

California Advisory Committee on Geographic Names (CACGN)

Minutes

November 18, 2022

Virtual Webinar

Sacramento, California

10:00 A.M. – 3:00 P.M.

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1. Call to Order

Chair Tiffany Meyer, Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, called roll.

Committee Members: 8 of 8 voting members were present

Present

- ✓ Department of Water Resources (**Mary Simmerer**)
- ✓ Department of Parks and Recreation (**Daniel Walsh**)
- ✓ Department of Fish and Wildlife (**Richard Lis**)
- ✓ Department of Conservation (**Amy Loseth**)
- ✓ Native American Heritage Commission (**Raymond Hitchcock**)
- ✓ California State Library (**Rebecca Wendt** for Greg Lucas)
- ✓ California African American Museum (**Susan Anderson**)
- ✓ Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (**Tiffany Meyer**)

Ex-Officio Members:

Present

- ✓ Select Committee on Native American Affairs (**Michael Chen** for Asm. James C. Ramos)
- ✓ Legislative Black Caucus (**Natalia Garcia** for Asm. Reginald Byron Jones-Sawyer, Sr.)
- ✓ California Natural Resources Agency (**Geneva E. B. Thompson**, Assistant Secretary for Tribal Affairs)

Absent

- ✗ Department of Transportation (Amar Azucena Cid); Latino Legislative Caucus (Asm. Luz Rivas); Asian Pacific Islander Legislative Caucus (Asm. Ash Kalra); Legislative LGBTQ Caucus (Jacob Fraker for Sen. Susan Eggman); Tribal Advisor to the Office of the Governor (Christina Snider); Legislative Women’s Caucus (TBD)

Federal Advisors:

Present

- ✓ United States Geological Survey (**Carol Ostergren**)
- ✓ National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (**Jeffrey Ferguson**)
- ✓ United States Forest Service (**Rich Spradling**)

Absent

- ✗ United States Bureau of Land Management (James Barnes);
National Park Service (Amanda B. Kaplan)

Emeritus Advisors:

Present

- ✓ **Jim Trumbly**, former Chair, retired, State Parks
- ✓ **Will Patterson**, past member, California Department of Fish and Wildlife

Absent

- Clayton Guiraud, past member, Department of Water Resources

Non-committee guests:

Jenny Runyon (US Geological Survey and US Board on Geographic Names [US BGN]);
Matt O'Donnell (US BGN); Heather Witzens (recording minutes)

2. Approve Minutes for July 22, 2022 Meeting

Minutes were distributed and approved electronically following the previous meeting.

3. Introductions / Announcements / Business

Roster was circulated electronically with agenda. Members were asked to confirm their information is correct.

a) CoGNA update

Member Loseth provided a recap of the annual Council of Geographic Names Authorities conference that was held from September 13-16 in Frederick, Maryland.

- Reports from individual state/territory boards. Board staffing, procedures and responsibilities vary widely.
- States have the option for BGN to manage their incoming proposals before they are officially added to the quarterly BGN Review List. This allows states more time to conduct research regarding the individual proposals.

- Feedback on federal Secretarial Orders 3404 and 3405:
 - 3404's 60-day comment period was insufficient.
 - Some states expressed concern regarding local acceptance and usage of new names. Having tribal assistance/consultation regarding pronunciation of names could be useful; however, privacy concerns could be an issue. Including phonetic pronunciation on signage could be useful to the public.
- USGS has white paper on state Assembly Bill 2022 that was recently passed in the California legislature.
- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) is creating a Storymap that includes Da-ek Dow Go-et Mountain (California feature formerly known as Jeff Davis Peak) as an example of a successful renaming process.

b) Federal Legislation: Update on DOI Secretarial Orders 3404 and 3405

Jenny Runyon provided a summary and updates on the Department of the Interior's Secretarial Orders 3404 and 3405.

- SO 3404 addresses Sq_ names. All 643 former Sq_ names are now updated in the GNIS database.
 - Getting some follow up comments regarding the 3404 process. Counties, individuals, Tribes asking if new names are permanent; they are welcome to submit new proposals to change replacement names. These new proposals would undergo the standard (more thorough) BGN process. Maps, signage, etc. are currently being redone, so BGN encourages prompt proposals.
 - BGN has postponed decisions on unincorporated places; two are being considered by CACGN today to make recommendations to BGN for their January meeting.
- SO 3405 in early stages. Advisory committee of non-federal employees is being set up; first meeting will be held soon. Committee is tasked with handling all other derogatory names of geographic features.
- Member Hitchcock asked for BGN's recommendations on updating CACGN charter to include new AB 2022 responsibilities. Runyon said BGN is currently updating their own [Principles, Policies, and Procedures](#) (PPP). BGN and States could benefit from working together to update their charters/PPPs.

c) State Legislation: Update on AB2022

The chair provided a summary of [Assembly Bill 2022](#), which requires renaming of all Sq__-named geographic features and place names on public land in California by January 1, 2025 due to the derogatory nature of the name; historically the term has been used as a sexual slur against Indigenous women.

- CACGN is required to revise their charter to include their new responsibilities related to AB2022

- CACGN must develop a procedure to receive the reports from public agencies identifying any Sq_ names in their jurisdictions; the reports must be received by July 21, 2023.
- The submitting agency will have 180 days from the time of submission to propose a replacement name.
- Replacement names must “prioritize names that honor and recognize the Tribes, cultures, and Indigenous languages specific to the geographic region in question, including place names that were previously used by Native American Tribes, or place names proposed by the California Native American Tribes through the appropriate enactment or resolution.”
- CACGN will have 90 days from proposal submission to approve or reject proposed name; if rejected, committee will have an additional 180 days to find a suitable replacement name.
- A subcommittee has been formed within CACGN to address the AB 2022 requirements.

