DHR | Virginia Department of Historic Resources

PRELIMINARY INFORMATION FORM (PIF) for INDIVIDUAL PROPERTIES

Note: PIFs are prepared by applicants and evaluated by DHR staff and the State Review Board based on information known at the time of preparation. Recommendations concerning PIFs are subject to change if new information becomes available.

DHR No. (to be completed by DHR staff) _____

1. General Property Information

Property name: Old Salem Church

Property address: 399 Rockfish Crossing

City or Town: Schuyler

Zip code: 22969

Name of the Independent City or County where the property is located: Nelson

Category of Property (choose only one of the following):

Building ____ Site ____ Structure X Object ____

2. Physical Aspects

Acreage: 4

Setting (choose only one of the following):

Urban ____ Suburban ____ Town ____ Village ____ Hamlet ____ Rural X

Briefly describe the property's overall location and setting, including any notable landscape features:

Set in a grove of majestic oaks, the Salem Church was built in 1897 on the foundation of the previous church, built in 1850. The church is on the highest point of the property, close to the road, with a semi-circular drive and woods surrounding the entire structure. The structure is oriented north to south, perpendicular to Rockfish Crossing.

3. Architectural Description

Architectural Style(s): American Gothic

If the property was designed by an architect, landscape architect, engineer, or other professional, please list here: Designed by Rev. RL Ware?

If the builder is known, please list here: the parish of Salem Methodist Church

Date of construction (can be approximate): 1897

Narrative Description (Please do not exceed one page in describing the property):
Briefly describe the property's general characteristics, such as its current use (and historic use if different), as well as the primary building or structure on the property (such as a house, store, mill, factory, depot, bridge, etc.). Include the materials and method(s) of construction, physical appearance and condition (exterior and interior), and any additions or other major alterations.

The church was built in 1897 under the supervision of Rev. RL Ware, the pastor for the Salem Methodist Church. The church community came together to construct the building on the site of the previous church, which had fallen into disrepair. The church cornerstone was laid by Rev. Ware in March 1897, but the building was not dedicated until 1901.

The property consists of majestic oak trees and mixed hardwoods, surrounding the church. The church building is the only surviving structure on the site, but there is a foundation for what is believed to be the old school building on the site.

The church is an American Gothic style building, measuring approximately 40 feet long by 30 feet wide.

Exterior: The outside is finished in wood clapboard siding and a slate roof. The front of the church has two double-door entrances with transoms above each set of doors. The paneled, solid wood exterior doors appear to be original. It also has a round window near the peak. Each side of the church has four windows with original wood sash four over four pane windows. The foundation, which is in dire need of repair, is dry stacked stone.

Interior: The building was originally one room, approximately 40 x 30, but a wall with two doors was added at some point to create a small vestibule and a ½ bathroom. The floor is hardwood throughout, with a raised wooden altar at the north end of the church in a small bumpout area. The church has wood wainscotting and wooden paneling on the ceiling, both which appear to be original. It has six schoolhouse-type lighting fixtures.

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In a bullet list, include any outbuildings or secondary resources or major landscape features (such as barns, sheds, dam and mill pond, storage tanks, scales, railroad spurs, etc.), including their condition and their estimated construction dates.

- Other than the church, there are no existing structures on the property. There is the foundation for what appears to be the old schoolhouse approximately 100 feet from the church in the woods.
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4. Property's History and Significance (Please do not exceed one page)

Briefly explain the property's historic importance, such as significant events, persons, and/or families associated with the property.

If the property is important for its architecture, engineering, landscape architecture, or other aspects of design, please include a brief explanation of this aspect.

Salem Methodist Church served as a community place of worship for nearly 100 years. The original structure, built in 1850, fell into disrepair by 1897, to the extent that the roof was leaking so bad that parishioners had to use umbrellas during church services. It was then that the Rev. RL Ware, pastor for the church, along with members of the parish, determined to build a new church on the site. Re-using the original foundation, they laid the new cornerstone in 1897. Parishioners, along with a few hired carpenters, and parishioners from the neighboring Baptist church, helped complete the new structure by 1901. By that time, Rev. Ware had departed the parish, and his successor, Rev. L. Hunter Early, dedicated the new church on Sunday, August 4, 1901.

