



**MINUTES (DRAFT)**  
**FOR THE MEETING OF THE**  
**HAWAI'I BOARD ON GEOGRAPHIC NAMES**

DATE: April 14, 2016  
TIME: 1:00 p.m.  
PLACE: Leiopapa A. Kamehameha Building  
Office of Planning, 6<sup>th</sup> Floor Conference Room  
235 S. Beretania Street  
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

**AGENDA ITEM 1: Call to Order**

Mr. Kama'ano Mills called the meeting to order at 1:08 pm.

The following were in attendance:

**MEMBERS:** Kalani Akana (Office of Hawaiian Affairs), Holly McEldowney (Department of Land and Natural Resources), Kamana' o Mills (Department of Hawaiian Home Lands), Noenoe Silva (University of Hawai'i)

Leo Asuncion (Office of Planning) arrived at 1:20 PM

Kamana' o Mills left the meeting at 1:45 PM

**ABSENT:** Marques Marzan (Bernice P. Bishop Museum), Ryan Morales (Land Survey Division)

**STAFF:** Joan Delos Santos (Office of Planning)

**ADVISORS:** Renee Louis

**GUESTS:** None

**AGENDA ITEM 2: Review of Meeting Minutes for March 10, 2016**

Ms. McEldowney moved to approve the minutes, and Mr. Akana seconded the motion. The board members present voted unanimously to approve the meeting minutes of March 10, 2016.

**AGENDA ITEM 3: Public Comments.**

There were no public comments.

**AGENDA ITEM 4: Announcements**

Ms. Delos Santos made the following announcements:

1. Ms. Delos Santos submitted all Maui Island names to US BGN on March 30.
2. The Office of Planning received a letter on March 30 from Ms. Heather Riggins of Princeville, Kauai, Hawaii asking that the name of the mountain in Princeville, Kauai known as “Hihimanu” be changed to “Hahalua.” Ms. Delos Santos emailed information on the Board as well as the Hawaii Geographic Names Application form to Ms. Riggins, and has not received the completed forms back yet.
3. Ms. Delos Santos received a phone call on March 28 from a Mr. Dave Lee, of Astronomy Magazine, asking to confirm the spelling of “Mauna Kea,” as he had been told that the HBGN had modified the spelling to be “Maunakea.” Ms. Delos Santos looked up the name in the spreadsheet, and also referred to the meeting minutes in order to confirm that the last decision by the HBGN had been to leave the name as two words. She informed Mr. Lee that the spelling is in fact “Mauna Kea.”
4. Mr. Arthur Buto has been hired as the new Statewide GIS Program Manager and will begin on April 18<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Buto will be staffing the board beginning with the May meeting.

**AGENDA ITEM 5: Board Discussion.**

Because Mr. Asuncion had not arrived, the Board voted to take the agenda items out of order. Item 5b was discussed before Item 5a.

**5b: Formation of Permitted Interaction Group (PIG) to research possible addition of new place name, Lō‘ihi, to the USBGN Geographic Names Information System (GNIS) database.**

Ms. Delos Santos informed the board that her research had revealed that the name “Loihi” does exist in a US BGN database, but it is not in the Domestic Names database. In fact, because the feature is more than 12 miles from the coastline, it is instead in the Undersea Features database, which is maintained by the National Geospatial Intelligence Agency (NGA), and is under the purview of the Advisory Committee on Undersea Features, which makes recommendations to the US BGN.

Because the feature exists in a US BGN database, HBGN would not be naming a new feature, but would be either changing the spelling of an existing name (if adding the diacritical markings to the name Loihi) or changing the name altogether (if the HBGN determines that it should be named something other than Loihi). The name change request would be submitted to the Undersea Features Advisory Committee, in much the same way that name change requests are submitted to the US BGN. That Subcommittee would then make a recommendation to the US BGN.

Mr. Mills asked whether a PIG would still be required, and Ms. Delos Santos said that yes, if the Board desired a name change, the formation of a PIG to conduct research and outreach would still be necessary.

