Newfoundland and Labrador Geographical Names Board

Department of Environment and Conservation
Government of Newfoundland and Labrador

Annual Activity Report 2007-08

1. MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

It is very pleasing to report solid progress on behalf of the Newfoundland and Labrador Geographical Names Board (NLGNB) for 2007-08 at both the provincial and national levels. The specifics of activities and achievements are outlined below. As in previous years, the board had ongoing dialogue and active consultations with provincial government departments and other public agencies on geographical names issues. This year representatives from the Department of Justice and the Department of Tourism, Culture and Recreation attended board meetings to deal with common concerns. Mr. Peter Armitage, a consultant to the Innu Nation of Labrador, also updated the board on the development of an Innu place-names website.

In that the board operates without an allocated budget to conduct an active geographical names fieldwork program, it relies heavily upon individuals and groups to collect and submit new names, or recommend changes to existing toponomy (place-names) on a voluntary basis. These activities, however, are carefully guided and directed by our Toponymic Information Officer/Secretary to insure that submissions meet the standards of the board's guidelines and principles for geographical naming". In 2007-08, the board continued to process names recently acquired from these voluntary field surveys. In this respect the board acknowledges with gratitude the significant contribution of Mr. Ford Lethbridge of Cartwright for submitting 136 new names from the Cartwright, Packs Harbour and Paradise River areas in Labrador, and Mr George Lee of Bay d'Espoir for 333 names submitted from field research around Gaultois, St. Alban's, Facheaux Bay, Cape La Hune and D'Espoir Brook.

As Chair I want to recognise and express thanks to the board members for their support in achieving our goals and I feel compelled to acknowledge especially the efforts of our Toponymic Officer/ Secretary, Mr. Randy Hawkins. His work in administering our program has been outstanding. Additionally, it is also worth noting Mr. Hawkins has gained remarkable stature as a professional toponymist within Canada and indeed internationally for his contributions in developing standards for improving geographical names data, handling, processing, dissemination and delimitation. The NLGNB ranks as having one of the most active and progressive toponymic programs in Canada because of his work.

As Chair, I can attest that Board is accountable for the results report in this document.

W.G. Handcock
Professor Emeritus in Geography
Chair

2. BOARD OVERVIEW

2a.   Lines of Business

The Newfoundland and Labrador Geographical Names Board (NLGNB) is appointed by the Minister of the Department of Environment & Conservation for three year terms. The administration of the board comes under the Director of Surveys and Mapping Division of the Lands Branch. The work of the board is supported by a Toponymic Information Officer, an employee within the Surveys and Mapping Division.

The main responsibility of the NLGNB is to administer the *Geographical Names Act* (CHAPTER G-3; 1991 c29 s2). This involves the collection and recording of information on the names of places and geographical features; consultation with government and agencies on the selection of place names, or the renaming of places and features; considering and making changes to existing names; collaboration with the Geographical Names Board of Canada (GNBC) on naming standards, practices and principles; holding public meetings or inviting submissions where disputes arise over names and naming practices; and recommending to the Minister for approval the official names of places and geographical features. Section 7 of the *Act* also empowers the board as the final authority on the spelling and pronunciation of the names of settlements and geographical features in the province. Section 9 of the *Act* stipulates that where a provision in the *Act* is inconsistent or conflicts with a provision, term or condition of the *Labrador Inuit Land Claims Agreement Act*, the provision, term or condition of the *Labrador Inuit Land Claims Agreement Act* shall have precedence over the provision of this *Act*.

2b.   Representation

   All meetings are held in St. John's. With the exception of the Chair, all members of the board are public servants. Meetings are normally scheduled to coincide with times when the member for Labrador is in St. John's for other meetings. With the exception of the Chair, there are no remuneration provisions for the board.