The church was used by the Methodist community for nearly 50 years. At some point prior to August 1951, however, it was decommissioned as a church and sold to the Rockfish 108 Ancient Free and Accepted Masons (A.F. & A.M.). The Masons used it as a lodge for the next 73 years, holding meetings and ceremonies in the facility. The property was then sold to the present owner in September of 2023.

The structure is a quintessential example of an old country church, designed in the American Gothic style. It appears to retain all of its original features, including solid wood paneled entry doors with glass transoms above each entrance, four windows on each side of the church, and a modest, raised altar at the far north end of the church.

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Please list all sources of information used to research the history of the property, such as deeds, census and tax records, and/or published articles and books. (It is not necessary to attach lengthy articles or family genealogies to this form.)

- Tax Records available at https://www.nelsoncountygis.org/#/mwl
- Contemporaneous article provided by the Nelson County Historical Society contained in **Nelson County, VA Heritage Book** (2000) (attached)
- Entry found in the Nelson County Historical Society files (attached)

5. Property Ownership (Check as many categories as apply):

Private: __X__ Public\Local _____ Public\State _____ Public\Federal _____

Current Legal Owner(s) of the Property (If the property has more than one owner, please list each below or on an additional sheet.)

name/title: Daniel J. and Justine M. Sennott
organization: N/A
street & number: 2416 N. Florida St.
city or town: Arlington state: VA zip code: 22207
e-mail: dansennott@yahoo.com telephone: 202-557-1737

Legal Owner's Signature: Daniel J. Sennott
Date: 12-27-2023 Justine Sennott

• • *Signature required for processing all applications.* • •

In the event of corporate ownership you must provide the name and title of the appropriate contact person.

Contact person: _____
Daytime Telephone: _____

Applicant Information (Individual completing form if other than legal owner of property)

name/title: _____
organization: _____
street & number: _____
city or town: _____ state: _____ zip code: _____
e-mail: _____ telephone: _____
Date: _____

PLEASE DO NOT ATTACH CONTINUATION SHEETS TO THIS FORM. THANK YOU!

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HISTORY OF SALEM METHODIST CHURCH, SCHUYLER, VIRGINIA

Salem church is located on Route 722, surrounded by a grove of majestic oaks in Nelson County about 4 miles from the Charlottesville District of the Methodist Church and is on the Schuyler Charge.

This is the third Salem Church in this community in approximately one hundred and fifty years. This church is the second one built on this present site. The first church built on this site was built about the year 1850. The plans for the present church were begun in 1896 due to a terrible storm during an afternoon revival service. The old church roof leaked so badly that some of the people had to raise umbrellas to keep from getting wet.

However, the actual work did not begin until the winter of 1897 under the ministry of Rev. W.L. Ware in cooperation with a board of stewards, composed of N.L. Lyon, W.E. Curd, A.L. Wray, S.G. Walker and J.H. Curd. As this was not a wealthy community the process of building was rather slow. A good carpenter was secured and the laymen of the church went to work with a determination to make a success of the project, some helping the carpenter, while others hauled material for the building. Some of our good Baptist friends also came to the rescue, helping in any way they were needed. In March 1897 the cornerstone was laid by Rev. W.L. Ware in the presence of a small group of church members. After a long pull, a strong pull and a pull all together the church was completed inside and out and was dedicated the first Sunday in August 1901 during the pastorate of Rev. L. Hunter Early.

Salem Church was on the Scottsville Charge until 1894, together with Bethany, Elmington and Howardsville Churches. It was called Buffalo Mission, after many changes it is now known as the Schuyler Charge. So we are today celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of the Dedication of the present Salem Church. First Sunday August 1951. The Salem Church building has now been renovated and is owned and used by the Rockfish Lodge 108 AM & FM.

This story of Salem Church was found in the papers of Rev. Fred C. Wray.

Written by: Mrs. A.W. Hamilton. Read by: Mrs. W.W. Walker. Submitted by: Valda Wray Mulkey.

