

Newfoundland and Labrador Geographical Names Board

Department of Environment and Conservation
Government of Newfoundland and Labrador

2008-09 Annual Activity Report



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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 2008-09 at both the provincial and national levels. The specifics of activities and achievements are outlined below. As in previous years, the NLGNB 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 Environment and Conservation and the Department of Tourism, Culture and Recreation attended board meetings to deal with common concerns.

Currently, the NLGNB operates without an allocated budget to conduct an active geographical names fieldwork program. Rather, it relies upon individuals to collect and submit new names, or recommend changes to existing toponymy (place-names) on a voluntary basis. These activities, however, are always carefully guided and monitored by our Administrative Officer/Secretary to insure that submissions meet the required geographical naming standards of the Board.

During 2008-09, the Board processed names recently acquired from several voluntary field surveys. Among these the Board most gratefully acknowledges the contributions of Mr. Ford of Lethbridge for names in the Pack's Harbour area; Mr. Gary Smith for submissions around Spaniard's Bay; and Mr. George Lee of Bay d'Espoir for toponyms of features on the Gaultois, Facheux Bay, Cape La Hune and D'Espoir Brook National Toponymic Series map sheets. The Board also recommended other names changes in the areas of Eastport; Lamaline; North West River, and St. Lawrence for adoption. In order to preserve our rich cultural history several place names of resettled communities were reinstated under the category of vacated or seasonal settlements.

As Chair, I want to recognize and express thanks to the Board members for their support in achieving our goals. Again, I feel obliged to mention the outstanding efforts of our Administrative Officer/ Secretary, Mr. Randy Hawkins. Largely because of his work, the NLGNB continues to have one of the progressive toponymic programs in Canada.

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



W.G. Handcock
Professor Emeritus in Geography
Chair

2. BOARD OVERVIEW

2a. Mandate and Lines of Business

The Newfoundland and Labrador Geographical Names Board (NLGNB) is appointed by the Minister of the Department of Environment & Conservation for a (3) year term. The administration of the Board falls under the Director for the Surveys and Mapping, Lands Branch, Department of Environment and Conservation. The work of the NLGNB is supported by an Administrative Officer, who is 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).

The Act empowers the board with the following duties:

- 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
- recommend 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 latter shall have precedence over the provision of this *Geographical Names Board Act*.

2b. Representation

All meetings are held in St. John's. With the exceptions of the Chair and Mr. Stanley Clinton, 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
Mr. Gary Smith	Vice Chair	Manager, Sailing Directions Publication, Canadian Hydrographic Service, DFO
Randy Hawkins	Secretary	Administrative Officer, SMD, Lands Branch, Environment and Conservation
Ms. Kathy Michelin	Member	Senior Policy Analyst, Labrador and Aboriginal Affairs
Mr. Stanley Clinton	Member	Director, Urban and Rural Planning Division, Municipal Affairs (Retired)
Ms. Linda Badcock	Member	Historic Sites Officer, Tourism, Culture and Recreation

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 previously indicated, the success of the Newfoundland and Labrador Geographical Names Program in 2008-09 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, with respect to the names of geographical names in Terra Nova and Gros Morne National Parks.
- The Department of Fisheries and Oceans, with respect to names of coastal and underwater features and fishing grounds around Newfoundland and Labrador.
- The provincial Department of Natural Resources, in providing assistance in the collection and verification of geographical names in the southern Labrador area.
- The provincial Department of Transportation and Works, in respect to names of geographical features along the route of the Labrador Highway.
- The provincial Department of Municipal Affairs, in respect to names of incorporated towns and local service districts.
- The provincial Department of Tourism, Cultural and Recreation, in respect to names of geographical features on tourist and touring maps.
- The provincial Department of Labrador and Aboriginal Affairs, in respect to names of geographical features in the Land Claim areas.
- The Nunatsiavut Government, in respect to names of geographical features in the Inuit Land Claims area.
- The Innu Nation, in respect to names of geographical features in the Innu Land Claims area.

Additionally, 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 enhanced in 2008-09 when 265 name recommendations were officially adopted on January 29, 2009. These names were published in the February 13, 2009 edition of the *Newfoundland and Labrador Gazette*.

These recommendations (mostly new names) were the result of NLGNB decisions made over the last (2) years.

Another important achievement was the initiation of a provincial Commemorative Geographical Naming Program. In keeping with the 2009 Bartlett Celebrations the Board played an active role in the approval of a submarine feature in Conception Bay called the Bartlett Basin. The approval of the Bartlett Basin received the assent of the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador as well as the federal government. The Truxtun-Pollux Shore is another noteworthy feature that commemorates the rescue efforts of St. Lawrence and Lawn residents following the shipwrecks of the U.S.S. Truxtun and the U.S.S. Pollux on February 18, 1942. The rescue efforts during that disaster continue to profoundly impact local residents. The site of the disaster has become a place of pilgrimage and a popular tourist attraction.

