burr arch truss by J. A. Britton
Pine Bluff Covered Bridge (1886), Howe truss by J. A. Britton
Rolling Stone Covered Bridge (1915), Burr arch truss by J. A. Britton
Baker's Camp Covered Bridge (1901), Burr arch truss by J. J. Daniels
Edna Collins Covered Bridge (1922), Burr arch truss by Charles Hendrix
Dunbar Covered Bridge (1880), Burr arch truss by J. J. Daniels
Oakalla Covered Bridge (1898), Burr arch truss by J. J. Daniels
Houck Covered Bridge (1880), Howe truss by Massillon Bridge Company
Dick Huffman Covered Bridge (1880), Howe truss by E. Anderson & Sons

Oakalla Covered Bridge was one of the county's late 19th century constructs. The bridge was built in 1898 for County Road 375 West and made a vital crossing of Big Walnut Creek from Oakalla Station on the south side of the creek to roads that led into Greencastle on the north. The loosely organized village of Oakalla stretched west from modern-day County Road 375 West, just south of the bridge, along modern-day County Road 275 South to near the confluence of Big Walnut and Little Walnut Creeks. The area was rich with limestone quarries and lime kilns during the mid-19th century and included a railroad station on the Indianapolis & St. Louis Railroad that bordered the south side of Big Walnut Creek through this region of Madison Township. Travel to and from the railroad station, kilns, and quarries would have taken place over a bridge crossing that predates the current bridge.

The crossing was important enough for it to be retained in 1898 when the current bridge was constructed. The land on which much of the stone quarries and Oakalla were located was owned by the Joseph D. Torr Family who created kilns on the property through which the railroad was originally routed. Joseph's two sons, Joseph and William, operated the stone quarries and kilns

¹ Romine, pg. 5

² Romine, pg. 6

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after their father's death. Under the name Torr Company, the sons contracted with the county to build bridges. The quarries closed when the railroad was routed north of Big Walnut Creek prior to 1910.³

The village of Oakalla has essentially disappeared from the landscape. Oakalla's Post Office, which opened in 1872, closed in 1903.⁴ Likely the disappearance of the village of Oakalla significantly reduced traffic on the bridge, though it remains a local crossing. In 1932, a minor collector road southeast of Oakalla and the bridge was scheduled for improvement on the Indiana State Highway Commission Map. That route appears to have been improved by 1940 though was not part of the state highway system. The route follows Putnam County Road 200 West from Greencastle to Manhattan, Indiana. This route made for a more direct and improved road in the region and, compounded with the loss of traffic to Oakalla, lessened traffic going to Greencastle across Oakalla Bridge. Due to safety concerns, Oakalla Covered Bridge was closed to vehicular traffic in November 2022.

Oakalla Covered Bridge was constructed by Joseph J. Daniels. Daniels was born in Marietta, Ohio in 1826, and first worked for his father who was an agent for Thomas Long, who invented the Long Truss. He constructed his first bridge in 1851 in Parke County, then left to be the construction engineer for the Evansville & Crawfordsville Railroad where he constructed several covered railroad bridges. After working for the railroad, Daniels settled in Rockville and promoted his own bridge-building business where he employed the Burr arch most often. His last bridge was built in 1904 rounding out a portfolio of about sixty bridges he constructed.⁵

Prior to 1855, most bridges in Indiana were either privately built by landowners or were constructed by private companies who may have required the payment of tolls. The state legislature authorized county governments to construct or financially assist with the construction of bridges in 1855. By 1870, county governments had the sole responsibility for constructing bridges, which is essentially still in place today. Crossing waterways up to this point was done either by fords or ferries. Eventually, open wood structures were built, then later, contractors built wood bridges on stone abutments. Stone arched bridges were being introduced at the same time.

Indiana's wood bridge builders often favored the Burr arch truss which combined king post trusses with a stiffening double wood arch. J. J. Daniels and the Kennedy Brothers, active in Rush County, both favored Burr arch trusses. The majority of surviving wood truss bridges in Indiana are Burr arch designs. The Howe Truss concept is more determinate in that specific members act in either compression or tension, while for the Burr arch, the arches have a role that is difficult to determine, even today. Both truss types offered viable solutions to spanning Indiana's waterways before iron or concrete became the most sought after solutions.