Ms. McEldowney asked whether the name change is under the purview of the HBGN, and Ms. Delos Santos responded that if the Board wanted to change the name in some way, then it would be under the purview of the Board. Ms. McEldowney asked whether all Federal agencies were required to follow the decisions of the Undersea Features Subcommittee, and Ms. Delos Santos replied that it seemed that they would have to do so, because the Undersea Features Subcommittee would make a recommendation to the USBGN, which in turn would vote on it. If they then voted to change the name, all Federal agencies would be required to use the name.

Mr. Asuncion clarified that 0-3 miles is considered to be State Waters, 3-12 miles is considered to be Territorial Seas, whereas anything from 3 miles to 200 miles is considered to be Federal Waters.

Ms. McEldowney asked how far Loihi was from the coastline, and Ms. Delos Santos recalled that it was about 22 miles from the coastline.

Mr. Mills proceeded with the discussion on the formation of a PIG. Mr. Akana asked who would need to be consulted, since the feature is so far out to sea. Ms. Delos Santos responded that the PIG would probably need to consult with the scientists who use the existing name, as well as the family that believes that the name should be Kama'ehu, as well as any others who might have an interest or an opinion as to the correct name. Ms. Silva pointed out there are some who have expressed that it should be named Kama'ehu based upon the chant distributed at the last meeting, but also noted that the claim/rationale required more research, as she was not certain that the chants were actually referring to the feature in question. Another person who has expressed interest in correcting the name is Mr. Bobby Camara of UH Hilo.

Mr. Mills asked whether there were any volunteers to serve on the PIG. Ms. Louis, Ms. Silva, Mr. Mills all volunteered. They also suggested asking Mr. Marzan and Ms. Losch whether they would be willing to serve on the PIG. Each of these potential PIG members would be able to reach out to others for their knowledge and input.

Mr. Mills asked how long the PIG should be allotted to conduct their research and present their findings. The group agreed that 6 months would likely be sufficient.

The procedure for establishing the PIG was briefly discussed: the Board decides at one meeting to form a PIG, and at a subsequent meeting, votes on the members of the PIG.

Ms. McEldowney moved to create a Permitted Interaction Group for the purpose of researching the correct name of the seamount currently referred to as Loihi to determine whether either the spelling or the name of the feature itself should be changed. Mr.

Akana seconded the motion. All those present voted unanimously in favor of the motion. The specific assignment and members will be determined at the next HBGN meeting.

**5a: Continued Discussion: HBGN request to send a letter to Hawai'i's Congressional delegation regarding changing the legal spelling of the state's name from "Hawaii" to "Hawai'i"**

Mr. Asuncion reported that the Office of Planning (OP) has a new deputy Attorney General, Ms. Dawn Takeuchi Apana, and gave some background on her previous positions and her credentials. He stated that Ms. Apana was asked to research whether there is anything in State statute that describes a procedure to change the official name of the state. She found that Hawai'i Revised Statutes is silent on the matter, i.e., it does not provide any guidance. Ms. Apana also stated that since 2003, there have been 18 bills and 2 resolutions relating to Hawaiian language – topics have been as varied as requiring that software be able to use proper diacritical markings, making sure that State letterheads use proper spelling of Hawaiian words, encouraging proper spelling of Hawaiian words in State documents, etc. The latest related legislation, [Senate Bill 895](#), introduced in 2015 by Senator English, requires that all letterheads, documents, symbols, and emblems of the State and other political subdivisions include accurate and appropriate Hawaiian names and language and establishes references for accurate, appropriate, and authentic Hawaiian names and words, including proper Hawaiian spelling and punctuation. Mr. Asuncion created a list of these bills and resolutions and will share his list with the group. Senate Bill 895 was not heard during this session. The bill that was most closely related to changing the spelling of the name of the state was [House Bill 709](#), introduced in 2011, which was eventually deferred. In addition to encouraging the proper spelling of any Hawaiian words and place names in State documents, House Bill 709 stated that the 'okina "shall" be included when spelling the name "Hawai'i." Mr. Asuncion has not yet researched the reason(s) that the bill was deferred. He would have to look in the capitol journal to see the discussions of the committee in order to ascertain that information. Mr. Akana said that his understanding is that State agencies usually testify against these bills, because of the amount of work it would create for agency staff. He also noted that this information will be helpful in order to help to craft a bill that would be more likely to pass, by understanding the reasons that these bills have not passed previously.

