

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

DATE: October 5, 2021
TIME: 2:30 p.m.
PLACE: Leiopapa A Kamehameha Building
Office of Planning and Sustainable Development
235 S. Beretania Street, 6th Floor Library
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

AGENDA ITEM 1: Call to Order

Mr. Marzan called the meeting to order at 2:33 p.m.

The following were in attendance:

MEMBERS: Marques Marzan (Bishop Museum)
Meyer Cummins (Land Survey Division)
Brad Ka'aleleo Wong (Office of Hawaiian Affairs)
Arthur Buto for Mary Alice Evans (Office of Planning and Sustainable
Development)
Kapā Oliveira (University of Hawai'i at Mānoa)
Holly McEldowney (Department of Land and Natural Resources)

ABSENT: Niniau Kawaihae (Department of Hawaiian Home Lands)

GUESTS: Dr. Robert Underwood
Ms. Hope Cristobal
Mr. Jimmy Teria
Ms. Anna Marie Arceo
Ms. Elyssa Santos
Mr. Carlos Madrid
Ms. Teresita Flores
Delia Ulma (member of the public)
Casey McCoy (geography student)
Reeshay Lanier (intern, DBEDT OPSD)
Jenny Runyon (US BGN, USGS)
Bobby Camara (member of the public)

**AGENDA ITEM 2: Introduction of Kumisión I Fino' CHamoru's Guam Place Names
Committee**

Mr. Marzan welcomed members of the Kumisión I Fino' CHamoru.

Dr. Robert Underwood, Chair of the I Na'an Lugåt, the place names committee of the Kumisión I Fino' CHamoru introduced Ms. Hope Cristobal (the Chair of the Kumisión), Mr.

Jimmy Teria (a member of the Kumisión and the committee), Anna Marie Arceo (Executive Director), Ms. Elyssa Santos (lead staffer for the place names effort), and Mr. Carlos Madrid (researcher at the Micronesian Area Research Center).

The work of the Kumisión parallels the work of the HBGN and they are hoping to learn from HBGN's experience. It is responsible for ensuring honor and respect to the traditions and cultural knowledge of the CHamoru people and maintenance and preservation of the Chamoru language, including place names. A lot of place names have sprung up over the years due to military facilities and planning and development, e.g., "Kaiser" appears in Guam too. In establishing the work, there's a three member committee – Dr. Underwood, Mr. Teria, Senora Teresita Flores. They are interested in learning more about HBGN and what it does with plan unit and development; how it relates to the US BGN; how it coordinates different agencies together. In Guam, the agencies are not in the same unit – public works, statistics and plans, department of land management; they are independent with some overlapping authority.

Hawai'i has had a geographic names organization for decades, formally established in 80's by statute comprising various agencies within State government – Office of Hawaiian Affairs, State Surveyor's Office, Office of Planning and Sustainable Development, University of Hawai'i, Hawaiian Home Lands, Land and Natural Resources, and the Bishop Museum (a private non-profit institution). By statute, HBGN has authority over determining the names of geographic features and State agencies are required to use those names. Other agencies may have jurisdiction over naming man-made structures and are not required to consult with HBGN. However, HBGN may forward those name decisions to the US BGN for inclusion in the GNIS database (Geographic Names Information System).

Mr. Marzan added that the Board also reviews names that may have changed over time from their original feature names and usually seeks to restore traditional names to places. A recent decision on the island of Maui was to return the name of Wailuku River from 'Īao Stream. HBGN encourages the community to engage in the naming process, as in the case of the naming of a new feature resulting from the 2018 Kīlauea eruption.

Dr. Underwood noted that the Guam place names committee does not have authority over man-made features but provides input on correct spelling. He brought up the Hawaii Kai development on O'ahu, named for Henry Kaiser, and also Diamond Head, which may lead to other area names, e.g., Diamond Head Estates. How does the Hawai'i Board deal with that?

Mr. Wong noted that improper names ; a lot of it has to come from the community. Maybe something we need to look into in the future. Community involvement and the push to use traditional names.

Dr. Underwood noted that unlike HBGN, they are trying to insert the Guam place names committee in the plan unit development process, as a group of people to consult in order to bring traditional and historical awareness to the naming process. Otherwise, developers and

landowners may ignore or be ignorant of the multi-cultural context of a location. He asked about the relationship between the HBGN and USGS. He has some limited experience with the changing the name from **Agaña** to **Hagåtña**; the US government seems to be looking for a single authoritative organization with which to consult.

