

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

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

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

Mr. Cummins called the meeting to order at 2:02 p.m.

The following were in attendance:

MEMBERS: Meyer Cummins (Land Survey Division) [remote]
Arthur Buto for Mary Alice Evans (Office of Planning and Sustainable
Development) [in-person]
Kapā Oliveira (University of Hawai'i at Mānoa) [remote]
Lilliane Makaila (Department of Hawaiian Home Lands) [remote]
Hailama Farden (Office of Hawaiian Affairs) [remote] *joined meeting at
2:05pm*

ABSENT: Marques Marzan (Bishop Museum)
Holly McEldowney (Department of Land and Natural Resources)

GUESTS: Jenny Runyon (Staff, US BGN, USGS) [remote]
Dr. Shellie Zahniser (Executive Secretary, Domestic Names Committee
(DNC), US BGN, USGS) [in-person]
Keith Gutierrez (Office of Hawaiian Affairs) [remote]
David [remote]
Bobby Camara [remote] *joined meeting at 2:35pm*

[0:01:01]

AGENDA ITEM 4: Announcements

Mr. Gutierrez announced that the new CEO of OHA, Stacy Ferreira named Hailama Farden as the OHA representative to the Board. Mr. Gutierrez expressed his gratitude and appreciation to Board members for his participation these past two years.

[0:02:46]

AGENDA ITEM 2: Review of Meeting Minutes for June 4, 2024

[0:02:55]

MOTION: Ms. Oliveira moved to accept the minutes of June 4, 2024. Ms. Makaila seconded the motion.

[0:03:06]

The members present voted unanimously to approve the meeting minutes of June 4, 2024.

[0:03:16]

AGENDA ITEM 3: Public Comments

Mr. Hailama Farden introduced himself. He is the Senior Director of Cultural Affairs at OHA, retired from Kamehameha Schools after 31 years.

[0:05:15]

AGENDA ITEM 5: Discussion about the possibility of using Hawaiian terminology instead of English descriptors in feature names.

Ms. Makaila provided a listing of her suggested changes to the US BGN Feature Class descriptions. This is not a comprehensive review.

She could not find a source or more information about *kepula* listed under the “Lava” feature class; it may be a misspelling, possibly for *kīpuka*. She recommends asking that it be removed.

She also highlighted some common and well-known terms that might be useful. *Awāwa* is listed under both “Stream” and “Valley.” In the discussion last month, she noted that for a stream, *kahawai* refers to the water flow and *awāwa* refers to the carved land. *Awāwa* is usually used when the stream is dry and *kahawai* is used when there is water. Mr. Cummins related that in his work with historical documents he has seen *awāwa* used that the time of year may be a factor. He was taught that *awāwa* is used to refer to the holder of the water, the gulch and the *kahawai* is the stream itself.

Mr. Farden added that his grand uncle was a cadastral surveyor starting in the 1920s and maintained a handwritten book that included Hawaiian terms for features and measurements and their meanings in English. He understands the usefulness of including Hawaiian terms in these Feature Class descriptions.

Ms. Oliveira agreed that it is useful to include appropriate Hawaiian terms to these descriptions. She noted that cultural and political issues may be associated with some features like *kahawai* where in a historical context it was normal for water to be flowing, but in a contemporary context that’s not the case.

[0:18:37]

Mr. Farden related his experience on a trip with his auntie returning to Olowalu. She talked about her experiences growing up and was referring to the *kahawai*, even though at that part

of the trip it was dry. She had an emotional response when they returned later that same day and the water was flowing.

Ms. Makaila agrees with Ms. Oliveira's discomfort with a global "search and replace" of English descriptors with Hawaiian terms and doesn't understand the purpose of doing that. She is supportive of adding terms to the Feature Class descriptions from a pae 'āina perspective.

Mr. Cummins supports continuing the discussion at future meetings before making recommendations to the US BGN.

[0:23:50]

AGENDA ITEM 6: Discussion and decision on establishing a Permitted Interaction Group (PIG) to research the name of the Island of Hawai'i.

Ms. Oliveira asked that the Board review the name of the island because the names of the other islands are more straightforward, and that context could help differentiate between "Hawai'i" referring to the island versus the State. If the Board is in agreement about the name, i.e., "Hawai'i," then there may not be a need for a PIG. If other options are under consideration, then establishing a PIG makes sense.