Mr. Asuncion described the options available to HBGN to change the spelling of the name of the state. They are:

1. Submit legislation (noting again that House Bill 709 most closely resembles the action that the HBGN would like to take with respect to the spelling of the State name). He also noted that it will be important to have provisions that will allow State agencies to support it – for example, that new Hawaiian word spelling requirements only need to be implemented for new documents/signs, etc. and when documents, signs, etc., are re-printed – the agencies wouldn't have to go and change all existing documents, etc., upon passage.

2. Use the existing statutes that encourage the correct spelling of Hawaiian words and place names to just start using the correct spelling of the State, and hope that it catches on and becomes standard procedure to use the ‘okina in the spelling of the State name. This, however, would not change the legal name of the state.

Ms. Delos Santos suggested that one way to make passage of such a bill more likely would be to make the bill less comprehensive and more focused – a bill to address ONLY the State name, rather than all Hawaiian words and names. Ms. Louis further suggested that a proposed bill not even address the use of the name in documents, signs, etc. – but focus only on the legal name of the State – and not address implementation, which documents it would apply to, etc.

Mr. Asuncion commented that this is a good time to start working on legislation, and suggested working with Senator English, and the chairs of the House and Senate Hawaiian Affairs committees.

Ms. Silva asked whether existing laws on the books that “encourage” the use of correct spellings, rather than mandating it, conflict with the fact that State agencies are required to use the spellings of place names in Hawai‘i as specified by the HBGN. Mr. Asuncion stated that the difference is that these bills did not only address place names, but all Hawaiian words, including place names. Ms. Silva asked why the Board’s decision on the spelling of the state of Hawai‘i, which is a place name, wouldn’t automatically mean that everyone has to spell it that way (with the ‘okina). Mr. Asuncion stated that it was because the U.S. Board would not accept the Hawai‘i Board’s authority/decision on the matter, because it is not just a place name, but is in fact the legal name of the State, so there would need to be some sort of statutory solution. He stated that perhaps in a bill such as House Bill 709, if the language said “may use proper spelling for Hawaiian words” and “SHALL use proper spelling for the State name of Hawai‘i” it might have a better chance of passing.

Ms. Louis raised the point that if a bill were to focus only on the State name, or, in a broader bill, only make it mandatory for the State name, it might cause the public to say that it should be all Hawaiian words, and not just the State name. She suggested that the Board response might be that although it would be beneficial to address all Hawaiian words, that it would be best, as a first step, to start with the State name, which most people agree should be spelled with the ‘okina.

Ms. Louis asked whether it would be easier to get the issue on a ballot, rather than trying to pass legislation. Mr. Asuncion pointed out that couldn’t happen until at least 2018. Ms. Delos Santos asked whether it’s very difficult to get a question on the ballot. Mr. Asuncion replied that it can be more difficult, partly because there is more legal scrutiny. Ms. Delos Santos stated a ballot question could be a good approach, because it brings the question to the public. Mr. Akana noted that the Board could work to promote the idea, using various methods including advertising and social media.

Mr. Asuncion reiterated that all of this should be discussed with interested parties, stakeholders and legislators before submitting any legislation or proposed ballot question. Ms. Delos Santos noted that it could be important to reach out to and engage those who may be opposed to such an idea before submitting any legislation.

Mr. Mills had to leave the meeting at 1:45 PM. Mr. Asuncion then began chairing the meeting, which still had quorum.

Mr. Asuncion noted that the Office of Planning had drafted a letter to the Congressional Delegation, as originally envisioned, but that since we now had other options, sending such a letter might be premature. He stated that a better approach might be to attempt to address the issue legislatively, at the State level.