Ms. Runyon recalled the meeting in 1998 at which they worked on the **Hagåtña** name change together when Dr. Underwood was a Congressman. The US BGN does look to local boards and commissions and would like to have one united recommendation from the jurisdiction. It has been working with HBGN for many years, restoring the writing marks on topographic maps.

The US BGN has come a long way in the last 20 years toward recognizing local historical, indigenous native names. Federal agencies now have a tribal consultation policy. It would probably be very open to recognizing traditional Guam names and removing names that might have been imposed on the people of Guam. The issue of local use and acceptance is important; US BGN makes decisions, but locals have to live with the result and have to bear the costs of confusion. Maybe in the short term, signs reflect both names, until the “new name” comes back into favor.

The new Secretary of the Interior is Laguna Pueblo. Indigenous names and name changes are important to her. Department leadership is addressing a lot of names, restoring historical and former names of places. The timing is perfect to reignite this relationship between Guam and USGS. Virtual attendance at US BGN meetings is welcomed.

Coincidentally the USGS was contacted recently by the World Fact Book which manages place names around the world. They asked about a contact in Guam.

Dr. Underwood noted that federal agencies, primarily the DOD have a lot of influence on place names, e.g., Mount Schroeder, is named after the second naval governor of Guam. Coastal Zone Management is making maps, working with the water environmental research institute. They have renamed all of the water basins, and hardly anyone ever thinks about them. In renaming them, had to figure out where they are. Many of the original names were related to military facilities.

Ms. Runyon asked him to forward those changes; NOAA, FWS, and DOD are on the US BGN. NWS uses the maps for typhoons. Everything revolves around maps: “whoever gets to Google first wins.”

Mr. Wong stated that OHA has commented on place names in the past often as part of an environmental review; they are the office that advocates for those matters. Dr. Underwood said that similarly in Guam, there’s an office of CHamoru affairs. The CHamoru voice is often given primacy, but not always.

Ms. Santos asked how they can establish a relationship with USGS and asked if they would they have access to the GNIS? They have their own database system and would like to use that to update the GNIS.

Ms. Runyon noted that the GNIS is still offline, but is being updated. When it's back online, the download/extract covering the place names of Guam will be available. The Kumisión can work thru the list to let USGS which names should be changed (USGS staff update the GNIS). The Kumisión could become the names authority for Guam and provide updates to US BGN.

Ms. Santos noted that they have a working spreadsheet of names, with names by village, by region, aligned with current orthography. She asked if the USGS has a relationship with Google or Apple maps? How do they get data for their map platforms?

Ms. Runyon responded that at the beginning of the year Apple Maps emailed her to ask for the January minutes of the US BGN meeting. They apparently use them to update their records. She is scheduled to meet with Google Maps in early November. The GNIS is one of many sources that they use for geographic names; she doesn't know how they resolve names if a local user's/contributor's place name conflicts with the GNIS.

Furthermore, Dr. Underwood noted that Apple is a commercial enterprise and promotes / highlights some places over others.

Mr. Camara noted that the Guam GNIS file, dated 8/27/2021, is available for download downloadable from USGS (<https://geonames.usgs.gov>).

He also noted that at HAVO, they are making an effort to change place names back to traditional names from western names. They compile lists, consult with their kupuna group, make recommendations, and provide documentation to HBGN, which then sends naming decisions up to the US BGN.

Dr. Underwood asked about how long it takes for acceptance and widespread use of a place name once a change is approved.

Mr. Camara talked about the "Hawaiian Renaissance" movement that became prominent 50 years ago. It included a revival of the Hawaiian language. The use of diacritical marks became more widespread. The inclusion of those diacritical marks in the spellings of the feature names in the GNIS is important because federal agencies are then required to use them in maps, documents and signage. For the State, people try to be current; it is a mark of language literacy and "coolness." There is a lot of respect when honoring names. The diacritical marks are modern, commonly used about 50 years ago or so. They are there to help those unfamiliar with the Hawaiian language to pronounce Hawaiian words. Some newspapers or documents may not include the diacriticals because of technical issues.

