

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

DATE: April 2, 2024  
TIME: 2:00 p.m.  
PLACE: Leiopapa A Kamehameha Building  
Office of Planning and Sustainable Development  
235 S. Beretania Street, 6<sup>th</sup> Floor Library  
Honolulu, Hawai‘i 96813

*[0:00:00]* **AGENDA ITEM 1: Call to Order**

Mr. Marzan called the meeting to order at 2:05 p.m.

The following were in attendance:

**MEMBERS:** Marques Marzan (Bishop Museum) [remote]  
Meyer Cummins (Land Survey Division) [remote]  
Lilliane Makaila (Department of Hawaiian Home Lands (DHHL)) [remote]  
Keith Gutierrez (Office of Hawaiian Affairs) [remote]  
Holly McEldowney (Department of Land and Natural Resources) [in-person]  
Arthur Buto for Mary Alice Evans (Office of Planning and Sustainable  
Development) [in-person]

**ABSENT:** Kapā Oliveira (University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa) [remote]

**GUESTS:** Lena Pahia [in-person]  
Bryce Moor (KHON2) [in-person]  
Regina Hilo (Department of Land and Natural Resources) [in-person]  
Bobby Camara (retired) [remote]  
Jenny Runyon (USGS) [remote]  
Others (see Appendix) [remote]

*[0:02:45]*

**AGENDA ITEM 2: Review of Meeting Minutes for March 1, 2024**

*[0:03:42]*

**MOTION:** Mr. Cummins moved to approve the minutes of March 1, 2024. Ms. Makaila seconded the motion.

*The members present voted unanimously to approve the meeting minutes of March 1, 2024.*

*[0:04:08]*

**AGENDA ITEM 3: Public Comments**

No public comments.

[0:04:21]

**AGENDA ITEM 4: Announcements**

No public announcements.

[0:04:40]

**AGENDA ITEM 5: Discussion and decision on Island of Hawai‘i**

Mr. Marzan explained that this item is on the agenda at the request of a Board member to initiate discussion about the official name of the Island of Hawai‘i. The Board can only take action on items that are on the agenda.

Mr. Buto explained that the discussion is about the official name of the Island of Hawai‘i, that is the name as it appears in the USGS’ Geographic Names Information System database (GNIS). The primary name in the GNIS is the name and spelling that all federal agencies are required to use in any maps, documents, signage, brochures, etc. when referring to a particular geographic feature. The primary name in the GNIS does not usually affect common or local usage. A notable recent exception might be the designation of Ahu‘ailā‘au as the name for “Fissure 8.”

Ms. Makaila shared her screen in which she demonstrated accessing and searching the GNIS (<https://geonames.usgs.gov> > click on ‘Domestic Names’ > click on ‘Search Domestic Names’ > type in a feature name to search (and/or other criteria) and click on ‘Query’). She highlighted “Island of Hawai‘i” in the GNIS search and pointed out that other islands have simpler names – Kaua‘i, O‘ahu, Maui, Moloka‘i, Lana‘i, Kaho‘olawe – but the Island of Hawai‘i’s might be so named to reduce confusion with the name of the State. The discussion today will be around the inconsistency and possibility of changing the name to Hawai‘i.

Mr. Buto noted that the general sentiment of the phone calls and emails received was surprise about the issue and unhappiness about the short comment timeframe. The Board is not in a rush to make a decision and welcomes public participation and feedback in the process.

Mr. Marzan called on members of the public who had comments and questions.

[0:15:40]

Leila Kealoha from Puna, Hawai‘i Island.

Ms. Kealoha noted miscommunication about the renaming of the island. She asked that the information about what is being proposed be clearly articulated and communicated to the public and the media.

Mr. Marzan thanked Ms. Kealoha for her comments and suggestions and stated that the Board will designate a media spokesperson for future communication.

[0:17:52]

Bobby Camara, Island of Hawai‘i.

Mr. Camara referred to the results of Ms. Makaila’s demonstration of the GNIS search capability. Under the name of the feature that was found there is a “Details” link that displays variant names for that feature, as well as other information about the name.

He has been doing research into place names for Hawai‘i Volcanoes National Park for almost forty years. The purpose of the GNIS is to standardize names, but a problem that the GNIS has is outreach to the community to further understanding of what it is and what role it fulfills. The GNIS is for federal agencies; State agencies have their own set of rules. Mr. Camara stated that not everyone will be happy with the Board’s decision, regardless of what it is. But the decision is about standardization for maps and written documents.

