

THE GIFTS OF THE SWAMP



"The land was given to us as a gift to experience, and we give back... use what you need." This excerpt is from Dani Tippman, member of the Miami Nation of Indiana. A similar philosophy was shared by other indigenous nations of the region who belonged to the broader Algonquin and Iroquois cultural and linguistic groups.

Can you imagine the various ways we could give back to the land?

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THE SWAMP OF PLENTY

Many tribes, including the Miami, would share the resources of the Great Black Swamp. Resources includes many plants that could be used as food or medicine. The Geranium was used for medicinal purposes, while the common Violet was used as a trail snack or in salads.

Could you imagine eating a wildflower on your morning jog?

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BACK OF THE TURTLE



The Miami Turtle

Do you know that this land you are standing on was a meeting point of oak savannas, swampy elm forests, and prairie grass? It was also a meeting point of Indigenous Nations, such as the Ottawa, Wyandotte, Shawnee, Miami, to list a few. These Nations share some commonalities, such as the belief that the land was on the back of the TURTLE, but they were also unique and different, like the landscapes they lived in. They fostered the variety of landscapes while burning the “high” lands of the ridges, then helping create the savannas and prairies in which deer roamed and birds found plentiful food.

Today, removal of invasive species, and other cultural practices, park naturalists also foster biodiversity and a patchwork of landscapes.