Mr. Buto explained that the suggestion of a PIG was to respond to the requests from the public that the Board engage with the community to collect input and feedback before making a naming decision. A PIG would make community engagement easier and more flexible than addressing the name in a monthly Board agenda item.

Ms. Makaila commented that many people who attended the earlier Board meeting were uncomfortable that this is an O'ahu-centric board making this naming decision. A PIG would allow the Board to hear from the community at a time and place that is more convenient for people who want to provide input. She feels that collecting public input through a PIG or through other means would honor the time taken by the people who attended and testified at the Board meeting and also hold the Board accountable to its consultation commitment.

Mr. Cummins felt that the Board should provide more context and background about why this is on the agenda and agreed that Board should provide an opportunity for the public to provide input. If the name is changed to "Hawai'i" he expressed a concern that in documents, it should remain clear when it refers to the island and when it refers to the State. One of the reasons for the Board is to identify feature names unambiguously.

Mr. Camara commented that he feels that the purpose of place naming is to recapture the original 'Ōlelo Hawai'i names and that using lower case English descriptors is acceptable and would help clarify that they are not part of the name itself.

He wanted to add “Lua Poho,” to the list of feature names in Hawai‘i Volcanoes National Park; he saw it on an 1872 map by Lyman. It is a pit crater like many of the craters in the park as opposed to an eruptive vent.

Mr. Cummins noted that the Board will continue the review of the Feature Class descriptions.

At the last meeting the Board started the conversation about establishing a Permitted Interaction Group (PIG), the pros cons, and the potential cost (to visit Island of Hawai‘i). Because a full Board wasn’t present, the discussions was tabled.

Mr. Cummins asked if any of the members present today would be willing to serve on the PIG. Ms. Makaila said that she would be happy to participate.

Mr. Cummins thought that Ms. Makaila and Ms. Oliveira would be good candidates, because of their knowledge of ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i and their interest in the topic. However, neither was present at the last meeting; Ms. Oliveira is not present today.

Ms. Oliveira’s ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i expertise extends to both language and geography. Mr. Cummins also volunteered to provide an additional mapping expertise from a surveyor’s perspective.

[0:42:10]

MOTION: Mr. Buto moved that the Board table this discussion until the next meeting where there are at least five Board members present. Ms. Makaila seconded the motion.

[0:42:30]

The members present voted unanimously to table this discussion until the next meeting where there are at least five Board members present.

[0:42:38]

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

[0:48:12]

[358537] Alapena Pool.

Mr. Cummins looked at Grant 3691 abutting the pool area, but it doesn’t identify the pool by name. Ms. Makaila did not find any additional information about the name.

[0:44:35]

MOTION: Mr. Cummins moved that the Board change the Status Code from “3” to “5,” already correct in the GNIS. Ms. Oliveira seconded the motion.

[0:44:50]

The members present voted unanimously to change the Status Code from “3” to “5.”

[0:55:10]

[358539] **Alau Gulch**

[358546] **Alei Pali**

Mr. Cummins did not find any additional information about the features in the field book associated with Registered Map 1784.

Mr. Camara suggested removing the descriptors from the names if they were added in the GNIS by the USGS. Ms. Makaila has concerns about removing the descriptors without seeing another reference that more clearly shows these features. Mr. Cummins noted that on RM 1784 there are gulches labeled as such, e.g., “Manini Gulch,” whereas the area labeled “Alau” on the map does not have “Gulch” as part of the label. It’s possible that what are labeled on the map as “Alau” and “Alei” refer to trig stations and not the geographical features.

Mr. Camara referred to the Papekilo Database, there are several references to “Alei Pali.”

Ms. Makaila prefers to leave them as is, until another source is found that identifies them more clearly as a gulch and a pali. She searched papakilodatabase.com and nupepa.org but didn’t find any additional documentation for the features.

[1:02:47]

MOTION: Ms. Makaila moved that the Board change the Status Code from “3” to “7,” exhausted available references and research resources. Ms. Oliveira seconded the motion.

[1:03:05]

The members present voted unanimously to change the Status Code from “3” to “7.”