The representative for Assemblymember Ramos thanked the committee for their efforts and offered support and assistance for the process.

d) Nominate Vice Chair

Member Amy Loseth was voted in as the new Vice Chair of CACGN (7 for, 0 against, 1 abstain, 0 absent).

Richard Lis will take over as Chair at next meeting and Meyer will return to regular committee membership.

e) Opening Remarks Regarding the History and Background of the Term “Squaw”

Summary of remarks follows; for full remarks, see item 8, “Statement of Fact by Geneva E.B. Thompson: History and Background of ‘Squaw’ to help inform the Administrative Record of the California Advisory Committee on Geographic Names and the United States Board on Geographic Names”.

The California Natural Resources Agency’s Assistant Secretary for Tribal Affairs provided opening comments regarding the historical and current context of the Sq_ term, why this term considered to be a highly offensive slur that dehumanizes Indigenous women, and provided information about the SO 3404 process:

- On November 19, 2021, Dept. of the Interior Secretary Deb Haaland, through Secretarial Order 3404, declared the Sq__ term as a derogatory term, ordered the removal of the term from all geographic features (of which there were approximately 650 nationwide and 87 in California), and established a federal task force to identify replacement names for these features.

- Over the next 11 months, the task force consulted with nearly 70 Native American Tribes; engaged with state, county, and local governments and communities; and received more than 1,000 replacement names for nearly all Sq_-named features across the United States.
 - In California, CACGN sent letters requesting collaboration to all California Native American Tribes whose ancestral lands contained a geographic feature with the Sq_ term, and sent a comment letter recommending to the task force to adopt replacement names informed and supported by local Tribes for 51 of the Sq_-named features in California; no tribe recommended retaining the Sq_ term.
- On September 8, 2022, the task force issued the final list of replacement names and requested for CACGN to review the proposed replacement names of two unincorporated areas in California, Sq_ Valley and Fresno County and Sq_ Hill in Tehama County, which the committee will discuss in today's meeting.

Member also provided a summary of California Assembly Bill 2022:

- On September 5, 2020, California Natural Resources Agency Secretary Wade Crowfoot issued a press release discussing the importance of reviewing and replacing derogatory names, including the Sq_ name. State leaders directed their departments to identify and redress discriminatory names, and expanded their representation on CACGN.
- On September 23, 2022, Governor Newsom signed Assemblymember James Ramos' AB2022 legislation, which declared the Sq_ term a derogatory term under State law and directed CACGN to review and select replacement names for all geographic features, places, and publicly owned structures, including navigable waters, parks, states, or local roads, bridges, publicly owned buildings, streets, alleys, or other roads, or political subdivisions of the State, containing the Sq_ term and other derogatory names.
 - Assemblymember Ramos' office received 25 letters of support for this bill from Tribal governments, Native-led entities, educational organizations, and community organizations. Each letter supported the legislation and the removal of the Sq_ term due to its derogatory nature to Native women.
 - This new law directs CACGN and other public agencies to meaningfully consult with California Native American Tribes on the identification of places containing the Sq_ term and other derogatory names and to identify replacement names. In selecting replacement names, the State is required to prioritize names that honor and recognize the Tribes, cultures, and Indigenous languages specific to the geographic region in question, including place names that were previously used by Native American Tribes or place names proposed by California Native American Tribes.

4. Actions made by U.S. BGN and 3404 Task Force since July 22, 2022

Chair announced the decisions made by the US BGN and/or SO 3404 Task Force, based on CACGN recommendations.

- September 8, 2022 decision dates were approved by the Task Force.
 - Overall, the Task Force approved 23 of CACGN's recommended replacement names for Sq_-named features in California.
- Other decision dates were approved by the US BGN.
- Sources: [DNC Review Lists by U.S. Board on Geographic Names](#) > Action List; August 5, 2022; Accessed November 6, 2022; and [Geographic Names Information System](#) by USGS)

- a) **Proposed Name:** **Paac Kūvūhū'k**
- Feature Type: Reservoir
 - County: Riverside County
 - Review List: 437
 - Task Force Decision Date: September 8, 2022
 - Case Status: **Approved**

- b) **Proposed Name:** **Washesu Peak**
- Feature Type: Summit
 - County: Placer County
 - Review List: 445
 - Task Force Decision Date: September 8, 2022
 - Case Status: **Approved**

- c) **Proposed Name:** **Nuum / Yokuts Valley**
- Feature Type: Populated place
 - County: Fresno County
 - Review List: 446 / 448
 - Task Force Decision Date: n/a
 - Case Status: *Deferred*

- d) **Proposed Name:** **Olympic Valley**
- Feature Type: Valley
 - County: Placer County
 - Review List: 446
 - Task Force Decision Date: September 8, 2022
 - Case Status: **Approved**

- e) **Proposed Name:** **Washesu Creek**
- Feature Type: Stream
 - County: Placer County
 - Review List: 446
 - Task Force Decision Date: September 8, 2022
 - Case Status: **Approved**

- f) **Proposed Name:** **Johnson Canyon**
- Feature Type: Valley
 - County: Nevada County
 - Review List: 434
 - BGN Decision Date: August 11, 2022
 - Case Status: **Approved**

5. Name Proposals on Pending Review Lists for Consideration

Following committee discussion of each proposed name, public comments were accepted for up to three minutes each from proponents and public officials, and for up to two minutes each from the general public.

- a) **Proposed Name:** **Woodson Bridge / Loybas Hill / Mi'tenek Hill**
- Current Name: Sq__ Hill
 - Feature Type: Populated place (unincorporated)
 - County: Tehama County
 - Review List: 448 / 449 / 449
 - Assigned Member: Amy Loeth
 - Case Status: Voted (Loybas Hill): *For _8_ / against _0_ / abstain _0_*
 - Recommendation: **Approve Loybas Hill**

Recommendation basis: Name change required due to SO 3404; recommended name was submitted by a local Native American Tribe, which is consistent with AB2022; Tribal and county support.

