

**U.S. BOARD ON GEOGRAPHIC NAMES
DOMESTIC NAMES COMMITTEE**

Eight Hundred and Sixty-first Meeting

February 8, 2024 – 9:30 a.m.

(Virtual Meeting)

Members and Deputy Members in Attendance

| | |
|------------------------|---|
| Kenia Allen | Department of Commerce (Office of Coast Survey) |
| Meghan Barrett | Department of Homeland Security |
| Marielle Black | Department of the Interior (U.S. Bureau of Reclamation) |
| Wendi-Starr Brown | Department of the Interior (Bureau of Indian Affairs) |
| Thad Ellerbe | Department of Commerce (Office of Coast Survey) |
| Andrew Flora | Department of Commerce (Census Bureau) |
| Brenda-Anne C. Forrest | Government Publishing Office |
| Andrew Griffin | Department of Defense (U.S. Army Corps of Engineers) |
| Christopher Hammond | Department of the Interior (U.S. Geological Survey) |
| Elizabeth Kanalley | Department of Agriculture (U.S. Forest Service) |
| Sean Killen | Department of the Interior (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service) |
| Susan Lyon | Department of Defense (U.S. Army Corps of Engineers) |
| Veronica Ranieri | Library of Congress |
| Melanie Riley | Department of Agriculture (U.S. Forest Service) |
| Mike Shelton | Department of the Interior (National Park Service) |
| Jeremy Smith | Department of the Interior (Bureau of Ocean and Energy Management) |
| Timothy St. Onge | Library of Congress (Chair) |
| Alexander Stum | Department of Agriculture (Natural Resources Conservation Service) |
| Michael Tischler | Department of the Interior (U.S. Geological Survey) (Vice Chair) |
| Tara Wallace | Department of Commerce (Office of Coast Survey) |
| Marilyn Withers | Department of Defense (National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency) |

Ex-Officio

Derek Hoffman, Executive Secretary, U.S. Board on Geographic Names / Foreign Names

BGN/GNIS Staff

Josefa Baker, U.S. Geological Survey
Shelby Bourquein, U.S. Geological Survey
Julie-Ann Danfora, U.S. Geological Survey
Lindsay Decker, U.S. Geological Survey
Matthew O'Donnell, U.S. Geological Survey
Sergio Rodriguez, U.S. Geological Survey
Jennifer Runyon, U.S. Geological Survey

Guests

Alex Fries, National Park Service

Apple Maps observers
Foreign Names Committee observers
National Geographic Society observers
Brigitta Urban-Mathieux, U.S. Geological Survey
Wendy Hawley, Bureau of the Census
Jamison D. Leach, Census Bureau

1. Opening

Chair St. Onge opened Meeting 861 of the Domestic Names Committee (DNC) at 9:32 a.m. He noted that motions would pass by a simple majority of votes. Staff conducted a roll call of members and staff.

Runyon reminded attendees of the USGS media policy and asked any attendees from the media to identify themselves and to email Gina Anderson, U.S. Geological Survey Office of Communications and Publishing.

Members were invited to review the reports that were distributed previously and to email any questions or comments to the staff. (Please note the reports appended hereto may have been edited for length and/or clarity.)

2. Review and Approval of Agenda

The agenda was approved as submitted.

3. Minutes of Meeting 860

The minutes of Meeting 860, held January 11, 2024, were approved as submitted.

4. Reports

4.1 BGN Chairman (Tischler)

There was no written report.

The full Board met on January 16, 2024. Questions were raised regarding a nomination to the BGN's Advisory Committee on Antarctic Features (ACAN); staff and members will work with the Department of State to address the concerns.

BGN member appointment letters are being received from other departments.

BGN Vice-chair Withers will schedule an Executive Committee meeting in April.

USGS is close to making a selection for the new permanent Executive Secretary for Domestic Names.

4.2 Executive Secretary for Domestic Names (vacant)

There was no report.

4.3 Executive Secretary for Foreign Names (Hoffman)

There was no written report. Hoffman summarized recent Foreign Names Committee (FNC) decisions, and noted that FNC is developing guidelines for generic terms. FNC Meeting 417 is scheduled for March 12.

The FNC will be hosting a delegation from the Republic of Korea next week.

An in-person meeting with the British Permanent Committee on Geographical Names (PCGN) is being planned for November at NGA Washington (Springfield, Virginia). Any members or staff interested in participating are encouraged to contact the FNC staff.

4.4 Special Committee on Communications (Ellerbe)

See attached report.

Ellerbe and Kanalley met with Steve Westley and Nicole Halseth from Natural Resources Canada on January 25 to discuss topics for the upcoming US/Canada Division meeting of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names (UNGEGN). There will be no in-person UNGEGN meeting this year, so they are hoping to have BGN and Geographical Names Board of Canada (GNBC) representatives attend each other's conferences in 2024 and to hold another virtual forum in fall 2024.

4.5 Staff (Runyon)

See attached report; staff shared the following highlights:

Quarterly Review List 454 was posted, and the Tribal notice was distributed by email. Staff is sending requests for recommendations to interested local, State, and Federal parties.

Review List 454 includes a proposal to change the name of Kelseyville, an unincorporated community in Lake County, California, to Konocti. To date, BGN staff has received about 80 emails from local residents, with approximately 75% opposed to the change.

The proponent of the change from Aanikegamaa Lake to Swan Lake, which was rejected by the DNC at the January meeting, has asked if there is an appeal process; a response is being prepared. The staff is also preparing a response to the proponent of the name Druid Hill; the

DNC determined last month that there was no new evidence to warrant revisiting its 2019 decision not to approve the name.

The proposal to apply the name Loch Heed Martin to an unnamed waterbody on a Lockheed Martin facility in Florida was withdrawn by the proponent.

On January 19, the [Lakota People's Law Project](#) initiated an email campaign titled "[Tell Secretary Haaland: Change Offensive Place Names Across Turtle Island.](#)" BGN staff received 2,162 emails from this campaign before Dr. Andrea Dekoter, the Designated Federal Official for the [Advisory Committee on Reconciliation in Place Names](#) contacted the Lakota People's Law Project to request that their supporters direct email to the Advisory Committee instead. Of the 12 names currently on the list, eight are under DNC purview; one was already changed by the DNC in December 2022 and the other is prevented from DNC action due to pending congressional legislation under the [Policy on Names Considered or Established by Congress or the President](#).

Shelton asked if the Eastern Band of the Cherokee Indians' proposal to change the name of Clingmans Dome to Kuwohi has been received and acknowledged. Runyon reported that it had and that it would be shared with the NPS soon.

Wallace asked if Apple Maps uses GNIS names in their data and how names are updated on their maps. Runyon noted that she has spoken to David Fogel of Apple Maps and that he is preparing a presentation for a future DNC meeting. St. Onge welcomed Fogel and asked if he wished to add anything. Fogel reported that Apple Maps does use GNIS, in an effort to include authoritative names, and also that they are hoping to develop an international geographic names register.

4.6 GNIS and Data Compilation Program (Decker)

There was no written report.

The gnis_manager@usgs.gov mailbox will be decommissioned on February 15. All public requests and inquiries should now be sent to tnm_help@usgs.gov where they will be routed to GNIS staff. All instances of gnis_manager@usgs.gov on BGN webpages and documents are being updated.

