

**Forest Service Handbook  
National Headquarters - Washington Office  
Washington, DC**

**Forest Service Handbook 7109.14 – Geographic Names Handbook**

**Chapter 1 - No Name For Chapter**

**Amendment:** 7109.14-Amendment 4

**Effective date:** November 1978

**Duration:** This amendment is effective until superseded or removed.

**Superseded Directive:**

**Approved by:**

**Date approved:**

**Responsible Staff:**

**Explanation of changes:**

## Table of Contents

<b>1 - Board on Geographic Names.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>1.1 - Domestic Names Committee .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>1.2 - Designation of Secondary Base Series Map.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>1.3 - Principles of Geographic Naming.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>1.31 - Commemorative Name Standards .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>1.32 - Derogatory Names.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>1.4 - Names for Administrative Units and Related Sites and Areas.....</b>	<b>5</b>

## **1 - Board on Geographic Names**

Broadly speaking, the purpose of the Board on Geographic Names is to standardize the names of geographic features on maps and in other official publications of the Federal Government. On September 4, 1890, the Board on Geographic Names was established by Executive order. In 1934 the Board was transferred to the Department of the Interior and in 1947 Public Law 242 provided a central authority for standardizing geographic names among Federal departments, and for other purposes.

The Board, jointly with the Secretary of the Interior, formulates Federal Government principles, policies, and procedures related to both domestic and foreign geographic names and determines the choice, spelling, and application of these names for official use.

### **1.1 - Domestic Names Committee**

The Domestic Names Committee of the Board on Geographic Names is comprised of representatives of the Departments of Agriculture, Commerce, and the Interior, and of the Postal Service, Government Printing Office, and Library of Congress. It deals with all name proposals and problems in the 50 States, District of Columbia, Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, and territories and possessions of the United States.

For several years, Forest Service personnel have represented the Department of Agriculture on the Board. A member and deputy are so designated. Most cases on geographic names in the Department have application in areas of Forest Service interest. Cases on geographic names occurring in activity areas of other agencies in the Department are handled through the Department representative.

The Domestic Names Committee of the Board handles questions of conflicts, proper application, and new name proposals. The executive secretary of the Committee is in the Cartography Branch, Topographic Division, Geological Survey.

Name case data and recommendations are submitted to the executive secretary. In the office of the executive secretary of the Committee, reference records are maintained, and investigations are conducted and correlated with all interested Government and other agencies and individuals. Following the assembly and evaluation of the facts on a case, a definition is prepared for the name and the main facts justifying the recommendation are furnished in a docket list to members of the Committee. Generally, the docket lists are furnished to the members at each monthly meeting for consideration at the next meeting in about 30 days. If the review of a name by an interested agency is not complete in this period, it is customary to ask for a reasonable deferment. The Committee endeavors to clear up the older dockets promptly and give early action to each recommendation. To accomplish this, agency requests for deferments should be held to a minimum and to the shortest possible time. Minutes of each Committee meeting are distributed to members, and notice of action taken is furnished to others as required. Promulgation of the approved names then becomes the responsibility of the interested Government agencies. Compiled lists of approved names are distributed periodically in decision lists issued by the Board.

## **1.2 - Designation of Secondary Base Series Map**

The board on Geographic Names has designated published maps covering areas of Forest Service administrative responsibility as base series maps for Federal Government use of names (U.S. Geological Survey Topographic Instructions, bk. 3, ch. 3A9 1961-USGS). This imposes on the Forest Service the significant responsibility of ensuring that the names on such maps are up to date, sound, as far as possible nonduplicated, and in accord with accepted usage.

Names proposed for approval by the Board for use on National Forest maps are referred to the Forest Service for such investigation and comment as may be desirable. Discharge of responsibility will include investigations and comments resulting in complete acceptance or rejection and alternate proposal prior to action by the Board through the Domestic Names Committee.

A greater degree of responsibility is involved in a name proposal originating in the Forest Service. In every case this demands a familiarity with Board functions and the principles applied to name selection and approval.

## **1.3 - Principles of Geographic Naming**

Proposals for new names should conform to the principles established by the Board on Geographic Names (Guidelines for Preparing and Submitting Proposals Regarding Domestic Geographic Names, U.S. Department of the Interior Geological Survey and Board on Geographic Names, 1967).

### **1.31 - Commemorative Name Standards**

It will be the responsibility of the Board on Geographic Names to determine the suitability of a commemorative name for a particular geographic feature. It is the responsibility of the Forest Service, when proposing a commemorative name, to give a complete biographical sketch which will establish the individual's character, reputation, honorable fame, public service (exploration, scientific investigation, heroic act, conservation activity, or other) and association with the feature. An explicit biographical sketch will establish the worthiness of the name for use.

### **1.32 - Derogatory Names**

With regard to geographic names, the Board of Geographic Names will be governed by the following procedures:

4. The disapproval of any new or proposed change of name containing a derogatory term.
2. Stimulation of local proposals for change of names involving such terms as may be found to exist.
3. All such names currently appearing on Federal maps will be reviewed by the publishing agencies, and as the maps are revised the names will be referred to the Board

for review and action.

4. Derogatory terms shall not be used on any new Federal maps or publications as part of a geographic name. When such a term is encountered as being in local usage, it will not be incorporated in the map.

#### **1.4 - Names for Administrative Units and Related Sites and Areas**

Standards for naming administrative units and related sites and areas, including memorials and dedications, are in FSM 1200. Although not included in the geographic names category, it is essential that any changes in the designations be incorporated into map revisions.