

Newfoundland and Labrador Geographical Names Board

Activity Plan

April 1, 2023 – March 31, 2026



Message from the Chairperson

In compliance with the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador's commitment to transparency and accountability and on behalf of the Newfoundland and Labrador Geographical Names Board, I am pleased to present the Activity Plan for April 1, 2023, to March 31, 2026. As Chairperson, and on behalf of the entire NLGNB, I accept accountability for the preparation of this plan and the achievement of its objectives.

This activity plan meets the requirements of the **Transparency and Accountability Act** for a category three entity and spans a three-year period. The strategic directions of Government related to the Department of Fisheries, Forestry and Agriculture (FFA) have been considered in the preparation of this plan.

The NLGNB is an advisory body appointed by the Minister of FFA in accordance with the **Geographical Names Board Act**. The NLGNB falls under the direction of the GIS and Mapping Division and its work is supported by a Computer Systems Analyst IA who also serves as provincial secretary.

The NLGNB acknowledges the exemplary work of Dr. W.Gordon Handcock, Professor Emeritus in Geography, MUN, who served on the NLGNB from 1983 – 2018, for most of those years as chair. His knowledge of the place names of Newfoundland and Labrador is unsurpassed and his contribution to the NLGNB will forever benefit the citizens of the province.

The provincial geographical names database now has 33,023 official entries. Although much work has been accomplished, there are many feature names, particularly in remote areas, that have never been recorded. In addition, some long-standing names may be viewed as disrespectful or unsuitable in the present day and may require a name change. Over the next three years, the NLGNB will undertake initiatives to inform the public about how they can be involved in the place naming process.

Respectfully,



Cheryl Brown-McLean
Chairperson

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1.0 Overview

The Newfoundland and Labrador Geographical Names Board (NLGNB) had its beginnings in the Newfoundland Nomenclature Board founded in 1904 under the former **Post and Telegraph Act**. This body concerned itself mainly with requests to change names of communities as proposed by postal authorities, members of the House of Assembly on behalf of their constituents and very frequently, members of the clergy. The post office attempted to avoid having communities with the same name, but many petitions for renaming or name changes were made because the existing place names were considered derogatory or offensive in some way.

The current NLGNB operates under the **Geographical Names Board Act**, which was proclaimed in 1975 and amended in 1991. In 1975, the NLGNB became more involved in the naming of all cultural and natural features in the province, not just settled places. During the 1980's and early 1990's, Memorial University geography students conducted field studies to collect geographic names. These directed field surveys added over 15,000 previously unrecorded, but locally used, names to the provincial database. In recent years, Indigenous governments and organizations have made valuable contributions to the official database, adding names that reflect their own traditional use of land and water.

The NLGNB is the main authority for recommending the proper status of, and all changes related to, names of places and provincial geographical features to the Minister of Fisheries, Forestry and Agriculture (the Minister).

The NLGNB consists of the provincial secretary and five other members appointed by the Minister. Appointments are made using a merit-based process; however, gender balance is considered during the appointment process and efforts are made to ensure the Board is representative of the population it serves. The provincial secretary position is filled by a Computer Systems Analyst IA within FFA. Members are appointed for a term of three years and may be reappointed. All members' (excluding the secretary's) terms will expire on December 31, 2024. There are currently two vacant board member positions.

Name	Role	Term	Residence
Cheryl Brown-McLean	Chairperson	4/29/2021 - 12/31/2024	St. John's
Gary N. Smith	Vice-Chairperson	4/29/2021 - 12/31/2024	Bishop's Cove
Nicole King	Secretary	10/12/2022 - 12/31/2025	Corner Brook
Randy Letto	Member	4/29/2021 - 12/31/2024	Happy Valley-Goose Bay
Vacant ¹	Member		
Vacant ¹	Member		

¹ FFA is working with the Public Service Commission to fill these vacancies.

Board members are entitled to receive Level I remuneration in accordance with Treasury Board guidelines as well as related travel expenses which are funded under FFA's

budget. All meetings are held in St. John's. The following is a summary of the NLGNB's budget for fiscal 2023-24:

Expenditure Item	Expenditure Amount
Honoraria (excludes travel)	\$5,000
Member Travel (excludes Secretary)	\$3,000
Secretary Travel	\$ 900
Total	\$8,900

For more information about the NLGNB and its work, please contact us at:

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2.0 Mandate

The main responsibility of the NLGNB is to administer the **Geographical Names Board Act** and make recommendations to the Minister regarding the names of places or geographical features.

3.0 Lines of Business

- 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 to be inappropriate or not representative of the place or geographical feature to which it is applied;
- Collaborate with the Geographical Names Board of Canada (formerly the Canadian Permanent Committee on Geographical Names) 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 Geographical Names Board of Canada;

- 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.

