

July 12
2022

Geographic Names

Proposed Procedure Updates

Authority

The Vermont Board of Libraries is the statutorily designated body to name geographic locations, including mountains, streams, lakes and ponds (10 V.S.A. § 151-154).

<https://legislature.vermont.gov/statutes/section/10/009/00152>



Goals for Geographic Names Procedure

- Provide clear information to community members about the Geographic Names process.
- Clarify the roles of the petitioner, the Board of Libraries, and of the Department of Libraries in the State of Vermont's Geographic Names process.

<https://legislature.vermont.gov/statutes/section/10/009/00152>



Policies or Procedure

Recommended revision:

VERMONT BOARD OF LIBRARIES

GEOGRAPHIC NAMES: ~~POLICIES~~ *PROCEDURE*

<https://legislature.vermont.gov/statutes/section/10/009/00152>

The Geographic Names Petition

“The Board of Libraries is hereby designated the State agency to name geographic locations, including mountains, streams, lakes, and ponds, upon petition signed by not less than 25 interested persons or by petition of an administrative department of the State.”

Recommended revision:

The Board of Libraries is the statutorily designated body to name geographic locations, including mountains, streams, lakes and ponds. (10 V.S.A. § 151-154). To meet its statutory responsibilities, *if it receives a petition to name geographic locations, including mountains, streams, lakes, and ponds as signed by not less than 25 interested persons or by petition of an administrative department of the State, the Board will adhere to the following:*

Guidance Within the Statute

“§ 154. Standards

The Board in choosing names shall give preference to historical events, historic persons, and flora and fauna native to Vermont; names characteristic to Vermont; and its traditions and local place names where long usage has made them appropriate and useful. (1961, No. 139, § 5, eff. May 24, 1961.)”

The Petitioner's Role

Recommended addition:

II) The petitioner must provide written documentation to support their request for Geographic Naming consistent with the Standards articulated in 10 V.S.A. § 154. In addition to historical research, the information provided by the petitioner must contain a description of the exact location of the feature to be named, the Global Positioning System (GPS) coordinates of the geographic feature, and a map with the geographic feature clearly labeled (photocopies acceptable). Petitioners may be referred to VHS and/or local historical societies and/or VSARA for research assistance.

Petitions from Administrative Departments

Recommended addition:

VI) The Board will consider no petition from an administrative department of State government unless that administrative department's governing board has voted to initiate the petition and a copy of the minutes pertaining thereto accompany the petition. *Naming requests initiated by an administrative department of State government must be signed by the Agency Secretary or Department Commissioner.*

Delete Notes

Recommended deletion:

VII) The Board has the authority to determine whether it will take any action on a petition when no one appears at the public hearing to testify either on behalf of or against the proposed naming.

~~(This was a telephone opinion by Louis Peck, Assistant Attorney General, April 28, 1978.)~~

Submittal of Petitions

Recommended addition:

VIII) All petitions and associated documentation shall be submitted in written form to:

*State of Vermont Board of Libraries
c/o Vermont Department of Libraries
Attn: Geographic Naming
60 Washington Street, Suite 2
Barre, Vermont 05641*

Additional Information

Recommended addition:

IX) Upon review of the materials submitted by the petitioner, the Board may request additional information and/or documentation to support the Geographic Naming application.

Department of Libraries Support

Recommended addition:

X) The Board may request assistance from the Department of Libraries in verifying documentation submitted by the petitioner.

Timeliness

Recommended addition:

XI) If the Board requests more information to support the petition be provided by the petitioner, the petitioner shall provide the information within 90 days to keep the petition active. If no response to additional requests of information is received, a final 30-day notice to respond will be sent. If no response is given, the Board of Libraries may suspend the petition pending further review or vote to close the petition with the requirement that the petitioner resubmit a new petition.

Warned Public Meetings

Recommended addition:

XIV) The Board will consider naming requests at a warned public meeting. Prior to the meeting, written public warnings of the meeting will be issued from the Vermont Department of Libraries to the Town Clerk/Selectboard where the feature is located and to local media. The United States Geological Survey (USGS) and the United States Board on Geographic Names (USBGN) will also be notified and invited to attend. The Board will send the petitioner a letter with the date and location of the public hearing via email or U.S. mail.

Public Comment

Recommended addition:

XV) The Chair of the Board of Libraries will conduct the public meeting on geographic naming petitions during meetings of the Board of Libraries and will allow for comment from all interested persons on this agenda item.

- Citizens in attendance who wish to provide comment on a geographic naming petition must provide their full name and the municipality in which they reside.*
- Citizen comment will be scheduled as a separate agenda item and will be closed by the Board Chair.*

Follow-up Questions and Voting

Recommended addition:

XVI) The Board will follow comment with discussion among the Board members and may ask for additional comment or may have questions for persons who represent the petition or provided comment. Unless the Board requires additional information to decide, the Board will vote on the naming petition directly following public testimony. The Board may choose for any reason to postpone a vote on a naming petition to an upcoming regular or special meeting.

Follow-up Questions and Voting

Recommended addition:

XVII) The State Librarian will issue an Order announcing the naming decision, will post the Order on the Department of Libraries' website, and will send the Order to the entities listed below.

USBGN Resources

- How Do I?

<https://www.usgs.gov/us-board-on-geographic-names/how-do-i>

- Principles, Policies and Procedures: Domestic Geographic Names, December 2016, Version 2.2

https://geonames.usgs.gov/docs/pubs/DNC_PPP_DEC_2016_V.2.2.pdf

Topic for inclusion?

Local Support

“a proponent of a new name or name change is encouraged to provide evidence of support for the proposal as well as evidence of any published or verbal usage of the proposed name. Such evidence may include copies of maps, government records, or any documents and publications. Letters or emails supporting the proposal may be solicited from: Federal, State, or local (county or municipal) agencies, Indian Tribes, State or Tribal geographic names authorities, civic organizations, historical societies, owner(s) of the property on which the geographic feature is located, and/or others familiar with the geographic feature and the appropriateness of the proposal.” (https://geonames.usgs.gov/docs/pubs/DNC_PPP_DEC_2016_V.2.2.pdf, p. 28)

Topic for inclusion?

Solicit Input

“SNAs are encouraged to solicit input from Federal, State, and local land management agencies as well as Indian Tribes...before issuing their recommendations to the BGN.”

(https://geonames.usgs.gov/docs/pubs/DNC_PPP_DEC_2016_V.2.2.pdf, p. 32)



Questions & Board Discussion