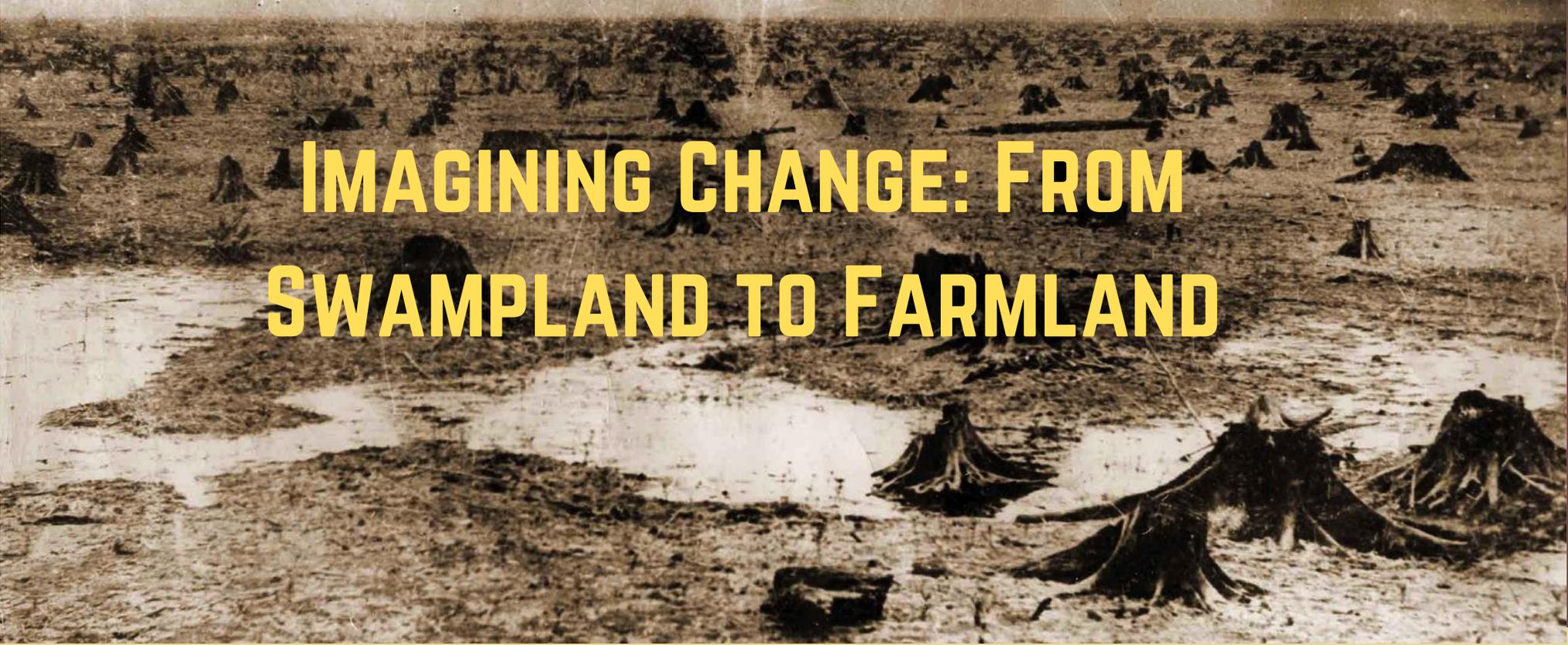


The Wyandot Turtle



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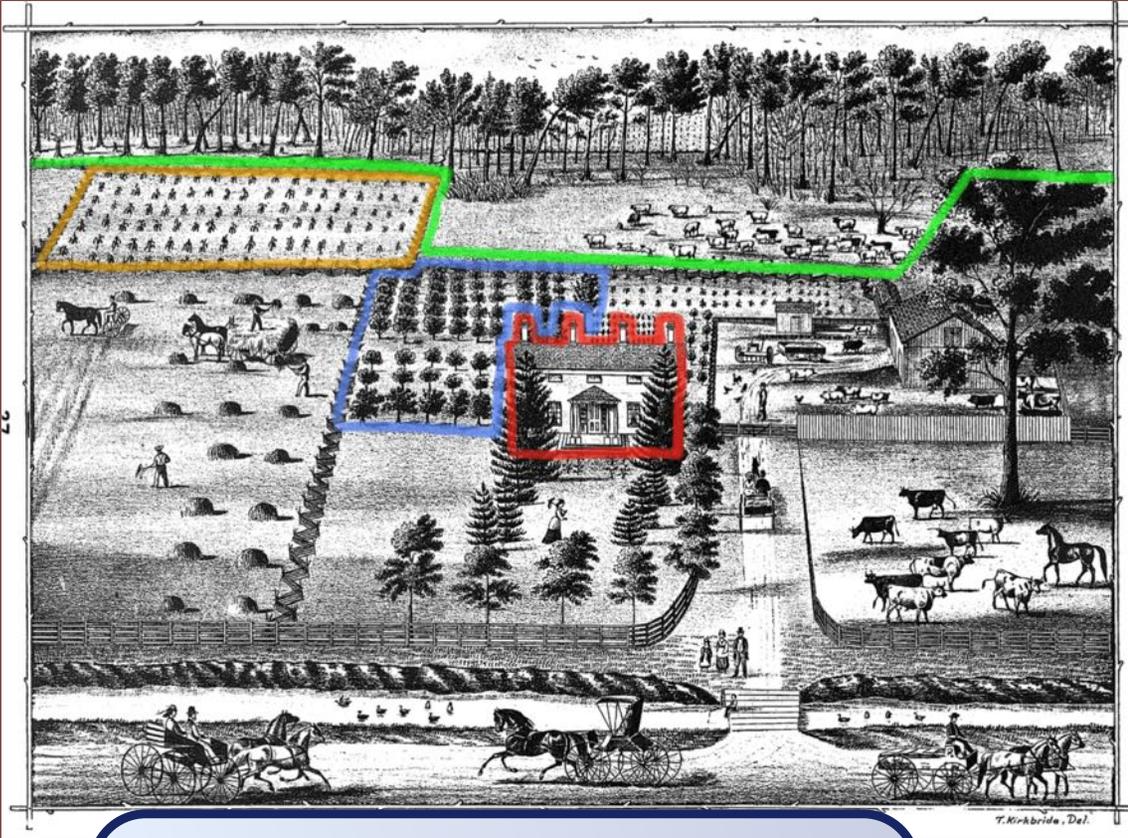


IMAGINING CHANGE: FROM SWAMPLAND TO FARMLAND

The name Great Black Swamp has the potential to evoke very terrifying images inside our imagination. Images like the one shown below might come to mind. However, Native Americans had many uses for the swamp. Then when settlers arrived at the Great Black Swamp they quickly realized this swamp was terrifying and had great potential.

