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WPK.*

Newfoundland and Labrador Geographical Names Board

**Department of Environment and Conservation
Government of Newfoundland and Labrador**

Annual Activity Report 2006-07



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1. MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

It is most gratifying to report that 2006-07 was marked by outstanding achievements at both the provincial and national levels. The specifics of activities are outlined below. The Board also continued active consultations and liaison with different provincial government departments and other public agencies related to toponymic issues. This year representatives from the Department of Transportation and Works, the Cultural Heritage Branch of the Department of Tourism, Culture and Recreation, and the Historic Sites Association of Newfoundland were, on different occasions, invited to discuss different contemporary and ongoing aspects of our geographical names program.

The appointment of Mr. Gary Smith, Sailings Directions Manager, Canadian Hydrographic Service, Department of Fisheries and Oceans, Canada, represents a very significant and welcomed addition to the Board. His experience with and knowledge of the geographical features in our coastal marine environment from extensive field work and preparing sailing guides for mariners gives the Board an extremely valuable working partner.

In that the Board operates without an allocated budget to conduct a geographical names program, it relies upon individuals and groups to collect and submit new names or recommend changes to existing toponymy (place-names) on a voluntary basis. These activities, however, are guided and directed by our Toponymic Information Officer/Secretary to insure that submissions are in accordance with the Board's "Guidelines and Principles for Geographical Naming". In 2006-07, the Board acknowledges with gratitude the voluntary work of Mr. Ford Lethbridge of Cartwright for submitting 136 new names collected by him around Cartwright, Packs Harbour and Paradise River in Labrador, and Mr George Lee of Bay d'Espoir for 333 naming proposals around Gaultois, St. Alban's, Facheaux Bay, Cape La Hune and D'Espoir Brook.

As Chair of the NLGNB I would be entirely remiss and negligent in my duties if I did not draw attention to the dedicated work in 2006-07 (as in former years) of Mr. Randy Hawkins on behalf of the Board and, by extension, the Province as a whole. As a consequence of his productivity and ability to forge and sustain cooperative working relationships with other partners, the NLGNB has become an acknowledged leader in toponymic programs at the Canadian level. At the annual meeting of the Geographical Names Board of Canada (GNBC) in Ottawa in June 2006 Randy was given a citation and an award (singular among participants) for his outstanding contribution to the recently completed Atlas of Canada project. Following that, at the GNBC annual meeting in Yellowknife August 2007, Randy presented the final report of a two-year project on behalf of a national Working Group on Delineation setting out guidelines for the digital definition of geographical features. This report was immediately accepted and approved as an official GNBC document and permission for its use (and possible adoption) was also requested by the United States Geographical Names Service. In December of 2006 Newfoundland and Labrador became, as a result of Randy's diligence, the first jurisdiction within the GNBC to complete the editing of its records in the national database (a newly structured Canadian Geographical Names Service) for web-based access by the other government departments and the general public. As noted, at the provincial level and in his role as Toponymic Information Office, Randy has been most successful in fostering and promoting a

voluntary field survey program (collecting new names) by working with knowledgeable local residents.

Dr. W. Gordon Handcock
Professor Emeritus in Geography
Chair

2. BOARD OVERVIEW

2a. Lines of Business

The Newfoundland and Labrador Geographical Names Board (NLGNB) is appointed by the Minister of the Department of Environment & Conservation and comes under the administration of the Director of Surveys and Mapping at the Howley Building, St. John's. The work of the Board is supported a Toponymic Information Officer, an appointment within the Surveys and Mapping, funded under the Open Doors Program. Currently, this position is held by Mr. Randy Hawkins who also serves as Board Secretary.

The main responsibility of the NLGNB is to administer the Geographical Names Act (CHAPTER G-3; 1991 c29 s2). This involves the collection and recording of information on the names of places and geographical features; consultation with government and agencies on the selection of place names, or the renaming of places and features; considering and making changes to existing names; collaboration with the Geographical Names Board of Canada (GNBC), (formerly the Canada Permanent Committee on Geographical Names), on naming standards, practices and principles; holding public meetings or inviting submissions where disputes arise over names and naming practices; and recommending to the Minister for approval the official names of places and geographical features. Section 7 of the Act also empowers the Board as the final authority on the spelling and pronunciation of the names of settlements and geographical features in the province. Section 9 of this Act stipulates that where a provision in 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

At present there are no remuneration provisions for the board. All meetings are held in St. John's. With the exception of the Chair, all members of the board are public servants. Meetings are normally scheduled to coincide with times when the member for Labrador is in St. John's for other meetings.

