



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

DATE: August 21, 2014
TIME: 9:30 am
PLACE: Leiopapa A. Kamehameha Building
Office of Planning, 6th Floor Conference Room
235 S. Beretania Street
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

AGENDA ITEM 1: Call to Order

Mr. Kamanao Mills, Chairperson of the Hawai'i Board on Geographic Names (HBGN or Board), called the meeting to order at 9:50 am. The start of the meeting was delayed by an emergency alarm and evacuation of the building.

The following were in attendance:

MEMBERS: Kalani Akana (Office of Hawaiian Affairs), Joan Delos Santos (Office of Planning), Kamanao Mills (Department of Hawaiian Home Lands), and Ryan Morales (Land Survey Division)

ABSENT: Betty Kam (Bernice P. Bishop Museum); Holly McEldowney (Department of Land and Natural Resources); Noenoe Silva (University of Hawai'i)

ADVISORS: Renee Louis, PhD., Naomi Losch (University of Hawai'i at Mānoa—retired)

Guest: Debbie Mendez (Office of Planning); Mr. Leo Asuncion (Office of Planning)

AGENDA ITEM 2: Approval of Meeting Minutes of June 26, 2014

Mr. Kalani Akana noted several corrections needed in the June 26, 2014 minutes. Ms. Joan Delos Santos moved to accept the minutes as corrected. The motion was seconded by Mr. Akana and approved unanimously by the Board.

AGENDA ITEM 3: Status of HBGN Names Database Organization and Publication Initiative

Ms. Delos Santos began by explaining that she and Ms. Renee Louis had been working on initiative to organize the HBGN place names database in a format that would be easier for the public use and understand. This would also help her answer public inquiries on particular names more quickly and accurately. She noted that HBGN has a website which includes information on the Board, copies of statute establishing the Board and defining its mandates, the meeting minutes, and the working spreadsheets that record decisions made during the

Board's ongoing review of island place names. She projected an example of the posted spreadsheets to demonstrate what the public would see and why it is difficult for them to understand. Their plan was to reorganize the names in a way that makes them more understandable. She introduced Ms. Debbie Mendes, a planner with Office of Planning, who is now assisting in this process. She is very a logical and meticulous worker.

Ms. Delos Santos projected an example of the spreadsheets in the new format and explained the revisions. At the top is a key explaining the meaning of the categories and abbreviations used in the spreadsheets. This allows users to tell at a glance the status of any given name in the database. The example displayed was for non-Hawaiian place names. The next categories they will worked on are those for names needing more research, those already corrected by the HBGN, those corrected in the Geographic Names Information System (GNIS), and those the Board decided needed to be changed in GNIS. Ms. Louis pointed out that the Board sometimes asks for other information in the GINS to be changed. For example, the Board asked that the translation for the name Koko Head be changed. Some decisions are more than spelling although the major focus of the Board has been spelling and inclusion of appropriate diacritical marks. The Board's decision on the name 'Ohe'o in Kīpahulu, Maui is an example of a name change. Name change would be the sixth category. Ms. Mendes clarified that she has finished working on all the islands except Ni'ihau, O'ahu and Kaua'i. Ms. Delos Santos said that they are about half way through and stressed that progress has increased significantly since Ms. Mendes came on board.

Mr. Mills noticed that the latitude and longitude are no longer on the tables and asked if this was because this can be found in GNIS by searching the Feature Number. Ms. Delos Santos repeated that the format can be revised if the Board believes more information would be useful. All the information is still on the original spreadsheets. The pdf files posted will only include fields useful to the public. It can be modified any time. The priority is to display the status of place names in the Board's review process quickly and simply.

Ms. Naomi Losch asked about the columns in the spreadsheet. Ms. Delos Santos admitted that some column headings may be confusing and they are considering revising some to make them clearer. The column headings are Feature ID, Feature Name, Feature Class, Corrected Name if it was corrected, the Source, and Notes. The confusing ones are Date Created and Date Edited. Both dates reflect actions taken by the U.S. Board of Geographic Names (BGN). Date Created is when the name was entered into the BGN's database and Date Edited means any other action taken by the BGN regarding the name. They will probably change these categories to reflect HBGN actions which would be more useful for the public. If a category is not useful or is confusing, it can be removed or explained. This date is currently in the Notes field and not in a separate category. Hopefully, their initiative will be completed by the end of the year and ready for public use. She stressed that progress would not have been possible without Ms. Louis explaining the different categories and actions taken by the BGN.