Notes: Three proposed names for same feature were considered together.

Assigned member provided case background. Feature is an unincorporated populated place west of the Sacramento River, 5 miles east of Corning. Current name first appeared on 1904 topographic map, but was published as early as 1880. Today, it is a small community with public recreation areas; State and USFW own part of the land also. No response from City Council of Corning or USFW regarding the name change.

The proposed name of Woodson Bridge was selected by the SO 3404 Task Force due to the community's proximity to an existing feature of the same name. Several other local features also carry this name. Not supported by local Tribes, local historical group or CA State Parks.

The proposed name of Loybas Hill was submitted by the Paskenta Band of Nomlaki Indians during the Task Force comment period. "Loybas" is a Wintuan word meaning "young lady" and is intended to honor past, present, and future Native women of the area and provide healing to the Native community. The Tehama County Board of Supervisors supports this name.

The proposed name of Mi'tenek Hill was submitted by the Tehama County Genealogical and Historical Society. Proposed name is intended to honor the River Nomlaki people and maintain a strong Indigenous connection to the area. The proposed name means "place on top of cut hill" or "mother on top of hill" as translated by an archeologist using a Native dictionary. The proposed name appeared on 1932 and 1951 archeologists' maps, but the location varied between the two maps.

Public comment, Andrew Alejandro, proponent of Loybas Hill name and Chairman of Paskenta Band of Nomlaki Indians, a federally-recognized tribe: The Paskenta Band of Nomlaki Indians are the active tribe in the area and are the caretakers of this land. The Tribe is working hard to educate the local community about the Tribe and the selection of the Loybas Hill name would be a meaningful step forward for the Tribe. This Tribe should have the right to name this community.

- Chair asked commenter if he is familiar with the Mi'tenek word; he is not and feels the name should be chosen by the local First People, not a historical society.

Native American Heritage Commission Member stated that selection of the proposed name of Loybas Hill is consistent with AB2022, which requires prioritization of place names proposed by California Native American Tribes.

----- Lunch Break was taken 12:09 – 1:00 -----

- b) Proposed Name: Yokuts Valley / Wootona / Bear Mountain**
- Current Name: Sq__ Valley
 - Feature Type: Populated place (unincorporated)
 - County: Fresno County
 - Review List: 448 / 449 / 449
 - Assigned Member: Greg Lucas
 - Case Status: Voted (Yokuts Valley): *For _8_ / against _0_ / abstain _0_*
 - Recommendation: **Approve Yokuts Valley**

Recommendation basis: Name change required due to SO 3404; name was submitted by a local Native American Tribe, which is consistent with AB2022; wide Tribal and community support.

Notes: Representative for assigned member provided a case summary. Area is a populated, unincorporated, place within a basin also named Sq__ Valley. This feature originally appeared on Review List 448 with the proposed name of Nuum Valley, which was later withdrawn by the proponent.

The proposed name of Yokuts Valley was submitted by the original proposer to replace his original submission of Nuum Valley. Proponent is a representative of the Rename S. Valley Coalition, member of the Dunlap Band of Mono Indians and Choinumni Tribes, and lifelong Fresno resident. "Yokuts" means "the people" and is a broad name for many local Tribes. This name is supported by ACLU and 16 other organizations, more than 200 online signatures, and Yokuts Tribal members, although no official Tribal letters of support were obtained. The Sq_ Valley geographic feature, in which this community is situated, has just been renamed to Yokuts Basin through the SO 3404 process.

The proposed name of Wootona was submitted by Sarah Worthing, a fourth-generation community member. Proponent got this name from a book of local lore and legends collected from Native and farming families in the area. This book states that Wootona means "woman's footprint," which describes a local geologic feature. There is little other documentation of Native use, historical or present, of this name. This submission is supported by two write-in votes on a September questionnaire sent out by the Fresno County Board of Supervisors.

The proposed name of Bear Mountain was submitted by the county based on their September questionnaire to community residents asking for feedback. According to the county, this was mailed to over 1,000 households (this community has a population of approximately 3,500 people). 653 surveys were returned; Bear Mountain was the most popular replacement name. A nearby peak is also known by the name Bear Mountain, and several local businesses use this name.

Public Comment, Robert McCloskey: Lives on Bear Mountain; would be confusing to name the community after the peak. Supports Yokuts Valley name and agrees with changing name from Sq_ Valley. The county survey represents less than 15% of community and misled people into believing they could keep Sq_ name. Many community members are in denial. Makes sense to choose Yokuts Valley name since the community is situated within the newly renamed Yokuts Basin.

Public Comment, Tedde Simon, ACLU Northern California: The ACLU of Northern California recognizes that Indigenous people continue to suffer from historic injustices as a result of colonization and through genocide, the dispossession of their lands, and attempted erasure of their cultures, languages, and traditions. ACLU of Northern California supports

the public education and advocacy work of the Rename S. Valley Coalition. The county supervisors refused to work with Indigenous leaders to change the derogatory name, discuss its meaning and significance, or create a process to collaboratively identify an appropriate replacement name. Removing the existing name will put an end to the harm and traumatization Indigenous people face when they encounter the offensive name. The ACLU of Northern California urges the adoption of the Yokuts Valley name to initiate truth and healing, to recognize and acknowledge the ancestral people who were violently driven from the land, and to celebrate their resilience.

Public Comment, Eve Hudson: Resident; embarrassed by current name and supports changing name to Yokuts Valley in remembrance of the Native Americans that live here.

Public Comment, Jeremiah Taylor: Resident; supports Yokuts Valley name.

Public Comment, Bayard Taylor: Resident; there are already a Bear Valley and Bear Mountain in California, so it would be confusing to call this community Bear Mountain. County survey was fraudulent and biased. Yokuts refers to 63 Tribes historically; Yokuts name fits with historic Indigenous presence.

