PROJECT SCROLL RESEARCH NOTE 2026-42

Swamp Rose Nature Preserve is the "New-Oak-Road Bog" of 1969: what became of the two natural areas in the northeast corner of Potato Creek

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SUMMARY

In 1969 Lindsey, Schmelz and Nichols's statewide survey, *Natural Areas in Indiana and Their Preservation*, described two sites in Liberty Township, St. Joseph County, inside the planned Potato Creek State Recreation Area: "Inez Clingenspell Woods and New-Oak-Road Bog." Of the woods it wrote, "The only old-growth stand we located in this area is Clingenspell Woods." The authors asked that both be made a natural area. The Natural Resources Commission dedicated Swamp Rose Nature Preserve in 1974, between the Academy of Science's spring and autumn meetings. In 1987 John A. Bacone and Michelle L. Martin of the state's Division of Nature Preserves traced every site in the 1969 book. Their Table 1 of protected areas lists the 1969 "New-Oak-Road Bog" under its current name, "Swamp Rose." Their Table 5, "Severely degraded or destroyed areas," lists "Clingenspell Woods." The bog was saved; the old-growth woods were not. The park's nature centre followed with its first building program: the department's 1982 guide announced "a nature center/warming hut" for that summer, to serve in winter "as a cross country ski rental building."

THE RECORD

1. **Alton A. Lindsey, Damian V. Schmelz and Stanley A. Nichols, *Natural Areas in Indiana and Their Preservation* (Lafayette, 1969), St. Joseph County**

   > *"INEZ CLINGENSPELL WOODS AND NEW-OAK-ROAD BOG St. Joseph County, Liberty Twp."... "The only old-growth stand we located in this area is Clingenspell Woods."*

   Internet Archive (lending copy; read in full-text search) · See the record (https://archive.org/details/naturalareasinin0000alto)

2. **Report of the Scientific Areas Committee, *Proceedings of the Indiana Academy of Science* 84 (1975)**

   > *"Since the 1974 Spring meeting, three more nature preserves have been dedicated by action of the Natural Resources Commission. These are Hornbeam Nature Preserve, Swamp Rose Nature Preserve, and Bitternut Woods Nature Preserve."*

   Internet Archive · See the record (https://archive.org/details/proceedingsofindv84indi)

3. **John A. Bacone and Michelle L. Martin, "Current Status of Natural Areas Listed by Lindsey, Schmelz and Nichols in Natural Areas in Indiana and their Preservation," *Proceedings of the Indiana Academy of Science* 97 (1987), pp. 247–252, Tables 1 and 5**

   > *Table 1, "Natural areas that have some type of permanent protection": Lindsey name "New-Oak-Road Bog," current name "Swamp Rose." Table 5, "Severely degraded or destroyed areas": "Clingenspell Woods." Sites "that have either been destroyed or severely degraded since 1969 were placed in Table 5."*

   Internet Archive · See the record (https://archive.org/details/proceedingsofindv97indi/page/n267/mode/1up)

4. **Indiana DNR, Division of State Parks, *Wander Indiana: 1982 Recreation Guide*, p. 17 (Vigo County Public Library clipping file)**

   > *"Sometime this summer, four new picnic areas, a nature center /warming hut, and three picnic shelters will be opening ... The nature center will be used in the wintertime as a cross country ski rental building."*

   Internet Archive · See the record (https://archive.org/details/state-park-general-information/page/n28/mode/1up)

WHAT IT CHANGES

The state's pages on Swamp Rose give neither its origin nor its date. This note identifies the preserve with the bog named in the 1969 survey, dates its dedication to 1974, and records that the old-growth woods the same survey asked to save with it was listed as severely degraded or destroyed by the state's own nature-preserves staff in 1987. It also dates the nature centre to the 1982 building program, as a warming hut and ski-rental building.

LIMITS

The match of New-Oak-Road Bog to Swamp Rose is Bacone and Martin's, read from their table. Its columns were aligned here by order, as the OCR separates them. Table 5 does not say whether Clingenspell Woods was degraded or destroyed, or when. The 1974 dedication is dated only to the interval between the Academy's spring and autumn meetings. The 1982 guide announced the nature centre; it does not record the opening.

WHAT WE SEARCHED BEFORE CALLING IT NEW

The DNR's park and nature-preserve pages; the 1981 *Directory of Indiana's Dedicated Nature Preserves*; *Preserving Our Natural Heritage* (1977); the *Proceedings of the Indiana Academy of Science*, 1974–1995; the DNR's park guides of 1979–1982; guidebooks of 1983–2000; the Internet Archive's full text.

Our standard for calling a finding new is set out in How we research (projectscroll.com/how-we-research/), and how we weigh each kind of record in Scrollsigns (projectscroll.com/scrollsigns/).

"New" means new to print as far as we can tell. If you know of an earlier publication, tell us and we will credit it here and raise the note's version.

WORKS CITED

Earlier work, catalogues and databases named in this note, besides the records quoted above.

1. Michael Urbanski, "Potato Creek returns to the wild," *Project Scroll* (2026), Part 3 of the series on Potato Creek. https://projectscroll.com/news/potato-creek-returns-to-the-wild/
2. Victor L. Riemenschneider, "Preliminary Report on the Flora, Fauna and Habitats of the Swamp Rose Nature Preserve," *Proceedings of the Indiana Academy of Science* 86 (1977): 172. https://archive.org/details/proceedingsofindv86indi

THE FULL STORY

The finding is set out in context, with the rest of its sources, in The park goes back to the wild (projectscroll.com/news/potato-creek-returns-to-the-wild/). In the discoveries register:

- `pc-swamp-rose` (projectscroll.com/discoveries/#pc-swamp-rose)
- `pc-nature-center-1982` (projectscroll.com/discoveries/#pc-nature-center-1982)

HOW TO CITE THIS NOTE

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