[0:22:10]

Hui Ho‘ōla ‘Āina.

He asked who requested the name change and what Constitutional rights does the Board have to change the name of a place and what is the federal definition for Hawai‘i and how is it being used by the concerned entities. He feels that the name of the island has been around historically for many years and doesn’t need to be changed.

Mr. Marzan clarified that the statutory authority of the Board is to ensure that place names in the State are identified and spelled correctly. Since the 2000s the Board has been reviewing feature names to include appropriate diacritical marks in the spellings [where the meaning and origin of the name is clear] in both the State and federal systems.

[0:28:05]

Tara Rojas.

She has two questions: 1) by when does a decision have to be made? How often does the Board meet and how often does the public need to follow up on this issue? And 2) over what names does this Board have authority?

Mr. Marzan explained that the Board meets monthly and it was requested at the last meeting that we discuss this issue today. The Board can only discuss and make decisions on items that are on the agenda. The discussion is just starting and a decision will not be made today. The Board engages with the community to gather input and feedback on feature names; decisions are not arbitrary. It will be some time before the Board is close to making a decision on this matter.

Ms. Makaila clarified that the Board’s kuleana rests with geographic feature names – pu‘u, islands, bays, mountains, etc. Often appear in maps and federal government documents. Airport names [and man-made features – roads, bridges, buildings, parks, etc.] are not the Board’s kuleana.

She also addressed questions in the chat that the Board's intention is not to change the inoa Hawai'i in the feature name. The intention is to look at the name of the geographic feature, currently Island of Hawai'i. Her preference is to look at the traditional name or commonly known name, e.g., Hawai'i or Hawai'i Island, but there has to be a full discussion to include community comments and community mana'o.

[0:34:17]

Lanakila Willard.

She does not believe that the Board has any authority to change anything that belongs to the Kingdom of Hawai'i. In the many historical documents that she has dating back to the Kingdom, the Republic, the Territory, and the American Legislature, the island is referred to as "the Island of Hawaii," no 'okina, or "Moku o Keawe." It doesn't make sense to change it to anything else just to "standardize" the name.

[0:36:42]

Kiara Lorenzo Rodrigues.

The mo'olelo of Hawai'iloa states that in his dreams he sees Mauna a Wakea and he comes to the island on his wa'a and names the island after himself and then names the other islands after his children, except for Maui, which already had its name.

The Great Mahele gave the name of this land as Moku o Keawe, Hawai'i. These names need to be understood and protected. Asks that the Board help ensure that the history is told correctly and that future generations understand where the names came from.

The island is also called Moku o 'Umi because of the ties to Liloa, especially in the ahupua'a of Hāmākua. She does not believe that the Board has the authority to change the name of the island. She wants to ensure that the Hawaiian language is put first and that changes are not made to make it easier for people to understand and that none of the history will be erased by changing a name. For example, many of the allodial titles are incorrectly written; false titles hold false names that have been changed, which is very important for securing sovereignty. She hopes that the Board understands the mo'olelo and the mana inoa as Hawai'iloa and the lines of Keawe are very rich and very well today.

[0:39:37]

Nalei from Maui.

She went to the website and didn't find any details about this agenda item. She did view the recording of the March 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting and got a sense of the discussion and research that the Board undertakes for these feature name reviews. Her understanding of the current discussion about the name is like a legal name for a person versus a common name or a nickname, and that the alternatives being proposed are "Hawai'i" or "Hawai'i Island."

Mr. Marzan confirmed that this meeting is the first opportunity for the Board to talk about the name and is the beginning of a longer discussion that will include engagement with the community.

Ms. Makaila was not aware that the official name of the island is “Island of Hawai‘i” and she looked at the official names of the other islands which are just “O‘ahu,” “Kaua‘i,” “Maui,” etc. She and another Board member raised the question about the appropriateness of

[0:47:28]

Luahiwa Namahoe from Hilo.

She would like to clarify what the naming issue is trying to resolve – ambiguity in the GNIS database between the State name, the county name, the island name. Wants to caution about unintended consequences. Remembers that “Island of Hawai‘i” has been used since her childhood and does not recall that “Hawai‘i Island” was used at all at that time.

