

Newfoundland and Labrador Geographical Names Board

Department of Environment and Conservation
Government of Newfoundland and Labrador

2014-17 NLGNB Activity Plan



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1.0 Message from the Chair

The Newfoundland and Labrador Geographical Names Board [NLGNB] is an advisory body appointed by the Minister of the Department of Environment and Conservation to make recommendations in accordance with the *Newfoundland and Labrador Geographical Names Board Act*. The NLGNB falls under the administration of the Surveys and Mapping Division and is supported by an Administrative Officer I within the Surveys and Mapping Division, who also serves as provincial NLGNB secretary.

The NLGNB traces its origin to the Newfoundland Nomenclature Board founded in 1904 under the *Post and Telegraph Act*. The Nomenclature Board, composed of leading clerics and educators of the day, was mainly concerned with changes to the names of settlements as requested by postal officials, members of the House of Assembly on behalf of constituents, and very frequently members of the clergy. The post office tried to avoid having settlements with the same name, but often petitions for renaming were made simply because the place names in use were deemed offensive or inappropriate. Following Confederation, an amendment to the *Act* in 1951 appointed the Curator of the Museum and Deputy Minister of Public Works ex-officio members and named the Curator as chair. At this stage Board members included the Premier of the province and other members of the Cabinet. In 1959, the Nomenclature Board was placed under the Minister of Provincial Affairs with the Deputy Minister of that department serving as chair. In 1961, the Nomenclature Board included Premier, J.R. Smallwood, the Attorney General, and the ministers of highways and health. Other notable Board members in the 1960s were: university professors Dr. E.R. Seary, Dr. G.M. Story and Dr. Leslie Harris; newspaper columnists and writers A.B. Perlin and Michael Harrington; St. John's city clerk E.B. Foran; and business man F.M. O'Leary, individuals with a keen interest in Newfoundland and Labrador history.

The current NLGNB operates under the *Geographical Names Board Act*, originally proclaimed in 1975 to replace the *Nomenclature Act*, but amended in 1991, ten years before *Newfoundland and Labrador* was adopted as the official name of the Province. In 1975 the term *Nomenclature* was changed to *Geographical Names* as the Board became more involved in the naming of all cultural and natural features in the province, not just settled places. Comprehensive field surveys covering the eastern half of Newfoundland and the Sandwich Bay area of Labrador were carried out by Memorial University geography students during the 1980s and early 1990s. In recent years, field surveys using volunteer and local residents have been extended to the South Coast, West Coast and Great Northern Peninsula regions of Newfoundland and into southern Labrador. These surveys altogether have added over 15,000 previously unrecorded geographical names, most of them existing for generations in local oral usage and at risk of being lost due to social, economic and demographic changes. Over the next five years the NLGNB will promote field research in areas hitherto inadequately surveyed. The provincial geographical names database, now containing about 32,000 official entries, is managed and names are made available to citizens by the Administrative Officer I.

As a category 3 government entity, the NLGNB is required to provide an activity plan in consideration with the strategic directions of the Minister of the Department of Environment

and Conservation. This plan must include the NLGNB's objectives for three fiscal years. As Chairman of the NLGNB, my signature below attests to the NLGNB's accountability for the preparation and the achievement of the objectives of the plan outlined herein.



W.G. Handcock
Professor Emeritus in Geography
Chair

2.0 Overview

The NLGNB is the main authority for recommending to government, through the Minister of Environment and Conservation, the proper status of, and all changes related to names of places and geographical features in the Province.

The NLGNB consists of the provincial secretary, a permanent staff member with the title Administrative Officer I assigned by the Department, and five (5) other members appointed by the Minister. Members are appointed for a term of three (3) years. The NLGNB operates under the departmental budget.

2a. *Mandate and Lines of Business*

The main responsibility of the NLGNB is to administer the *Geographical Names Board Act*.