Ms. Delos Santos asked what the process would be. For example – would the Board as an entity approach Senator English and others, or would individual members, acting as private citizens do so? Mr. Asuncion said that he thought that the Board could be a part of the initiative, but perhaps OHA or DHHL would include proposed legislation in their legislative package for next session, with OP acting as a supporting entity to the proposal.

Ms. Louis noted that if the Board adopted the correct spelling of the State name after successfully passing legislation, it would become clear to State agencies that in addition to the spelling of the State name, that they are required to follow the place name decisions as acted upon/adopted by HBGN.

Mr. Asuncion stated that he sensed a movement and support for the correct usage of the Hawaiian language, and as such, this would be a very good time to address the issue of the spelling of the State name. The best approach would be for a group, perhaps led by OHA, DHHL or OP, to discuss the idea with Senator English and work with him between legislative sessions

Mr. Asuncion stated that someone, probably Senator English's staff, could get copies of all of the previous bills, with testimony and committee reports in order to be sure to address concerns that may have stalled the other attempts at correcting the spelling of the State name, and anticipate any questions or opposition that may arise from introducing such legislation. Although it would take effort, it could lead to easier and smoother passage of the bill.

Mr. Asuncion said that the best thing to do would be for someone to go to Senator English now and ask if he's interested in working on this topic for next session. The group would make it clear that there is support from OP, OHA, DHHL, the HBGN, etc. for this effort.

Ms. Delos Santos asked what the next steps would be, and stated that probably someone would simply need to volunteer to take the lead. She thought that it would be best for a State agency to take the lead. Mr. Asuncion stated that if it is determined that the HBGN

should take the lead, then it would be through the Office of Planning, since the Board is housed in OP. Ms. Louis thought that OP should take the lead. Ms. Delos Santos asked what agency would be able to be most effective in shepherding this through, would be most likely to be successful, has existing relationships or experience with the Hawaiian Affairs committees, etc.

Ms. Silva thought that the topic should be put on the next agenda, so that in the meantime, Board members could go back to their respective agencies to determine the level of support within their agencies. Ms. Delos Santos said that it could include a discussion on which agency would be best positioned to take the lead.

Ms. Silva asked for a copy of Mr. Asuncion's list of bills, including who testified, who introduced the bills, etc., in order to understand who the supporters and opponents were, so that it would be easier to determine which agency or group might be most effective as the lead. Mr. Asuncion agreed to edit the document/list for clarity and send it out to the board.

Mr. Asuncion informed the Board that he will be in Washington D.C. during the week of May 9, and hoped to talk with the Congressional Delegation and would raise it to them at that time, in order to let them know that this action is being considered. He said that usually, they are supportive on initiatives being undertaken by the State. He will also ask them, what federal/congressional action should be taken if it doesn't seem that a State action will suffice.

Mr. Asuncion asked Ms. Delos Santos to find out from the U.S. Board, before he goes to Washington D.C., whether State legislation would be accepted as the basis to change the legal name of the State in the US BGN database (Geographic Names Information System – GNIS). Mr. Asuncion noted that the U.S. Board should have some idea as to what they would accept on the federal level – would it require an Act of Congress? Ms. Louis and Ms. Delos Santos agreed that they'd always heard that it would require an Act of Congress, but when Ms. Delos Santos called to confirm that with the U.S. Board, they said that they weren't completely sure, that it might be a State issue. There seems to be a great deal of uncertainty. Mr. Akana asked whether the renaming of Mt. McKinley to Denali was a similar example, and Ms. Delos Santos responded that a more apt comparison might be the attempted renaming of the State of Rhode Island from "Rhode Island and Providence Plantations" to simply "Rhode Island." In that case, it was a legislatively referred proposed constitutional amendment – so it seemed to be a State issue.

The group discussed the fact that a ballot initiative would require a great deal of voter/public education, which could be very costly.

Ms. Delos Santos asked what the process was to get a proposal for a constitutional amendment on the ballot. Mr. Asuncion stated that it was still a legislative process – the legislature would determine whether the question would be approved to go onto the ballot. She noted that if it could be done legislatively, it appeared that would be the

simplest route. Mr. Ascuncion clarified that this was contingent upon Ms. Delos Santos finding out whether the US Board would accept legislation. If the US Board says that legislation is good enough, that would be the easiest. Ms. Delos Santos confirmed that she would contact the US Board the next day.

