



THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR  
WASHINGTON

ORDER NO. 3405

**Subject:** Addressing Derogatory Geographic Names

**Sec. 1 Purpose.** This Order directs the creation of a Federal Advisory Committee to address derogatory geographic names.

**Sec. 2 Authority.** The authority for this Order is established under 43 U.S.C. §§364-364f and Reorganization Plan No. 3 of 1950 (64 Stat. 1262).

**Sec. 3 Background.** The Board on Geographic Names (BGN), originally established by an Executive order in 1890, is a Federal body designed to maintain uniform geographic name usage throughout the Federal Government. In 1947, pursuant to Public Law 80-242 (61 Stat. 456; codified to 43 U.S.C. §§364 through 364f), the Secretary of the Interior (Secretary) was given conjoint authority with the BGN and has “final approval or review of” its actions. (See 43 U.S.C. §364.)

The BGN is comprised of representatives from Federal agencies concerned with geographic information, population, ecology, and management of public lands. It promulgates official geographic feature names in accordance with its principles, policies, and procedures.

The BGN’s guiding principle is to approve, for Federal use, the names of geographic features in the United States and its territories found in present-day local usage (see Principles, Policies, and Procedures [2016], Principle II, Names in Local Use). An exception to this principle occurs when a name is derogatory or is shown to be offensive to a particular racial or ethnic group, gender, or religious group. The BGN will not make official for Federal use a locally used name that has been determined to be derogatory or offensive to a particular racial or ethnic group, gender, or religious group. In accordance with its Policy V, Derogatory and Offensive Names, the BGN acts “on a case-by-case basis,” and proponents must suggest a replacement name to the name found to be offensive.

By design, the BGN relies on individuals and community representatives to provide name-replacement proposals. The Federal Advisory Committee established pursuant to this Order will help facilitate development and review of these proposals.

**Sec. 4 Determination and Reconciliation of Derogatory Names.** The National Park Service is directed to form a discretionary advisory committee under the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) (5 U.S.C. App.) within the following parameters:

- a. The committee shall be named the Advisory Committee on Reconciliation in Place Names and will include no more than 17 members to be appointed by the Secretary, of whom, to the extent practicable:
  1. At least four will be members of an Indian Tribe;
  2. At least one will represent a Tribal organization;
  3. At least one will represent a Native Hawaiian organization;
  4. At least four will have backgrounds in civil rights or race relations;
  5. At least four will have expertise in anthropology, cultural studies, geography, or history; and
  6. At least three will represent the general public.
- b. The committee will recommend to the Secretary changes to existing Federal land unit names and additional terms that may be considered derogatory, and identify resources required to implement any resulting name changes.
- c. The committee will recommend a process to solicit, encourage, and assist proposals to the Secretary to change derogatory geographic names. The committee will make recommendations to the Secretary regarding Federal land unit names that are considered derogatory; however, in many cases (e.g., the names of national parks and designated wilderness), an act of Congress will be required. The term "Federal land unit" includes (1) National Forest System land; (2) a unit of the National Park Service; (3) a component of the National Wilderness Preservation System; (4) any part of the National Landscape Conservation System; and (5) a unit of the National Wildlife Refuge System.
- d. The committee will solicit proposals to replace derogatory geographic feature and Federal land unit names from:
  1. Indian Tribes;
  2. Appropriate State and local governments;
  3. The affected Federal agency or department; and

4. Members of the public.
- e. In general, members of the committee will serve without compensation.
  - f. Members of the committee may be allowed travel expenses, including per diem in lieu of subsistence, at rates authorized for an employee of an agency under subchapter I of chapter 57 of title 5, U.S.C., while away from the home or regular place of business of the member in the performance of the duties of the committee.
  - g. The Secretary will provide the committee with any staff members and technical assistance the Secretary determines to be appropriate to enable the committee to carry out its duties.
  - h. The committee may adopt such rules as may be necessary.
  - i. The committee will be subject to FACA (5 U.S.C. App.).
  - j. The BGN's Policy I, entitled "Names Considered or Established by Congress or the President," that prevents the BGN from considering a name change due to pending congressional legislation will not apply to the actions resulting from this Order.

**Sec. 6 Effect of the Order.** This Order is intended to create a process by which the newly created Federal Advisory Committee will solicit, review, and recommend changes to derogatory geographic and Federal land unit names. In the event that the provisions herein conflict with any applicable statutory or regulatory requirements, those requirements shall control.

**Sec. 7 Expiration Date.** This Order is effective immediately and will remain in effect until it is amended, superseded, or revoked, whichever occurs first.



Secretary of the Interior

Date: **NOV 19 2021**