The *Act* empowers the NLGNB with the following duties:

- gather, collate and record information respecting names of places and geographical features in the province;
- consult with and advise government departments and agencies, municipalities and other bodies or persons concerned with the selection of place names or the renaming of places and features regarding the suitability and spelling of the names;
- consider and make recommendations respecting a proposed change in the name of a place or geographical feature already in use that may be considered or be represented to be inappropriate to the place or geographical feature to which it is applied;
- collaborate with the Canadian Permanent Committee on Geographical Names (now known as the Geographical Names Board of Canada) respecting the selection of new geographical names, the elimination of alternative or duplicated names, the correct or preferred spelling of established names and other matters that may be of concern to the NLGNB or the Canadian Permanent Committee on Geographical Names;
- hold public meetings or invite submissions to NLGNB meetings where dispute arises or may arise with respect to the naming or renaming of a place or geographical feature; and
- recommend to the Minister for approval the names of places or geographical features.

Section 9 of the *Act* states “Notwithstanding sections 5 to 8, this *Act* shall be read and applied in conjunction with the *Labrador Inuit Land Claims Agreement Act* and, where a provision of this *Act* is inconsistent or conflicts with a provision, term or condition of the *Labrador Inuit Land Claims Agreement Act*, the provision, term or condition of the *Labrador Inuit Land Claims Agreement Act* shall have precedence over the provision of this *Act*.”

2b. Representation

With the exception of the Chair, who is paid an honorarium, NLGNB members do not receive any remuneration. All meetings are held in St. John's.

| Name | Role | Residence |
|---------------------------|------------|------------------------|
| Dr. Gordon Handcock | Chair | Salvage & Mount Pearl |
| Gary N. Smith | Vice-Chair | Bishop's Cove |
| Randy Hawkins | Secretary | St. John's |
| Margarita Andersen (Rita) | Member | Nain |
| Franca Smith | Member | Happy Valley-Goose Bay |
| Cheryl Brown-McLean | Member | St. John's |

3.0 Primary Clients

The NLGNB's primary clients are members of the general public, government departments and agencies, municipalities and other bodies or persons concerned with the use of official names as well as the selection of place names or the renaming of places and features for official status. A key partner is the Geographical Names Board of Canada, which maintains a database of all official geographical names in Canada.

Other government partners and agencies include:

- Parks Canada with respect to geographical names in Terra Nova and Gros Morne National Park;
- The Department of Fisheries and Oceans with regard to names of coastal and underwater features and fishing grounds;
- The provincial Department of Natural Resources in the collection and verification of geographical names in the southern Labrador area;
- The provincial Department of Transportation and Works in respect to names of geographical features along the Labrador Highway;
- The provincial Department of Municipal and Intergovernmental Affairs involving names of incorporated towns and local service districts;
- The provincial Department of Tourism, Culture and Recreation concerning names used on tourist maps;
- The provincial Department of Natural Resources in the collection of names of Forest Access Roads;
- Labrador and Aboriginal Affairs Office in the naming of geographical features in the Land Claim areas;
- The Innu Nation pertaining to names of geographical features in the Innu Land Claims area; and
- Other aboriginal groups.

4.0 Vision

The vision of the NLGNB is to record and preserve geographical names for functional use and as an important part of our cultural heritage. These names are made official for use in all government correspondence and documents, published literature, research reports, newspapers and magazines, road signs, public buildings, and maps and charts throughout the Province.

5.0 Mission

By March 31, 2017, the NLGNB will have made recommendations to Government in relation to any new geographical features and place names.

Performance Measure: Made recommendations to Government

Indicators:

- Processed naming recommendations from the general public and other stakeholders.

Overall, the NLGNB employs practices that are consistent with the Mission & Vision of the Department of Environment and Conservation. When appropriate, the NLGNB acts upon areas that coincide with the goals and objectives in the Strategic Plan for the Department. Given the indicators, goals and objectives of the Department in the forthcoming Strategic Plan are primarily concerned with Environmental Protection and Wildlife Management, the NLGNB will adhere to those strategic directions, as these relate to the roles and responsibilities of the NLGNB.