An aboriginal website was also launched by the Innu Nation of Labrador in November of 2008. The launching of this website was the culmination of a (4) year research project. This website, www.innuplaces.ca, is the first comprehensive website dedicated entirely to aboriginal place names. The Surveys and Mapping Division of the Lands Branch and the NLGNB are credited as significant contributors to that website.

Newfoundland and Labrador contributed to the populated places layer of the National Scale Frameworks Atlas of Canada Program. This populated places layer was released on www.geogratis.com in March of 2009.

During the past year the employment of Google Earth has greatly enhanced the processing of geographical names. The application is an effective means of easily obtaining information from the general public and other stakeholders. Google Earth can also be used as an effective tool to educate our younger generations about the importance and relevance of toponymy in the preservation of our cultural heritage. Plans are to invite selected schools to participate in a Google Earth toponymy project during the upcoming year. It is hoped that such a project will raise the awareness of our provincial geographical naming program and engage students in the process.

The recent appointments of our (2) newest Board members will ensure that the Board can efficiently fulfill its mandate for the upcoming 2009-10 fiscal year. The term of the current NLGNB will expire on December 31, 2009. The Board will be eligible for reappointment at that time.

5. OUTCOMES

The NLGNB will be reporting on the same objectives and indicators each year as indicated in the 2008-11 Activity Plan.

This section provides the results of work done over the past year on the objectives as outlined in the Board's 2008-11 Activity Plan. Each objective 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

With the advent of better mapping and computer technologies, standards for data management are continually changing. The Board strives to ensure that the provincial dataset is up to date with the current standards.

Objective 1: By March 31, 2009, the NLGNB will focus on the improvement of our provincial geographical names dataset to ensure that it meets with existing Canadian national standards.

Performance Measure: Improvement of the provincial geographical names dataset.

Indicators	Accomplishments
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Geographical names collected and entered in dataset.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">1,069 new provincial records were uploaded to the federal dataset in the 2008-09 fiscal year.Google Earth is now being used as a very efficient medium for contacting new informants and for the verification of new and existing geographical features and place names.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Revisions made to current names in dataset.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">A total of 1,943 existing database records were edited and uploaded to the federal dataset in the 2008-09 fiscal year.This total would also include any positional coordinate updates.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Revisions made to feature coordinates to improve accuracy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Coordinate updates are necessary to improve the accuracy of our geographical features and place names. Coordinates adjustments often take place as a direct result of

	<p>new information from members of the general public.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Approximately 500 positional coordinate updates for existing provincial records were added to the federal dataset in 2008-09.
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Issue 2: Digital Delineation

Digital delineation is a new and precise method of mapping the geometry of a given geographical feature or place name. Many of the geographical features in the Province are based on point locations. Digital delineations of these features will enable feature geometries to be identified. While much of the water features have already been identified as part of the national hydrology layer, many of the inland and coastline features of the Province still need to be captured digitally. These standards are developed on a national level and the work will require several years to complete.

Objective 2: By March 31, 2009, the NLGNB will have implemented a digital delineation process in accordance with nationally recognized guidelines.

Performance Measure: Implementation of digital delineation process.

Indicators	Accomplishments
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Features delineated digitally and entered into a geometry database.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Initiated the investigation of federal digital delineation protocols in February of 2009.• Further investigation is required before an optimal digital delineation strategy can be developed.• Initiated review of current federal digital delineation processes.• It is necessary to identify and extract any features that may have already been identified or captured. While much of the water features have already been identified as part of the national hydrology layer, many of the inland and coastline features of the Province still need to be captured digitally. This process will take several years to complete.• Digital delineation will commence as soon as the review of existing federal protocols has been completed.

Issue 3: Commemoration Naming Program

The Province currently does not have a commemorative naming program for place names. However, the development of a commemorative naming program is timely because the Board has been approached by other agencies to assist with the commemoration of certain historical events.

Objective 3: By March 31, 2009, the NLGNB will work on a strategy for a provincial Commemorative Naming Program.

Performance Measure: Work progressed on strategy.