4.0 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 National Park, Gros Morne National Park and L'Anse aux Meadows National Historic Site;
- The Regimental Advisory Committee of the Royal Newfoundland Museum in respect to commemorative names of Newfoundland Regiment veterans from World War I;
- The Fisheries and Oceans Canada with regard to names of coastal and underwater features and fishing grounds;
- The Department of Transportation and Infrastructure in respect to names of geographical features along the Trans-Labrador Highway (Rt 510);
- The Department of Municipal and Provincial Affairs involving names of incorporated towns and local service districts;
- The Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts and Recreation concerning names used on tourist maps and marketing initiatives;
- The Department of Fisheries, Forestry and Agriculture in the collection of names of forest access roads;
- The Executive Council, Intergovernmental Affairs Secretariat, Office of Indigenous Affairs and Reconciliation, and the Department of Labrador Affairs in the naming of geographical features in the Land Claim areas and areas where there are Indigenous interests; and
- Indigenous groups as represented by: Nunatsiavut Government, Innu Nation, NunatuKavut Community Council, Miawpukek First Nation, and Qalipu First Nation.

5.0 Vision

The effective management of geographical names for cultural/heritage purposes, as well as supporting search and rescue functions.

6.0 Issue

Given its mandate, the NLGNB's primary focus is to make recommendations to the Minister of FFA on the names of geographical features. As the focus of the NLGNB will remain the same for the duration of the plan, the NLGNB will report on the same objective and indicators in each of the three years.

Issue 1: Engagement with the Public on Geographical Names

The preservation and management of geographical names are given a very high priority by the NLGNB. Cultural differences are taken into account through the geographical naming process, which is particularly vital in recognizing Indigenous place names. The NLGNB aims to continually improve its processes to enhance engagement with the public and to effectively manage official geographic names.

As the focus of the Board will remain the same for the duration of the plan, the Board will report on the same objective and indicators in each of the three years.

Objective 1: By March 31, 2024, the NLGNB will have undertaken measures to enhance engagement with the public on geographical place names.

Indicators:

- Communicated with municipalities, Indigenous groups and other stakeholders to explain the mandate of the NLGNB and encourage participation in the geographical naming process.
- Consulted with Indigenous groups about geographical naming issues.
- Reviewed requests for geographical names submitted by the public and made recommendations to the Minister.

Annex A: Legislated Mandate

Under the Geographical Names Board Act

Composition of board

3. (1) The board is continued as the Newfoundland and Labrador Geographical Names Board.

(2) The board shall be composed of a secretary and 5 other members appointed by the minister.

(3) The minister shall appoint 1 member of the board as chairperson and 1 as vice-chairperson.

(4) The members of the board shall hold office during pleasure for a term of 3 years from January 1 following their appointment and may be reappointed.

(5) When a vacancy occurs the minister shall appoint a person to fill the vacancy for the balance of the unexpired term.

(6) The members of the board shall receive the remuneration and expenses that the Lieutenant-Governor in Council may determine.

Meetings of board

4. (1) The board shall meet at the times and places that the chairperson appoints and the chairperson shall appoint a time and place for a meeting on the request of 3 members.

(2) Three members constitute a quorum at a meeting of the board.

(3) The chairperson shall preside at meetings of the board.

(4) In the absence of the chairperson the vice-chairperson shall preside at meetings of the board.

(5) In the absence of the chairperson and the vice-chairperson from a meeting the members of the board present shall appoint a temporary chairperson to preside at that meeting.

(6) The secretary shall

(a) keep a record of all proceedings of the board;

(b) conduct the correspondence of the board;

(c) provide a copy of the minutes of each meeting of the board to each member and to the minister within 7 days after the adjournment of the meeting; and

(d) perform the other duties that the board may direct.

(7) In the absence of the secretary from a meeting the members of the board present shall appoint a temporary secretary for that meeting.

Powers of board

5. The board shall

(a) gather, collate and record information respecting names of places and geographical features in the province;

(b) 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;

(c) 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;

(d) collaborate with the Canadian Permanent Committee on Geographical Names 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 board or the Canadian Permanent Committee on Geographical Names;

(e) hold public meetings or invite submissions to board meetings where dispute arises or may arise with respect to the naming or renaming of a place or geographical feature; and

(f) recommend to the minister for approval the names of places or geographical features.

Publication and use of approved name

6. (1) Subject to section 5 of the Municipalities Act, 1999, the minister may approve a name recommended by the board for a place or geographical feature and shall publish notice of the approved name in the Gazette.

(2) A name approved under subsection (1) shall be used by all government departments and agencies in the preparation of maps and other publications.

Board is final authority

7. The board is the final authority on the spelling and pronunciation of the names of places and geographical features in the province.

Final authority on names

8. An Act, regulation, order, contract, summons, information, writ or other document affecting legal rights shall not be considered to be invalid merely because of the use of a name of a place or geographical feature that has not been approved by the minister under section 6.

Labrador Inuit rights

9. 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.

Source: <https://www.assembly.nl.ca/Legislation/sr/statutes/g03.htm>