

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: Dunbar 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 25 North 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Not For Publication: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>_____  <b>Signature of certifying official/Title:</b>  <u>Indiana DNR-Division of Historic Preservation and Archaeology</u>  <b>State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</b></p>	<p>_____  <b>Date</b></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>_____  <b>Signature of commenting official:</b></p>	<p>_____  <b>Date</b></p>
<p>_____  <b>Title :</b></p>	<p>_____  <b>State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</b></p>

Dunbar Covered Bridge  
Name of Property

Putnam County, IN  
County and State

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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:) \_\_\_\_\_

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Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

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#### 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

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**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.)

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### Summary Paragraph

The Dunbar Covered Bridge, built in 1880 in Greencastle Township, Putnam County, has a span of 174 feet over Big Walnut Creek. The double-span Burr arch trusses set atop cut stone abutments and center pier. The bridge has board and batten siding and features a metal roof. The bridge continues to carry vehicular traffic on Dunbar Road.

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### **Narrative Description**

The Dunbar Covered Bridge (photo 01) was built in 1880 by J. J. Daniels. The double-span bridge is 174 feet long with Burr arch trusses (photo 04) that rest on cut stone abutments and a center pier rising approximately 20' above Big Walnut Creek below. The bridge is approximately 16' wide with a portal approximately 13'-6" wide. The bridge is 19' tall from the deck to the ridge. The bridge is positioned in a northwest/southeast alignment over Big Walnut Creek and carries Dunbar Road. The general terrain around the bridge is wooded to the north with agricultural land to the south. 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 and pier that support the bridge are approximately 7' tall (abutments) and 18' tall (pier). They are composed of eight-to-ten courses of cut stone with capstones. The center pier features a pointed concrete breakwater on its east side in the direction of flowing water (photo 06).

The heavy oak timber frame is composed of sawn lumber with the Burr arches spliced together (photo 04). Ten panels of oak timber X-bracing are below the bridge deck and overhead in each span (photo 04, 08). 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 braces in the walls about two feet above the deck. A wood curb is at the deck. The bridge's sides are covered with boards and battens, painted red (photos 02, 05, 07). The top of the walls are left open for ventilation. A wide opening is at the north end of the bridge's east wall. Four openings, two narrow openings flanked by wider openings, are located at the south end of the bridge's east wall (photo 05). 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 (photos 03, 05). The portals feature clipped top corners and 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, rehabilitated in 2010 with some replacement deck boards and new roof, remains open to vehicular traffic on Dunbar Road.

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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**

1880-1932

**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 1880. While the bridge continues to be used for local vehicular traffic, the period of significance ends in 1932, the year that Highway 36 was substantially improved across the north part of the county. This provided a better connection to U.S. 231 than the route into Greencastle formerly known as the Greencastle-Portland Mills Road where the Dunbar Bridge is located. This lessened the use of Dunbar 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.)

Dunbar Covered Bridge, 1880, is a fine example of a wooden Burr arch bridge and is one of nine covered bridges extant in Putnam County. Dunbar 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 Dunbar Road over Big Walnut Creek in Greencastle 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 Dunbar Covered Bridge.

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

#### **ENGINEERING & TRANSPORTATION**

Dunbar Covered Bridge is an example of the Burr arch (photo 04) incorporated into a double-span covering 174' rising about 18' above Big Walnut Creek (photo 07). 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.<sup>1</sup> 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.<sup>2</sup> While generally thought of as a mid-19<sup>th</sup> century method for bridge construction, Putnam County Commissioners continued to commission covered bridges into the first two decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> 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

Dunbar Covered Bridge was one of the county's 19<sup>th</sup> century constructs. The bridge was built in 1880 for the Greencastle-Portland Mills Road (also known as Dunbar Road or County Road 25 North at the crossing). The Greencastle-Portland Mills Road connected the county seat at Greencastle to an early village platted in the northwest corner of Clinton Township. The road seemed to follow a series of connecting road segments roughly following Little Walnut Creek through Clinton Township. The 1879 plat map of Greencastle Township has this crossing of Big Walnut Creek marked with "ford" which would indicate that no bridge had yet been constructed at this site. Similar to several other bridges in the north half of Putnam County, with the construction of state highways offering alternative, better-paved routes that connected the county, traffic over covered bridges likely lessened. When Highway 36 was constructed across Putnam County, it offered a route between Portland Mills and Greencastle via U. S. 231. The bridge still provides essential local travel from the near northwest region outside of Greencastle to the city.

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<sup>1</sup> Romine, pg. 5

<sup>2</sup> Romine, pg. 6

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Dunbar 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.<sup>3</sup>

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.

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.

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### **Developmental History/Additional historic context information**

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<sup>3</sup> Felkner, Charles. *Parke County Covered Bridges Thematic Resource National Register of Historic Places form*

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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: 1919, 1926, 1932.

