

# Wisconsin Geographic Names Council Meeting

November 18th, 2022, 1:00 – 2:00 pm

## Meeting Notes

Attendance: Schaal, Carroll – DNR; Moreland, James T – DNR; Burke, Alixandra J – DNR; Brigit E – DNR; Cutforth, Laurence B – DNR; Vick, Dawn – DOA; Myrick, Brett H – DOI; Eric Carson – WGNS; Howard Veregin – UW; Emily Long – DOI; Goodwill, Kris M – DNR; Peterson, Veronica C – DNR; Runyon, Jennifer E -USGS /BGN; Milligan, Diane L – DNR; Michael Tischler – USGS; Sharon Reilly - Great Lakes Intertribal Council (GLITC).

### Status of SO3404 - Declaring “Sq\*\*\*” a Derogatory Term and Implementing Procedures to Remove the Term from Federal Usage.

Wisconsin Geographic Names Council (GNC) invited guests from the United States Board on Geographic Names (BGN), U.S. Geological Survey and Department of Interior hoping to learn more about how replacement names were chosen for features in the state containing the derogatory term Sq\*\*\*. Mike Tischler, Director of the USGS National Geospatial Program and chair of the SO 3404 Task Force, reviewed the federal process. This is the third time a word has been declared derogatory. A feature cannot just be unnamed. In previous instances, the “N” word and pejorative of Japanese had replacement names (Negro and Japanese) but there was none for Sq\*\*\*.

A spatial search of candidate names was conducted, and the five most nearby feature names were listed as alternatives. There was a public comment period announced in the federal register and separate tribal consultations. 6500 public correspondences were received. Only 3% voiced total dissent. ~1000 recommendations were made on 960 features nationwide. May - July task force met to reconcile input and put forward the best name recommendation to the BGN which approved them in Sept.

There is no publicly available record of the decision-making process, and he was unable to provide the Council with any specifics of how the Wisconsin names were ultimately chosen. There is no accelerated or special process for “appealing” the new names. The task force’s work is done. Going forward, the process will be the same as prior with any established federal name change to go through the BGN. Jennifer Runyon, BGN, explained that while proposals for new names can go directly to the BGN, that would then seek state and local input, proposal can first go to the WI Geographic Council that then forwards them to BGN for review and decisions.

### Status of SO3405 - Addressing Other Derogatory Geographic Names.

Josh Winchell, National Park Service, previewed this process that is just beginning. The order identifies the makeup of a committee which has been established by the U.S. Park Service. There is an email setup for communication and meetings will be announced in

the federal register and open to the public. Committee has yet to meet. First actions will be to reach out to states and tribes. Discussion followed.

What is derogatory will be an open question for the public and the committee. He expects an open channel for communication. Committee members are professional members from impacted communities and includes state naming experts. There are no Wisconsin representatives. The committee will make recommendations to the Secretary of the Interior, Debra Haaland, as to what names are derogatory and it will be her decision to implement any changes from there.

The committee will complete its work in 2 years. The committee charter requires part of the process will be soliciting input from impacted communities though the method for that is not determined yet. Committee meetings are publicly noticed for 15 days prior. Details: <https://www.nps.gov/orgs/1892/advisory-committee-on-reconciliation-in-place-names.htm>. We should go through Josh to get information about the committee or committee members. Our closest representative is in Michigan. Julie Nye is from a Potawatomi Band located in Michigan. There is no federal funding associated with the effort to help offset local costs such as replacing road signage etc.

### Council Business

Federal guests left the meeting around 1:52 pm and the Council discussed future business. Carroll reviewed we have received 26 proposals in 2022 by the Oct. 1 deadline. 16 are from Burnett County which is updating its GIS mapping. Staff is currently developing case briefs and exploring options for sharing the large file electronically with the Council and the public. He recommended the Council meet in January to screen the new proposals and provide some initial input then make final recommendations at a March meeting. He will send Doodle Polls. Hopefully, this will allow for more and better local input to be received. He would also like to start a discussion on procedure improvements and how we want to proceed regarding input into the SO3405 committee. Carroll will reach out to Julie Nye for her thoughts.

The Council adjourned at 2:10 PM