

VERMONT BOARD OF LIBRARIES

GEOGRAPHIC NAMES: ~~POLICIES~~ PROCEDURE

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:*

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 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.

III ~~II~~) The Board will not approve more than one name for any geographic feature or location.

IV ~~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.

V ~~IV~~) 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.

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.*

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.)~~

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

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.

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

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.

~~XII)~~ The Board will not name state roads, highways, bridges, or other transportation-related entities. These come under the jurisdiction of the Vermont Transportation Board.

~~XIII)~~ The Board will not name city streets or town roads. These come under the jurisdiction of the municipalities.

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.

XV) The Chair of the Board of Libraries will conduct the public hearing 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.*

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.

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.

- Petition Designated Representative(s)*
- Town Clerk of Town(s) where feature is located*
- Town Manager or Mayor or Chair of Selectboard of town(s) where feature is located*
- Executive Director, Enhanced 9-1-1 Board*
- Secretary of Administration*
- Secretary of State*
- Secretary, Agency of Natural Resources*
- Commissioner, Department of Public Safety*
- Vermont Center for Geographic Information*

State of Vermont
Department of Libraries
109 State Street
Montpelier, VT 05609--0601

Tel: 802-828-3261
Fax: 802-828-2199

Agency of Administration

- J. Office of Legislative Council*
- K. United States Geological Survey (USGS) Vermont representative*
- L. United States. Board on Geographic Names (USBGN)*
- M. Commissioner, Department of Transportation*
- N. Executive Secretary, Vermont Transportation Board*
- O. Commissioner, Department of Buildings and General Services*
- P. Commissioner, Department of Public Service*
- Q. Executive Director, Vermont Historical Society*
- R. Chair, Natural Resources Board*
- S. Department of State's Attorneys and Sheriffs*
- T. Commissioner, Department of Tourism & Marketing*
- U. Chief Marketing Officer, State of Vermont*
- V. Newspaper in vicinity of the geographic feature*
- W. Green Mountain Hiking Club*

Adopted by Vermont Board of Libraries, August 13, 1991.

Policy revisions adopted by Vermont Board of Libraries, July 14, 2015.

Draft reviewed by Vermont Board of Libraries, July 12, 2022.