



For Immediate Release:  
Oregon Geographic Names Board

Nov. 2, 2010

## FINDLEY BUTTES NAMED TO REMEMBER SETTLER AND TRIBAL HISTORY

The Oregon Geographic Names Board at its fall board meeting on Saturday, Oct. 30, in Troutdale voted to recommend approval of 3 names, two honoring settlers and one recognizing an ancient tribal name, for the three Findley Buttes on the Zumwalt Prairie in Wallowa County.

Those names, which are now forwarded to the National Board of Geographic Names, are Findley Butte, Méexsem Hépey Butte, and Harsin Butte. The board further offered Wiláatyaksa as a variant name for Harsin Butte, and Brumback as a variant name for Méexsem Hépey Butte on the United States Geological Services (USGS) mapping data bases.

The board took the action following a compromise forged by Deniece Osterberg of Idaho who sought to name the three buttes for pioneer families in the area and the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, who had historic names for two of the buttes. The buttes, collectively called the Findley Buttes, are largely located on land owned by The Nature Conservancy, which participated in the process.

In other actions, the board recommended approval of names for Ghost and Fern creeks in Washington County and for Biggs Arch and Matties Hump near Biggs Junction in Sherman County. They recommended against applications for Rock Flour Hill in Wasco County and an application to replace "Squaw" geographic names in Jackson County with the term, "Indian Maiden."

The board delayed action until a special meeting in later in the year on proposals by the Umatilla tribes to replace 44 "Squaw" names in nine Eastern Oregon counties with tribal names. Action by the Oregon legislature, beginning 9 years ago, called upon the Oregon Geographic Names Board and the federal government to replace "Squaw" geographic names in Oregon because the term has become derogatory.

The board, comprised of journalists, historians, cartographers and geographers who volunteer their time, considers applications for new names and changed names of Oregon's geographic sites.

The Oregon board is associated with the Oregon Historical Society and is an advisor to the United States Board on Geographic Names. The OGNB supervises the naming of geographic features in the state to standardize geographic nomenclatures, prevent confusion and duplication in geographic features, and correct previous naming errors.

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