

**Oregon Geographic Names Board**  
**Minutes of Zoom Videoconference Board Meeting**  
October 24, 2020

*[CORRECTED MINUTES AS OF NOVEMBER 4, 2020]*

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

The following individuals joined the Zoom videoconference board meeting: **Board Members:** Bruce Fisher (President), Champ Vaughan (Vice-President), Kerry Tymchuk (Executive Secretary), Gwen Carr, Douglas Decker, Bob Hart, Charles Kocher, Jeff LaLande, Paul Levesque, Mary McArthur, Michael McArthur, James Meacham, Robert Melbo, Malissa Minthorn-Winks, Mary Oberst, Sharon Nesbit, Chet Orloff, Guy Randles, Linda Roach, John Terry, and Steve Wilson; **Advisors:** Reid Brown (ODF), Meredith Carine (OWRD), Bob Harmon (ORWRD), Sandy Hinkley (Forest Service), Maxine Kline (Forest Service), Frank Lahm (BLM), and Corey Plank (BLM); and **Guests:** Kevin Hardin, reporter with *Portland Tribune/Pamplin Group*, Jennifer Runyon, USBGN Research Staff, and Susan Leonard, private citizen.

With the initial total of 15 board members present and gradually increasing during the board meeting to a maximum of 22 board members present, the Quorum requirement to act on official matters of the Board was satisfied.

**1. Report of the Oregon Historical Society Executive Director & OGNB Executive Secretary:**

Kerry Tymchuk gave a status report concerning the extensive vandalism and damage suffered by Oregon Historical Society's downtown facility as a result of a protest and riot on October 11th. He stated that he was pleasantly overwhelmed by the concern expressed by so many people and the generous donations received by the Society. Kerry announced the retirement of Bill Robbins from the board and the appointment to the Board of Bob Hart, Executive Director of the Lane County Historical Society and Museum.

**2. Introductions & Announcements:** President Fisher welcomed the participation of all who signed on to the videoconference and welcomed Bob Hart as the new Board member and Reid Brown of the Oregon Department of Forestry to replace Liz Dent as that agency's Advisor to the Board.

**3. Minutes of Past Board Meeting:** The minutes of the February 28, 2020, electronic mail board meeting were corrected to include the participation of board members Doug Decker and Paul Levesque. The minutes are approved as corrected and published.

**4. NEW NAME PROPOSALS FOR UNNAMED FEATURES:**

**A. Hole-in-the Rock**, Jackson County [Descriptive name] [arch]: The proponent is Alice Knotts of San Diego, California. The Medford District, Bureau of Land Management has no objections, no comments were received from the tribes, and the Jackson County government has no objections. The motion to approve the name was passed 15 yea, 0 nay, and 0 abstentions.

**B. Latgawa Pinnacles**, Jackson County [Associative name because of the location adjacent to Camp Latgawa] [pillar]: The proponent is Alice Knotts of San Diego, California. The U.S. Forest Service, Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest, has no objections, no comments were received from the tribes, and the Jackson County government declines to comment. The motion to approve the name was passed 15 yea, 0 nay, and 0 abstentions

**C. Marjorie Falls**, Jackson County [Commemorative name to honor the late Camp Latgawa organizer Marjorie Cooley Knotts - deceased in 2014] [falls]: The proponent is Alice Knotts of San Diego, California. The U.S. Forest Service, Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest recommends approval of the name, no comments were received from the tribes, and the Jackson County government has no objections to the name. The motion to approve the name was passed 17 yea, 0 nay, and 0 abstentions.

**D. Governor Snell Ridge**, Lake County [Commemorative name to honor the late Governor Earl Snell who died in a airplane crash at that location in 1947] [ridge]: The proponent is Ted Curphey of Cheney, Washington. The Forest Service, Fremont-Winema National Forest supports the name, no comments were received from the tribes, and the Lake County government supports the name. A point was made during the discussion that the document “Principles, Policies, and Procedures” of the U.S. Board on Geographic Names provides that “A person’s death on or at a feature, such as in a mountaineering accident or automobile or plane crash, does not necessarily meet the ‘direct association’ criterion” for naming a geographic feature. A second point was made that several people died in the aircraft accident, not just Governor Snell, and attaching just one person’s name to the ridge tells an incomplete story. In reviewing Governor Snell’s history, the Board discussed his controversial record as an avid supporter of the internment of Japanese Americans during World War II and his sponsorship of State law, which would have restricted the rights of both Japanese American citizens and Japanese nationals. Given the history and current climate of race relations in the United States, the Board reasoned that a commemorative geographic name containing the surname “Snell” and honoring Governor Snell would be inappropriate. The aircraft crash site near the subject ridge has been added to the National Register of Historic Places with the official title “Governor’s Ridge Crash Site.” The name “Snell” is not included, which is consistent with the view of the Oregon Geographic Names Board. The motion to disapprove the name was passed 20 yea, 0 nays, and 0 abstentions.