Name	Role	Agencies
Dr. W. Gordon Handcock	Chair	Professor Emeritus in Geography, MUN
Ms. Shelley Smith (Resigned in August of 2007)	Vice-Chair	Director, Information Management, OCIO
Randy Hawkins	Secretary	Environment and Conservation
Ms. Michele Wood (Resigned in October of 2007)	Member	Labrador and Aboriginal Affairs
Mr. Stanley Clinton	Member	Director, Urban and Rural Planning Division, Municipal Affairs (Retired)
Mr. Gary Smith	Member	Manager, Sailing Directions Publication, Canadian Hydrographic Service, DFO

2c.   Vision

The vision of the Department of Environment and Conservation is a clean, sustainable
environment and healthy, resilient ecosystems in perpetuity for the social, physical, cultural,
biological and economic well-being of the Province. The *Geographical Names Board Act*, G-3,
RSNL 1990 promotes the cultural aspect of this vision.

The vision of the Newfoundland and Labrador Geographical Names Board is to record and
preserve the oral and written geographical names for functional use and as an important part of
our cultural heritage. These names are made official for use in all government correspondence
and documents, published literature, research reports, newspapers and magazines, road signs,
public buildings and maps and charts throughout the Province.

2d.   Mission

By 2011, The NLGNB will have made recommendations to Government in relation to any new
geographical features and place names.

Performance Measure: Made recommendations to Government

Indicator:
- Processed naming recommendations from the general public and other
  stakeholders.

3.   SHARED COMMITMENTS

As indicated above, the success of the Newfoundland and Geographical Names Program in
2007-08 was largely due to cooperative working partnerships between provincial and federal
government agencies. The following partners played an active role in operational procedures
this year:

- The Earth Sector of Natural Resources Canada and the GNBC Secretariat in providing direct
  access to the federal database;
- Parks Canada by, jointly with the board, approving official names for16 geographical feature
  names in Gros Morne National Park.
- The Department of Fisheries and Oceans for cooperating in the identification of marine and
  coastal features.
- The Canadian Coast Guard in helping resolve local naming inconsistencies between official
  toponyms (as used on maps and charts) and local usage in the Bay of Islands area.

In addition to the various government agencies, the success of the provincial geographical names
program is primarily due to the cooperation and assistance of the local residents within our
province.

4.   HIGHLIGHTS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The provincial geographical names data base was significantly enhanced in 2007-08 when 998 name recommendations were officially adopted on March 20, 2008. These names were published in the April 4, 2008 edition of the *Newfoundland and Labrador Gazette*.
These recommendations (mostly new names) were the result of board decisions made over the last four years.

Another important achievement in the processing of geographical names in Canada was the completion of a two-year project to develop guidelines for the digital delineation of geographical features by a Working Group of the Canadian Geographical Names Board of Canada (GNBC).
This Working Group was chaired by the Director of the Surveys and Mapping Division, (the provincial member of the GNBC), and consisted of toponymists (geographical naming specialists) from across Canada. Our provincial toponymic specialist also served on the Working Group and made the final report at the GNBC meeting in August of 2007 where it was officially adopted.

5.   OUTCOMES

This section provides the results of work done over the past year on the goals as outlined in the 2007-08 Activity Plan. Each goal pertains to an issue of key importance to the Board. In most cases, we have been successful in achieving results on the planned activities. Where an indicator has not been fully met, an explanation is provided.

Issue 1: Data Integrity and Management

Goal 1:   By March 31 2008, the NLGNB will have completed beta-testing of the newly restructured Canadian Geographical Names Service (CGNS) and uploaded the latest additions from the provincial geographical feature names dataset to the federal dataset.

Performance Measure: Completed beta-testing

Indicators	Accomplishments
• .Tested application.	• .Beta-testing completed.
• Suggested design improvements.	• Made suggestions to improve database search parameters. Design improvements have been implemented.
• Implementation of new database fields.	• New database fields have been added to the federal database.
• Documented results of beta-testing and communicated results to CGNS.	• Made an itemized list of existing deficiencies in beta version and communicated ways to improve database searching capacity.
• New records uploaded.	• Approximately 900 new provincial records were uploaded to the federal dataset in the spring of 2008.
• Coordinate revisions for pre-existing records uploaded.	• Positional coordinate updates for existing provincial records have been added to the federal dataset

Issue 2:   **Digital Delineation**

Goal 2**:**   By March 31 2008, the NLGNB will have participated in a working group to
             establish a national set of guidelines for digital delineation.

