

Missouri Board on Geographic Names

May 20, 2021

James C. Kirkpatrick State Information Center

600 W. Main St.

Jefferson City, MO 65101

Voting Members Present: Chair Designee John Dougan, Vice Chair Chris Barnett and Tony Spicci. Participating virtually were Bryan Chinn, Brett Chloupek, John Fisher, Alan Foreman, Debra Greene, Melanie Hans, Ron Heimbaugh, Gary Kremer and Henry Sweets.

Voting Members Absent: David Nail, Joseph Gillman, Lynn Morrow and Frank Nickell.

Non-Voting Members Present: Secretary Brian Rogers.

Guests: Alicia Struckhoff, Missouri Department of Conservation.

Chair Designee John Dougan called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. and thanked everyone for participating.

After calling roll, Dougan indicated this is Tony Spicci's last meeting as the Missouri Department of Conservation's representative on the board and thanked him for his service.

Dougan then asked for additions to the agenda. Chris Barnett explained that he would like to add a discussion of derogatory place names to the continuing business section. So moved by Tony Spicci. Motion seconded by Barnett. All in favor. None opposed. Motion approved.

Approval of MOBGN Meeting Minutes from Nov. 19, 2020

Henry Sweets moved to approve the minutes as presented. Motion seconded by Tony Spicci. All in favor. None opposed. Motion approved.

COGNA Update

Chris Barnett stated that he participated in a COGNA Executive Committee planning meeting earlier in the year at which it was decided it was too late to plan a conference, virtual or in-person, for the summer of 2021. He went on to explain that Oregon will likely host the 2022 conference, but Missouri will have the option to host in 2023, if still interested. Barnett also explained that lagging attendance in recent years means that the conference is looking at going only virtual, but nothing has definitively been decided yet.

Discussion of Derogatory Naming Issues

Chris Barnett indicated that he had recently been in touch with USGS staff member Jenny Runyon to discuss how various states are handling existing derogatory names. He noted that some are being proactive in renaming features with offensive names, while others are moving cautiously, giving particular attention to local usage. Barnett then reminded the

board that several derogatory feature names were discussed at the November 2019 meeting, noting that no action was then deemed necessary.

Barnett asked the board if it would consider becoming more proactive with such feature names if the US BGN provided more direction. Tony Spicci replied that it is hard to answer without looking at a list of specific names and/or terms, adding that the only way to be proactive is to have an agreed upon list of terms that are deemed “offensive.” Barnett replied that the US BGN was proactive years ago in renaming features with names offensive to Japanese Americans and some features offensive to African Americans. Debra Greene agreed with Spicci, noting that even if that were to happen, the board would need to develop a way to reach out to the surrounding community for input. She added that doing so could leave the board in a bad position if an appropriate constituency was not approached.

Spicci asked if there were examples of other boards proactively trying to rename features with derogatory names. Barnett replied that features including the term “squaw” are currently receiving the most attention, noting President Obama’s executive order renaming all administrative features on federal land including the term and several efforts by state boards.

Gary Kremer stated that the State Historical Society of Missouri receives several emails a month from individuals asking if the derogatory names found in the Ramsey Files, the source of many such names in the state, can be updated. He added that the society’s response is always that you cannot change a historical document.

John Dougan brought up the fact that all records of a derogatory name would not disappear just because the name is changed. He then stated that he does not think a list of potentially offensive terms from the US BGN would be helpful with local residents if used as a justification for a name change.

Barnett stated that he will report to Runyon that the board feels it should remain reactive to derogatory name change attempts in Missouri and that a list of derogatory terms on which to act would not necessarily be helpful. The board would, however, be responsive to any requested actions from the US BGN.

Board Reappointments

John Dougan indicated that, in September 2019, citizen members Chris Barnett, Brett Chloupek and Debra Greene were all reappointed to terms ending in September 2023. In the coming months, Secretary Brian Rogers will contact citizen members with terms expiring in 2021 to gauge their interest in continuing on the board.

