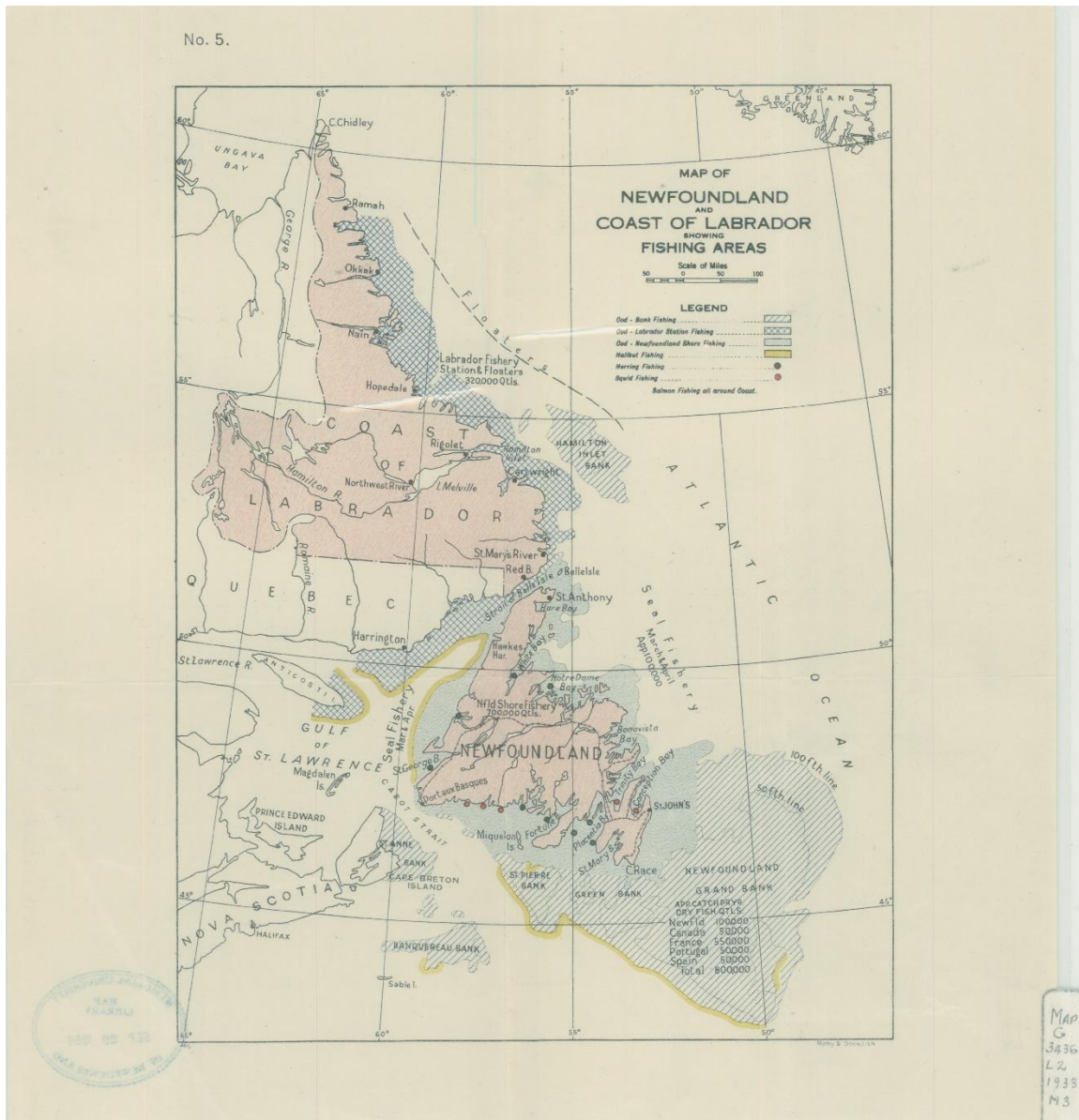


Newfoundland and Labrador Geographical Names Board

Activity Plan

April 1, 2026 – March 31, 2029



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 (NLGNB), I am pleased to present the Activity Plan for April 1, 2026, to March 31, 2029. 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 Forestry, Agriculture and Lands (FAL) have been considered in the preparation of this plan.

The NLGNB is an advisory body appointed by the Minister of FAL 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 the Chairperson. He continues to provide information and advice to the NLGNB upon request. 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

Table of Contents

1.0 Overview	1
2.0 Mandate	2
3.0 Vision	2
4.0 Lines of Business	2
5.0 Primary Clients.....	3
6.0 Issues	4

Cover image:

Great Britain. Newfoundland Royal Commission. *Map of Newfoundland and Labrador Showing Fishing Areas*, 1933. Digital reproduction courtesy of the Map Library, Memorial University of Newfoundland. Source: Memorial University Libraries Digital Archives Initiative. <https://collections.mun.ca/digital/collection/maproom/id/9/rec/17>.

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 1980s and early 1990s, 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 Forestry, Agriculture and Lands (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 FAL. Members are appointed for a term of three years and may be reappointed.