[0:50:25]

Lena.

She shared her mana‘o. The consistent name when referring to the island – the Big Island of Hawai‘i, Hawai‘i Island, Island of Hawai‘i – is “Hawai‘i.” No matter what you want to call it, its name remains the same, “Hawai‘i.” If you want to use a place-based name, then it’s “Moku o Keawe.”

[0:51:46]

Keala.

No response (audio issues?)

[0:52:40]

Lilliane Makaila.

She polled attendees on the call who are from the Island of Hawai‘i to weigh in on whether they would have concerns about changing the island name to “Hawai‘i.”

[0:53:26]

Kalei Kailikini originally from Moloka‘i, but currently a resident of the Island of Hawai‘i. Her father’s family is from Waimea, Hawai‘i, so she considers it her island now. Her generation didn’t have the benefit of Hawaiian studies and history that the more current generation has. She is not a native speaker of Hawaiian, but her children and grandchildren are, and her late husband was. With the lack she has to catch up and research. She thinks that the spark started by this discussion. She wants to preserve the names. Protecting her homeland means everything; protect this special place that helps to feed the rest of the State.

[0:58:27]

Bobby Camara.

He appreciates the discussion. His great-grandparents came to Hāmākua on Hawai‘i to work sugar in the mid-1800’s and never left. The name of the island is Hawai‘i. He has no objection to the name being just “Hawai‘i” with an ‘okina.

[1:00:30]

Kyla Turner.

She is a County of Hawai‘i Youth Commissioner but is speaking in a personal capacity. As a young person she doesn’t know much about the history, but as a previous speaker noted, “Island of Hawai‘i” is how the island was referred to in the Kingdom days. She is curious about how the other islands were referred to back then. As an ‘ōpio of Hawai‘i the island has just been “Hawai‘i” or “Moku o Keawe.” She asks that the Board help the community research and understand the historical and traditional names for the island so that they can collectively come to an agreement.

Mr. Marzan complimented Ms. Turner on her knowledge and insight. We learn from, support, and uplift each other to better understand our kuleana to our ‘āina and to our community.

[1:04:20]

Missy.

She is a new resident on the Island of Hawai‘i; her husband is from O‘ahu. She has a lot of respect for the culture. How do we maintain involvement and follow along. Do we meet on a monthly basis; when do the agendas come out.

Mr. Marzan clarified that the Board does meet on a monthly basis and that this item will be on next month’s agenda; meeting packet items are uploaded onto the HBGN website prior to the meeting.

To facilitate public participation in the meetings, Ms. Makaila asked that the schedule of meetings for the year be posted on the HBGN website. Mr. Buto stated that the website will be updated to include placeholders for the rest of the Board meetings through the end of the calendar year. The Board meets on the first Tuesday of each month from 2pm-4pm.

[1:08:05]

**MOTION:** Mr. Buto moved to continue the discussion of this item at the next meeting of the Board. Ms. McEldowney seconded the motion.

*The members present voted unanimously to continue discussing this item at the next meeting of the Board.*

Mr. Buto asked people to put their email addresses in the meeting chat if they want to be included on the Board’s email distribution list.

[1:09:42]

**AGENDA ITEM 6: Discussion and decision on selected feature names on the Island of Hawai‘i.**

Mr. Camara met with Hawai‘i Volcanoes National Park’s Kupuna group. They are continuing to discuss feature names, including **Lua Poholo**. He will report back next month after the Kupuna group meets later this month. He will put together a list of preliminary names to be addressed.

He also spoke to Ku‘ulani Auld at the Kona Historical Society. She sent him information about **Mizota’s Kīpuka**. Mizota was a Japanese carpenter who worked on the mountain. This kīpuka is below and to the right of **Pu‘u Ikaaka** and to the right of **Waha Pele**. No one had any information about **Pu‘u Ikaaka** itself. He will forward the email about **Mizota’s Kīpuka** which is an interview between Ku‘ulani Auld and Frank Silva.

Mr. Camara suggests that for a future meeting we include Larry Kimura, Puakea Nogelmeier, Naomi Losch, and/or others for a high-level kūpuna discussion about the use of ‘okina and kahakō.