4.7 Special Committee on Native American Names and Tribal Communication (Kanalley)

There was no written report.

The Special Committee will meet after this meeting to discuss Tribal consultation about revisions to the DNC's *Principles, Policies, and Procedures*, as well Tribal engagement opportunities.

5. Docket

Please refer to the attached Docket for a description of each proposal.

Review List 439**Franklin Fork, Texas** (FID 2831460)

A motion was made and seconded to approve the name.

Members discussed the “outstanding national or international recognition” section of the [Commemorative Names Policy](#).

Vote: 21 in favor
0 against
0 abstentions

Review List 441**Gray Rock Creek**, Pennsylvania (FID 2831458)

A motion was made and seconded to approve the name.

Vote: 21 in favor
0 against
0 abstentions

Review List 451

Change **Walnut Branch** (FID [2831414](#)) to **Augustine Run**, Virginia

A motion was made and seconded not to approve the change, citing the longstanding name and the objections from the county and the State Names Authority.

Members asked about the process by which the name **Walnut Branch** was recently added to GNIS. Staff replied that the county historical society submitted it directly to the GNIS staff, who determined there was sufficient evidence to add it to the database, thus making it official for Federal use.

Vote: 21 in favor
0 against
0 abstentions

A motion was made and seconded to affirm the name **Walnut Run** as a 2024 BGN decision.

Vote: 21 in favor

0 against
0 abstentions

One member left the meeting.

Change **Grass Lake** (FID [1523607](#)) to **Nathaniel Sargent Lake**; new name **Rodney White Slough** (FID 2831463), Washington

A motion was made and seconded to consider these two proposals as a group.

Vote: 20 in favor
0 against
0 abstentions

A motion was made and seconded to approve the proposals with the proviso that the following paragraph be included in the minutes:

The Domestic Names Committee wished to note for the record that, despite the erroneous statement by the Washington Board of Natural Resources [which serves as the Washington Board on Geographic Names] in its February 7, 2023, meeting minutes, then-Secretary of the Interior Steward L. Udall’s 1963 decision to declare the word n_____r derogatory was done to remove a slur from the Nation’s map, not to “erase” any “community’s history.”

Vote: 20 in favor
0 against
0 abstentions

Review List 452

Change **Jessie-Ca Lake** (FID [450551](#)) to **Hidden Valley Lake**, Indiana

A motion was made and seconded not to approve the change, citing longstanding use of the current name and concerns that the proposed name would violate the Commercial Names Policy.

Vote: 20 in favor
0 against
0 abstentions

River Tay, North Carolina

A motion was made and seconded not to approve the name, citing the objections of the State Names Authority.

Vote: 16 in favor

1 against
3 abstentions

The vote against the motion was made in the belief that the proponent's reasoning was compelling. There was discussion regarding the interpretation of "no objection" from interested parties. The proponent will be asked to solicit support for the name.

Two members left the meeting.

Change the application of **Indian Gap** (FID [1000703](#)) (Great Smoky Mountains National Park), North Carolina and Tennessee

A motion was made and seconded to approve the change.

Vote: 18 in favor
0 against
0 abstentions

It was noted that the approved change results in the former location of "Indian Gap" being unnamed.

Mesquite Creek, Texas (FID 2831462)

A motion was made and seconded to approve the name.

Vote: 17 in favor
0 against
1 abstention

Urby-Urrabazo Creek, Texas (FID 2831461)

A motion was made and seconded to approve the name.

Vote: 18 in favor
0 against
0 abstentions

Review List 453

Wheel Creek, Maryland (FID 2831456)

A motion was made and seconded to approve the name.

Vote: 18 in favor

0 against
0 abstentions

Grays Creek, North Carolina (FID 2831457)

A motion was made and seconded to approve the name.

Vote: 18 in favor
0 against
0 abstentions

Wildwood Creek, Pennsylvania and New York (FID 2831459)

A motion was made and seconded to approve the name.

Vote: 18 in favor
0 against
0 abstentions

6. Other Business

Members discussed the upcoming Esri Federal GIS Conference; the status of the *Principles, Policies, and Procedures* revision; and plans for the annual Council of Geographic Names Authorities conference scheduled for mid-September 2024 in Columbia, Missouri.

7. Closing

The meeting adjourned at 11:30 a.m. The next meeting of the DNC is scheduled to be held on March 14, 2024, at 9:30 a.m. Eastern Time.

(signed)

Executive Secretary
[Vacant]

APPROVED
(signed)

Timothy St. Onge, Chair
Domestic Names Committee

Special Committee on Communications Report

The Chair (Thad Ellerbe) and Betsy Kanalley (chair of Special Committee on Native American Names and Tribal Communication) attended a meeting with Steve Westley and Nicole Halseth from Natural Resources Canada on January 25th to touch base for the US/ Canada Division of UNGEGN. After introductions, we reflected on 2023 and discussed what went well and what could be improved. As there will be no in person UNGEGN meeting this year, we would like to have representatives from each country attend each other's naming conferences and have another virtual forum (as we did last year) in the fall possibly during their conference. Possible topics are indigenous geographical names, approaches to derogatory geographical names, cross-border feature names, undersea feature naming and database issues.

Monthly reminders/ updates:

- Jennifer Runyon (research staff USGS) was contacted by the Pima County Genealogy Society to see if someone could give a presentation on geographic names at one of their meetings in 2024 via Zoom. They are looking for a 45 min to 1 hour presentation. If you are interested in this, please let me know. We have slides from a few presentations collected on the Collaboration Site that could be helpful with this.
- The Special Committee on Communications has not met since the last report.

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## Staff Report

Since the DNC's last meeting on January 11, the BGN has received 14 new name and name change proposals:

- Will High Top, NC – make official a name found in 1920s news articles
- China Hat, OR – counterproposal to Bath Hat (Review List 437), name change for Chinaman Hat
- Mount Crestone – counterproposal to Frustum Peak (Review List 442), Lawrence Peak (Review List 454), Tabeguache Ute Peak (Review List 454)
- Duffee Mountain, AL – name change from Duffy Mountain
- Horner Lake, IA -- new commemorative name for unnamed lake
- Jack Creek, OR – name change from Negro Jack Creek
- Lazy Leopard Creek, North Branch Lazy Leopard Creek, NY – new names for unnamed streams
- Lake Ivan, MI – new commemorative name; no association between honoree and feature
- Third Parish Hill, NH – new name for unnamed summit
- Kuwohi, NC, TN – name change from Clingmans Dome. A few emails supporting the change have been received, and the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians requested a meeting with the Secretary of the Interior to discuss the matter.