AGENDA ITEM 4: Briefing for Director of Office of Planning on HBGN History and Current Initiatives

Ms. Delos Santos introduced Mr. Leo Asuncion, Director of the Office of Planning, whom she invited to the meeting so that he could better understand the work of a board housed in the Office of Planning. Also, they are starting to receive more inquiries about the Board and its decisions and some are or could be controversial.

Mr. Mills began by presenting a brief history of the Board. At the national level, the BGN was created in the late 1800s because numerous maps were being produced independently around the nation and many used different place names for the same features. The intent was to have a single federal entity to create and maintain a uniform system of geographic place names and usage. No matter which official map an individual used, the place name would be the same for a given geographical feature. In 1974, the Hawaii Legislature passed Act 50 which created the HBGN, the Hawai'i equivalent of the national board. The Board is composed of the Chairpersons of the Department of Hawaiian Homelands, the Department of Land and Natural Resources, and the Office of Hawaiian Affairs; the State Land Surveyor; the President of the University of Hawaii, and the Directors of Office Planning and Bernice P. Bishop Museum. All can designate representatives and have done so in official correspondence. The HBGN is, in practice, composed of these designees.

Although created legislatively in 1974, the Board as it functions today was created in 1996. Some present at today's meeting were involved in those formative years. The Board's main task has been reviewing all the place names of Hawaii. About 90% of this process entails deciding if names should have 'okina and kahakō and 10% is establishing new place names. Once in a while there will be a controversy. In the first decade, Board's deliberations were quiet. It systematically reviewed spreadsheets listing all the place names found on the USGS topographic quadrangles. There are thousands of names. Names were reviewed one at a time with the Board checking its resources before making decisions. In certain cases, particularly names composed of compound names or proper nouns, the board is not able to tell based on existing resources how the name should be written. In many cases, the names are categorized as needing further research. Recently, the Board began the creation of a HBGN style guide based on the standards the Board had used for decades, the experience of Board members, and working with the community. This will help standardize how the Board approaches deciding if a compound name should be written as one word or two words and when to capitalize name components. As more resources have become available electronically and more people know about the Board, more controversial situations have arisen. The Board tries to work through each issue in a way that appreciates community concerns.

Ms. Delos Santos clarified that reviewing the usage of diacritical marks on all place names is not technically the main function of the Board. It was a project the Board decided to undertake. Ms. Louis briefly summarized the history of this effort. It started when the BGN developed the capacity to include diacritical marks in national place name database. The BGN reached out to Mr. Craig Tasaka, then the GIS coordinator for the Office of State Planning, and asked if Hawai'i was ready to correct those Hawaiian place names needing diacritical marks. Mr. Tasaka convened a group of knowledgeable individuals to discuss this possibility.

Ms. Louis recalls that this request by the BGN was prompted by Haleakalā National Park, which asked to include a kahakō in the name Haleakalā. Ms. Delos Santos said that without this initiative; the purview of the HBGN is considering requests by individuals or agencies that want official recognition of a new or existing place name of a geographic feature. Ms. Louis clarified that correcting of a Hawaiian place names is not the same as adding a new name to the national database. It would, however, be a new name if letters in a place name were transposed or a letter should be removed and the Board decided to correct the name. This would be a name change. Adding diacritical marks to names is not considered a name change. It is part of the Board's purview to correct names in the GNIS. The U.S. BGN is currently operating on a very tight budget and is only correcting names for certain feature types. Correcting names in the national database is an intensive process. Many names from across the country are on hold. Ms. Delos Santos explained that decisions made by the HBGN were not submitted to the BGN for a long time. In 2012, about 2,000 names were submitted because new quad sheets were being developed. There have been a couple of submissions since then. Once names are officially accepted by the BGN, federal agencies are required to use them for in all their signage and documents. Place name usage must be consistent with GNIS. This is why the National Park Services has in interest in the Board's work. Recently a County agency called asking how a place name should appear on signs for a park it recently acquired from the State. The name was one still being considered by the Board.