Indicators	Accomplishments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research conducted on existing programs in Canada. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consulted the Geographical Names Board of Canada (GNBC) and other provincial and territorial naming authorities in Canada. This process has concluded. • In principle, the Board agreed to adopt the national set of guidelines on the commemoration of geographical features in the Province. • Some of these guidelines have been modified slightly in order to reflect the cultural and or regional needs in the Province. • The NLGNB will investigate other regional commemorative naming policy stakeholders in the 2009-10 fiscal year.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Names proposed to provincial and federal jurisdictions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An undersea feature, the Bartlett Basin was presented to the Geographical Names Board of Canada for consideration. This feature would commemorate the achievements of Captain Robert A. Bartlett as one of the foremost Arctic explorers of the 20th century. The Bartlett Basin was formally adopted by the Geographical Names Board of Canada and the Canadian Hydrographic Service (CHS) on November 20, 2008. The

	<p>Government of Newfoundland and Labrador also formally adopted the Bartlett Basin on January 29, 2009. Other activities in connection with the Bartlett Basin are planned for the summer of 2009.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Truxtun-Pollux Shore was formally adopted by the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador on January 29, 2009. This feature commemorates the brave rescue efforts of the residents of St. Lawrence and Lawn during the shipwrecks of the U.S.S. Truxtun and the U.S.S. Pollux in 1942.
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Issue 4: Communication

Communication has become an issue since the work of the Board has gained a higher profile due to increased use of the internet and an increased number of inquires from the public about the Province’s place names.

Objective 4: By March 31, 2009, the NLGNB will have increased the visibility and profile of the Board.

Performance Measure: Increased visibility and profile.

Indicators	Accomplishments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Web page updated and maintained. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The current divisional website has been updated. • Additional links may be added in the next year.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contacts made with new informants in the interior of Labrador and other areas in the province. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New informants were also contacted in Labrador but no feedback has been received to date. • During 2008-09 several new naming submissions came about as a result of contact made with new informants. • The Board also received new naming submissions in the Spaniard’s Bay area of the

	<p>Province.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Board has received naming submissions as a result of a Community-Based mapping project in the Change Islands area of the Province. This submission will be processed during the 2009-10 fiscal year.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of speaking engagements on the Board. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Secretary gave a presentation on the Bartlett Basin to the Geographical Names Board of Canada. • The Board invited departmental Accountability Framework personnel to an information sharing session. • The NLGNB invited members of the Historic Commemorations Naming Program to an information sharing session on Commemorative Naming.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Articles published. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Lost And Found Land”, <i>Canadian Geographic</i> magazine, published in April of 2008. • “Off The Map”, <i>The Telegram</i> newspaper, published on April 21, 2008.

6. ACTIVITIES

6a. Progress on current activities:

In the 2008-09 fiscal year, 265 new geographical names were approved at (3) Board meetings.

The NLGNB received a submission of names in the Change Islands area of the Province. The submission arose from a Community-Based Mapping project which was conducted in the fall of 2008. The Surveys and Mapping Division participated in this project by providing the researchers with all of the official geographical names in the Change Islands area. These names will be discussed during the 2009-10 fiscal year.

In this report period, the Board processed submissions in the areas of Pack's Harbour, Spaniard's Bay, Gaultois, Facheux Bay, Cape La Hune and D'Espoir Brook. Other names in the areas of Eastport, Lamaline, North West River, and St. Lawrence were also recommended for adoption. In an attempt to preserve the place names in our rich cultural history, several resettled communities throughout the province were reinstated as vacated or seasonal settlements.

The employment of Google Earth during the past year has greatly enhanced the processing of geographical names. The application will continue to be used in the future as an effective means of easily obtaining information from the general public and other stakeholders.

6b. General Inquiry Statistics:

The following statistics are estimated:

2008-09 Inquiry Types	
General public requests for information	50
GNBC Secretariat requests between federal and provincial offices	300
Provincial Government requests	50
New names or name change requests	265
Historical origin inquiries resolved by Dr. Gordon Handcock	35
Raster Amendment Map Requests	15

7. OPPORTUNITIES and CHALLENGES

Enhance the current web mapping services using direct access to CGNS data as support layers in specific user applications.

- Implement the use of Google Earth as a method of contacting new informants for geographical naming information within the province.
- Initiate a GIS process for feature delineations of Newfoundland and Labrador records.
- Continue with the 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.
- Continue the development and maintenance of a provincial geographical names program website.

8. FISCAL STATEMENTS

The Board is not required under the *Transparency and Accountability Act* to provide an audited financial statement.

Statement of Expenditures		
NLGNB Expenditures	Total 2008-09 Expenditures	Projected 2009-10 Expenditures
Professional Services (Chair)	\$3,538.70	\$5,500.00 ¹
Meeting Accommodations	\$567.58	\$1,000.00
Totals	\$4,106.28	\$6,500.00

The above stated Expenditures and Projection are certified correct.

¹ The projected annual expenditures for 2009-10 have been increased because the Chair is now a permanent resident of Salvage. This increase is due to the associated travel costs for (3) NLGNB meetings in 2009-10.