

State of Vermont  
Department of Libraries 60  
Washington Street, Suite 2  
Barre, VT 05641--4209

(802) 636-0040

Agency of Administration

Dear Sir or Madam,

Thank you for your inquiry regarding Vermont's procedures for geographic naming. The Vermont Board of Libraries has statutory authority for naming natural geographic locations, "including but not limited to mountains, streams, lakes and ponds upon petition signed by not less than 25 interested persons ...." (10 V.S.A. §152-154).

Included with this letter you will find

- a copy of the complete statute which governs geographic naming of natural locations in Vermont
- a copy of the Geographic Naming Policies of the Board of Libraries
- a blank petition form, with instructions for completing and submitting the petition.

Please note that during the 2015 Vermont legislative session, changes were made regarding geographic naming in Vermont:

**1) Naming of Transportation Locations**

Beginning in March 2016, the Vermont Transportation Board handles all naming of State transportation locations, including roads, bridges, etc. Please address inquiries related to naming transportation locations to:

John Zicconi, Executive Secretary, Vermont Transportation Board.  
[John.Zicconi@vermont.gov](mailto:John.Zicconi@vermont.gov)

**2) Naming of State Buildings**

State law gives the authority for naming "a state building or facility" to "the general assembly" (29 V.S.A. § 820). Please address inquiries related to naming State buildings and facilities to:

Judy Bruneau, Executive Assistant, Vermont Department of Buildings and General Services  
Commissioner's Office. [Judy.Bruneau@vermont.gov](mailto:Judy.Bruneau@vermont.gov)

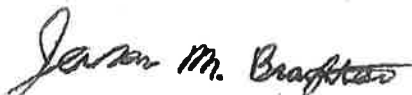
**3) Naming of Areas of Land**

State law gives the authority for naming forests, parks, and natural areas of land to the Agency of Natural Resources (10 V.S.A. §2607). Please address inquiries related to the naming of areas of land to:

Niels Rinehart, Vermont Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation.  
[Niels.Rinehart@vermont.gov](mailto:Niels.Rinehart@vermont.gov)

Thank you for your interest in Geographic Naming and we look forward to reviewing your petition.

Sincerely,



Jason Broughton  
State Librarian

# Geographic Naming: Vermont Statutes

## *V.S.A.: Title 10: Conservation and Development Chapter 9: GEOGRAPHIC NAMES*

**§ 151. Terminology and spelling.** (a) The state librarian is authorized to furnish for any federal or state publication the proper terminology and spelling of any geographic name in Vermont and may advise the United States postal service regarding the proper selection and spelling of the name of a Vermont post office or any railroad company regarding the use and spelling of the name of a Vermont station. The state librarian is authorized to function in collaboration with the United States board on geographic names and to conduct his operations similarly.

(b) The names used in the topographic maps of the state now being prepared by the United States geological survey in cooperation with the state shall be spelled in accordance with the recommendations of the state librarian. (Amended 1959, No. 329 (Adj. Sess.), § 45, eff. March 1, 1961.)

**§ 152. Authority to name roads and geographic locations.** 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. (Added 1961, No. 139, § 3, eff. May 24, 1961; amended 1969, No. 226 (Adj. Sess.), § 2, eff. March 31, 1970; 2015, No. 40 § 26, eff. March 1, 2016.)

**§ 153. Procedure.** When the Board receives a petition to act under section 152 of this title it shall give reasonable notice to each administrative department of the State having jurisdiction of the location to be named, and to each town in which the location lies of the time and place when it will hear all interested parties. (Added 1961, No. 139, § 4, eff. May 24, 1961; 2015 No. 40 § 26, eff. March 1, 2016.)

**§ 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.)

# Vermont Board of Libraries

## *GEOGRAPHIC NAMES POLICIES*

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, the Board will adhere to the following policies:

- I. The Board will rely on 10 V.S.A. § 154 in making decisions: "...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."
- II. The Board will not approve more than one name for any geographic feature or location.
- III. The Board will not name any geographic feature or location that commemorates or may be construed to commemorate living persons.
  - A person must have been deceased for at least five years before a commemorative proposal will be considered.
  - A person in whose honor a naming is being proposed must have had strong ties to the feature in keeping with 10 V.S.A. § 154 or have made a significant contribution to the area or to Vermont.
  - Commemorative names for individuals with outstanding national or international reputation will be considered even if those individuals were not directly associated with the geographic feature or location.
- IV. The Board will not name state roads, highways, bridges or other transportation-related entities. These come under the jurisdiction of the Vermont Transportation Board.
- V. The Board will not name city streets or town roads. These come under the jurisdiction of the municipalities.
- VI. The Board will recommend to the U. S. Board on Geographic Names that it not make official for use in or on any Federal publication any Vermont name or name change for geographic features or locations which should come to the Vermont Board of Libraries for such action.
- VII. 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.
- VIII. 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.)

# Vermont Board of Libraries

## *GEOGRAPHIC NAMING PETITION*

The attached petition is to formally request that the Vermont Board of Libraries give consideration to the geographic naming proposal as described below.

Date Petition Submitted to the State Librarian: \_\_\_\_\_

The undersigned are in agreement that the Board of Libraries approve

\_\_\_\_\_ (proposed name) as the name for

\_\_\_\_\_ (brief description of geographic location/feature).

This feature is located in the Town of \_\_\_\_\_, in the County of

\_\_\_\_\_, at the location described here:

Please provide a brief description of the reason for proposing this name:

Please provide a brief description of the history of the feature and/or name:

State of Vermont  
Department of Libraries  
60 Washington Street, Suite 2  
Barre, VT 05641-4209

(802) 636-0040

Agency of Administration

**Main Petitioner's Contact Information (Please print):**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Secondary Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Do you represent a group/organization?       Yes\*       No

\*If Yes, please provide the name of the group/organization:

\_\_\_\_\_

Main Petitioner's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

***Please attach the following documentation to support this naming proposal:***

- Available map(s) of the feature
- Letters of support
- Additional documentation concerning the history of feature and/or name
- Additional documentation concerning the reason for proposing this name
- Minimum of 25 signatures in support of the petition

**Mail the original to:**

State Librarian  
Vermont Department of Libraries  
60 Washington Street, Suite 2  
Barre, VT 05401-4209

**DO NOT COMPLETE THIS SECTION – FOR OFFICE USE ONLY**

Petition received: \_\_\_\_\_

Documentation:  Signed Petition Form    25 Signatures    Maps    History    Proposal Reason    Letters of Support

# Vermont Board of Libraries

## GEOGRAPHIC NAMING PETITION – SIGNATURES

*Must include a minimum of 25 signatures of interested persons. Signers must be at least 18 years old.*

Signature	Print Name	Mailing Address, Town, Zip
1.		
2.		
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11.		
12.		

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Signature	Print Name	Mailing Address, Town, Zip
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*Attach additional pages as needed.*