³ Weick, pg. 672

⁴ Weick, pgs. 177-178

⁵ Felkner, Charles. *Parke County Covered Bridges Thematic Resource National Register of Historic Places form*

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Indiana has the third highest number of covered bridges in the nation. Between 1820 and 1922, it was estimated that 600 covered bridges were constructed of various truss patterns. By 1977, 102 were extant, which dwindled to 98 extant covered bridges by the early 1990s. The first covered bridge in Indiana was constructed around 1820 at Mooresville (now Floyd's Knob); several more followed through the late 1830s. Several covered bridges were constructed during this early time across the National Road (Richmond to Terre Haute) and then the Michigan Road (Madison to Michigan City). A litany of internal infrastructure improvements during the 1830s was brought to a halt during financial woes the state faced in the 1840s.

Developmental History/Additional historic context information

Oakalla Covered Bridge
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9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

Allen, Richard S. Covered Bridges of the Middle West. Bonanza Books, New York: 1970

archINform (website accessed January 23, 2023) Burr arch truss:
<https://www.archinform.net/stich/2683.htm>

Atlas of Putnam County, Indiana. J. H. Beers & Co. Publishers, Chicago: 1879.

Black, Archibald. The Story of Bridges. McGraw-Hill Book Co., New York: 1936.

Boykin, Linda L. *The Wooden Age of Indiana's Covered Bridges*, Butler University Thesis, 1986.

Felkner, Charles. *Parke County Covered Bridges Thematic Resource National Register of Historic Places form* (1978).

Gould, George E. Indiana Covered Bridges Thru the Years. Indiana Covered Bridge Society, Indianapolis: 1977.

Indiana State Highway Maps: 1932, 1940.

Ketcham, Bryan. Covered Bridges on the Byways of Indiana. Oxford Printing Co., Oxford, Ohio: 1949.

Reed, Robert. Indiana's Covered Bridges. Arcadia Publishing, Chicago: 2004.

Romine, Malcolm S. *The Covered Bridges of Putnam County, Indiana*. Mitchell Fleming Printing, Knightstown, IN: 2021.

Weik, Jesse W. Weik's History of Putnam County, Indiana. B. F. Bowen & Co., Indianapolis: 1910.

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Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other
- Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): HB-2015, 133-121-40027

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property Less than one acre

Use the UTM system

UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or NAD 1983

- | | | |
|----------|-----------|-----------|
| 1. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 2. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 3. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 4. Zone: | Easting : | Northing: |

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Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The west and east boundaries are lines parallel to and 10 feet west and east of the sides of the bridge and extend along the right-of-way for County Road 375 West which is approximately 40 feet wide. Similarly, the north and south boundaries are lines parallel to and 10 feet south and north of the edge of the portals. Nothing in this boundary description should be construed as intent to include adjacent private property.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary described includes the outer extents of the covered bridge, its abutments, all parts of the wooden bridge, and the portion of County Road 375 West's alignment that features approaches to the bridge.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Kurt West Garner
organization: Putnam County Heritage Preservation Society, Inc.
street & number: 12954 6th Road
city or town: Plymouth state: IN zip code: 46563
e-mail: kwgarner@kwgarner.com
telephone: 574-780-1423
date: February 1, 2023

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)
-

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Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 3000x2000 at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Name of Property: Oakalla Covered Bridge
City or Vicinity: Greencastle
County: Putnam State: Indiana
Photographer: Kurt West Garner
Date Photographed: July 18, 2022

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera: Looking southeast at bridge from north approach

1 of 10.

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera: Looking south at north portal

2 of 10.

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera: Looking southwest at bridge from north approach

3 of 10.

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera: Looking south through bridge from north end

4 of 10.

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera: Looking west out of opening inside bridge

5 of 10.

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Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera: Looking northwest at bridge from south approach

6 of 10.

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera: Looking northwest at bridge from southeast creek bank

7 of 10.

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera: Looking west at bridge from south creek bank

8 of 10.

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera: Looking up/northwest at underside of bridge from south creek bank

9 of 10.

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera: Looking northeast along west side of bridge from southwest creek bank

10 of 10.