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

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- 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-2014, 133-121-35011

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**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 southwest and northeast boundaries are lines parallel to and 10 feet southwest and northeast of the sides of the bridge and extend along the right-of-way for Dunbar Road which is approximately 40 feet wide. Similarly, the northwest and southeast boundaries are lines parallel to and 10 feet southeast and northwest 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 and pier, all parts of the wooden bridge, and the portion of Dunbar Road's alignment that features approaches to the bridge.

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**11. Form Prepared By**

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

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**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: Dunbar 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 northwest at bridge from southeast approach

1 of 8.

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera: Looking northwest along east side of bridge from southeast approach

2 of 8.

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

3 of 8.

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

4 of 8.

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

5 of 8.

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Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera: Looking northwest and down at center pier with breakwater from south creek bank

6 of 8.

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

7 of 8.

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera: Looking northwest across breakwater under the bridge from south creek bank

8 of 8.

**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.).

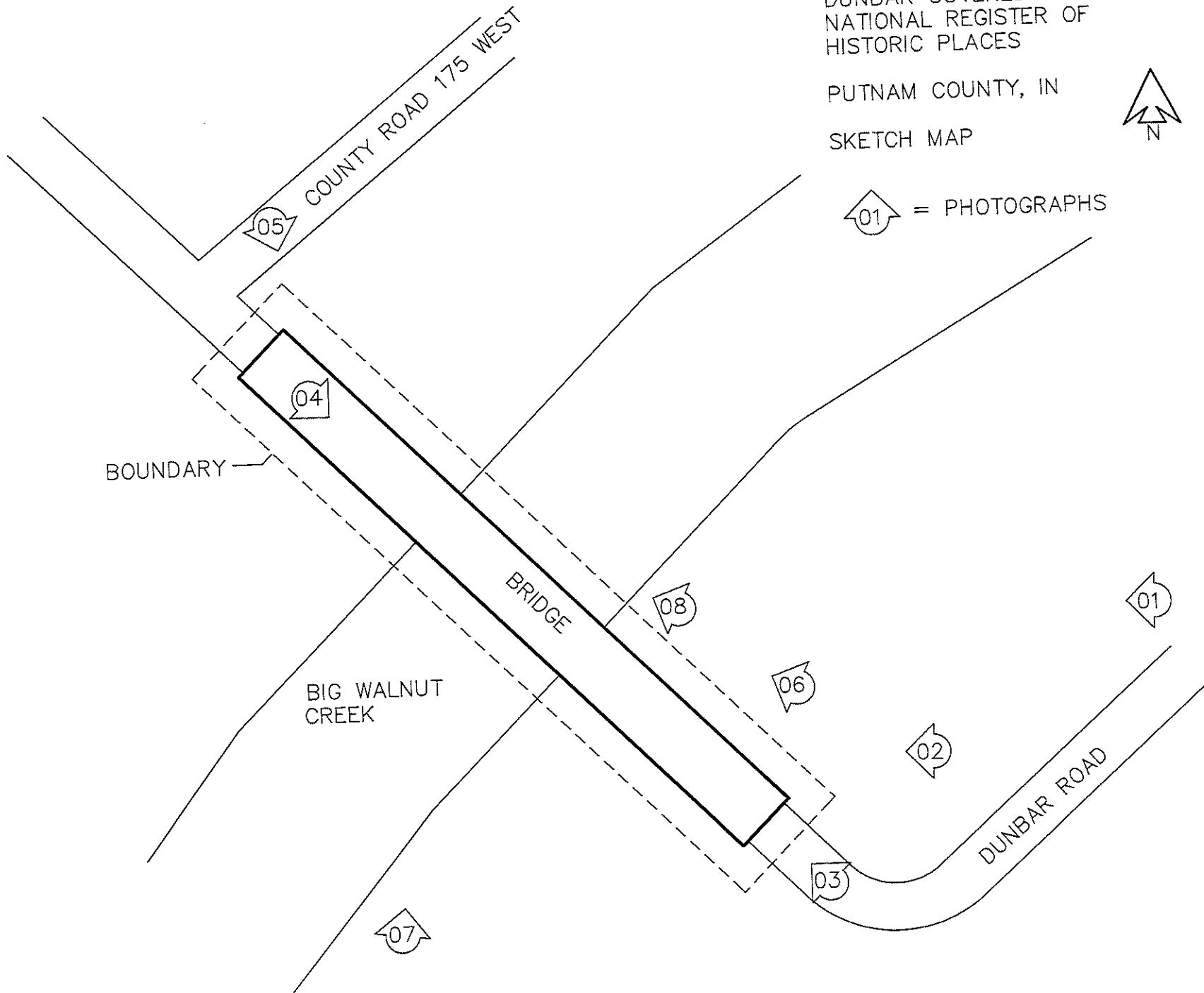
**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form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