6.0 Values

The core values explain the character of the organization we promote. The strategic values ensure our core values are visible throughout the organization.

| Value | Strategic Value Action Statements |
|-----------------|--|
| Collaboration | Each individual will strive to engage with citizens and government agencies to achieve our desired goals. |
| Professionalism | Each individual will demonstrate integrity in carrying out the duties of the NLGNB. |
| Innovation | Each individual will encourage innovative strategies in acquiring, presenting and maintaining data related to place names of the Province. |
| Communication | Each individual will strive to share information about the NLGNB, its purpose, functions and value with stakeholders. |

7.0 Objectives

This activity plan is drafted in accordance with government's Strategic Direction:

Strategic Direction # 1: Natural Heritage

- Outcome: Enhanced management of natural heritage in Newfoundland and Labrador;
- Focus areas: Parks and Natural Areas, Crown Land Management, Wildlife Management, Remediation of Contaminated Sites, Water and Air Quality, Climate Change

The following objectives identify the priorities of the NLGNB for fiscal years 2014-15, 2015-16, and 2016-17. The objectives include performance measures and indicators to facilitate the evaluation of the NLGNB's success. The NLGNB will carry out the same objectives for each year of the plan. The entity's compliance to government's Strategic Direction is indicated in Annex A.

Issue 1: Data Integrity and Management

With the advent of improved mapping and computer technologies, standards for data management are continually changing. The NLGNB strives to keep pace with national standards of data management. This leads toward the enhancement of Natural Heritage.

Objective 1: By March 31, 2015 the NLGNB will have maintained the provincial geographical names dataset to ensure that it meets with existing Canadian national standards.

Performance Measure: Maintained provincial geographical names dataset.

Indicators:

- Collected and entered geographical names in the dataset;
- Made revisions to current names in the dataset;
- Ensured that data integrity was in accordance with provincial guidelines and principles.

Issue 2: Natural Wilderness Areas and Lands of Aboriginal Occupancy

Two main concerns of this plan are the recording and processing (and hence preservation) of the well-established orally-used names of geographical features in remote and natural wilderness areas. All names, including traditional Aboriginal names of features and places are provided by knowledgeable citizens.

Objective 2: By March 31, 2015 the NLGNB collected and processed traditional Aboriginal geographic names.

Performance Measure: Implementation of Aboriginal names collection process.

Indicators:

- Communicated with persons with good knowledge of remote and natural wilderness areas and Aboriginal groups;
- Collected and recorded Aboriginal names and geographical names from remote and wilderness areas;
- Reported on issues/challenges with the collection and processing of Aboriginal names and new names from remote and wilderness areas.

Issue 3: Public Outreach and Awareness

The geographical names program and its value in preserving our cultural heritage need to be better understood and appreciated by all citizens throughout the Province. There is also a need to actively engage all interest groups in the program and the naming process.

Objective 3: By March 31, 2015 the NLGNB engaged the public in the geographical naming process.

Performance Measure: Work progressed on development of strategies.

Indicators:

- Contacted municipalities;
- Contacted researchers and special interest groups;
- Contacted members of the general public;
- Collaborated with other provincial/federal government agencies.

8.0 Annexes

Annex A: Articulation and application of strategic directions

Title: Environmental Sustainability

Strategic Direction: This outcome supports the policy direction of government.

Clarifying Statement: It requires the collection of geographical features and place names as a practical method of the enhanced management of our Province's natural environment. This process involved the following:

- Data collection and maintenance
- Implementation of Aboriginal names collection process
- Public outreach and awareness

Application of strategic directions is expressed through the following table to be included in plans and reports:

| Strategic Directions | Focus Areas of the Strategic Direction | This Direction is: |
|------------------------------|---|--------------------------------------|
| | | addressed in the Minister/Board plan |
| Environmental Sustainability | Parks and Natural Areas, Crown Land Management, Wildlife Management, Remediation of Contaminated Sites, Water and Air Quality, Climate Change | X |