

Background on HBGN, and Iao Stream named feature in GNIS:

The Hawaii Board on Geographic Names is authorized under [Chapter 4E](#), HRS, which states that "[...The board shall designate the official names and spellings of geographic features in Hawaii...](#)"

The Hawaii Board works in partnership with the [US Board on Geographic Names](#), which is a federal body created in 1890 and established in its present form by Congress in [Public Law 80-242](#) in 1947.

The original source of the database containing official names for geographic features and places in Hawaii was the US Board on Geographic Names. In the US Board's database (the geographic names information system - GNIS), there is a feature (ID # 359480) called 'Īao Stream, with a variant name of Wailuku River.

http://geonames.usgs.gov/apex/f?p=136:3:0::NO:3:P3_FID,P3_TITLE:359480,%E2%80%98%C4%AAo%20Stream

It appears that the name was first recorded by the US Board in 1914 and confirmed again in 1954. The Hawaii Board verified the name (and added diacritical marks) in 2012, based upon the work of Mary Pukui: see Pukui, Mary Kawena, Samuel; H. Elbert and Esther T. Mookini. Place Names of Hawaii. 31-Dec-1974. Revised and Expanded Edition. Honolulu, Hawaii: University of Hawaii Press, 1974.

The official name of the stream is currently 'Īao Stream, and by law, any change to the name, even if changing back to an earlier name, can only be accomplished by sending an application to the Hawaii board. If approved, the decision would be forwarded to the U.S. Board for consideration (the U.S. Board usually follows the recommendation of the Hawaii Board).

20150214 – Message from USBGN re: Stream vs. River Designation

The BGN has no criteria for applying the generic stream or river to a feature. Nor is there a prescribed hierarchical aspect for doing so (contrary to the belief of some), since the naming of features is an organic thing, and is/was often done without the person/people applying the original name having (complete) knowledge of the entire drainage system, and whether a feature was a first, second, or third order stream. The generic applied by the first namers was based on their perception of the feature, the generics that they were familiar with from their previous life experiences (where they were originally from), and/or the generics used in the surrounding area (if they were known). As an example, in Virginia "Little River" flows into "Goose Creek".

Please let us know if you have any follow up questions.

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