Public Comment, Linda Tubach: 30-year resident and high school teacher. Names matter; sq_ word is extremely offensive. Local common daily usage has normalized word. Believes most residents are open to renaming. Yokuts name honors the people who have inhabited this land for thousands of years. Local people understand the importance of Indigenous history of area. It's time to make amends and recognize the contributions of the Yokuts people to this area in the past and today.

Public Comment, June Taylor: Resident; favors Yokuts Valley, in favor of honoring original inhabitants.

- c) **Proposed Name:** **James Wong Howe Creek / China Creek**
- Current Name: Chinaman Creek
 - Feature Type: Stream
 - County: Tuolumne County
 - Review List: 440 / 443
 - Assigned Member: Tiffany Meyer
 - Case Status: *Deferred*

Deferral basis: Waiting for counter-proposal by USFS or other agency.

Notes: Forest Service member stated their proposal was not well thought out and would like the new counter-proposal to come from another agency. The Chinese Historical Society of America and county historians have been asked for their input.

- d) Proposed Name: Meniffee Hills**
- Current Name: n/a
 - Feature Type: Ridge
 - County: Riverside County
 - Review List: 440
 - Assigned Member: Amy Loeth
 - Case Status: *Deferred*

Deferral basis: Additional feedback needed from local Tribes.

Notes: Ridge is currently unnamed. Proposed name is taken from the city of Meniffee, named after Luther Meniffee Wilson, an early settler and prospector in the area. Feature is a popular recreational area. Several community facilities, businesses, etc. also use Meniffee Hills name. Meniffee City Council supports proposed name; no response from County Board of Supervisors. The Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians is deferring to the Soboba Band of Luiseño Indians and Pechanga Band of Luiseño Indians; Soboba Band has responded and expressed interest in collaborating with the Pechanga Band to propose a Tribal name.

- e) Proposed Name: Risler Buttes**
- Current Name: Pickaninny Buttes
 - Feature Type: Summit
 - County: San Bernardino County
 - Review List: 442 (*relisted from 437*)
 - Assigned Member: Mary Simmerer
 - Case Status: *Voted: For _6_ / against _0_ / abstain _1_ / absent _1_*
 - Recommendation: **Approve**

Recommendation basis: Replacement of a highly offensive name; no opposition to proposed name.

Notes: Member Hitchcock had to temporarily leave the meeting and was not present for discussion or voting.

Assigned member reached out to the Morongo Band of Mission Indians and the San Bernardino Band of Mission Indians and has not yet received a response; these Tribes are within a 30-mile radius of the feature. Member could not find evidence of previously used Indigenous names for the feature.

This is the second proposal for this feature; the first, Alfalfa Buttes, has been withdrawn. Proposed name was submitted by the Lucerne Valley Economic Development Association in reference to the pioneer family that had the original homestead patent on the land and who have continued to live on the property since; other branches of this family also live in the vicinity.

One member expressed reservations about naming the feature after a family about which little is known; would also like to know more about the historical African American presence in the region that the current name seems to refer to; assigned member has researched this extensively and could find little information.

- f) **Proposed Name:** **Lake Marie**
- Current Name: n/a, part of Loch Leven Lakes complex
 - Feature Type: Lake
 - County: Placer County
 - Review List: 445
 - Assigned Member: Mary Simmerer
 - Case Status: Voted: *For _7_ / against _0_ / abstain _0_ / absent _1_*
 - Recommendation: **Approve**

Recommendation basis: Tribal and Forest Service support.

Notes: Member Hitchcock had to temporarily leave the meeting and was not present for discussion or voting.

Lake is a currently unnamed feature in a larger, named group. Name commemorates the late Marie Barry, who was a prominent and influential community leader in the Washoe tribe. Several local Native American Tribes support the proposed name. The term “Middle Lake” has been used infrequently in the past but was not deemed to be a problem. The US Forest service supports the change.

Public Comment, Darrell Cruz (proponent): Thanked the committee for their efforts.

- g) **Proposed Name:** **Oakland Hills**
- Current Name: n/a (Berkeley Hills area)
 - Feature Type: Range
 - County: Alameda and Contra Costa Counties
 - Review List: 445 (*relisted from 428*)
 - Assigned Member: Tiffany Meyer
 - Case Status: *Deferred*

Deferral basis: Input from proponent needed regarding geographic boundaries of area and additional outreach.

Notes: Member Hitchcock had to temporarily leave the meeting and was not present for discussion or voting.

Assigned member has gotten no response from her outreach efforts. BGN has also conducted extensive research in an attempt to better define the boundaries of the feature.

- h) Proposed Name: Avi Kwalal**
- Current Name: Pilot Knob
 - Feature Type: Ridge
 - County: Imperial County
 - Review List: 446 (*relisted from 443*)
 - Assigned Member: Greg Lucas
 - Case Status: Voted: *For _7_ / against _0_ / abstain _0_ / absent _1_*
 - Recommendation: **Approve**

Recommendation basis: Tribal and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) support.

Notes: Member Hitchcock had to temporarily leave the meeting and was not present for discussion or voting.

Representative for assigned member provided an update. Proposed name was submitted by the Quechan Tribe of the Fort Yuma Indian Reservation and is already in use locally. The feature is partly on the Fort Yuma Reservation and partly on BLM land, specifically the Pilot Knob Area of Critical Environmental Concern. County has not provided an opinion.

BGN representative explained that according to BGN records, the current name is applied only to the second-highest peak on the ridge; however, this proposal and local usage refer to the ridge as a whole. BGN will address this discrepancy during their approval process; the record will be updated to apply to the whole ridge and Pilot Knob will be recorded as a variant name.

----- Afternoon Break was taken 2:35 – 2:45 -----

- i) Proposed Name: Ipuk Spiruk***
- Current Name: Little Stonewall Peak
 - Feature Type: Summit
 - County: San Diego County
 - Review List: 446
 - Assigned Member: Daniel Walsh
 - Case Status: *Deferred*

Deferral basis: Additional outreach needed.

