

# **Geographical and Community Names Policy**

## **1. Statement of Policy**

The Government of the Northwest Territories recognizes the importance of traditional names for geographical features and populated places to the language, culture and history of the indigenous people of the Northwest Territories and supports the official recognition and preservation of these names.

## **2. Principles**

The Government of the Northwest Territories will adhere to the following principles when implementing this Policy:

(1) Traditional names for geographical features and populated places should continue to form an integral part of the language, culture and history of the indigenous people of the Northwest Territories.

(2) Traditional names for geographical features and populated places should be officially recognized to assure their cultural continuity for the people of the Northwest Territories.

(3) The public should be assured input and participation in the process leading to the official recognition of names for geographical features and populated places in the Northwest Territories.

## **3. Scope**

This Policy applies to names for all geographical features and populated places in the Northwest Territories.

## **4. Definitions**

The following terms apply to this Policy:

Geographical Name - the name for a discernible physical feature (e.g., "Prosperous Lake").

Local Name - an unofficial geographical or place name used by members of the local population (e.g., "Tin Can Hill", the name for a hill within the limits of the City of Yellowknife, is well known locally but has yet to be given official status).

Multiple Name - the name for a physical feature or populated place that is used by members of the local population in addition to a current official

name (e.g., "Tucho" is a name used locally in addition to the official name "Great Slave Lake").

New Name - a geographical or place name, not in local use, proposed for a specific geographical feature or populated place.

Official Name - a geographical or place name approved as an official name. Only official names can be shown on federally produced topographical maps, charts, publications and legal documents.

Place Name - the name for a populated place or previously populated place (e.g., "Yellowknife").

Replacement Name - the name for a physical feature or populated place that is used by members of the local population in place of a current official name. Upon approval by the Minister, a replacement name replaces an official name. The previous official name then loses its official status (e.g., "Jackfish Lake", the name for a small lake within the limits of the City of Yellowknife, replaced the previous official name "Stock Lake" on October 9, 1980).

Significant Name - the name for a populated place or geographical feature for which a decision may conflict with another name; may have importance to individuals outside of the immediate area of the feature; may have national or international ramifications; or, may be considered controversial in nature. Upon approval by the Executive Council, a significant name becomes an official name (e.g., changing the name "Frobisher Bay" to "Iqaluit" affected individuals outside of the immediate area of the community and was, therefore, considered to be a significant name decision

Toponymic Analysis - the research into the origin, pronunciation, correct spelling and orthography, and history of use of a name for a physical feature or populated place; the determination of the exact location and extent of the feature or place; and, the gathering of secondary and archival references to the name or the feature to which it applies.

## **5. Authority and Accountability**

### **(1) General**

This Policy is issued under the authority of the Executive Council. The authority to make exceptions and approve revisions to this Policy rests with the Executive Council. Authority and accountability is further defined as follows:

#### **(a) Minister**

The Minister of Education, Culture and Employment (the Minister) is accountable to the Executive Council for the implementation of this Policy.

### **(b) Deputy Minister**

The Deputy Minister of Education, Culture and Employment (the Deputy Minister) is accountable to the Minister and responsible to the Minister for the administration of this Policy.

## **(2) Specific**

### **(a) Executive Council**

The Executive Council may, on the advice of the Minister, approve significant names.).

### **(b) Minister**

The Minister may:(i) appoint the Northwest Territories Representative on the Canadian Permanent Committee on Geographical Names;

(ii) on the advice of the Northwest Territories Representative on the Canadian Permanent Committee on Geographical Names and after submitting an information item to the Executive Council approve official, replacement, multiple, and new names; and

(iii) on the advice of the Northwest Territories Representative on the Canadian Permanent Committee on Geographical Names, recommend to the Executive Council the disposition of significant names.

### **(c) Deputy Minister**

The Deputy Minister (or designate) will:

(i) receive requests and/or suggestions for name approvals and/or changes from communities, institutions, organizations, federal and territorial government departments, individuals, or from toponymic field research projects;

(ii) determine the category for each name request;

(iii) consult and obtain the recommendation of the appropriate local government authorities concerning the disposition of the name;

(iv) conduct toponymic analysis of proposed name decisions and prepare, depending on the name category, background information; and

(v) make known to the general public all name decisions, whether approvals or rejections, through a medium appropriate to the level of importance of the decision.

(d) Northwest Territories Representative on the Canadian Permanent Committee on Geographical Names The Northwest Territories Representative on the Canadian Permanent Committee on Geographical Names may:

(i) recommend to the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment the disposition of significant, replacement, multiple and new names; and

(ii) approve local names.

## **6. Provisions**

### **(1) Name Submissions**

Requests for name decisions must include the reason the decision is being requested, the exact location of the feature and, if known, any relevant background information on the name. The requests should also demonstrate how the proposed name supports the intent of this Policy, to promote the official recognition of traditional names.

### **(2) Multiple Naming**

If it can be demonstrated that more than one name is used locally for a geographical feature or populated place, then consideration should be given to official recognition of those names.

### **(3) Orthography**

All aboriginal names are to be approved in the orthographic form used by the Government of the Northwest Territories unless it can be demonstrated that a variant form of orthography is in common local use.

### **(4) Use of Generic Term**

The generic portion of a local name is to be approved in the form in which it is used locally. The generic used in a new name must accurately describe the feature to which the name applies.

### **(5) Executive Council Notification**

The Minister shall advise the Executive Council by means of an information item of all replacement, multiple, new and local name approvals before they are finalized.

## **(6) Appeal Procedure**

If a name decision, whether that decision has been for approval or rejection, causes public controversy, then the issue or issues which caused that controversy will be made known to each group or individual who made a recommendation concerning the disposition of the name. The group or individual will then be asked to put forth a new recommendation based on the information provided. The approval or rejection of the name will then be reconsidered by the Executive Council as a significant name.

## **7. Prerogative of the Executive Council**

Nothing in this Policy shall in any way be construed to limit the prerogative of the Executive Council to make decisions or take action respecting names for geographical features and populated places outside the provisions of this Policy.

## **Premier and Chairman of the Executive Council**