Performance Measure: Participated in national working group

Indicators	Accomplishments
• Presentation of proposed delineation guidelines to national board.	• This Working Group was chaired by the provincial NL member of the GNBC and consisted of toponymists (geographical naming specialists) from across Canada including our own Toponymic Officer/ Secretary, who made the final presentation to the GNBC. The final report was presented and formally adopted at the plenary session of the GNBC in August of 2007.

Issue 3:   **Internal Business Processes**

Goal 3:   By March 31 2008, the NLGNB will have reviewed and adjusted internal
             processes for Board operations.

Performance Measure: Adjusted business processes

Indicators	Accomplishments
• Membership issue addressed.	• Due to the resignations of two of the board members in the fall of 2007, two new members are in the process of being appointed.
• Finalized policy on annual number of board meetings and meeting schedule.	• Policy finalized; the board will now hold three two-day meetings in a calendar year.

Issue 4:   Communication

Goal 4:   By March 31, 2008, the NLGNB will have increased the visibility and profile of the Board.

Performance Measure: Increased visibility

Indicators	Accomplishments
• Web page created.	• A website is still under development.. This delay is due to a difficulty in finding a consultant to do the work and other work took longer than anticipated.
• Contact new informants in the interior of Labrador.	• New informants were also contacted in Labrador.
• Speaking engagements of the Board.	• The Secretary gave a presentation on the Association of Newfoundland Land Surveyors in Gander.

6.   ACTIVITIES

6a.   Progress on current activities:

In the 2007-08 fiscal year, 238 new geographical names were approved at three board meetings. An additional sixteen (16) feature names were approved for adoption in Gros Morne National Park.

The NLGNB received a request from the Newfoundland and Labrador Historic Sites Association to identify an appropriate geographical feature to commemorate the arctic voyages of Captain Bob Bartlett. After some study and consultation it was proposed to name a prominent but yet unnamed submarine trough in Conception Bay the ***Bartlett Basin.***

In this report period we received new independent field surveys covering the areas of Cartwright; Packs Harbour; Paradise River; Gaultois; St. Alban's; Facheaux Bay; Cape La Hune and D'Espoir Brook. While some of these name proposals have already been reviewed by the board, the remainder will be reviewed during the 2008-09 fiscal year.

6b.   General Inquiry Statistics:

The following statistics are estimated:

2007-08 Inquiry Types	
General public requests for information	75
GNBC Secretariat requests between federal and provincial offices	400
Provincial Government requests	100
New names or name change requests	254
Historical origin inquiries resolved by Dr. Gordon Handcock	50
Raster Amendment Map Requests	25

7.   FUTURE CHALLENGES

- Enhance the current web mapping services using direct access to CGNS data as support layers in specific user applications;
- Contact new informants for geographical naming information within the province;
- Initiate GIS process for feature delineations of NL records;
- Continue with coordinate revision project;
- Complete the remaining Quality Control Application for Names Delineation verifications for the Atlas of Canada;
- Establish protocol between the aboriginal communities and the NLGNB in anticipation of a large submission from the Labtop Innu Names project;
- Development and maintenance of a provincial geographical names program website.

8. FISCAL STATEMENTS

The Board is not required to provide an audited financial statement.

Statement of Expenditures		
NLGNB Expenditures	Total 2007-08 Expenditures	Projected 2008-09 Expenditures
Professional Services (Chair)	$3,350.00	$4,000.00
Meeting Accommodations	$264.97	$1,000.00
Totals	**$3,614.97**	**$5,000.00**

The above stated Expenditures and Projection are certified correct.