Notes: *General notes for all four features (items 5i-5l):* Features are on California State Park lands, mostly in Cuyamaca Rancho State Park. Proponent has hired a researcher to acquire community feedback on the proposed names.

***4 cases (items 5i–5l) were submitted by same proponent for same region and will be considered together.**

- j) Proposed Name: Ipuk Spiruk Creek***
- Current Name: Little Stonewall Creek
 - Feature Type: Stream
 - County: San Diego County
 - Review List: 446
 - Assigned Member: Daniel Walsh
 - Case Status: *Deferred*

Deferral basis: Additional outreach needed.

Notes: See item 5i, above.

***4 cases (items 5i–5l) were submitted by same proponent for same region and will be considered together.**

- k) Proposed Name: Cush-Pii***
- Current Name: Stonewall Peak
 - Feature Type: Summit
 - County: San Diego County
 - Review List: 446
 - Assigned Member: Daniel Walsh
 - Case Status: *Deferred*

Deferral basis: Additional outreach needed.

Notes: See item 5i, above.

***4 cases (items 5i–5l) were submitted by same proponent for same region and will be considered together.**

- l) Proposed Name: Cush-Pii Creek***
- Current Name: Stonewall Creek
 - Feature Type: Stream
 - County: San Diego County
 - Review List: 446
 - Assigned Member: Daniel Walsh
 - Case Status: *Deferred*

Deferral basis: Additional outreach needed.

Notes: See item 5i, above.

***4 cases (items 5i–5l) were submitted by same proponent for same region and will be considered together.**

- m) Proposed Name:** **mee muku creek**
- Current Name: n/a
 - Feature Type: Stream
 - County: Marin County
 - Review List: 448 (*relisted from 440*)
 - Assigned Member: Richard Lis
 - Case Status: Voted: *For _8_ / against _0_ / abstain _0_*
 - Recommendation: **Approve**

Recommendation basis: Tribal and federal support.

Notes: Counter-proposal to Elk Creek from Review List 440. Proposed name means “green chert trail” or “green rock trail” in Coastal Miwok language. Proponent is the Federated Tribes of Graton Rancheria, a federally recognized Tribe.

Feature is a stream 2.4 miles long in the Golden Gate National Recreation Area (GGNRA). It flows through Tennessee Valley and exits at Tennessee Cove; the Tennessee name was taken from the S.S. Tennessee, which wrecked in a cove near the valley in 1853.

The GGNRA and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) formally support the proposed name; county has expressed verbal support. Regarding opposition, some dissatisfaction has been expressed verbally but no formal written opposition has been received.

Proponent prefers lower case. In Miwok culture, capitalization is not used; it is an Angelcized convention meant to emphasize certain things and in Miwok culture this is not necessary. GGNRA/National Park Service and BGN support this preference.

Some committee members expressed hesitation about recommending an all-lowercase name since this goes against typical naming convention and may be perceived as an error. There is concern that not capitalizing the name will cause it to inappropriately stand out from other names on the map, not follow the written language standards and will probably lead to improper spelling. The proponent should submit an overriding need for not capitalizing the name, other than personal preference. It was noted that the Coast Miwok Indian website capitalize their nouns on the website. However, BGN representative listed several examples of the BGN approving names with non-standard capitalization, reiterated that Tribal preferences should be respected, and that any change to the capitalization in the proposed name would be treated as a counter-proposal.

- n) Proposed Name:** **Sue-meg Point**
- Current Name: Patrick’s Point
 - Feature Type: Cape
 - County: Humboldt County
 - Review List: 448

- Assigned Member: Richard Lis
- Case Status: Voted: *For_8_ / against_0_ / abstain_0_*
- Recommendation: **Approve**

Recommendation basis: Tribal, state and county support.

Notes: Proponent is California State Parks; the state park formerly known as Patrick’s Point State Park has already been renamed to Sue-meg State Park. This proposal is to rename the geographic feature (cape/peak) within the state park. The current name refers to Patrick Beegan, who lived in the area less than three years and murdered multiple local Native Americans. Sue-meg is the Yurok name for this area, which is celebrated in traditional Yurok stories and songs. County supports proposed name; no opposition recorded.

o) Proposed Name: Black Miners Bar

- Current Name: Negro Bar
- Feature Type: Bar
- County: Sacramento County
- Review List: 448 (*relisted from 435*)
- Assigned Member: Susan Anderson
- Case Status: *Deferred*

Deferral basis: Additional State Parks research needed.

Notes: State Park has currently been changed to Black Miners Bar as a temporary name; State Parks is currently researching new name for park.

p) Proposed Name: Pinkston Slough

- Current Name: Black John Slough
- Feature Type: Stream
- County: Marin County
- Review List: 448
- Assigned Member: Raymond Hitchcock
- Case Status: *Deferred*

Deferral basis: Additional research and outreach needed.

q) Proposed Name: Middle Ranch Reservoir

- Current Name: McGee Lake
- Feature Type: Reservoir
- County: Los Angeles County
- Review List: 448
- Assigned Member: Tiffany Meyer

- Case Status: *Deferred*

Deferral basis: Additional research needed.

Notes: Feature is on Santa Catalina Island; proponent is Avalon Fire Department.

6. New Proposals on Pending Review Lists to be Introduced

- a) **Proposed Name:** **Loybas Hollow**
- Current Name: Table Hollow
 - Feature Type: Valley
 - County: Tehama County
 - Review List: 449
 - Proposal Release Date: October 31, 2022
 - Assigned Member: Amy Loseth
- b) **Proposed Name:** **O'Haniel Creek**
- Current Name: n/a
 - Feature Type: Stream
 - County: Humboldt County
 - Review List: 449
 - Proposal Release Date: October 31, 2022
 - Assigned Member: Mary Simmerer

7. Time and Place of Next Meeting:

Proposed Spring meeting date:

March 10th, 2023 @ 10:00 A.M. – 3:00 P.M.