Mr. Buto shared his screen showing the GNIS website, <https://geonames.usgs.gov> and also the downloaded Guam place names snapshot from August 2021. **Hagåtña** is showing the writing marks, but few, if any other place names are. Ms. Runyon mentioned that many of the names that appear in the current view of the GNIS will no longer be displayed, because they are not under the purview of the US BGN, e.g., Feature Classes of airports, bridges, etc. The Guam place names committee could use this list as a starting point. Ms. Santos said that they have a hard copy of this list that they're working through

Dr. Underwood said that USGS provides topo maps for each congressional district on a regular basis. He clarified that they only have jurisdiction in Guam. The Northern Marianas – Saipan, Rota, and Tinian – are separate jurisdictions. There are some differences in how places are named – a “beach” in Guam is named like the ocean (next to the water); in Saipan, they would reference the sand.

Ms. Santos noted that the Guam download file from the GNIS is dated August 2021 and the last update date of the data is 1981, but some individual records say 2014 or 2015. It's a good base layer, but they need to be updated.

Ms. Runyon said that the USGS doesn't have the direct connection to the communities. The Kumisión can do a lot – get the word out about what the goals are for place names; encourage the community to step up and share their knowledge; go out into the community and hold community meetings. They could start with school children and college students; take this on as a project. This encourages that language restoration; get them involved in research.

Ms. Cristobal asked about the criteria by which input is accepted for name changes, does the US BGN accept names submitted by anyone? The Kumisión has been designated as the authority over Guam place names. They will do the groundwork in order to facilitate the return of the use of their indigenous names.

Ms. Runyon responded that anyone can submit a proposal to the US BGN. There are very active place name authorities in some states that take charge of the effort. If the USGS receives a name proposal from other individuals or agencies, they will turn it back to those states' BGNs. The US BGN would not make decision until the state's BGN acts on it. The US BGN would not make a name decision without input from the Kumisión first.

With respect to the database, the interim solution that's available now does not include attachments like the citations. Phase I was the initial effort to collect names for topographic maps; Phase II went state-by-state to collect names from other sources. The Pacific Islands were finished in the early 2000's.

Dr. Underwood noted that military holdings are pretty extensive; they name a lot of things on their own. In some cases people are already used to the military acronyms / abbreviations for places and features.

Ms. Runyon noted that the USGS retains responsibility for reservoir names (sometimes difficult to distinguish from lakes or other water features), but not for other manmade structures and facilities. The US BGN could approve a name change for a reservoir or a hill, but not a park. Dr. Underwood also noted that some traditional names remain, but the pronunciation has been changed because the population is made up of military personnel. The US BGN currently does not provide any pronunciation guidance.

Ms. Santos said that she liked the variant option in the GNIS. There may be some difficulty dealing with indigenous place names versus names associated with clans, which are also very important. Having a place name with a variant name is a good thing.

Mr. Wong said that in Hawai‘i, some places have multiple traditional names or traditional names may compete with widely used names. Including variant names is a good way for people to learn the traditional names associated with familiar places. Names are a good way to reclaim a space.

Mr. Marzan thanked the Guam members for the rich conversation.

AGENDA ITEM 3: Review of Meeting Minutes for September 7, 2021

Ms. Oliveira suggested a revision of the wording regarding global concatenation.

MOTION: Mr. Cummins moved to accept the minutes of September 7, 2021 with the revision; Ms. McEldowney seconded the motion.

The members present voted unanimously to approve the meeting minutes of September 7, 2021 with the revision.

AGENDA ITEM 4: Public Comments

None

AGENDA ITEM 5: Announcements

Mr. Wong sent a link to the article by Bobby Camara appearing in *Ka Wai Ola* about the Board approving the name “**Kama‘ehuakanaloa.**”

Mr. Buto sent the Board members a link to the georeferenced image of the old survey map showing the location of **Alanaio** and **Pi‘inaio**. Ms. Runyon confirmed that as seen on the map, the source of the **Alanaio** can be located in the area of the lower ponds. Then if evidence is found later of the stream originating in the area of the upper ponds, the Board can submit a revision at that time.

AGENDA ITEM 6: Discussion and Action on Kaluaopalena rock

Ms. Ulina, a long-time resident of Kalihi, shared information about Kaluaopalena Rock, which is also the name of the 'Ili in which she lives.

AGENDA ITEM 7: Review selected place names on the island of Hawai'i (Camara)

This item was not discussed.

AGENDA ITEM 8: Adjourn

Mr. Marzan adjourned the meeting at 4:55 p.m.