[1:04:20]

[363581] **Punchbowl.** Mr. Camara talked to Puakea Nogelmeier who sent him a transcript of an interview talking about “Pūowaina.” Mr. Nogelmeier did extensive research on the name and wrote a paper that’s in UH’s Hamilton Library. It will be sent out to the Board when it’s been scanned.

On another topic, Mr. Camara has been doing some research into the controversy circa 2000 about Forbes Cave. He would like the Board’s perspective on geographic features that apparently don’t have a traditional name, like Forbes Cave.

Mr. Buto recalled that in earlier discussions with respect to naming new features, the consensus was that it is not the Board’s kuleana to come up with names, but to listen to

input from stakeholders, as it did for Ahu‘ailā‘au. And the names and locations of caves are not published in the GNIS, which would limit the general awareness of the name.

Mr. Farden asked if there are records of when and how place names were changed in more recent history, i.e., earlier in the 20th Century, e.g., “Waipilopilo” is now “Waiakamilo.”

Mr. Nogelmeier worked as an apprentice under Theodore Kelsey who talked to and corresponded with people. Some of these letters are included in the archives. “Pūowaina” is included in the collection; one includes “Pūo Ina,” “Pu‘uowaina,” and “Pūowaina.”

Mr. Kelsey also recruited “informants” who would answer his questions. One man provided translations of the names of the islands. But sometimes the meanings of place names are lost to antiquity and may never be known. He cautioned that in those cases the Board should not try to invent or speculate the meaning without evidence.

Also included in the collection is a letter from John Wise in which he reproaches Mr. Kelsey by touting his own unique endowments.

Ms. Makaila wouldn’t be surprised if there is an inoa Hawai‘i for “Forbes Cave,” but that those who know are content to let it be known to the public by its contemporary English name. In her work she tries to find lineal or cultural descendants of an ahupua‘a and work through them. She was doing research related to the Kohala area and she listened to kani ‘āina recordings and they didn’t discuss that particular cave.

She is very interested in discussing restoring traditional names to “Punchbowl” and “Diamond Head” and is interested in reading Puakea’s research about “Pūowaina.” In addition, “Le‘ahi” and “Lae‘ahi” She also let Mr. Farden know that the GNIS does accommodate Variant Names, so they would be included in the database record.

Mr. Cummins noted that if a name was proposed for “Forbes Cave,” the Board would consider it, but at the same time it would have the undesirable effect of drawing attention to the cave.

Mr. Camara talked about when he was the cave resources specialist at Hawai‘i Volcanoes National Park in the late 1990s. It was apparent that lava tubes were not named, just the entrances and the openings in the ceilings. These were referenced in Boundary Commission testimony.

Mr. Camara noted that the next meeting of the kūpuna group will take place on Friday the 12th. They are open to submitting partial lists of name changes/corrections as they make decisions.

[1:30:00]

AGENDA ITEM 8: Adjourn

[1:30:10]

MOTION: Mr. Cummins moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Buto seconded the motion.

[1:30:25]

The members present voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting.

Mr. Cummins adjourned the meeting at 3:32 pm.

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 references and research resources							
Stat	Feat ID	Feature Name	Feature Class	Corrected Name	Source	Notes	USGS Quad Name
5	358537	Alapena Pool	Lake	Alapena Pool	HBGN	PNH: not listed; HBGN: more research needed, 05-07-2024 HBGN: found on File Plan 184 (ca. 1917); will check State Parks maps and Grant 3691 abutting Alapena Pool, 06-04-2024; HBGN: no additional information found, 07-02-2024	Honolulu
7	358539	Alau Gulch	Valley	Alau Gulch	HBGN	HBGN: "Alau" and "AleI" found on Registered Map 1784; will check Field Book associated with map for information about naming conventions, 06-04-2024; HBGN: no additional information found; awaiting additional evidence, 07-02-2024	Kaena
7	358546	Alei Pali	Cliff	Alei Pali	HBGN	HBGN: "Alau" and "AleI" found on Registered Map 1784; will check Field Book associated with map for information about naming conventions, 06-04-2024 HBGN: no additional information found; awaiting additional evidence, 07-02-2024	Kaena