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

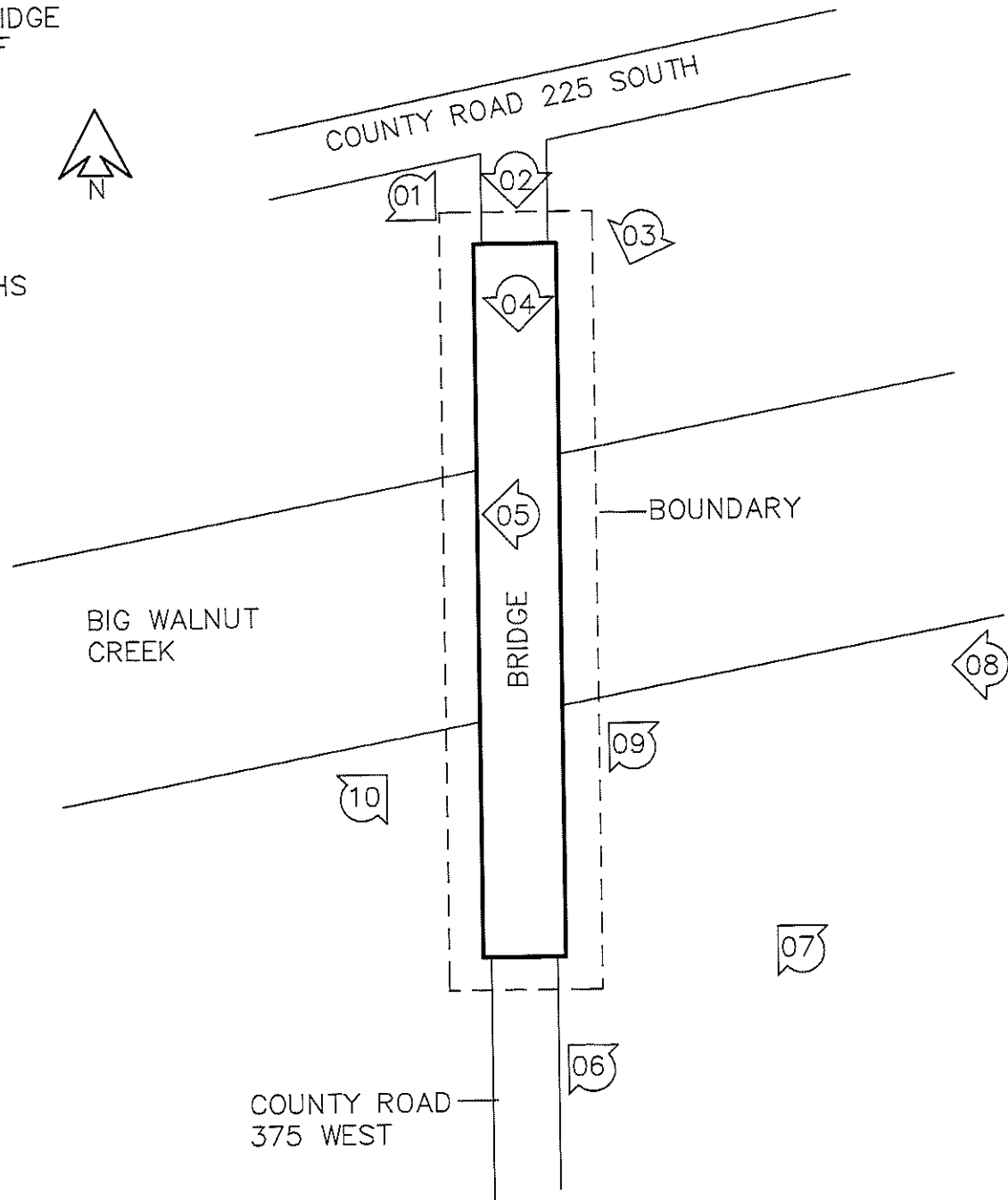
Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