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FARMING THE LAND

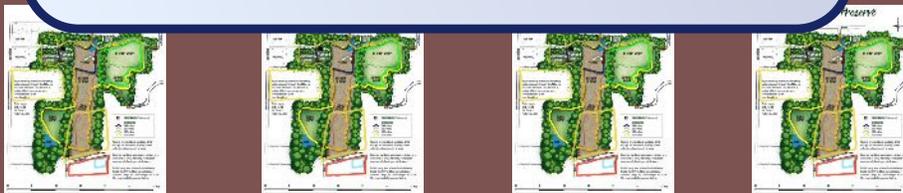
St. John bought this property, currently St. John's Woods, in 1842 at 80 acres. The farm continued to grow in size until its peak in 1880 when it was 200 acres. His descendants sold the farm in 1917.

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This is what a typical Black Swamp farm would have looked like. Looking at a map of the park, where do you think the following parts of the St John Farm were?



LOST AND FOUND IN THE WOODS

In 1896, a man walking along Sand Ridge Road got lost in these woods for hours. He only gained his bearings after hearing the train pass through town. Later in 1904, a "Wild Man" escaped from the circus and sought refuge here until his capture!

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HAVING FUN IN THE WOODS 1960S STYLE

Did you know that the building used to be a community lodge and youth hostel in Wintergarden Woods? The building was officially dedicated to the public in 1969 as part of the Youth Hostel Movement.

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WINTERGARDEN COMMUNITY LODGE AND YOUTH HOSTEL

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A WILD TRANSITION

Did you know that the first mention of the St. John's Woods dates back to March 28, 1895?

The images show us the "then and now." While the woods themselves have seen marginal change the rest of the area has undergone a significant transformation. The idea of wilderness/wild space is a transformation of the community. By addressing this space (the woods and surrounding area) the community as given it new purpose.



The picture above shows Redman's Farm circa the 1940's. In the background is "St. John's Woods."



Image in St. John's Woods today

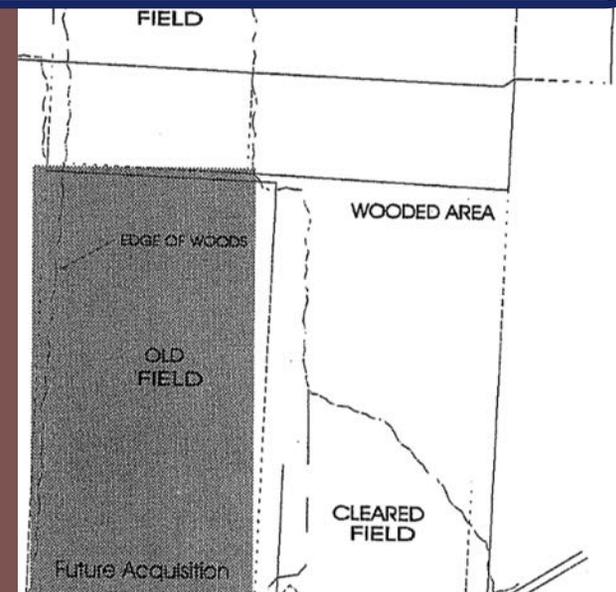
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IMAGINING WINTERGARDEN WILD AGAIN

In 1995, Wintergarden volunteers removed the cottonwood trees and existing vegetation to establish a native meadow system. Every single flower was initially introduced with love by a community member like you and has found its place in this restored native ecosystem. The map on the right was part of the original proposal for the "Native Meadow Project."

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EARNING A BADGE IN ST. JOHN'S WOODS

As early as 1922, boys and girls scouts have been earning badges in the Wintergarden and St. John's woods. The Rotary Nature Center was initially built to host them.

Do you know anybody who was a scout in the 1960s or before? Ask them if they camped here!



Page 4 THE DAILY SENTINEL-TRIBUNE TUESDAY, MAY 16, 1922

Notice to Scouts of Troop No. 3

All Scouts of Troop No. 3 are asked to meet at the City Building Wednesday at 4:00 p.m. prepared to hike to St. John's woods and cook your suppers. All Scouts that haven't passed fire building, cooking 1st and 2nd Class and tracking come prepared to do so. Those having Scout axes bring them along.

A. M. PATTERSON,
Scout Master

St. John's Woods is Roosting Place of In- numerable Birds

They Come in Cawing and Chat-
tering For Two Hours
Before Dark

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