- Rejected Jean Byrd Creek, AL; violates Commemorative Names Policy
- Rejected Mount Nielsen, NC; violates Commemorative Names Policy
- Acknowledged Ashley Peak, MT; new name for summit on Flathead Reservation, directed proponent to work with Tribe's leadership

The staff also responded to inquiries/correspondence:

- Forest Service inquiry re: updating administrative names
- Letter addressed to President Biden objecting to BGN's approval of Mount Blue Sky as a replacement name for Mount Evans, Colorado
- USGS Lafayette Publishing Service Center re: restrictions on sharing locations of springs in GNIS (none)
- Naming stream in Hanover County, VA
- Naming private lake
- Naming island in Lexington County, SC
- Process for issuing notification letters for Advisory Committee on Undersea Features decisions
- Request for USGS field notes for "Kern" names, Stanislaus County, CA (for pending changes to "Curran")
- Senator Marcus, NC expressed support for new proposal to name an unnamed summit in North Carolina Mount Douglass
- Origin of the name of Booker Mountain, WA
- Use of the name Chinaman Canyon (AK) in USGS reports
- Definition of map codes in 1990s *Utah Names Gazetteer*
- Origin of the name Dinwoody Glacier, Wyoming
- History of names Lake Pagosa, Picketwire Valley/Purgatoire River, Colorado
- New York State Names Authority re: request to rename East River
- Request for BGN files for three California decisions
- Making official locally used names for volcanoes in AK

Case briefs were prepared for the 45 new proposals (new names and name changes) and Quarterly Review List 454 was released on January 24. The notification email to federally recognized Tribes and Tribal Historic Preservation Offices was sent this week. The staff is sending out requests to stakeholders for input on the new proposals.

One proposal on the new review list is to change the name of the unincorporated community of Kelseyville in Lake County, California to Konocti. To date, the BGN has received 24 emails in support and 45 opposed. Three Tribal governments have submitted support for the change. Several opponents state that they recognize that Andrew Kelsey, the honoree of the current name, committed atrocities against Native Americans ("The atrocities . . . [are] well documented, and Andrew Kelsey was violently murdered for his actions by those he abused. Good, if anyone ever deserved such a fate, he did. I hope he is still rotting in hell"); nonetheless, they do not believe the name should be changed, noting that Kelsey built the first cabin in the area. They also

express concerns regarding the impacts on business names, local infrastructure, and mailing addresses.

At the January meeting, the DNC voted to not support a name change for [Mount Washington](#) in New Hampshire. The proponent thanked the DNC for considering the matter and inquired as to when it is appropriate to show the variant name on Federal maps.

Following the decision by the DNC at its January meeting not to approve the proposal to rename [Aanikegamaa Lake](#), Michigan to [Swan Lake](#), the Township government asked if there is an appeal process. A response is being prepared.

The proponent of the name [Druid Hill](#) for a location in DeKalb County, Georgia was informed that the DNC determined there is no new evidence that warrants revisiting the 2019 decision not to approve the name. The proponent responded with a request for further clarification and a response is being prepared.

The proposal to make official the locally used name [Loch Heed Martin](#) for a lake on the campus of the Lockheed Martin Company in Orange County, Florida has been withdrawn by the proponent. The name still appears on Google Maps as a place marker for a “park,” not as a base map name.

As a result of additional research by History Colorado, the proposal to change the name of [Negro Draw](#) in Montezuma County, CO (Review List 443) has been amended to the spelling “Robison.”

Review List 453 included a proposal to rename [Dead Injun Creek](#) in Oregon and on the Malheur National Forest to [Numu Creek](#); the word “numu” is from the Northern Paiute language for “the people.” The Burns Paiute Tribe responded to the U.S. Forest Service’s request for input and noted that the correct name is [Neme Creek](#); the original proponent has agreed to amend their proposal and the review list has been updated.

Regarding the Federal Advisory Committee (FAC) on Reconciliation in Place Names, updates continue to be posted at the website: <https://www.nps.gov/orgs/1892/advisory-committee-on-reconciliation-in-place-names.htm>.

On January 19, the Lakota People’s Law Project issued a statement entitled “Tell Secretary Haaland: Change Offensive Place Names Across Turtle Island”; see [Lakota People's Law Project \(lakotalaw.org\)](#). The project’s “Place Name Hall of Shame” lists:

- Big Negro Creek in Missouri
- Darky Knob in Kentucky
- Red Skin Run in Kentucky
- Negro Foot in Virginia
- Pickaninny Buttes in California
- Red Skin Knolls in Utah

- Redskin Brook in Indiana
- Wetback Tank in New Mexico
- Anna in Illinois
- Devil's Tower in Wyoming
- Dead Indian Pass in Wyoming
- Chinamans Canyon in Colorado

(The original list included the first ten names; the last two were added more recently. Note: the BGN is already considering a proposal to rename Chinaman Canyon, Colorado.)

Three of the twelve names are not in GNIS so the staff cannot pinpoint their locations, while the others are listed and under the purview of the BGN. One (Pickaninny Buttes) has been changed already (BGN 2022), and another (Devils Tower) is the subject of proposed bill in Congress, and cannot be acted on by the BGN under Policy I. The project's webpage prompted supporters of the changes to email the BGN and the Secretary of the Interior. Over the following five days, the BGN received 2,160 emails. The Designated Federal Officer for the FAC contacted the author of the page to explain the BGN process and to request that the emails be directed to the FAC instead of to the BGN.

Runyon participated in a meeting of the Colorado Geographic Naming Advisory Board on January 24, during which she was asked to provide an update on the four proposals that have been proposed as replacements for Kit Carson Mountain. The proponents for Lawrence Peak and Mount Crestone spoke in support of their proposals during the public comment session, as did an individual who is opposed to changing the name.

Staff participated in Quarterly Meeting 291 of the Full Board, held on January 16.

Bob Glover's detail as Executive Secretary for Domestic Names concluded on January 19. Interviews for the permanent position have concluded.

A representative of Apple Maps has attended a number of recent DNC meetings. In response to a request that Apple Maps share with the BGN how it manages geographic names on its products, the representative contacted the staff to discuss updates to military base names and natural features located on those installations; conflicts with the USGS National Map base map; and other items of mutual interest.

Staff assisted in a review and update of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between USGS and the Census Bureau regarding the maintenance of "civil" and "census" entities in GNIS. There was also discussion as to whether "military" entities are included in the MOU. They are not, which led to a discussion with representatives of the USGS Protected Areas Database of the U.S. (PAD-US) program regarding who is responsible for maintaining these features. Runyon attended the January 31 meeting of the Federal Lands Working Group to provide a brief overview of the BGN and to share a link to the FAC website.

The Department of the Interior continues to await member appointment letters for the 2023-2025 term; to date, seven responses have been received.

The month of February is recognized as Mahina ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i: Hawaiian Language Month. DOI issued a Press Release, “Interior Department Announces New Guidance to Honor and Elevate Hawaiian Language,” which includes the following statement [italics added]. It also spells the name of the State as Hawai‘i, which contradicts the official spelling which was established by Congress and can only be changed by Congress; the name does not include the okina.

The guidance recognizes the evolving nature of ‘ōlelo Hawai‘i and *acknowledges the absence of a single authoritative source*. While the Hawaiian Dictionary (Pukui & Elbert 2003) is designated as the baseline standard for non-geographic words and place names, Department bureaus and offices are *encouraged to consult other standard works, as well as the Board on Geographic Names database*.

Effective February 15, the [gnis\\_manager@usgs.gov](mailto:gnis_manager@usgs.gov) dropbox will be disabled. All inquiries related to GNIS maintenance should be directed to [tnm\\_help@usgs.gov](mailto:tnm_help@usgs.gov). BGN webpages and published material are being updated to reflect the change.