Proposed Fall meeting date:

August 4th, 2023 @ 10:00 A.M. – 3:00 P.M.

8. Statement of Fact by Geneva E.B. Thompson: History and Background of “Squaw”

Please see the following pages for “Statement of Fact by Geneva E.B. Thompson: History and Background of ‘Squaw’ to help inform the Administrative Record of the California Advisory Committee on Geographic Names and the United States Board on Geographic Names”.

Statement of Fact by Geneva E.B. Thompson: History and Background of “Squaw” to help inform the Administrative Record of the California Advisory Committee on Geographic Names and the United States Board on Geographic Names

Introduction

Osiyo, my name is Geneva E. B. Thompson. I am a citizen of the Cherokee Nation, my pronouns are she/her, and I am honored to serve as the first ever Assistant Secretary for Tribal Affairs at the California Natural Resources Agency. My ancestral lands are in the southeastern woodlands area of what is now called the United States. Through war, presidential declaration, and forced removal along the Trail of Tears – the Cherokee people were forcibly marched to what is now Oklahoma. My ancestors were marginalized and suffered from the genocidal policies of the United States. I share this history to highlight the personal impact colonialization has had on me and many other Native people within the United States.

I have an honors degree in History and Political Science from the University of Utah and a juris doctorate from the University of California Los Angeles, where I focused my studies at intersection of federal Indian and environmental law. My career has been dedicated to addressing social, economic, cultural, and environmental issues impacting California Native American tribes and Native communities. Through my lived experience as a Native woman as well as my career working closely with California Native American tribes and Native communities – I am personally and professional highly aware of the impacts of derogatory terms and actions have on the health and wellbeing of Native people.

To support the members of California Advisory Committee on Geographic Names’ review of proposed replacement names containing the term “squaw,” and to present a complete record to the United States Board on Geographic Names, I share with the Committee the historical and current context of this term, which I refer to as “sq_” term. Throughout this presentation, I unfortunately must discuss some triggering topics including; sexual violence, murder, and derogatory terminology towards women, sex workers, and people of color. I find discussing these triggering topics personally difficult and in no way do I mean to offend or cause anyone harm. But for the purpose of having a clear record and presenting adequate information to the Committee for their consideration on their upcoming cases – it is important I provide the Committee with some historic and present-day context relative to the word “squaw.” I thank you in advance for your understanding and patience with me and this presentation, and for the acceptance of the information I am relying here both in writing and orally.

Pre-Contact and Early Contact Use of “Sq_”

To begin, the Merriam-Webster dictionary defines the term derogatory as a term to express a low opinion of or to detract from the character or standing of someone or something.¹ While not derived from a derogatory word, the “sq-” term as used by early settlers was appropriated and corrupted into a word that carries with it a history of genocide and rape of Native American people, and particularly of Native women. The etymology, or linguistic history, of “sq_” is derived from a term found in the traditional language of the Algonquian people - whose ancestral lands are in what we now call Massachusetts – and simply means “young woman” or “woman.”² While the roots of this word are based in an indigenous language, the term was appropriated by Euro-American colonialists and debased in order to dehumanize Native women and justify sexual violence against them, like so many other indigenous words and customs. As Secretary Deb Haaland states in her Washington Post Opinion article the “sq_” term is “a broad racial slur, a caricature that removed individual identity and dignity from all women of Native American heritage,”³ the word was ultimately used in naming of places to denote in the most vulgar manner, the inferiority and sexual vulnerability of colonized and displaced Native women.

European colonialists arrived in North America believing they had a right to colonize its land and control its natural resources—this belief included destroying the civilizations that were already present. Native American tribes, as the original stewards of these lands, had complex governments, societies, economies, and traditions that were interconnected with the lands, waters, and natural resources the colonialists sought to acquire and develop. As a result, Native American tribes and people became obstacles for colonizers hungry for power that was contingent upon the amassing of lands and wealth derived from their natural resources. Through a wide series of state sponsored genocidal policies and military and militia supported battles, the colonialists murdered and forcibly removed Native people

¹ Merriam-Webster Dictionary, Derogatory, available at <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/derogatory>.

² William Bright, *The Sociolinguistics of the “S-Word”: Squaw in American Placenames*, The America Name Society, 211 (September/December 2000).

³ Deb Haaland, *Opinion How we Expunged a Racist, Sexist slur from Hundreds of Public Lands*, Washington Post (September 28, 2022).

from their homes and ancestral lands.⁴ In this mission of conquest, the rape, sexual assault, and murder of Native women were used as a weapon against tribes and to breakup communities.⁵

Further, the use of derogatory names, like “squaw” and “buck,” were used to dehumanize Native people – equating them to be more animals than people – to justify the violent treatment against them. As Rayna Green discusses in her paper *The Pocahontas Perplex: The Image of Indian Women in American Culture*, the lexicon used by Euro-American colonialists to describe Native women in literature, their personal journals, and everyday discourse was to either to describe “Indian princesses” as pure virgins who protected and cared for white men or as “squaws” who were deceitful “whores” not worthy of respect or care.⁶ This dichotomy and stereotypes of Native women persists throughout American culture and is a remanent of the brutality that marked that period in history and continues to be felt by tribes and Native communities today. Distorting the “sq_” term into one of vulgarity and abuse toward Native women was one of many tactics Euro-American colonialists used to physically and psychologically harm not only Native women, but their families, communities, and tribes.