**AGENDA ITEM 6: Review of Kaho‘olawe Island Place Names.**

Ms. Silva noticed that some of the Kaho‘olawe names that were previously reviewed don’t look right to her, and/or don’t conform to current HBGN naming guidelines. Ms. Louis noted that many of the names were determined by the Kaho‘olawe Island Reserve Commission (KIRC). Ms. Silva said that perhaps the HBGN should revisit all of the Kaho‘olawe names and the board members agreed.

Ms. McEldowney asked whether HBGN would inform KIRC that HBGN was revising their name decisions. Board members agreed that KIRC should be notified.

The Board reviewed twelve Kaho‘olawe island place names. Of these, five were determined to be correct in the GNIS database, four were corrected, one required a name change, one required the addition of a variant name, and one was determined to require more research. Individual name decisions can be seen below.

**Names reviewed and decisions:**

*Status Key: 1 = Not Hawaiian; 2 = Not Reviewed; 3 = More Research Needed; 4 = HBGN Corrected; 5 = Already Correct in GNIS; 6 = Name Change; 7 = Other*

Status	Feat ID	Feature Name	Feature Class	Corrected Name	Source	Notes
5	1924940	Ahupū Iki Bay	Bay	Ahupū Iki Bay	PNH/HPN	4-14-16
6	1924942	Big Gulch	Valley	Hakioawa Gulch	HPN	HBGN: Current version of Clark HPN has Hakioawa as the Hawaiian name for this gulch and <b>Big Gulch should be the variant</b> , 4-14-16
7	359804	Kaho‘olawe	Island	Kaho‘olawe	PNH	HBGN: <b>Add Kohemālamalama as a variant</b> as it is in PNH and an ancient name, 4-14-16
3	1924955	Kaukaupapa Beach	Beach			4-14-16
5	1924957	Kaulana Beach	Beach	Kaulana Beach	PNH	HBGN: associative,



						4-14-16
5	360936	Kealaikahiki Channel	Channel	Kealaikahiki Channel	PNH	4-14-16
4	1926997	Kuheeia Bay	Bay	Kūheia Bay	PNH	4-14-16
5	1935658	Kula Division	Civil	Kula Division	PNH	HBGN: associative, 4-14-16

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**Names reviewed and decisions (continued):**

Status Key: 1 = Not Hawaiian; 2 = Not Reviewed; 3 = More Research Needed; 4 = HBGN Corrected; 5 = Already Correct in GNIS; 6 = Name Change; 7 = Other

Status	Feat ID	Feature Name	Feature Class	Corrected Name	Source	Notes
5	1924962	Molokini Shoal Marine Life Conservation District	Park	Molokini Shoal Marine Life Conservation District	PNH	HBGN: associative, 4-14-16
4	1924944	Hanakanae‘a Beach	Beach	Honokanai‘a Beach	HPN	HBGN: Current version of Clark HPN has Honokanai‘a and Hanakanai‘a as the variant, 4-14-16
4	361473	Kuheeia (historical)	Locale	Kūheia	PNH	<del>HBGN: culturally sensitive—request this name be removed from publication, 4-14-16</del>
4	358454	Ahupūiki Gulch	Valley	Ahupū Iki Gulch	HBGN	HBGN: changing according to PNH/HPN and HBGN Guidelines; KIRC: recommended Ahupūiki (previous to the Oct 2000 decision), 4-14-16

**AGENDA ITEM 7: Review of Lāna‘i Island Place Names (Time Permitting).**

The Board did not finish reviewing Kaho‘olawe Island place names, so did not have time to discuss Lāna‘i Island place names.

**AGENDA ITEM 8: Adjourn**

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, May 12, at 1:00 p.m., at the Office of Planning Conference Room. Mr. Akana moved to adjourn the meeting, Ms. Silva seconded and the motion was carried unanimously. Mr. Leo Asuncion adjourned the meeting at 3:00 pm.