The Maine Legislature discussed [LD 1667](#), “An Act Regarding Recommendations for Changing Place Names in the State”. It would establish a formal State Names Advisory Board. [Audio and public testimony](#).

Media coverage of BGN activities continues:

*The Houston Chronicle* inquired about a possible new proposal to apply the name Starbase to an area in south Texas that is the site of the SpaceX launch facility. A City of Brownsville [press release](#) stated that “the city’s mayor . . . in a letter to the U.S. Board on Geographic Names . . . expressed the city’s endorsement of the change.” No such letter has been received, nor is it clear whether this would be a name change (perhaps from [Kopernik Shores](#)) or a new name for an unnamed unincorporated community. See [Elon Musk Wants to Create a New City in Texas Called 'Starbase' \(travellandleisure.com\)](#) and <https://www.motherjones.com/politics/2024/01/elon-musk-spacex-texas-boca-chica-oligarchy/>.

*Conway Daily Sun* (New Hampshire): [Board says no to changing Mount Washington to Agiocochook | Local | conwaydailysun.com](#)

*Los Angeles Times*: <https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2024-01-30/california-banned-slur-from-geographic-place-names-fresno-county-wont-let-go>

[https://www.wyomingnews.com/laramieboomerang/news/board-of-geographic-names-approves-knight-lake/article\\_b4a04b58-bc96-11ee-9e0b-43558cb13107.html](https://www.wyomingnews.com/laramieboomerang/news/board-of-geographic-names-approves-knight-lake/article_b4a04b58-bc96-11ee-9e0b-43558cb13107.html)

[Wolverine Canyon peak officially named Petes Peak after early homesteader | Local | idahostatejournal.com](https://www.localidaho.com/news/wolverine-canyon-peak-officially-named-petes-peak-after-early-homesteader/)

[Fresno County voters to vote on Measure B in March elections | Fresno Bee](https://www.fresnobee.com/news/local/fresno-county-voters-to-vote-on-measure-b-in-march-elections/article238404.html) [Yokuts Valley, S.O. 3404, CA AB 2022]

[Rachel Talbot Ross Pushes Bill to Rename "Offensive" Place Names in Maine - The Maine Wire](https://www.maine-morningstar.com/news/rachel-talbot-ross-pushes-bill-to-rename-offensive-place-names-in-maine/)

[Maine grapples with renaming racial and ethnic slurs in place names - Maine Morning Star](https://www.maine-morningstar.com/news/maine-grapples-with-renaming-racial-and-ethnic-slurs-in-place-names/)

Recently spotted on a Colorado highway:



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DOCKET
February 2024

Unless otherwise specified, in accordance with the BGN's Policy X: Tribal Geographic Names, a link to the Quarterly Review List containing each proposal was sent to all federally recognized Tribes, and to Tribal Historic Preservation Officers for which an email address was available. The Tribal authorities were given 60 days to comment on any proposal. If no responses were received regarding a proposal, it is presumed to indicate a lack of opinion.

Please note that if an interested party's recommendation is recorded as "no opinion," that reflects their response to the BGN. If an interested party did not respond at all, the recommendation is recorded as "no response."

Review List 439

Franklin Fork, Texas

Mouth: 30.88352, -99.032135 / Source: 30.870067, -99.056242

| | | |
|-----------------------|--|-------------|
| Local government | Mason County Commissioners Court | No opinion |
| State Names Authority | Texas Geographic Names Committee | Support |
| Tribes | All federally recognized Tribes contacted under Policy X | No response |

This proposal is to apply the new commemorative name Franklin Fork to an unnamed 2.2-mile-long tributary of North Fork San Fernando Creek in Mason County. The proponent is the owner of the Double Helix Ranch, through which the stream flows.

The proposed name would commemorate Rosalind Franklin (1920-1958), an English chemist and X-ray crystallographer, whose research led to the discovery of the structure of the DNA molecule (the “Double Helix”) that encodes all genetic information. According to an article in *The New York Times* in 2015, the proponent is an evolutionary biologist at the University of Texas at Austin, who “has been employing genetics, biochemistry and computation to figure out how [the Longhorn] breed of cattle developed its trademark feature.” The article quotes the proponent, “[We] bought the ranch [and] hoped to connect it to some aspect of Texas history. That’s what led us to longhorns. These animals are not only a symbol of the state, they have an unusual biological history. . . . It seemed we could learn a lot by studying this breed. The idea was to use the ranch as a kind of off-hours laboratory. We call the place the Double Helix Ranch.”

The Mason County Judge (the Chair of the County Commissioners Court) reported, “After consulting with the county’s attorney, the court took no action on the request as they felt it was not within the scope of the court.”

Review List 441

Gray Rock Creek, Pennsylvania

Mouth: [40.092012, -75.138384](#) / Source: [40.089057, -75.150207](#)

| | | |
|-----------------------|--|--------------|
| Local government | Cheltenham Township Commissioners | Support |
| | Montgomery County Commissioners | No response |
| State Names Authority | Pennsylvania Geographic Names Committee | No objection |
| Tribes | All federally recognized Tribes contacted under Policy X | No response |

The new name Gray Rock Creek is proposed for an unnamed 0.7-mile-long tributary of Tacony Creek in Cheltenham Township in Montgomery County. The name refers to a distinctive gray

rock in the stream. This stream is not shown on USGS topographic maps, nor in the National Hydrography Dataset, but local maps and aerial imagery show the presence of a stream. The stream flows partly through underground culverts.

There is no local name for this stream, but several nearby unnamed streams do have locally used names. The tributary located 0.9 miles downstream along Tacony Creek is labeled “Rock Creek” on many local maps and also on FEMA maps but is not listed in the Geographic Names Information System. Despite the proximity of a stream already known locally as “Rock Creek,” the Cheltenham Township Commissioners recommend approval of the name Gray Rock Creek.

The township began a project to name the unnamed tributaries of Tacony Creek in 2008. Some of the names put forward at the time entered local use and are now used on township, county, and Pennsylvania sources. The township government has proposed 14 additional stream names to the BGN and these are on Review List 454. Six are to make official names in local use, and eight are for new names selected during a township naming process in 2023.

Review List 451

Change **Walnut Branch** (FID [2831414](#)) to **Augustine Run**, Virginia

| | | |
|-----------------------|--|---------------|
| Local government | Stafford County Board of Supervisors | Opposed* |
| State Names Authority | Virginia Board on Geographic Names | Opposed |
| Tribes | All federally recognized Tribes contacted under Policy X | No response |
| Other | Stafford County Historical Society | Opposed* |
| | Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources | No objection* |

* contacted by SNA

This proposal is to change the name of Walnut Branch, a 2.3-mile-long tributary of Long Branch in Stafford County, to Augustine Run.

Prior to receiving this proposal, no name was recorded for the stream on Federal maps or in GNIS. However, in the course of reviewing the Augustine Run proposal, the Virginia Board on Geographic Names (VABGN) learned from the Stafford County GIS Office that the name Walnut Branch was included in its dataset, having been collected by a local mapmaker from an early nineteenth century tract survey. The Stafford County Historical Society added, “Walnut Branch runs through a tract that was owned by the Allen family in the 18th century and by the Shumates in the early to mid-19th. Walnut Branch was named on surveys dating from 1819, 1888, and 1913, so the name most certainly pre-dates 1819.” The Stafford County cultural resource specialist, citing the published evidence, requested that the name be made official for Federal use. The GNIS staff agreed to add it to GNIS, thus making Augustine Run a name change rather than a new name for an unnamed feature.