The continued use of the “sq_” term memorializes and perpetuates ongoing dehumanization of Native women. To this day, Native communities have rates far exceeding the national average of assault, abduction, and murder, and those crimes go unresolved and unpunished far more often than crimes against other demographics.⁷ A 2016 study by the National Institute of Justice found that more than four in five American Indian and Alaska Native women – approximately 84.3 percent of Native women - have experienced violence in their lifetime, including 56.1 percent who have experienced sexual violence.⁸ According to the Bureau of Indian Affairs’ website “the Center for Disease Control and Prevention [reports], the murder rate is ten times higher than the national average for women living on [Indian] reservations, and the third leading cause of death for Native women. Additionally, this group

⁴ See generally for the history of the colonialization of California: Damon B. Akins and William J. Bauer Jr., *WE ARE THE LAND: A HISTORY OF NATIVE CALIFORNIA*, University of California Press (2021); Benjamin Madley, *AN AMERICAN GENOCIDE: THE UNITED STATES AND THE CALIFORNIA INDIAN CATASTROPHE*, Yale University Press (2016).

⁵ Benjamin Madley, *AN AMERICAN GENOCIDE: THE UNITED STATES AND THE CALIFORNIA INDIAN CATASTROPHE*, Yale University Press, 160 (2016) (Quoting General George Crook “It was of no unfrequent occurrence for an Indian to be shot down in cold blood, or a squaw raped by some brute.”) *Id.* at 311 (Stating the murder of a Paiute-Shoshone Indian and the rape of three young women – including the daughter of the Paiute-Shoshone chief Shoandow was the start of the first Owens Valley War in 1861.)

⁶ Rayna Green, *The Pocahontas Perplex: The Image of Indian Women in American Culture*, *The Massachusetts Review*, Vol. 16, No. 4, 711 (Autumn, 1975).

⁷ Bureau of Indian Affairs, *Missing and Murdered Indigenous People Crisis*, available at <https://www.bia.gov/service/mmu/missing-and-murdered-indigenous-people-crisis>

⁸ *Id.*

were significantly more likely to experience a rape in their lifetimes compared to other women.”⁹ Simply put, the statistical evidence bears out that Native women continue to be less valued and less protected by the American Justice System, a persistent legacy of their historic mistreatment that is ironically embodied in the linguistic terms we used today. The continued use of the “sq_” term semantically excuses this original and ongoing disparity and the broader Missing and Murdered Indigenous Peoples Crisis Native people face today, and particularly Native women continue to suffer.

Use of “Sq_” in Geographic Features

As part of the conquest of the United States, Euro-Americans would not refer to newly stolen lands by their traditional names – but instead renamed geographic features after generals, militia leaders, settlers, or massacre events. For example, Kelseyville, California, and Kelsey Creek are named after the settler Andrew Kelsey who enslaved, interned, and severely abused a number of Pomo people and would sexually abuse Pomo daughters.¹⁰ There are many other examples of these naming practices across the state.

The action of disregarding the Native names for geographic features, and the conscious decision to rename such places was a way of celebrating colonialization of the land, and the conquer of its people. Euro-American colonialists have long described landscapes in gendered terms – especially land they perceived or pretended to be unoccupied as virgin and feminine.¹¹ By using the “sq_” term for place names further extends the use of this metaphor to project concepts of Native inferiority and presumed rights of Euro-American conquest of the land and Native women.¹²

Some of illustrative examples of this naming practice in California includes “Squaw Hill” in Riverside County, “Squaw Tit” in Humboldt, San Diego, and San Bernardino Counties, and “Squaw Camp Spring” in Trinity County.

Federal and State Policy on Removal of Sq_

In the United States, there was nearly 650 geographic features with names containing “sq_” term. Out of those nearly 650 names, 87 of those names were in California.

⁹ *Id.*

¹⁰ Wikipedia, Bloody Island Massacre, available at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bloody_Island_massacre

¹¹ Bruce E. Johnsen and Barry M. Pritzker, *Squaw, Debates Over Place Names*, Encyclopedia of American Indian History Vol. 1, 163 (2008).

¹² *Id.* At 164

For some history on the replacement of these names -- on November 19, 2021, Secretary Deb Haaland through Secretarial Order 3404 declared the “sq_” term as a derogatory term, ordered the removal of the term from all geographic features, and established the Derogatory Geographic Names Task Force to identify replacement names.¹³ Through an eleven month process, the Task Force consulted with nearly 70 Native American tribes and engaged with state, county, and local governments and communities and received more than 1,000 replacement names for nearly all of the geographic features across the United States.¹⁴

Here in California, the California Advisory Committee on Geographic Names sent request for collaboration letters to all California Native American tribes whose ancestral lands contained a geographic feature with the “sq_” term and sent a comment letter recommending the Task Force adopt replacement names informed and supported by the local tribes and attached the tribal letters the Committee received, a copy of which is attached to this statement. Through this collaboration with California Native American tribes, the Committee was able to share with the Task Force 51 tribally recommended replacement names for geographic features in California. No tribe recommended retaining this name.

On September 8, 2022, the Task Force issued the final list of replacement names and requested the California Advisory Committee on Geographic Names to review the proposed replacement names for two unincorporated areas – “Squaw Valley” in Fresno County and “Squaw Hill” in Tehama County.¹⁵ The Committee is completing its review on these two unincorporated areas during today’s meeting.

As for state policy, on September 5, 2020, Secretary Wade Crowfoot, Director Armando Quintero, and Director Toks Omishakin issued a press release discussing the importance of reviewing

¹³ Department of the Interior, *Secretary Haaland Takes Action to Remove Derogatory Names from Federal Lands*, Press Release, (Nov. 19, 2021), available at <https://www.doi.gov/pressreleases/secretary-haaland-takes-action-remove-derogatory-names-federal-lands#:~:text=Secretarial%20Order%203404%20formally%20identifies%20the%20term%20%E2%80%9Csquaw%E2%80%9D,racial%2C%20and%20sexist%20slur%2C%20particularly%20for%20Indigenous%20women>; see also Secretary Deb Haaland, , Secretarial Order 3404, Department of the Interior (Nov. 19, 2021), available at <https://www.doi.gov/sites/doi.gov/files/elips/documents/so-3404-508.pdf>.