Mr. Mills pointed out that if this Board followed what its counterparts do in other states, its work would be relatively boring. The Board would probably act only when it received a name change request which might be two or three a year. Mr. Asuncion asked if the 'okina-kahakō project helped generate recent controversies. Ms. Louis responded that this was not the case. She comes from an academic background in Geography and her dissertation was on place names. She has attended the national meetings of the Council of Geographic Names Authorities and has seen that native peoples are starting to come forward and ask that indigenous names be recognized and written appropriately. She has been a prominent voice in this effort and has been able to persuade policy makers at the BGN that this issue cannot be ignored any longer. Most agreed although there has been some resistance. She pointed out to them that the HBGN is a good example of how the issue of officially recognizing native place names can be addressed. Some members of the other state board favor these efforts while others want nothing to do with it. Some seem reluctant to recognize that there are native peoples in their states. Some people in the West, specifically the Northwest, are proactive and welcome the inclusion of native names. Part of this trend is due to increasing accessibility to information on the internet. It is easier for people to become aware of this process and the ways they can participate.

Ms. Delos Santos said that she finds it interesting that there are differing opinions and ideas among individuals who are very knowledgeable and experienced. This is the case on how Mauna Kea should be written. It can make the Board's job difficult. Ms. Louis said that she appreciates the thorough discussions, but she does not envy the Board members having to make these decisions. It is harder now that their names are associated with these decisions in online records.

AGENDA ITEM 5: Further Discussion of Draft HBGN Style Guide and Past and Future Decision Making Criteria

Ms. Delos Santos began by distributing comments Mr. Larry Kimura has submitted on the draft HBGN Style Guide.

Mr. Mills gave a brief summary of style guide's purpose and why it was drafted. Over the past two decades, the Board had been following the 'Ahahui 'Ōleo guidelines for spelling Hawaiian words and names. After a number of discussions, the Board decided that it would help to develop its own style guide specifically for the Board when it makes decisions on geographic names. A draft was prepared and the Board is asking Hawaiian language and cultural experts for input before adopting the guide. Once adopted, it is the guidance document the Board will use.

Mr. Mills suggested that the Board address Mr. Kimura's comments one at a time. The first two comments addressed typographical errors in the introductory paragraph. The third comment focused on who should be considered "Knowledgeable Community" members for the purposes of consultation. Mr. Kimura set out three priorities for gathering information on a particular place name or names. The first priority is native Hawaiian speakers who are from that community. The second is members from that community whose command of the Hawaiian language is reliable. The third would be people who were born and raised in that community. Ms. Louis noted that Mr. Kimura's comments help further delineate what is a knowledgeable community member. Ms. Delos Santos asked if these priorities are hierarchal. She is concerned that this could imply that the Board needs to go to communities and consult even for simpler names. Realistically, the Board does not have funding for this level of outreach. Ms. Losch asked if outreach to community members would only occur be if there was a particular question about a name. Ms. Delos Santos agreed that this is the clarification she is seeking. Ms. Louis suggested that language be added to the guidelines clarifying that Mr. Kimura's suggestions help prioritized input and do not set out steps in a process. Available sources may suggest one spelling or meaning, but then someone from the community may come forward with another explanation. The community member's information would be given more weight in the Board's decision-making process. She sees this as addressing how information will be assessed when the Board makes decisions. She does not see it establishing a process for the Board to follow as it might a checklist. Ms. Delos Santos hopes that the Board continues make decisions based on available resources when it is comfortable doing so and then consults for names needing more research or when individuals come forward with questions.

Mr. Mills suggested, just for the sake of discussion, that language could be added stating that these priorities apply if someone comes before the Board or contacts the Board with information. This avoids giving the impression that the Board would routinely consult with communities. Information could be submitted by email or correspondence. Individuals do not need to appear before the Board in person for their information to be considered. Ms. Louis noted that she has been asked to help an elementary school in Puna that wants to do a project on place names. This includes working with kupuna from the area. It is conceivable that this information could be submitted electronically to the Board, but the Board might not be able to

discern which place names information came from a priority one, two, or three community source. Mr. Mills said that he will add wording clarifying that the three distinctions are guidance for weighing information and not prioritized steps.

Mr. Asuncion explained how he sees this process based on his experience with the Coastal Zone Management program and community outreach. He believes checking all available resources is the first step before going to any community. After this, if the Board is going to consult, it should seek information from knowledgeable individuals in the order outlined by Mr. Kimura to the extent possible. During discussions with these individual, the Board can share what it has learned from various sources. He would see this as a process. Steps in the guidelines can be laid out without numbering them. An approach can be inferred by saying that the Board will check resources first without implying that those sources are more important than community information. A wealth of resources is already available. The next step would be verifying information from these written resources with community members following Mr. Kimura's priorities. It could be through email or in person. These guidelines would also be useful for those wanting to approach the Board about a place name. It would encourage them to follow the same steps the Board does and to come prepared after having checked the resources themselves. This is how he views Mr. Kimura's comments. Clarifying this process helps the board know where it is in the decision making process and where it goes next.

