

WI Geographic Names Council Meeting

3/24/2022

Attendance: GNC members Carroll Schaal, DNR; Howard Veregin, State Cartographer; Dawn Vick, DOA and Christine Koeller DOT. Also in attendance were Dennis Wiese, Elizabeth Rockow, Diane Milligan, and Kris Goodwill, DNR.

There were no public comments.

1. Anunson Lake from Mud Lake – **No decision. Follow up with Town and County**
 - Two main concerns
 - No proof Anunson was directly associated with the lake though perhaps to the area.
 - Anunson maybe not the best conservation figure for commemoration
 - No local feedback, applicant is not a permanent resident. It would be important for the town to support name change.
 - Wait to hear if there is town and county approval/support and we can take it up again.
2. Big Hill Savanna from ‘Unnamed’ –**No decision. Express technical concerns**
 - Iowa Co did not weigh in; Dane Co has a resolution pending
 - Wait for Dane Co. resolution to avoid conflict. All towns and counties were given more than a 60 day deadline to send in feedback. Attorney Milligan commented no response can be interpreted as no opinion.
 - How do they want it defined as geographical feature? Savanna is not a feature used in GNIS. Is it an area or ridge, hill, etc?
 - Create confusion with Clay Hill Road?
 - We can seek technical guidance from BGN after the county gives feedback.
3. Stickleback Brook from ‘Unnamed’ – **No objection, approve conditionally if it will classified as a ‘designated trout stream’ by DNR.**
 - Under 5 miles but exceptions are made for trout streams. Looks to be close to 3 miles
 - Not officially listed currently as a trout stream, ‘potential trout’ stream upon reintroduction.
4. & 5 Marshall Island from Big Island and Scrub Oak Island from Little Island – **Denied. Not a compelling reason to change an established name.** (note the original brief included the misspelling “Shrub” Oak.
 - Oneida Co. doesn’t approve or disapprove but the Town approves
 - The policy of hesitancy to change an existing feature name unless its derogatory conflicts with the policy reasons cited in the proposal.
 - The documentation on the historical correction based on deeds is incomplete because we don’t know why the established names were chosen over these local names in the first place.
 - Confusion cited doesn’t seem significant enough to warrant the effort to change a name.
6. Silver Stream from Unnamed - **Approved**
 - Town indicated approval in the BGN documentation but did not respond to our request, nor did the County. There is local support from the Historical Society and some landowners.

- BGN completed some research and seems supportive.
- It's a significant stream only tributary to Lake Michigan. Compelling reason to name it since it is a significant unnamed feature.
- Silver Creek would create a duplicate. This would be the only named "stream" in Wisconsin. All others are creeks but stream is an accepted GNIS feature type.

7. Sisu Creek from Unnamed – **No decision, send corrected map back for local opinion**

- Town and county rejected the name because they could not determine the specific stream location based on the information in the proposal.
- A request for clarification was not provided so staff will follow up.

8. Helena Lake from Helen Lake – **Approved**

- County didn't respond
- Name change is supported by other local names 'Helena road' 'Helena cemetery etc. and eliminates duplicate names.

9. to 20.

The Council agreed with staff's decision not to consider the follow proposal because they did not meet minimum size and length criteria, public access and/or other disqualifying criteria.

- Big John Lake (< 10 acres)
- Soup Lake (< 10 acres)
- Hreno Lake (< 10 acres)
- The Rushes Lakes (< 10 acres)
- Butterfly Creek (Criteria not met – 2.5 miles)
- Lunker Creek (Criteria not met – 3 miles)
- Standing Bear Lake (Criteria not met – 6 acres)
- Gelein Bay (Criteria not met – 5 acres)
- Brassow Lake (Criteria not met – 9 acres & self-naming)
- Lassess Lake (Criteria not met – self-naming)

The Lungwitz and Byington Creek proposal did not meet minimum criteria (streams < 5 miles), but they were sent to us via BGN with the expectation we would review. Carroll will contact BGN and convey our decisions and see what their thoughts are regarding if additional review or consideration is needed.

E. Derogatory Geographic Names Task Force

Department of Interior Secretary's Order 3404 declared the sq*** a derogatory name and assigned a task force to generate alternative names for all US recognized features. The list of alternative names is based on other nearby feature names. There is a public comment period open until April 25th before a selection is made. There are 28 geographic features with the sq*** name in WI that will be changed. They will become the federal government's first choice unless they receive other recommendations.

Earlier in the meeting Kris Goodwill, DNR Tribal Liaison, reported that the Department was releasing a press release based on the DOI release in an effort to let people know this is happening and to participate if they desire.

The WGNC could review the names and comment on any that are clearly inappropriate - too close to other features named the same thing or where the name change would clearly cause confusion etc.). However, without the benefit of local input that is about all we can do at this point. We may be asked to comment on the final list and could be asked, after the fact, to change a new name selected by the task force that is locally unacceptable. This could happen in the next year or two.

Carroll will send a Doodle Poll out to schedule another meeting prior to the end of the comment period to discuss any of the 28 proposed names that we might comment on.

DOI Sec. Order 3405 establishes another task force to consider other feature names that may be derogatory and make recommendations. This task force has not been convened yet and could parallel a similar process within DNR. This will generate some future workload for GNC but hopefully on a more relaxed time frame.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 4:20 PM.