Discussion of Bandy Creek Proposal

Chris Barnett began by summarizing the proposal, stating that the proposed “Bandy Creek,” is a currently unnamed, 2.5-mile-long tributary of the Bourbeuse River. The stream’s head is located 2.6 miles southeast of Melody Lake in Franklin County’s Boone Township. It flows west, then north, before feeding into the Bourbeuse River 3.9 miles south of Mineral Lake. The name would commemorate seven members of the Bandy family who died when their vehicle was swept away in a flash flood near their home

along the stream on June 15, 1957. They were returning to their farm when rising floodwaters stranded them on a small knoll while attempting to wait out a storm. The deceased were Mrs. Alice Bandy, age 52; her daughter-in-law Andrea Bandy, 18; Andrea's one-year-old baby Phyllis; Alice Bandy's daughter Winifred, 16; and her sons Ben, Herbert and Howard, aged 18, 15 and 13, respectively. All seven victims are buried at Evergreen Baptist Church Cemetery, approximately 1.5 miles from the stream.

Barnett asked for a motion to consider recommending the proposed name to the US BGN. So moved by Debra Greene. Motion seconded by Henry Sweets.

Before opening the floor to discussion, Barnett reminded the board that when adding names to GNIS, it is generally preferred that a proposed waterway feature be assigned the longest, straightest course, though sometimes these two may be in conflict. He then explained that the proponent, Paul Lawrence, originally wanted to name a collection of streams, but that the US BGN limited him to a single feature, so, on their recommendation, he settled on the stream and route identified in the proposal materials.

John Dougan stated that if this proposal is approved, it would be a good to publicize the new name, much like the board did with the Archer Alexander Creek several years ago. It would provide both good publicity for the board and a way to improve flash flooding awareness.

Barnett then explained that though the location of the incident is not on the proposed route, Bandy family remains were found throughout the area, including along the proposed "Bandy Creek." The proposed route also twice crosses the only road in the area, Evergreen Loop, providing opportunities for signage. Barnett then asked if there were any concerns about the proposal. None were forthcoming.

Brian Rogers added that Presiding Franklin County Commissioner Tim Brinker is in favor of recommending the feature name.

Barnett then called for a vote on the motion to recommend the proposed name, "Bandy Creek," to the US BGN. All in favor. None opposed. Motion approved.

Discussion of Other Proposal Inquiries

John Dougan stated that the board received two additional proposals from St. Louis County to name unnamed creeks, but that the materials came in after the deadline to distribute proposals to members ahead of this meeting. Brian Rogers added he would distribute the materials ahead of the November board meeting.

Messenger Memorial Update

John Dougan reminded attendees that longtime board secretary Jane Messenger recently passed away. He then stated he thought it appropriate to begin considering features that could possibly be named in her honor after the five-year period required by the US BGN Principles, Policies and Procedures document.

Chris Barnett relayed that the email from Messenger's USGS colleagues stated she passed away from COVID-19 complications on Jan. 2, 2021, and that she requested an Irish-style wake after her passing that will hopefully be scheduled some time over the summer. More details to come. Barnett then praised Messenger, stating there would be no MOBGN without her approaching Walter Schroeder and Don Lance about its creation back in 1993 or 1994. She was also responsible for bringing the first COGNA Conference to the state in 2000 and played a large role in planning the conference toponymic tour each year it was held in Missouri.

Barnett indicated he had recently discussed with Jenny Runyon whether Messenger would appreciate having a feature named after her without some sort of personal connection. He then stated perhaps the next COGNA conference hosted in Missouri could be dedicated to her memory. Additionally, if deemed necessary, a feature bearing a derogatory name could be renamed in her honor. Barnett then indicated the appropriate actions would be considered when the time is right and/or the necessary amount of time has passed.

Henry Sweets added that Messenger was always the individual that kept board business running smoothly, that her research presentations at meetings were always impeccable and that she will be greatly missed.

Discussion of Next Meeting

John Dougan stated that Nov. 4, 2021, is the tentative next meeting date.

John Fisher stated that the Missouri Folklore Society annual meeting starts November 4, so another date would be preferred. Debra Greene concurred, explaining she is also involved with that meeting.

Dougan suggested Nov. 18, 2021. The rest of the membership present concurred. Rogers stated he would book the conference room space and pass the date along to the membership not present.

Adjournment

Chris Barnett moved to adjourn. Motion seconded by Tony Spicci. All in favor. None opposed. Motion approved.

Meeting adjourned at 2:02 p.m.