Mr. Mills asked the Board if he should eliminate the numbers which designate the major sections of the guidelines. The Board agreed that this would more accurately reflect the process envisioned by the Board and would be less distracting.

The discussion returned to Mr. Kimura's comments. He suggested that recorded "audio interviews of native Hawaiian speakers, whose interview is conducted in Hawaiian" and "who are from the place and/or general location of concern" be specified as a resource to be checked. The Board agreed that this source should be added to the reference list attached to the guidelines. It could be placed under "Online Resources". Mr. Akana warned that the interviews are not easily accessible on line. All of Mr. Kimura's interviews have been transcribed and are available at the University of Hawaii at Hilo and at Mānoa.

Mr. Kimura's fifth suggestion on Page 1 was that Hawaiian newspaper collections and early boundary surveys be included as primary resources. This comment had already been addressed in a more recent revision of the guidelines.

The sixth comment addressed the section on considering common usage. He suggested that the heading be changed from "Consider Common Usage" to "Consider Hawaiian and Common Usage." The Board agreed. He also suggested the following:

Ascertaining accurate Hawaiian geographic names based on common usage must be approached very cautiously. It is critical that members always be on guard. Hawai'i's history in "vocalization" has changed so rapidly-with the dissipation of the Hawaiian language-and with such a wide variety of speech sounds that renders accurate pronunciation suspect as to its spelling. Sometimes the pronunciation is

correct but the hearing of it is recorded inaccurately because the "ear" is not familiar with the language it hears. Fortunately we have accrued a huge corpus of geographic names, mostly Hawaiian, but verification and deliberation still remains.

Mr. Louis noted that this approach puts a somewhat different spin to the intent of the original wording of this section. Mr. Kalani Akana suggested that Mr. Kimura's comment be added as a caveat to this section as reminder of what the guideline users should keep in mind. The Board agreed with this suggestion. The original language will remain the same but Mr. Kimura's comments will be added as a caveat. Mr. Louis pointed out that Mr. Kimura is focused on the sound of language when deciding how a place name should be spelled. She has generally been more focused on the meaning of the place name which, in turn, suggests the name's spelling. If the meaning is known, variations in pronunciation are less critical.

Mr. Mills turned to Page 2 of the guidelines and read Mr. Kimura's first comment on that page. It addresses the introduction to Section 4 titled "Naming Guidelines". The introduction reads as follows in the draft reviewed by Mr. Kimura:

If there are no resources of information for certain geographic areas, and time and/or money constraints do not allow research or interviews with knowledgeable community members, please utilize the following guidelines:

Mr. Kimura suggests removing the introduction and comments as follows:

This seems odd. The criteria below reflect a good statement of criteria preferences. Bad to state you will allow suggestions by someone who doesn't want to take the time for research. This seems like a recipe for conflict.

Mr. Mills noted that this introduction could be removed completely. Users would just proceed to the criteria outlined in this section. He remembered adding this language because the Board intended the sources outlined on the first page of the guidelines to be considered before utilizing the criteria set out under "Naming Guidelines". He did not want future boards to skip the sources on Page 1 and go straight to the criteria on Page 2. Ms. Losch pointed out that this confirms that the guidelines were intended to set some priorities. Mr. Mills agreed but sees Sections 1 through 3 on Page 1 as being a single priority and the criteria on Page 2 as the second priority. He reiterated that the guidelines are to be used when there is no information available. Mr. Akana suggested that the introduction be simplified to say that the Board will consider the following when making its decision. It would then be up to that Board to apply the criteria as appropriate. Mr. Mills agreed with this approach.

Mr. Kimura's third comment on Page 2 proposed alternative wording. Instead of "Geographic names should be capitalized", he suggested "Only the initial letter of a name is to be capitalized". The Board agreed with the proposed wording.

Mr. Kimura's fourth comment on Page 2 also proposed alternative wording to address cases in which a single word modifier in a geographic name should be capitalized. The proposed alternative was: "When a single word modifier that is used as a traditional part of the place name is verified, then that modifier is spelled as a separate word and its initial letter is

capitalized. e.g. Ko‘olau Loa; Ko‘olau Poko; Kalihi Uka, Kalihi Waena, Kalihi Kai; Kohala Loko, Kohala Waho.” The Board preferred keeping the original wording because it was simpler and would be easier for most people to understand. Mr. Akana suggested that the examples provided by Mr. Kimura be added to the guidelines. Mr. Mills agreed.