SALEM METHODIST CHURCH

Rev. W. L. Ware came to the South Nelson charge in 1896 and was pastor for three years. During this time the present building was constructed. An old church had stood on the present site, the date of which, I have not been able to find. A part of the present foundation is that of the older church. The land was given by Mr. William Elsom.

Parson Fortune was the founder and first pastor of the old church.

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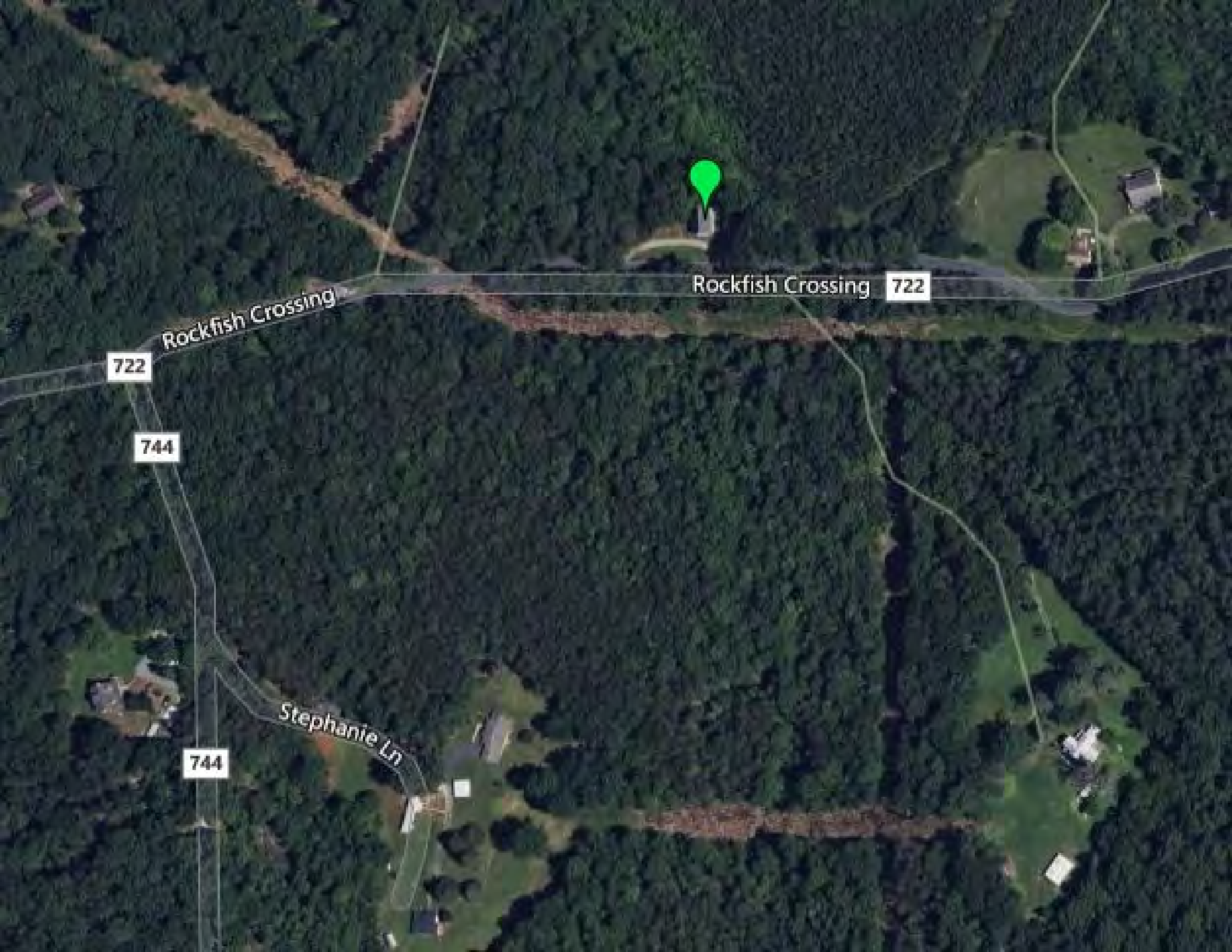
062-5002-0135
NELSON CO
ALBEMARLE CO
ROCKFISH
062-5260
062-5256
062-5258
Salem
Cem
Branch