Name	Role	Term Expiry	Residence
Cheryl Brown-McLean	Chairperson	2027-12-31	St. John's
Gary N. Smith	Vice-Chairperson	2027-12-31	Bishop's Cove
Nicole King	Secretary	Not applicable	Corner Brook
Randy Letto	Member	2027-12-31	Happy Valley-Goose Bay
Jillian Drover	Member	2026-12-31	St. John's
Nicholas Draco Dunphy	Member	2026-12-31	Harbour Main

Board members are entitled to receive Level I remuneration in accordance with Treasury Board guidelines as well as related travel expenses that are funded under FAL's budget. All board meetings are held in St. John's. The following is a summary of the NLGNB's budget for fiscal 2025–2026:

Expenditure Item	Amount
Honoraria (excludes travel)	\$5,000
Member Travel (excludes Secretary)	\$3,000
Secretary Travel	\$5,700
Meeting Expenses	\$ 0
Total	\$13,700

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

Newfoundland and Labrador Geographical Names Board
Department of Forestry, Agriculture and Lands
GIS and Mapping Division
192 Wheelers Road
P.O. Box 2006
Corner Brook, NL A2H 6J8
Phone: 709-637-2331
Email: GMD@gov.nl.ca
Web: <https://www.gov.nl.ca/fal/lands/maps/geographical/>

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. For more information on the NLGNB's mandate, please visit: <https://www.assembly.nl.ca/Legislation/sr/statutes/g03.htm>.

3.0 Vision

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

4.0 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.

5.0 Primary Clients

The NLGNB's primary clients include members of the general public, government departments and agencies, municipalities and other bodies or individuals involved in the use of official geographical names or the selection and renaming of places and features for official status. A key partner is the Geographical Names Board of Canada (GNBC). Through the Strategic Policy and Results Sector of Natural Resources Canada, which provides Secretariat support to the GNBC, the NLGNB has direct access to a national database of official Canadian geographical names and participates in working groups focused on Indigenous geographical names and respectful terminology.

Other government partners and agencies include:

- Indigenous governments and organizations, including the Nunatsiavut Government, Innu Nation, NunatuKavut Community Council, Miawpukek First Nation and Qalipu First Nation, which use official place names to support cultural recognition, community governance and geographic information needs.
- Provincial Government of Newfoundland and Labrador departments, including Forestry, Agriculture and Lands; Municipal and Community Affairs; Tourism, Culture, Arts and Recreation; Transportation and Infrastructure; and Executive Council (including the Intergovernmental Affairs Secretariat, Office of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation, and the Department of Labrador Affairs), which rely on standardized and authoritative geographical names to support land and resource management, community administration, infrastructure planning, public communications, policy development and intergovernmental coordination.
- Federal government departments and agencies, including Fisheries and Oceans Canada and Parks Canada, which depend on authoritative geographical names for the management and administration of marine, coastal and protected areas, including national parks and historic sites.
- Heritage Foundation of Newfoundland and Labrador (Heritage NL), which uses official geographical names to support heritage research, documentation and preservation initiatives.

- Search and Rescue organizations, which require reliable geographical naming information to support emergency response operations. These include land, air and marine-based activities, including local civilian search and rescue organizations, the Department of National Defence and the Canadian Coast Guard.

6.0 Issues

Over the next three years, the NLGNB will focus on two key issues that support its mandate. The first is strengthening public engagement, including with Indigenous governments and organizations and other stakeholders, to ensure geographical naming decisions reflect local knowledge and cultural significance. The second is improving the technologies used to manage geographical naming information, contributing to efficiency, accuracy, and public accessibility and support for critical functions such as search and rescue.

As the focus of the NLGNB will remain consistent over the planning period, progress will be reported annually based on the objectives outlined below.

Issue 1: Public Engagement on Geographical Names

Given its mandate, the NLGNB's primary role is to make recommendations to the Minister of FAL on the names of geographical features. This work relies on meaningful engagement with the public, Indigenous governments and organizations, municipalities and other stakeholders. Engagement activities include promoting awareness of the NLGNB's mandate, encouraging participation in the geographical naming process, consulting on naming proposals and gathering relevant historical, cultural and local knowledge to inform decision-making.

This engagement supports more accurate and culturally informed naming decisions, increases awareness of the naming process and helps ensure that naming proposals reflect the history, identity and lived experiences of communities across the province.

Objective: By March 31 of each year, the NLGNB will have conducted public and stakeholder engagement to support informed, inclusive and culturally appropriate geographical naming decisions.

Issue 2: Data Management for Geographical Names

The NLGNB prioritizes the preservation, management and accessibility of geographical names. Continuous improvement of data management practices is required to process place naming applications efficiently and to maintain accurate and accessible geographical names databases. This includes initiatives towards enhancing systems for tracking, storing and retrieving naming information, as well as coordinating with the Geographical Names Board of Canada (GNBC) to align with best practices and improve accessibility for board members and the public.

Improved data management supports greater efficiency, enhances data accuracy and ensures that geographical naming information is readily available for a wide range of users. Accuracy is particularly important for applications such as search and rescue operations. Effective tools also support the preservation of community knowledge and the expertise of board members and stakeholders.

Objective: By March 31 of each year, the NLGNB will have strengthened its data management practices to improve the accuracy, accessibility and overall reliability of geographical naming information.