The proposed name Augustine Run would commemorate Augustine Washington (1694-1743), the father of George Washington. The proponent stated:

Augustine Washington was a major landowner in Stafford County, and the county was home to George Washington from age six to 20. His widowed mother, Mary Ball Washington, kept Stafford as her home until 1772, when son George bought her a house across the Rappahannock River in Fredericksburg.

The particular significance of the “Augustine” name to the feature is that the elder Washington part-owned and operated an iron foundry nearby, known as Accokeek Furnace. This historical feature inspired the naming of the adjacent Colonial Forge High School, and also inspired the names of nearby real estate developments, including the Augustine Golf Course.

The housing development through which the feature to be named flows is named “Augustine at the Glens.”

Augustine Washington owned the Bridges Creek Plantation and the Popes Creek Plantation in present-day Westmoreland County. The George Washington Foundation’s biography of him reports that in 1725, he “entered into an agreement with the Principio Company of England to start an iron works on Accokeek Creek in Stafford County. In 1728, Augustine made an agreement with the company to bear one sixth of the cost of running Accokeek Furnace.” The furnace site is located a few miles east of the stream. In 1735, he moved with his family and second wife to his Little Hunting Creek Plantation, later named Mount Vernon. In 1738, he moved his family to a plantation on the north side of the Rappahannock River in Stafford County (this plantation was later known as Ferry Farm). His biography also notes that “In addition to planting, Augustine was active in the church and in local politics, serving at various times as justice of the peace and as county sheriff.” Augustine Washington owned enslaved persons at each of his properties.

The proponent “expects there would be no objection or opposition to the proposed name” and stated that it is “complementary to the name of the residential development through which it runs.” He also notes that he is “the largest single owner of land on both sides of the proposed Augustine Run.”

The proponent was informed that the name Walnut Branch is now official for Federal use and asked if he wished to withdraw his proposal or proceed. He has not responded.

According to GNIS, there is only one geographic feature named “Augustine” in Virginia: Augustine North is listed as a populated place, having been recorded in 2008 from a county GIS dataset. It is located approximately 1.5 miles east of the stream in question. Virginia includes 20 features with names that include “Washington,” although it can be presumed these were named for George Washington. One, a civil division, is located in Stafford County.

Change Grass Lake (FID [1523607](#)) to Nathaniel Sargent Lake, Washington

| | | |
|-----------------------|--|-------------|
| Local government | Mason County Commissioners | Support* |
| State Names Authority | Washington Committee on Geographic Names | Support |
| Tribes | All federally recognized Tribes contacted under Policy X | No response |
| Other | U.S. Representative Derek Kilmer | Support* |
| | Resident | Support* |

* provided to or solicited by SNA

This proposal is to change the name of Grass Lake, near Tahuya in Mason County, to Nathaniel Sargent Lake. The new name would commemorate Nathaniel Sargent (1863-1954) who was “a well-known and well-liked Black homesteader, writer, artist, and justice of the peace” in the Seabeck-Crosby area, about 15 miles north-northeast of Grass Lake.

The proponents do not object to the existing name but wish to recognize the regional Black community because the lake had formerly been called Negro Slough and N_____r Slough. They also report that the change would be “corrective/restorative history to honor a black pioneer who didn’t receive the recognition he deserved during his lifetime.”

According to a [digital exhibit from the Kitsap History Museum](#) on Black Trailblazers of Kitsap County:

Nathaniel J. Sargent was known as “Nat” to his friends. He was born into slavery and after emancipation was adopted by a white family in the north. They sent him to the University of Illinois where he graduated, then came west with his family to Oregon.

Because Oregon laws forbade Negroes, he came to Kitsap County where he earned a living working in the woods as a logger. He homesteaded in Crosby [approximately 15 miles north-northeast of Grass Lake] after his arrival in 1882, and as settlers started arriving, he worked as a handyman alongside the homesteaders, building their homes, starting their orchards, butchering, harvesting. He was their friend although he never “imposed” and was often an invited guest. . . .

He returned to his home in the East one year to seek a bride, but returned home empty-handed. He filled his lonely hours by writing poetry (which was published) and oil painting. Until four years before his death, he would walk over the hills to Bremerton [~22 miles northeast of Grass Lake] and back again in one day. In 1894, he was elected Justice of the Peace at Seabeck. He also donated land for a school in the Seabeck-Crosby area.

Nathaniel Sargent died in 1954. Everyone from Crosby showed up for his funeral. . . .

The former names of the lake (potentially a misapplication of the “slough” names) may have been a reference to Rodney White (q.v.), a Black man who homesteaded the land around the lake and the adjacent swamp.

Federal maps labeled the slough as N_____r Slough as early as 1943; however, on a 1952 map the name was transferred to the lake, and the slough was unnamed. In 1970, the name became Negro Slough, a result of the 1963 Secretary of the Interior directive to replace “n_____r” with “negro” when maps were reprinted. A 1985 USGS map labeled the lake as Grass Lake, presumably based on local use recorded during field work; the name was added to GNIS in 1992 citing this 1985 map. None of these names have been the subject of BGN review or a BGN decision.

State sources and commercial maps have variously labeled each waterbody with the names Grass Lake, N_____r Slough, and Negro Slough, resulting in much confusion.



Proposed names in blue; current official names are shown on the USGS basemap

The new proposals for Nathaniel Sargent Lake and Rodney White Slough (q.v.) were submitted to the Washington Committee on Geographic Names (WCGN) by the Living Arts Cultural Heritage Project in an effort to reflect the Black history of the local community and of the larger Great Peninsula region (locally called Kitsap Peninsula), as well as to address the former official and unofficial names of these features.

Historical records show that Rodney White homesteaded on the land around the lake and swamp, while Nathaniel Sargent homesteaded about 15 miles away in Kitsap County.

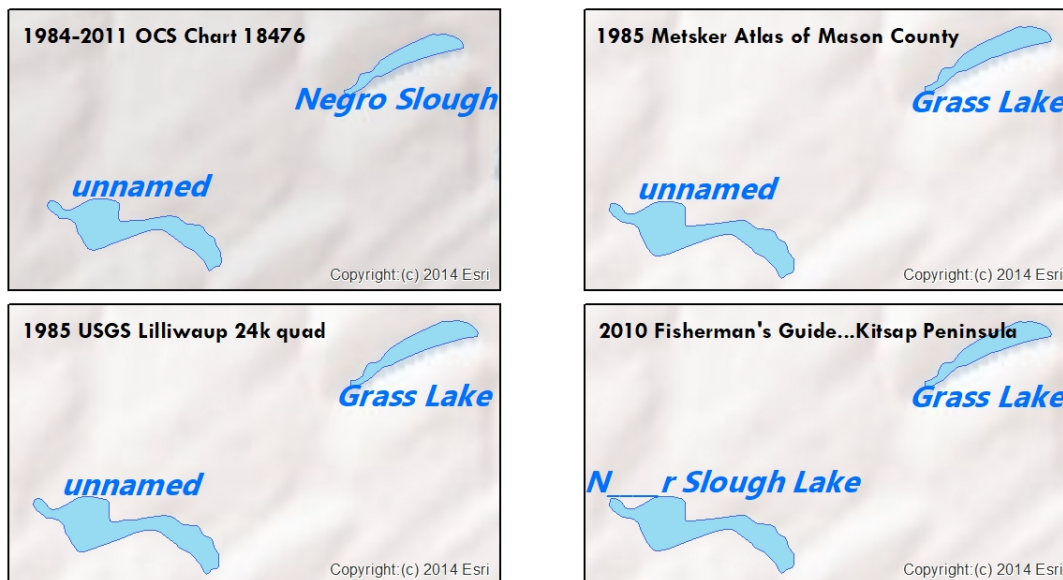
The Chair of the WCGN reported that the full names of both individuals should be used in the feature names:

The case of Rodney White should be clear to BGN: naming something “White Slough” to commemorate a Black man would be nonsensical. In the case of Nathaniel Sargent Lake, the justification is . . . the need to make it clear who is being commemorated. I think if we were to shorten one of them, this would be the one, but given that the proponent wanted

to advance the full name on Rodney White Slough, I think everyone [on the WCGN] felt it was useful to maintain the parallel construction.



Selected Federal sources (left) and local private and State sources (right) showing the various names applied to the two waterbodies [continued below]



Selected Federal sources (left) and local private and State sources (right) showing the various names applied to the two waterbodies

An [August 4, 2022 Kitsap Sun article](#) erroneously reported that in 1992, the BGN had established Grass Lake as a new name for the slough, adding that “the entry in its database notes the area was known by the previous name of ‘Negro Slough.’” [Negro Slough is recorded as a variant name.]

The [February 7, 2023 minutes of the Washington Board of Natural Resources](#) (BNR), which formalizes the recommendations of the WCGN, reported that the then-Chair of the WCGN had stated:

Two names are proposed for areas in Mason County that were previously considered during a similar renaming process intended to remove names derogatory towards Black people. The federal government undertook a similar process [sic] and submitted names that did not reference Black people, which represented an erasure of the community's history. To rectify that situation, community members working with the Living Arts Cultural Heritage Project in Poulsbo took advantage of the current renaming process to recommend names reflective of the area's Black history. The [WCGN] recommends replacing the names of two bodies of water with the names of the actual Black pioneers. The names proposals include Rodney White Slough and Nathaniel Sargent Lake both located in Mason County. Both gentlemen were early pioneers in Mason County and were residents in those locations.

This proposal and the one for Rodney White Slough were deferred by the BGN at its November 2023 meeting, citing a concern that this statement from the former WCGN chair was incorrect and with a request that the BNR amend its minutes. The staff of the WCGN has since clarified that the statement was made in the February 2023 meeting of the Washington Board of Natural Resources, not at any meetings of the WCGN. Members and staff of the WCGN do not attend the BNR meetings.

Neither the Department of the Interior nor the BGN has ever conducted a renaming process similar to the recent S.O. 3404 process; that is, there was no effort to rename all features that contained the word “negro” or “n____r”; instead, in 1963 the Secretary of the Interior instructed USGS to replace each occurrence of “n____” with “negro” during the normal map revision cycle. Similarly, there was no Federal “erasure of the Kitsap Peninsula's Black history” when the name Grass Lake came into use. The latter name dates back to at least 1955 and was used in a 1961 Washington State document (which also included the name “N____r Lake” for the lake). In addition, there is no evidence that Nathaniel Sargent lived at or near the features, but instead, resided in Kitsap County about 15 miles to the north.

The [November 7, 2023 BNR minutes](#) reported that the February 2023 minutes had been amended. The copy made available to the BGN staff includes the insertion of a handwritten note in the margin that reads “Amended November 7, 2023, Tami Kellogg [the BNR coordinator].”

Rodney White Slough

[47.3981717, -123.052788](https://www.kitsapnews.com/story/news/2022/08/04/rodney-white-slough-naming-proposal/7011177002/)

| | | |
|-----------------------|--|-------------|
| Local government | Mason County Commissioners | Support* |
| State Names Authority | Washington Committee on Geographic Names | Support |
| Tribes | All federally recognized Tribes contacted under Policy X | No response |
| Other | U.S. Representative Derek Kilmer | Support* |
| | Resident | Support* |

* provided to or solicited by SNA

This proposal is to apply the new name Rodney White Slough to an unnamed swamp in Mason County near Tahuya. The name would commemorate Rodney White (1861-1913), a Black farmer, rancher, and road builder whose homestead included the swamp. The proponents report that the name is proposed for “corrective history: reconciliation and healing of oppressive and harmful history that African Americans endured during that period [Rodney White’s lifetime].” The proposal included an [August 4, 2022 Kitsap Sun article](#) which reported:

Born into slavery in Missouri, White went on to develop his own ranch and farm in Mason County while cutting roads through the peninsula that remain in use today. . . .

White arrived in the area in 1890 on the steamer *Delta* and survived a capsizing skiff that ferried six Black men to the shore where they hoped to homestead. Two men died and White appears to be the only survivor that remained in the area.

Atop a high-wheeled wagon, White plowed and rode the hinterlands of the Tahuya River Valley, pushing a team of oxen to build the road to Dewatto [3.5 miles northwest of the swamp] and create a ranch and homestead out of the untamed wilderness from the time after the boat accident to his death in 1913.

With “a voice like a foghorn,” he’d command his livestock, especially his two leading donkeys. . . . After White’s death, the animals were transported to the Woodland Park Zoo in Seattle to live out their days. . . .

White came to Tahuya seeking acreage under the federal Homestead Act, passed during the Civil War with the aim of distributing western lands. His “four forties,” the nickname for the total of 160 acres, were divided between the area west of Maggie Lake and the Tahuya River valley. . . .

White built a barn, cabin, root cellar and chicken coop out of logs and farmed an orchard of fruits that included apples, prunes, pears and peaches. . . .

There were great challenges to farming in the 19th and early 20th centuries on the timber-covered Tahuya River valley. Logged or not, the stumps made it next to impossible to plant fields. So sometimes farmers, like White, would empty ponds and small lakes with the aim of farming their basins.

[It is] believed that was how White shaped the land in the area that became known as the slur-named slough.”

Review List 452

Change **Jessie-Ca Lake** (FID [450551](#)) to **Hidden Valley Lake**, Indiana

| | | |
|-----------------------|--|-------------|
| Local government | Noble County Commissioners | Support |
| State Names Authority | Indiana State Names Authority | Opposed |
| Tribes | All federally recognized Tribes contacted under Policy X | No response |

This proposal is to change the name of Jessie-Ca Lake, a 3.5-acre reservoir in Green Township in Noble County, to Hidden Valley Lake. The reservoir was first labeled on USGS topographic maps in 1965.

The proponents, who own the entire reservoir, report that they purchased the land 27 years ago and that the name Jessie-Ca Lake refers to the former owner. The Noble County parcel report records that the proponents purchased the land from Jessie A. Clouse (1913-2012). County atlases from 1874 to 1933 show that members of the Clouse family owned many properties in the area.