[1:22:50]

**MOTION:** Mr. Buto moved to concatenate **Pu‘uikaaka** with an ‘okina in pu‘u and change the Status to “7” – we have exhausted our available references and resources and will reconsider the spelling if some additional evidence surfaces. Ms. Makaila seconded the motion.

*The members present voted unanimously to concatenate **Pu‘uikaaka** with an ‘okina in pu‘u and change the Status to “7.”*

[1:23:35]

**AGENDA ITEM 7: Discussion and decision on selected feature names on O‘ahu.**

[1:24:17]

[358757] **Diamond Head.** Ms. McEldowney noted that this is a State Park; she asked if the Feature Class, “summit” is appropriate. In common usage, the name **Diamond Head** refers to much more than just the summit. The GNIS shows **Koko Head**, **Pu‘u‘ōhulehule**, and **Mauna Kea** are listed as summits; **Punchbowl** is listed as a crater.

**Le‘ahi** and **Lae‘ahi** are listed as variants as are **Diamond Hill** and **Kaimana Hila**. Ms. Makaila recommends further research into the variant names to get a more complete understanding of the place name.

Ms. McEldowney noted that the name is almost 200 years old; there may be some consideration for it as a historic name. It is known nationally and internationally. There is no federal land ownership.

Ms. McEldowney also noted that the State can designate an Alternate Name, which carries the equivalent weight for State agencies as the primary name.

Mr. Cummins agreed that more research into the traditional and historical names is needed; he is looking at a survey map from 1870 with the **Diamond Head** name on it. Ms. McEldowney found that the name **Diamond Head** was first recorded in 1825.

Ms. McEldowney had boundary questions as well. In common usage **Diamond Head** refers broadly to an area beyond the crater. Ms. Runyon noted that the GNIS does not include boundaries for the extent of a summit feature.

Ms. Makaila found that GNIS indicates that **Diamond Head** is designated as a National Natural Landmark. Ms. Runyon stated that because that's designated by the National Park Service, there may be an issue with a name change.

Ms. McEldowney noted that the State Department of Defense would be impacted by a name change, the community college might be affected also.

[1:37:03]

**MOTION.** Ms. McEldowney moved that the Board continue to research what name should apply to the feature now known as **Diamond Head**. Mr. Buto seconded the motion.

*The members present voted unanimously to continue to research what name should apply to the feature now known as **Diamond Head**.*

[1:37:26]

[363581] **Punchbowl.**

Ms. Makaila shared some information from the GNIS. Feature class: Crater; variants: Punch Bowl, Punch-Bowl, Punchbowl Hill, Puowaena, Puowaina, Puu-o-waina, and Pu'uwaina. Past decisions Punchbowl (1/1/1954) and Punchbowl Hill (5/6/1914).

Puakea Nogelmeier did some extensive research when he was at Kamehameha Schools. Mr. Camara will reach out to him to see if he can share the results of his research with the Board.

Melia Lane-Kamahele added that Punchbowl is the name given to the National Memorial Cemetery. The federal government holds the fee title for the land within the bowl of the crater. Ms. Makaila noted that DHHL has lands along the outside of the crater. She has some maps associated with a regional plan including Papakōlea, Kalāwahine, and Kewalo Homesteads. There is also a 14 acre parcel along the outer slopes near the elementary school that Papakōlea Homestead groups are planning for community and cultural uses. She would like to look into the major landowners in that area to get a better understanding of who has kuleana regarding Puowaina.

Kiara Lorenzo Rodrigues.

She brought some historical and cultural context into the discussion. At the time of the Kingdom, disease was rampant, four out of five kanaka died, many are buried there. There are a lot of iwi kūpuna in this area. This is a leinaaka'uhane, a pulling point for the 'uhane after they die; through here the 'aumakua help on the journey to the gods.



[1:43:46]

[358471] **Aimuu Gulch.**

Ms. Makaila shared some information from the GNIS. Feature class: Valley; no variants. Her preference is to remove the word “Gulch” from the name, but there’s not enough information to change the “Aimuu” spelling.

Mr. Camara asked about the dates that are shown in the GNIS. Ms. Runyon explained that Decision Date is the date that the US BGN made a decision about a name; the Decision Card attached to the record, if there is one, is downloadable – most of the ones that she saw date back to 1914. There was a big effort in 1954 to catalog feature names. In 1981 there was a big effort to transfer names from topographic maps into the GNIS. In the 2000s the effort began to add diacriticals to the spelling of feature names.

