

Commemorative Naming Guidelines

Geographical Names Board of Canada

I – Introduction / Background

In the fall of 2004, the Commemorative Naming Policy Working Group of the Geographical Names Board of Canada (GNBC) was formed to draft national guidelines on commemorative naming.

Existing documentation on commemorative naming from federal, provincial, and territorial naming authorities was reviewed.

It was apparent that formal guidelines on commemorative naming, as well as a related set of procedures, would promote and achieve consistency across Canada.

Definition: Commemorative Naming

For the purposes of these guidelines, commemorative naming refers to the naming of natural or cultural features after persons or events, as a way to honour or memorialize the person or event in question.

II – Objective

To encourage the standardization of existing policies, principles, and procedures associated with commemorative naming throughout Canada.

III - Guiding Principles

When proposing or considering a commemorative name, the following principles will be adhered to, unless they conflict with an existing policy of the naming authority in question:

1. A proposed name will only be considered for persons posthumously; a minimum of five years must elapse from the date of death before a commemorative name proposal will be considered. For events, at least twenty-five years must have elapsed since the occurrence of the event.
2. A commemorative name will only be considered for subjects with a strong association with the area or feature, or of outstanding significance to the cultural legacy or development of the area, the province, or the nation.
3. A proposed name will be supported by the local community and reach beyond a single or special interest group.

4. A commemorative name will not be used to commemorate victims or mark the location of accidents or tragedies.

5. A commemorative name will not be considered for adoption if a well-established and acceptable name already exists for the feature.

6. Ownership of land does not confer the right or entitlement to apply a commemorative name to a geographical feature. The use of unofficial commemorative names in publications, or in landscape dedications or markers, is no assurance that they will be adopted into official geographical names records.

IV - Procedures:

Before contemplating a proposal and undertaking the necessary research, proponents should contact the appropriate names authority in the province or territory where the feature is located, in order to obtain guidelines and procedures for establishing a commemorative name in that jurisdiction (see Appendix 'A'). Some jurisdictions have application forms, and most will require some or all of the following:

- (a) Map delineating the feature to be named;
- (b) Rationale for the proposal;
- (c) Evidence that the feature is unnamed and that the proposed name is acceptable and has broad community support;
- (d) Brief biography and photograph of the person to be commemorated, including a description of his/her association with the area where the feature is located and an explanation of the unique contribution that would single him/her out for commemoration in this fashion; for events, a description of the event and its association with the feature in question;
- (e) Statement of the proponent's relationship to the person or event to be commemorated;
- (f) Proposals should be submitted directly to the appropriate names authority in the province or territory where the feature is located. The proposal should be signed and include a complete mailing address, and daytime telephone number and/or e-mail address.

V – Other Means of Commemoration

Besides the naming of natural and cultural features, other commemorative naming possibilities exist and should be considered. Please contact the provincial or territorial naming authority to determine its jurisdiction over constructed facilities. Or, contact the local municipality, school board, university or college, etc., to determine criteria and procedures for commemorative naming.

Appendix – List of names authorities

Director

Heritage Resource Management Branch
Alberta Community Development
8820 112th Street
Edmonton AB T6G 2P8

Geographical Names Office

Base Mapping and Geomatic Services Branch
Integrated Land Management Agency
Ministry of Agriculture and Land
PO Box 9355 STN Prov Govt
Victoria BC V8W 9M2

Provincial Toponymist

Manitoba Geographical Names Program
Manitoba Conservation
1007 Century Street
Winnipeg MB R3H 0W4

Project Executive - Commemorations

Historic Places
Culture and Sport Secretariat
Place 2000
250 King Street
Fredericton NB E3B 5H1

Newfoundland and Labrador

Geographical Names Board

Department of Environment and Conservation
Howley Building, Higgins Line
P.O. Box 8700
St. John's NL A1B 4J6

Cultural Places Officer

NWT Cultural Places Program
Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre
Government of the N.W.T.
P.O. Box 1320
Yellowknife NT X1A 2L9

Provincial Coordinator, Geographical Names

Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations
Registry and Information Management Services
P.O. Box 1523
Halifax NS B3J 2Y3

Nunavut Toponymist

Culture, Languages, Elders and Youth
Nunavut Government
Box 310
Igloolik NU X0A 0L0

Ontario Geographic Names Board

Provincial Georeferencing
Ministry of Natural Resources
300 Water Street, 2nd Floor, North Tower
P.O. Box 7000
Peterborough ON K9J 8M5

Provincial Tax Commissioner

Provincial Treasury
95 Rochford Street
P.O. Box 2000
Charlottetown PE C1A 7N8

President

Commission de toponymie
750 Boulevard Charest Est, Ground floor
Québec QC G1K 9M1

Chairman

Saskatchewan Geographical Names Board
Information Services Corporation of Saskatchewan
10 Research Drive, 2nd Floor
Regina SK S4P 3V7

Manager

Heritage Resources Unit
Department of Tourism & Culture
Government of the Yukon
P.O. Box 2703
Whitehorse YT Y1A 2C6

Director, Historical Services Branch

National Historic Sites Directorate

Parks Canada

Édifice Jules-Léger

25 Eddy, 5th Floor

Gatineau QC K1A 0M5

Director

Realty and Facilities Management Support

National Defence Headquarters

Major-General George R. Pearkes Building

101 Colonel By Drive, 9 Center Building North

Ottawa ON K1A 0K2