DUNBAR COVERED BRIDGE  
NATIONAL REGISTER OF  
HISTORIC PLACES

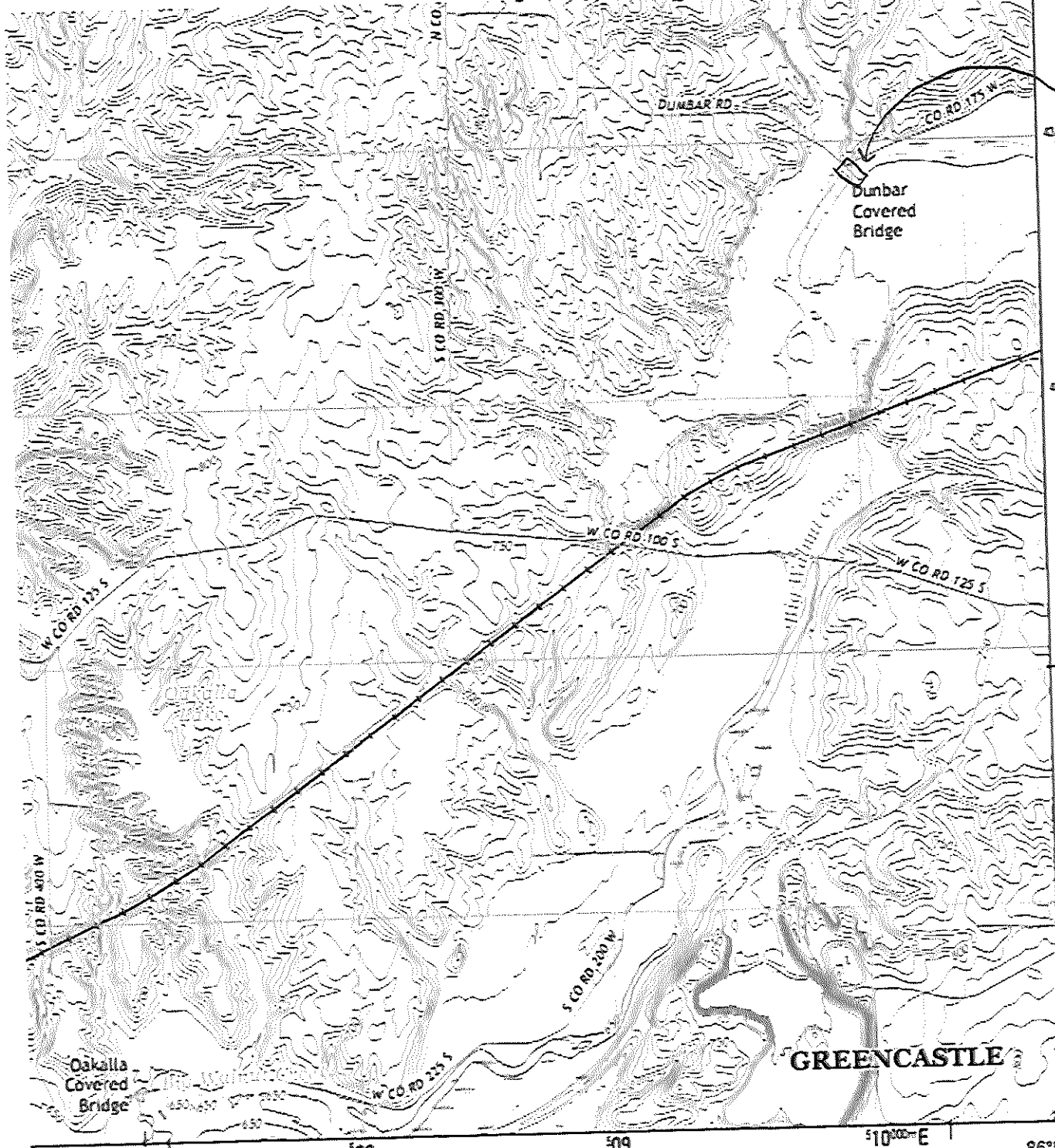
PUTNAM COUNTY, IN  
SKETCH MAP



01 = PHOTOGRAPHS







Dunbar Covered Bridge

Oakalla Covered Bridge

GREENCASTLE

DUNBAR COVERED BRIDGE  
NATIONAL REGISTER OF  
HISTORIC PLACES  
POTOMAC CO. W

E16S E099 95

N16S 4389 377

890

889

888

8700=N

39°37'30"

07

55'

08

09

10

86°52'30"

ROAD CLASSIFICATION



IN\_PutnamCounty\_DunbarCoveredBridge\_0002



IN\_PutnamCounty\_DunbarCoveredBridge\_0003





IN\_PutnamCounty\_DunbarCoveredBridge\_0004



IN\_PutnamCounty\_DunbarCoveredBridge\_0006