**E. Sohmer Creek**, Baker County [Descriptive name relating to a pleasant summer day] [stream]: The proponent is Tom Isaacson of Baker City, Oregon. The land involved is privately owned and both landowners support the name, no comments were received from the tribes, and the Baker County government has no preference for a name. The motion to approve the name was passed 20 yea, 0 nay, and 0 abstentions.

## **5. NAME CHANGE PROPOSALS:**

**A. GNIS ID 1140703 Dead Indian Soda Springs/Latgawa Soda Springs**, Jackson County [spring]  
**GNIS ID 1154277 Dead Indian Mountain/Latgawa Mountain**, Jackson County [summit]  
**GNIS ID 1140701 Dead Indian Creek/Latgawa Creek**, Jackson County [stream]

The three name change proposals would replace the terms “Dead Indian,” which is generally considered to be derogatory. The proponent is Alice Knotts of San Diego, California. The term “Latgawa” is an associative name, which refers to the Latgawa Tribe (also known as the Upland Takelma), an early distinct-ethnic group of people in southwestern Oregon. The U.S. Forest Service, Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest, and the Bureaus of Land Management, Medford District, support the proposed name changes, no comments have yet been received from the tribes, and the Jackson County government has no preference. The motion to approve the three name change proposals, with a stipulation to allow two weeks additional time for the tribes to comment, was passed 22 yea, 0 nay, and 0 abstentions.

**B. GNIS ID 1146832 Negro Ben Mountain/Ben Johnson Mountain**, Jackson County [summit] [The proponent is Margo Schembre of Wilsonville, 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 Board agrees that 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 motion to approve the name change to “Ben Johnson Mountain” as a commemorative name was passed 22 yeas, 0 nays, and 0 abstentions. Board member Gwen Carr shared the personal history of Mr. Johnson and the commendable efforts of the Oregon Black Pioneers and the Southern Oregon Historical Society to preserve the uniqueness and importance of early African-American settlement in southwestern Oregon.

**C. GNIS ID 1146759 Negro Creek/Freedom Creek**, Douglas County [stream]  
The Board agreed to defer further action until the Interim Committee completes its review and processing and provides the opportunity for competing proposed replacement names to be submitted.

**D. GNIS ID 1138084 Big Squaw Mountain/Sacagawea Mountain**, Douglas County [summit]  
The Board agreed to defer further action until the Interim Committee completes its review and processing and provides the opportunity for competing proposed replacement names to be submitted.

**E. GNIS ID 1118917 Chinaman Hat/Bath Hat**, Wasco County [summit]  
The Board agreed to defer further action until the Interim Committee completes its review and processing and provides the opportunity for competing proposed replacement names to be submitted.

**6. Recent Decisions by USBGN:** President Fisher announced that the U.S. Board on Geographic Names has approved the 26 new names (all Native American names) for unnamed features within the Newberry Volcano National Monument, Deschutes and Lake counties, and Prowell Springs for an unnamed feature in Deschutes County. Also, the name Jim Crow Sands in Clatsop County will be deleted from the GNIS because the feature is actually part of an island already with the official name, Pillar Rock Island.

**7. Other Proposals:** The proposal to name an unnamed hot spring in Harney County with the name “South Harney Lake Hot Spring” continues to be deferred awaiting a potential competing name proposal from the Burns Paiute Tribe. The three competing proposed names to name an unnamed island in the Willamette River near Springfield, “Westview Island, Honk Island, and Bridgebend Island,” have been rejected because the landowner, the Department of State Lands, opposes all three names and the OGNB Board has already indicated that it does not support either name. Also, a proposal has been received to name an unnamed bluff in Jackson County as “Knotts Bluff,” but further action is deferred awaiting review and processing by the Interim Committee.

**8. Additional Announcements:** The COGNA conference scheduled to be hosted in 2021 by the Missouri geographic names authority has been cancelled due to uncertainties involving the COVID-19 Pandemic. OGNB is considering offering to host the COGNA conference in 2022. President Fisher will soon query all OGNB board members by e-mail notice to obtain feedback and opinions on whether or not to proceed with an official offer to host. President Fisher will also query all OGNB board members by e-mail notice asking for suggested dates and locations to schedule our next OGNB board meeting sometime in mid-2021.

**9. Comments from the USBGN Staff:** Jennifer Runyon participated in the meeting and provided comments about pending federal legislation, which would create a federal advisory committee to insure that the USBGN properly processes the elimination of all offensive names of geographic features and federal land units. Open this link to view H.R. 8455 sponsored by Rep. Debra Haaland of New Mexico: <https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/house-bill/8455/text?r=229&s=1>

**10. How to Use the GNIS Retrieval System:** BLM Advisor, Frank Lahm, gave a computer demonstration on how to retrieve domestic names information from the Geographic Names Information System.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:15 pm.

Respectfully submitted:  
Champ Vaughan, Vice-President