

Minutes of Interim Committee Meeting

Oregon Geographic Names Board

September 9, 2020

Zoom Videoconference Meeting

Due to circumstances involving the COVID-19 pandemic, a Zoom videoconference meeting was held in place of a physical committee meeting. President Bruce Fisher and Vice-President Champ Vaughan called the meeting to order at 1:05 PM.

The following members of the Interim Committee joined the Zoom meeting: **Board Members** Bruce Fisher (President), Champ Vaughan (Vice-President & Interim Committee Chair), Kerry Tymchuk (Executive Secretary), Mary McArthur, and John Terry and **Advisors** Meredith Carine (OWRD), Bob Harmon (ORWRD), Sandy Hinkley (Forest Service), Frank Lahm (BLM). Also joining the meeting were other board members Gwen Carr and Mary Oberst and guest Kevin Harden, reporter with *Portland Tribune/Pamplin Group*. The President welcomed new Forest Service Advisor Sandy Hinkley.

NEW PROPOSALS FOR UNNAMED FEATURES:

1. Hole-in-the Rock, Jackson County: The type of feature is identified as a rock arch and is a descriptive name. The Proponent is Alice Knotts of San Diego, California. The Committee agreed unanimously to forward the proposal to the full board with a recommendation of approval.

2. Latgawa Pinnacles, Jackson County: The type of feature is identified as a pillar and is an associative name because of its adjacent location to Camp Latgawa. The proponent is Alice Knotts of San Diego, California. The Committee agreed unanimously to forward the proposal to the full board with a recommendation of approval.

3. Marjorie Falls, Jackson County: The type of feature is waterfall, is located on Dead Indian Creek, and is a commemorative name honoring the late Camp Latgawa organizer Marjorie Knotts. The proponent is Alice Knotts of San Diego, California. The Committee agreed unanimously to forward the proposal to the full board with a recommendation of approval.

4. Governor Snell Ridge, Lake County: The type of feature is identified as a ridge and is a commemorative name honoring the late Governor Earl Snell who died in a airplane crash at that location in 1947. The proponent is Ted Curphey of Cheney, Washington. The Committee agreed unanimously to forward the proposal to the full board with a recommendation of approval.

5. Sohmer Creek, Baker County: The type of feature is identified as a stream and is a descriptive name relating to a pleasant summer day. The proponent is Tom Isaacson of Baker City, Oregon. The Committee agreed unanimously to forward the proposal to the full board with a recommendation of approval after the coordinates and specific stream segment are properly identified and confirmed.

NAME CHANGE PROPOSALS:

1. GNIS ID 1140703 Dead Indian Soda Springs/Latgawa Soda Springs, Jackson County: (springs)

GNIS ID 1154277 Dead Indian Mountain/Latgawa Mountain, Jackson County: (mountain)

GNIS ID 1140701 Dead Indian Creek/Latgawa Creek, Jackson County: (stream)

These three name change proposals would replace names considered by some to be derogatory. The proponent is Alice Knotts of San Diego, California. The Committee unanimously agreed to delay forwarding the proposals for action by the full board until the appropriate tribes in southwestern Oregon are contacted and specifically asked for comments on the legitimacy of the proposed names and also offered the opportunity to submit competing replacement names in Native languages, which might be considered more appropriate.

NAME CHANGE PROPOSALS Continued):

2. GNIS ID 1146832 Negro Ben Mountain/Ben Johnson Mountain, Jackson County: (Mountain) The proponent is Margo Schembre of Medford, Oregon. The existing name is considered either an associative name or commemorative name relating to the late Ben Johnson, an early African-American settler in the area. The term “Negro” is considered outdated and unnecessary, and the appropriate manner to identify the individual is to use the surname of the individual. The Committee unanimously agreed to forward the proposal to the full board with a recommendation of approval. The Committee also unanimously agreed with board member Gwen Carr who offered to take the lead to properly identify and publically present the history surrounding Mr. Johnson to preserve the uniqueness and importance of early African-American settlers in southwestern Oregon. Gwen will coordinate this project with the Oregon Black Pioneers and the Southern Oregon Historical Society.

RECENT DECISIONS BY THE U.S. BOARD: The President announced that the U.S. Board has approved the 26 new names for unnamed features within the Newberry Volcano, Deschutes and Lake counties and Prowell Springs for an unnamed feature in Deschutes County.

NEW PENDING PROPOSALS: The following new proposals have been received and need to be reviewed and processed before the Interim Committee and the full board can proceed with appropriate action: (1) Knotts Bluff (unnamed feature in Jackson County), (2) Chinaman Hat/Bath Hat (name change proposal in Wasco County), and (3) Big Squaw Mountain/Sacagawea Mountain (name change proposal in Douglas County).

SPECIAL ACTION BY U.S. BOARD: The U.S. Board has rejected the name change proposal of Jim Crowe Sands/Pillar Rock Sands on the Columbia River in Clatsop County, has eliminated the name Jim Crow Sands, and has included the sands feature as part of the existing name and feature Pillar Rock Island.

SPECIAL ACTION BY INTERIM COMMITTEE: The Committee unanimously agreed to reject all three competing name proposals (Westview Island, Honk Island, and Bridgebend Island) for the unnamed island in the Willamette River located directly west of Springfield in Lane County. The landowner (Division of State Lands) is opposed to all three names and the full OGNB board is not favorable to any of the three names. The President will contact all three proponents and offer the opportunity for them to submit different proposed names.

NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS: (1) President Fisher announced that he has been approached by various media for interviews relating to offensive geographic names in Oregon. Board member Chet Orloff assisted the President by writing an Op Ed in *The Oregonian*. (2) A decision has been made to conduct a full board meeting by Zoom videoconference from 1:00 to 4:00 pm on Saturday, October 24, 2020. More details will be announced later. (3) President Fisher will discuss with board members the possibility that Oregon will host the COGNA conference in 2022. The COGNA conferences planned for Oregon in 2020 and Missouri in 2021 have been cancelled due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The committee meeting was adjourned at 3:15 PM.

Respectfully Submitted
Champ Vaughan, Interim Committee Chair