Mr. Marzan suggested that more research is needed for this feature name.

[1:50:07]

[358496] **Akupu.**

Ms. Makaila shared some information from the GNIS. Feature class: Populated place. She is unsure why it’s classified as a populated place when it does not appear from the imagery to be populated.

Ms. Runyon explained that the US BGN has no authority over incorporated populated places, but does have authority over unincorporated populated places – you can differentiate them in the Census –  
 C1 = incorporated  
 U5 = unincorporated

Although the current satellite imagery does not show any structures, historical topo maps show a cluster of buildings. Mr. Marzan stated that he knows that there are occupied residences on the ridge close by.

Ms. Makaila noted that in *Ulukau* in “Hawaiian Place Names,” **Akupu** is identified as a pu‘u and a spring located in the ahupua‘a of Honouliuli with a comment: “*All water for Akupu [camp] was brought up from the Akupu Spring, which was carved out of the solid rock below the ridge, a distance of over a mile from camp. This area was called "Palehua" on the USGS 1953 edition.*” The source is *Sites of O‘ahu [Sterling and Summers, 1978]*.

There is not a lot of current use of **Akupu**. Gill Ewa Lands has partnered with Mālama Learning Center on the Akupu Ridge Restoration Project, a reforestation project of about 5 acres. There were no other references of **Akupu** as a place name.

She doesn’t think that there’s an issue with the name as written and it is referenced in Sites of O‘ahu and a current reference in the Akupu Ridge Restoration Project.

[1:59:20]

**MOTION.** Mr. Cummins moved to recognize that **Akupu** is correctly spelled in the GNIS. Ms. Makaila seconded the motion.

*The members present voted unanimously to recognize that **Akupu** is correctly spelled in the GNIS.*

[2:00:05]

**MOTION.** Mr. Buto moved to continue research on **Punchbowl** and **Aimuu Gulch**. Ms. Makail seconded the motion.

*The members present voted unanimously to continue research on **Punchbowl** and **Aimuu Gulch**.*

[2:00:25]

**AGENDA ITEM 8: Adjourn**

[2:01:09]

Mr. Marzan adjourned the meeting at 4:06pm

*Status Key: 1 = Not Hawaiian; 2 = Not Reviewed; 3 = More Research Needed; 4 = HBGN Corrected; 5 = Already Correct in GNIS; 6 = Name Change; 7 = HBGN partial correction, exhausted available reference and research resources*

Stat	Feat ID	Feature Name	Feature Class	Corrected Name	Source	Notes	USGS Quad Name
7	363733	Puu Ikaaka	Summit	Pu'uikaaka	HBGN	PNH: not listed; HBGN: combined, Pu'uikaaka; HBGN: Mr. Camara will consult with the Kona Historical Society, 03-01-2024 HBGN: concatenated per Style Guide, but more research needed; exhausted available reference and research resources, 04-02-2024	Hualalai
3	358757	Diamond Head	Summit			PNH: Diamond Head; world-famous tuff crater... the highest point is Lē'ahi Peak...formerly called Lae'ahi and sometimes Diamond Hill (Kaimana Hila) in the 1800s. HBGN: The name is almost 200 years old (ca. 1825); designated as a National Natural Landmark; more research needed on variant names and historical context, 04-02-2024	Honolulu
3	363581	Punchbowl	Crater			PNH: Punchbowl; post-erosional tuff cone in Honolulu... The National Cemetery of the Pacific is in the crater... see Pūowaina. HBGN: Puakea Nogelmeier did extensive research; Mr. Camara will reach out to him; DHHL has lands outside of the crater; cultural significance as a Ieinaaka'uhane; more research needed, 04-02-2024	Honolulu
3	358471	Aimuu Gulch	Valley			PNH: not listed; HBGN: more research needed, 04-02-2024	Waimea
5	358496	Akupu	Populated Place	Akupu	HBGN	PNH: not listed; HBGN: in Sites of O'ahu as Akupu, pu'u and a spring; part of contemporary project: Akupu Ridge Restoration Project, a partnership between Gill Ewa Lands and Mālama Learning Center; currently occupied residences in the area; name appears to be current and correct, 04-02-2024	Schofield Barracks