Rockfish Crossing
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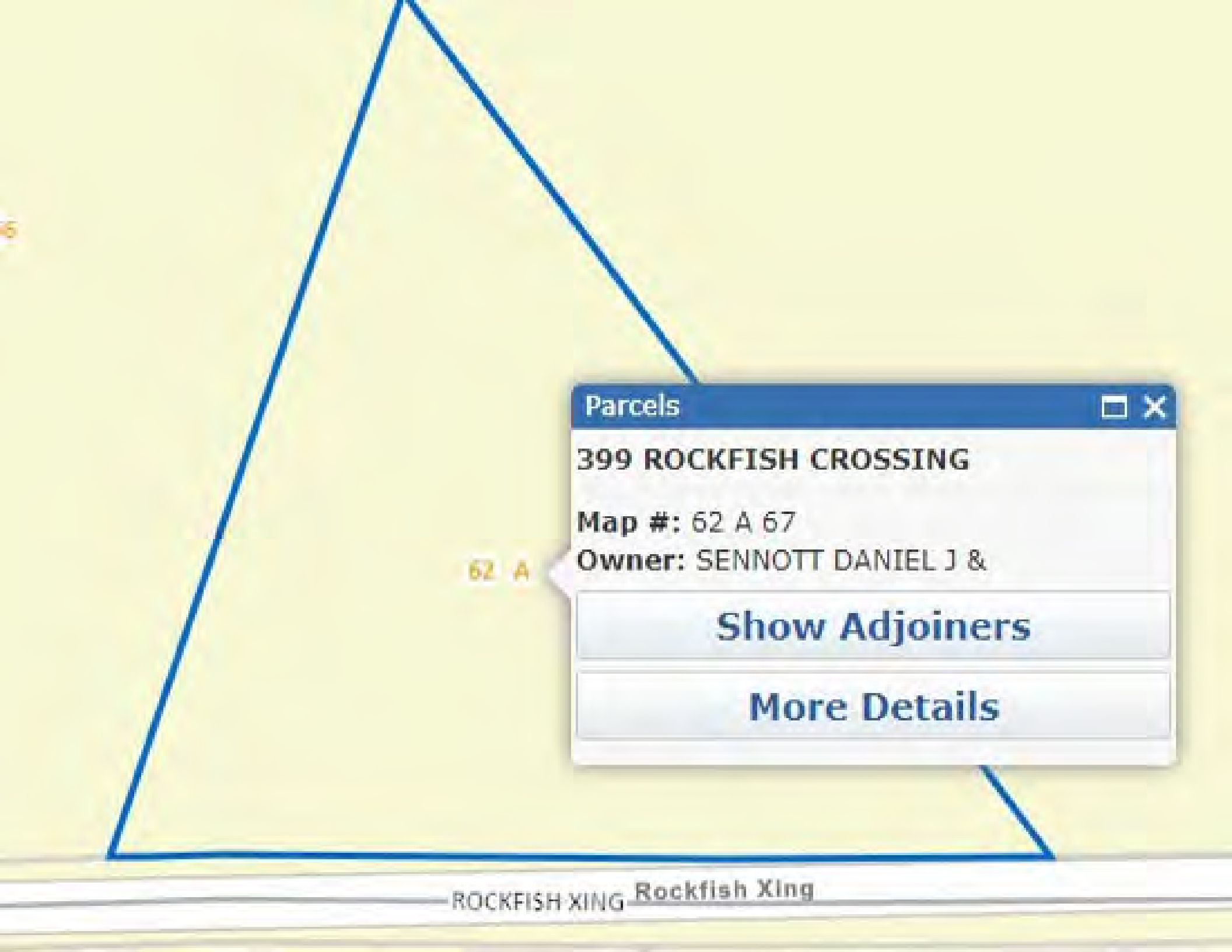
Stephanie Ln


Parcels
399 ROCKFISH CROSSING
Map #: 62 A 67
Owner: SENNOTT DANIEL J &
Show Adjoiners
More Details
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