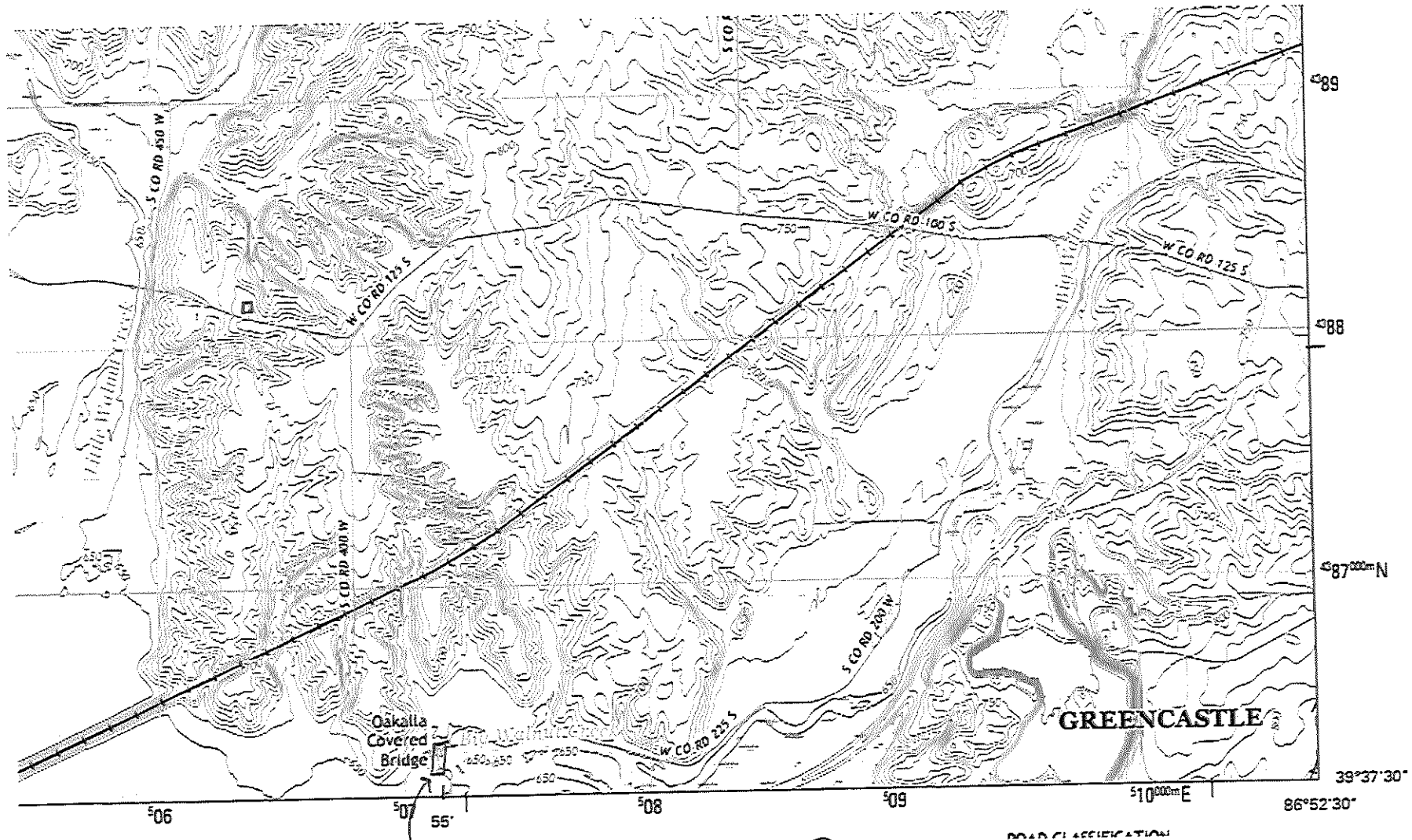
OAKALLA COVERED BRIDGE
NATIONAL REGISTER OF
HISTORIC PLACES

PUTNAM COUNTY, IN
SKETCH MAP



 = PHOTOGRAPHS





→ OAKALLA COVERED BRIDGE
 NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
 PUTNAM CO. IN

E165 509989

N165 4389882



IN_PutnamCounty_OakallaCoveredBridge_0001



IN_PutnamCounty_OakallaCoveredBridge_0004



IN_PutnamCounty_OakallaCoveredBridge_0007



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