The proponents report that they have called the reservoir Hidden Valley Lake since they purchased the land and that they cleaned up the “poorly maintained [lake that was] . . . completely covered with algae and cattails,” developing it into “a beautiful location for fishing and relaxing.” They also note that two years ago they “completely remodeled a cottage on the property with the intention of renting it out to folks as a peaceful vacation getaway, and named it Hidden Valley Lake Cottage.” They add that “Updating the lake’s name would help vacationers find its location on the internet, as well as maintain the aesthetic of the property.”

GNIS does not list any nearby features with similar names. There are two other reservoirs in Indiana named Hidden Valley Lake, both over 100 miles away.

In its support for the change, the Noble County Commissioners stated “[A] hearing was held . . . and no one appeared to object to the name change.” Two of the commissioners stated that they’d lived in the area “all my life [and] I’ve never heard of Jessie-Ca Lake.” They noted that since the proponents “own all of the property around the small lake, [we] didn’t have any issue with sending a positive recommendation to the BGN,” adding, “It’s your water on your private property.”

The Indiana State Names Authority does not recommend approval of the change, stating “Despite the votes from the Noble County Commissioners, the proposal does not align with BGN rules specifically for the reasons given that are for profit.”

River Tay, North Carolina

Mouth: [35.832537, -80.805486](#) / Source: [35.81065, -80.8257](#)

| | | |
|-----------------------|--|--------------|
| Local government | Statesville City Council | No objection |
| | Iredell County Commissioners | No objection |
| State Names Authority | North Carolina Board on Geographic Names | Opposed |
| Tribes | All federally recognized Tribes contacted under Policy X | No response |

The new name River Tay is proposed for an unnamed two-mile-long tributary of Beaver Creek in Iredell County. A short section of the stream flows through the City of Statesville.

The proponent, who owns property along 0.2 miles of the stream near its mouth, wishes to name it after the River Tay in Scotland, due to the large numbers of Scottish and Scotch-Irish settlers in the area in the 18th century. He states that many of the local place names reference “the Scottish Highlands and also Biblical names from their deep presbyterian faith.” Further, Scotland’s River Tay “passes through the ancestral home of several of the families that settled and still reside in this area. This name would both honor those who farmed the area but also their home in Scotland to remind future generations of the rich history of this area of North Carolina.”

Names of rivers in Great Britain commonly have the generic “River” as the first word; GNIS lists only a few streams in that format. Six are named River Styx (in addition to three named Styx River); one is River Lethe, another name from Greek mythology; others include French names found in areas of French settlement and exploration.

Scotland’s River Tay is approximately 120 miles long and the longest river in Scotland. A 60-mile-long stream in Canada named Tay River is reportedly named after the River Tay and also derives from Scottish settlement in the area.

The [North Carolina Board on Geographic Names](#) (NC BGN) does not recommend approval, because the name is not “commensurate with the size of the feature.” They had initially recommended:

naming this unnamed feature on condition that US BGN and proponents consider using Creek Tay or some other waterbody name type that is more commonly associated with a very small water body. NC has a system that would identify this waterbody as a Creek based on drainage area size.

The BGN has no requirements regarding the application of specific generic terms (creek, stream, branch, river, etc.) to features of certain sizes.

BGN staff shared the NC BGN's conditional support with the proponent, who responded:

I fully appreciate the NC BGN's concern about the size of the tributary, but considering that the BGN at a federal level does not have a qualification tier system for what uses which name, and that the intent is to use the exact name of the waterbody in Scotland in honor of those who settled the section along its banks, I can't help but maintain my desire to see it named River Tay instead of some variation of that name.

Fully acknowledge it is a sentimental response, but typically names are given from a place of deep sentiment.

The NCBGN has reiterated that it does not approve the name River Tay.

Change the application of **Indian Gap** (FID [1000703](#))
(Great Smoky Mountains National Park), North Carolina and Tennessee

| | | |
|-----------------------|--|-------------|
| Local government | Swain County Commissioners [NC] | No response |
| | Sevier County Commissioners [TN] | No response |
| State Names Authority | North Carolina Board on Geographic Names | Support |
| | Tennessee | Support |
| Federal | National Park Service | No opinion |
| Tribes | All federally recognized Tribes contacted under Policy X | No response |

This proposal is to change the application of the name Indian Gap, located along the State line between Swain County, North Carolina and Sevier County, Tennessee. The gap is in Great Smoky Mountains National Park (GRSM) along the Appalachian National Scenic Trail.

The gap's current location, north of Luftee Gap and 0.7 miles west of Newfound Gap, has been labeled on USGS maps since 1966; earlier maps placed the name at the proposed location, south of Mingus Lead and 1.2 miles west-southwest of Newfound Gap. The name was the subject of a 1932 BGN decision, which reported that "[a] prehistoric Indian trail crossed the mountains through this gap. The gap has been variously called Grassy, Lufty [*sic*], Road, and Wares."

The GRSM website, as well as NPS sources from the 1930s and 1940s, support a change to the proposed location. An NPS [sign at the proposed location](#) reads:

Traffic of all sorts once passed through here—Indians, explorers, Confederate soldiers, farmers with livestock herds, merchants, and families traveling for varied reasons. This is Indian Gap. The road trace that descends the hill in front of you is a remnant of the Indian Gap Road, at one time the major north-south route through the Great Smoky Mountains.

For centuries this had been an Indian trail, but in the 1830s it was widened as a toll road, with charges for pedestrians, riders, vehicles, and livestock. The new road was steep, rocky, rutted, and only about five feet wide. Ice and fallen trees often obstructed the way. But until the Newfound Gap Road opened in the 1930s, travelers had no better way to cross the mountains. To avoid the arduous crossing, many opted for lengthy routes around.

The [GRSM website](#) states:

The old road over the Smoky Mountains crossed at Indian Gap, located about 1.5 miles west of [Newfound Gap] [In 1872, Arnold Henry Guyot’s] work revealed Newfound Gap as the lowest pass through the mountains, displacing nearby Indian Gap. When the lower, easier crossing was discovered, it became known as the “newfound” gap. A new road followed, and it became the forerunner of Newfound Gap Road.

Some older sources, including the 1882 Map of North Carolina by North Carolina State Geologist W. C. Kerr, labeled the gap as Road Gap and showed the name Indian Gap on a gap further to the north.

Mesquite Creek, Texas

Mouth: [29.9953, -97.73816](#) / Source: [30.02572, -97.7343](#)

| | | |
|-----------------------|--|-------------|
| Local government | Niederwald City Council | Support* |
| | Caldwell County Commissioners Court | Support |
| | Caldwell County Commissioners Court | Support* |
| State Names Authority | Texas Geographic Names Committee | Support |
| Tribes | All federally recognized Tribes contacted under Policy X | No response |

* provided by proponent

The new name Mesquite Creek is proposed for an unnamed 2.7-mile-long tributary of Elm Creek in Caldwell County and Hays County. A portion of the stream flows through the City of Niederwald.