¹⁴ Department of the Interior, *Interior Department Announces Next Steps to Remove “Sq_” from Federal Lands*, Press Release (Feb. 22, 2022), available at <https://www.doi.gov/pressreleases/interior-department-announces-next-steps-remove-sq-federal-lands>; see also Department of the Interior, *Interior Department Completes Removal of “Sq_” from Federal Use*, Press Release (Sept. 8, 2022), available at <https://www.doi.gov/pressreleases/interior-department-completes-removal-sq-federal-use>.

¹⁵ Department of the Interior, *Interior Department Completes Removal of “Sq_” from Federal Use*, Press Release (Sept. 8, 2022), available at <https://www.doi.gov/pressreleases/interior-department-completes-removal-sq-federal-use>.

and replacing derogatory names, including “sq_.”¹⁶ In this press release, the state leaders directed their departments to identify and redress discriminatory names and expanded the representation on the California Advisory Committee on Geographic Names.¹⁷

Further, on September 23, 2022, Governor Newsom signed Assemblymember James Ramos’ AB 2022 legislation, which declared the “sq_” term as derogatory under state law and directed the California Advisory Committee on Geographic Names to review and select replacement names for all geographic features, places, and publicly owned structures – including navigable waters, parks, state or local roads, bridges, publicly owned buildings, streets, alleys, or other roads, or political subdivisions of the state containing the “sq_” term and other derogatory names.¹⁸ Assemblymember Ramos’ office received 25 different letters of support for this bill from tribal governments, Native-led entities, education organizations, and community organizations – including Fresno Barrios Unidos, a community-based organization serving marginalized youth in Fresno.¹⁹ Each letter supported the legislation and the removal of the “sq_” term due to its derogatory nature to Native women.

In this new law, the Committee and other public agencies are directed to meaningfully consult with California Native American tribes on the identification of places containing the “sq_” term and other derogatory names and identify replacement names.²⁰ In selecting replacement names, the State is required to “prioritize names that honor and recognize the tribes, cultures, and indigenous languages specific to the geographic region in question, including place names that were previously used by Native American tribes or place names proposed by California Native American tribes...”²¹ The Committee will begin this work early next year.

¹⁶ California Natural Resources Agency, *State Agencies Announce Steps to Address Discriminatory Names, Inequities in State Parks and Transportation System Features*, Press Release (Sept. 5, 2020), available at <https://www.parks.ca.gov/NewsRelease/976>.

¹⁷ *Id.*

¹⁸ Government Code 8899.90 – 8899.95 (AB 2022 Assemblymember James Ramos).

¹⁹ The letters of support were from the following governments and organizations: ACLU California, Re-Name S-Valley, Fresno County Coalition, Alliance for Boys and Men, American Indian Cultural Center of San Francisco, American Indian Student Association at California State University, Anti-Police-Terror, Anti-Defamation League, California Consortium for Urban Indian Health, California Federation of Teachers, California Native Vote Project, California Teacher Association, Communities United for Restorative Youth Justice, Dignity and Power NOW, Fresno Barrios Unidos, Friendship House Association of American Indians, Habematolel Pomo of Upper Lake, Indian Health Center of Santa Clara Valley, Morongo Band of Mission Indians, Native Sisters Circle, Rising Hearts, Restoring Justice for Indigenous Peoples, Save California Salmon, Tachi Yokut Tribe, Tule River Tribe, and Yocha Dehe Wintun Nation.

²⁰ Government Code 8899.94 (e).

²¹ Government Code 8899.94(e)(3).

It is important to note there are people, even Native people, who do not consider the “sq_” term derogatory. Their views are not invalid, so much as situational. For some, they have lived their whole life in a town or near a geographic feature containing this term and have emotional and positive associations with the name because of their personal connection to the place. For others, there is a concern with the movement of changing derogatory names due to their disagreement with the movement towards political correctness. Lastly, for some Native people, there is a movement to reclaim the term, avoid the erasure of the acknowledgment of Native women represented by these names, and to honor the “sq_” term’s Algonquian roots.²²

While it is important for this Committee to hear these differing opinions and the reasons behind them – it is equally important to note that a large majority of Native people find the term offensive and equate its offensiveness to the “n-word” for the black and African American community.²³ Further, the federal and state governments’ official naming practice of geographic features, places, and unincorporated places, should not allow for terms that give offense to minority communities, even if a few do not find the term offensive themselves.²⁴ Lastly, it is the policy of Secretary Deb Haaland and Governor Newsom that the “sq_” term is offensive and must be changed, and thus the State has no authority to retain the existing term.

Conclusion

My hope is these comments provided useful historical and policy context on why the “sq_” term is an offensive slur towards Native women and should be considered derogatory. I also hope these comments help support the Committee’s discussion, review, and recommendation on the replacement names for the Tehama and Fresno County unincorporated places currently containing the “sq_” term. I would be happy to answer any questions the Committee has and thank you again for the opportunity to present before you today.

²² Marge Bruchac, *Reclaiming the Word “Squaw” in the Name of the Ancestors*, Comment, (Dec. 1999).

²³ William Bright, *The Sociolinguistics of the “S-Word”: Squaw in American Placenames*, The America Name Society, 213 (September/December 2000); *Id.* at 211-212, 214 (Bright notes that popular belief – given wide circulation by Suzan Harjo on a 1997 TV show – that the term “squaw” was a derivative from the Mohawk language for “female genitalia” and used by “French and British fur-trappers” to refer to Native women has helped shape current attitudes and subjective associations to understand the term to be offensive. Bright further argues that in the sociolinguistic question of the ideological value of the “sq_” term, “subject associations are as important as objective ones”).

²⁴ William Bright, *The Sociolinguistics of the “S-Word”: Squaw in American Placenames*, University of Colorado, 214 (September/December 2000).