In comment five, Mr. Kimura recommended that “Kalae” be removed from the examples of compound geographic names that should be written as one word. His comments are as follows:

Eliminate "Kalae". Its initial word is an article and not a noun, or list another category of names beginning with the article "the". In fact, most so-called names beginning with “ka lae” are four words such as, “Ka Lae ‘o Ka‘ena” and “Ka Lae ‘o Kalā‘au”. In English this would be “Point (Cape) Kalā‘au” or “Point (Cape) Ka‘ena”. Of course there are names with “ka lae.” in the name itself such as, "Kalaeloa."

In Hawaiian we have rocks as names that is not common in English, such as Pōhaku ‘o Kau (Kau Rock); Pōhaku ‘o Kāne (Kāne Rock).

A Note: In English we have such names as Point X, Mount X, and X Beach. In Hawaiian, the more noted one would be Point, represented with Ka Lae. I’m not aware of other such name qualifiers common in Hawaiian as others are in English.

Mr. Mills started the discussion by asking if the Board believes Pōhaku ‘o Kāne should be one word or two. Mr. Akana recalled that the Board intended to add a section addressing proper nouns in a place name. Mr. Mills responded that he added a statement about proper nouns in the most recent version of the guidelines which he then distributed to the Board. He pointed to the new criterion which said: “In rare circumstances, when a single and specific geographic feature is specially named after an individual, the proper noun shall be written separately from the geographic feature.” Mr. Akana asked if this would include some of the examples Mr. Kimura raised. Mr. Miles said he realized that Mr. Kimura’s comments and examples, as well as criterion e, should be included under criterion d. He will work on revisions to criterion d that will accommodate these comments and the intent of criterion e. Mr. Akana suggested that more examples be included.

Mr. Mills returned to the issue of place names that include Hale, such as Haleolono and Haleokeawe. Under criterion d, these places would be written separately. Mr. Akana pointed out that the Board does not need to make a decision on Haleolono because it is already in *Place Names of Hawaii* as one word. Mr. Mills questioned whether all names with Hale should be considered geographic features because Hale is house. Ms. Louis pointed out that, metaphorically, a house, or hale, does not need to be built structure. Mr. Mills noted the Haleakala would illustrate her point. Mr. Akana raised the example of Haleolono on Molokai which applies to a geographical place. Mr. Mills noted the Board may need to revisit some the more complex possibilities in the future.

Ms. Delos Santos suggested that somewhere the guidelines should note that these criteria and other considerations may not always reflect past Board decisions. The note could also indicate that previous Board's relied heavily on the 'Ahahui 'Ōleo guidelines. Ms. Louis pointed out that once the guidelines are adopted, the Hawaii Board's decision making process will be more similar to that of the BGN in that individuals can cite a particular part of the guidelines when voting yes or no on a particular decision. The BGN minutes record the vote of each member and the BGN principle each used to reach that decision.

Returning to Mr. Kimura's comments, Mr. Mills turned to Page 3 of the guidelines. Mr. Kimura had three suggestions. One was to specify primary sources for place names such as kingdom and territorial boundary surveys, newspapers, and oral histories. Another was to identify the references currently listed as secondary sources. The third comment asked that nupepa.org be added to the list of online resources. Mr. Mills said the third comment had already been addressed and is reflected in the most recent revision of the guidelines.

Ms. Delos Santos asked if listing primary sources first would imply that the Board actually checks these primary sources first in the decision making process. Mr. Ryan Morales pointed out, for example, that survey maps are important for determining locations but they do not have diacritical marks. If diacritical marks are the focus of the review, the survey maps will not help. He sees them as more of an additional reference. Ms. Louis agreed and suggested that the primary sources mentioned by Mr. Kimura be listed under the heading "Additional Resources". These are archival resources that can inform Board decisions. She also noted that people, such as those addressed on Page 1, would also be considered primary resources.

AGENDA ITEM 6: Discussion of Maui Island Place Names (Continued review of Maui Island place names for spelling and diacritical marks)

The discussion of Maui Island place names was deferred to the next meeting.

AGENDA ITEM 7: Adjourn

The Board decided to hold the next meeting on September 18, 2014 at 9:00 am. The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

Holly McEldowney