The proposal was submitted by the Project Manager of Cuatro Consultants, Ltd. on behalf of a local real estate company that is “developing affordable living communities in the Central Texas area.” In seeking the support of the city and Hays County, the developer stated that in order to

complete the CLOMR [[Conditional Letter of Map Revision](#) from FEMA] process, “the wet weather creek on our property needs a name.” Hays County referred the proponent to the BGN. The proposed name refers to the large amount of mesquite trees which cover the property.

There are 23 streams in Texas with names that contain “Mesquite,” with the closest being 23 miles to the southwest in Guadalupe County.

Urby-Urrabazo Creek, Texas

Mouth: [27.67664, -99.50829](#) / Source: [27.70195, -99.45774](#)

| | | |
|-----------------------|--|-------------|
| Local government | Laredo City Council | Support* |
| | Webb County Commissioners Court | Support* |
| State Names Authority | Texas Geographic Names Committee | Support |
| Tribes | All federally recognized Tribes contacted under Policy X | No response |
| Other | Laredo District Engineer, Texas Department of Transportation | Support* |

* provided by proponent

This proposal is to apply the new commemorative name Urby-Urrabazo Creek to a 4.35-mile-long stream in Webb County. The stream heads on the west side of I-35 and flows generally southwest to enter Sombrerito Creek. The upstream section and a short section at the mouth of the stream lie within the City of Laredo.

The proposed name would commemorate Yolanda Urby Urrabazo (1946-2016), who according to the proponent, was a well-loved teacher of English literature in Laredo (United High School) for 32 years. The Ignacio and Yolanda Urrabazo Scholarship Endowment at The University of Texas at El Paso was established to award scholarships valued at \$150,000 to qualified students majoring in English, Spanish, or Business.

The proponent reports that a name is needed for the stream because of ongoing construction and for maintenance purposes; a new four-lane highway will include three span bridges, one of which will cross this unnamed tributary. Construction is still in the planning stage, likely to begin early 2024. A District Engineer with the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) submitted a letter stating, “It would be greatly beneficial to the engineers from the City of Laredo, Webb County, [TxDOT], and all entities involved during the process of construction and future maintenance, if all 3 creeks crossed by the bridges were identifiable by name.” (No specific name was identified.)

Review List 453

Wheel Creek, Maryland

Mouth: [39.48108, -76.34037](#) / Source: [39.49643, -76.32973](#)

| | | |
|-----------------------|--|--------------|
| Local government | Harford County Council | Support* |
| State Names Authority | Maryland State Names Authority | No objection |
| Tribes | All federally recognized Tribes contacted under Policy X | No response |

* provided by proponent

This proposal is to make official the name Wheel Creek for a 0.72-mile-long stream in Harford County. The stream heads near the community of Emmorton and flows through Harford Glen Park to enter Winters Run at Atkisson Reservoir. The proponent represents the Wheel Creek Naming Committee of Emmorton Elementary School, a public school located within the stream's watershed.

The committee states that making this name official "is important because it preserves the history of the wheel factory and directly relates to the parallel road named Wheel Road. This area was historically known for its wheel factory, and we believe calling it 'Wheel Creek' helps preserve the legacy of the area."

The wheel factory was constructed in the 1870s along Winters Run and operated until it succumbed to fire and flood at the turn of the 20th century. The proposal included an excerpt from Harford County's Rural Heritage series, which noted that the factory earned "exemplary recognition" by The Historical Society of Harford County. It was initially run by water power but later a steam engine was installed. Wheels were made from shagbark hickory trees from the surrounding forest and were used in the carriage and wagon building industry of the area. The company employed 35 men and turned out 25 sets of wheels daily.

USGS topographic maps published from the 1950s through 2011 labeled a locale named Wheel between the stream and Atkisson Reservoir at the site of the factory. A USGS Watershed Monitoring Station located near the mouth of the stream is designated as [Wheel Creek](#). West Wheel Road intersects the stream.

Grays Creek, North Carolina

[35.270905, -75.538007](#)

| | | |
|-----------------------|---|-------------|
| Local government | Dare County Commissioners | Support |
| State Names Authority | North Carolina Board on Geographic Names | Support |
| Federal | NOAA | Support |
| Tribes | All federally recognized Tribes contacted | No response |

| | | |
|--|----------------|--|
| | under Policy X | |
|--|----------------|--|

The new name commemorative name Grays Creek is proposed for an unnamed 0.35-mile-long channel that flows into Pamlico Sound at Cape Hatteras. The name would honor the proponent’s ancestors, including Amalek Thomas Gray (1848-1931), Cyrus Hooper Gray (1872-1956), and Cyrus Rufman Gray (1907-1997), as well as their respective wives.

All three generations of the Gray family served in the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG)/Life Saving Service. Amalek Thomas Gray was keeper of the Big Kinnakeet light station from 1890 to 1915 and was awarded the gold Life Saving medal for his service. The lighthouse is located approximately three miles to the north of the channel proposed to be named. His son Cyrus Hooper Gray also served with the lifesaving service and retired as postmaster of Buxton. Cyrus Rufman Gray served in the Pacific Theatre during World War II, during which he “piloted landing crafts with his knowledge of the surf.” His ship was torpedoed by the Japanese; after recovering from his injuries, he was awarded the Purple Heart. These biographical details are supported by published memorials and USCG records.

The proponent concludes, “it is an honor to be their descendant and living on the land they once roamed and called home. It would also be an honor to have the creek [sic] that runs through their property named for those men and the women [wives] who stuck with them through some really tough times.”

The channel cuts through the property as well as five other parcels with dwellings. GNIS does not list any other features in Dare County with names that include “Gray” or “Grey.”

The Dare County Commissioners reported at one of their meetings that they have always known the feature to be called Grays Creek.

Although the proponent listed the GNIS feature class “gut” on his application (“relatively small coastal waterway connecting larger bodies of water or other waterways (creek, inlet, slough”), the feature appears instead to be a former natural inlet that was dredged out for boats, and so if approved, the name will be recorded as a “channel.”

Wildwood Creek, Pennsylvania and New York

Mouth: [41.99046, -76.49702](#) / Source: [42.00505, -76.48598](#)

| | | |
|-----------------------|--|--------------|
| Local government | Athens Township Supervisors [Bradford Co., PA] | Support* |
| | Barton Town Board [Tioga Co., NY] | Support* |
| | Bradford County Commissioners [PA] | Support* |
| | Tioga County Legislature [NY] | Support* |
| State Names Authority | Pennsylvania Geographic Names Committee | No objection |

| | | |
|--------|--|-------------|
| | New York Geographic Names Committee | Support |
| Tribes | All federally recognized Tribes contacted under Policy X | No response |

* provided by proponent

The new name Wildwood Creek is proposed for an unnamed 1.48-mile-long stream that flows south from the Town of Barton in Tioga County (New York), then southwest through Athens Township in Bradford County (Pennsylvania) to enter the Susquehanna River. It also flows through Wildwood Nature Preserve, which is owned by the non-profit Carantouan Greenway Inc., which proposed the name.

The name is associated with the settlement of Wildwood which was once located in the vicinity, as documented by the Tioga Point Museum and the Bradford County Historical Society and mentioned in Thomas A. Weil's book *Athens Township: 200 Years in the Making*. The proponent believes an official name is needed for use in conservation efforts and for public safety, as the stream occasionally floods Wildwood Road.