

Wisconsin Geographic Names Council:

History & Authority

The duties and functions of the State Geographic Board were transferred by Section 25(1) (A) of Chapter 75, Laws of 1967, to the Natural Resources Board. Subsequently the Natural Resources Board assigned the duties and functions to the Division of Resource Management since renamed as the Department of Natural Resources. The Wisconsin Geographic Names Council is comprised of the State Geologist, the State Cartographer, and designees from the Department of Transportation, Division of Highways, Department of Administration, and Department of Natural Resources. The designee from the Dept. of Natural Resources also serves as Chair of the Council.

Statutory Authority - Section 23.25 Wis. Statutes: Geographic Powers and Duties

- The department shall:
 - (a) Determine the correct and most appropriate names of the lakes, streams, places and other geographic features in the state, and the spelling thereof;
 - (b) Pass upon and give names to lakes, streams, places and other geographic features in the state for which no single generally accepted name has been in use;
 - (c) In cooperation with county boards and with their approval, to change the names of lakes, streams, places and other geographic features, with the end in view of eliminating, as far as possible, duplication of names within the state;
 - (d) Prepare and publish an official state dictionary of geographic names and to publish the same, either as a completed whole or in parts when ready;
 - (e) Serve as the state representative of the U. S. geographic board and cooperate with the said board to the end that there shall be no conflict between the state and federal designations of geographic features in the state.
- Whenever the department has given a name to any lake, stream, place or other geographic feature within the state, or determined the correct spelling of any such name, it shall be used in all maps, reports and other publications thereafter issued by the state or any of its political subdivisions, and shall be deemed the official name of such geographic feature.
- No person shall in any advertisement or publication attempt to modify local usage or name unnamed geographic features without first obtaining the approval of the department. In case of a violation of this subsection, the department may promptly announce its disapproval and thereafter adopt an official name for such feature.