Name	Role	Agencies
Dr. W. Gordon Handcock	Chair	Professor Emeritus in Geography, MUN
Ms. Shelley Smith	Vice-Chair	Director, Information Management, OCIO
Randy Hawkins	Secretary	Environment and Conservation
Ms. Michele Wood	Member	Labrador and Aboriginal Affairs
Mr. Stanley Clinton	Member	Director, Urban and Rural Planning Division, Municipal Affairs (Retired)
Mr. Gary Smith	Member	Manager, Sailing Directions Publication, Canadian Hydrographic Service, DFO

3. SHARED COMMITMENTS

The success of the Newfoundland and Geographical Names Programme is due to the development and cultivation of working partnerships between provincial and federal government agencies. The following government agencies played an active role in our policy development during the 2006-07 fiscal year:

- The Earth Sector of Natural Resources Canada and the GNBC Secretariat in providing direct access to the federal database;
- The Atlas of Canada in feature delineation techniques and verification of 1:1 Million feature delineations;
- Parks Canada in resolving the names of 50 geographical feature names in Gros Morne National Park.
- The Department of Fisheries and Oceans with the identification of marine and coastal features.
- The provincial Department of Natural Resources in the verification of geographical feature names in the Port Hope Simpson area.
- The provincial Department of Transportation and Works in verifying geographical names in the interior of Labrador.

In addition to the various government agencies, the success of the provincial geographical names programme is primarily due to the cooperation and assistance of the local residents within our province.

4. HIGHLIGHTS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The 2006-07 fiscal year saw significant advancements in the provincial geographical names programme. Newfoundland and Labrador became the first province or territory to edit provincial records in the federal database (Canadian Geographical Names Service) in December of 2006. This web-based application permits geographical features to be processed locally and shared with any stakeholders in the federal government. Information is collected once, at source, and distributed for public use via the internet.

Newfoundland and Labrador is in the process of beta-testing the newly restructured Canadian Geographical Names Service (CGNS). Many improvements have already been implemented. The provinces of Alberta and New Brunswick will also be given direct access to the CGNS in the coming months.

In January of 2007, a power-point presentation on marine features was given to the Atlantic Coastal Zone Information Steering Committee on the use of the CGNS database. The examples used demonstrated how toponymic information on hydrographic features can be shared interactively in a web-based environment.

Another important accomplishment was the completion of the Working Group on Delineation. The group, comprised of toponymists (geographical naming specialists) from across Canada, completed its two-year project by establishing a set of guidelines for the digital delineation of geographical features. A final report of the Delineation Working Group was presented to the Canadian Geographical Names Board of Canada (GNBC) in August of 2007. This report was formally adopted as an official document of the GNBC. The GNBC also immediately passed a resolution to present these guidelines at an upcoming meeting of the Canadian Council on Geomatics (CCOG). The GNBC further resolved that the CCOG incorporate these guidelines into a future national toponymy data model. On the international level, a representative of the Geographic Names Office in the United States has also requested permission to use this document.

5. ACTIVITIES

5a. Progress on current activities:

In the 2006-07 fiscal year, 577 NLGNB decisions were made in four Board meetings. A total of 845 decisions now await Ministerial ratification. An additional fifty geographical feature names were adopted in Gros Morne National Park.

The NLGNB also provided the Department of Transportation and Works with a digital file containing 49 sign-posting recommendations along the Trans Labrador Highway. This was in response to an earlier request for the Board's assistance. The Department of Transportation and Works has also offered to assist the board with potential informant sources in the interior of Labrador. These new sources will be investigated during the coming year.

In this report period we received new independent field surveys covering the areas of Cartwright; Packs Harbour; Paradise River; Gaultois; St. Alban's; Facheaux Bay; Cape La Hune and D'Espeir Brook. While some of these new naming proposals have already been reviewed by the board, the remaining proposals will be reviewed during the 2007-08 fiscal year.

5b. General Inquiry Statistics:

The following statistics are estimated:

2006-07 Inquiry Types	
General public requests for information	65
GNBC Secretariat requests between federal and provincial offices	400
Provincial Government requests	100
New names or name change requests	475
Historical origin inquiries resolved by Dr. Gordon Handcock	35
Raster Amendment Map Requests	120

6. OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES AHEAD

- Enhance the current web mapping services using direct access to CGNS data as support layers in specific user applications;
- Contact new informants in the interior of Labrador;
- Initiate GIS process for feature delineations of NL records;
- Continue with coordinate revision project;
- Complete remaining Quality Control Application for Names Delineation verifications for the Atlas of Canada;
- Anticipate receipt of Labtop Innu Names submissions. These are expected in the fall of 2007.
- Reaffirm lines of communications between the aboriginal communities and the NLGNB

7. FISCAL STATEMENTS

The financial statement will be provided separately as an appendix.

* Financial information provided by Neil MacNaughton, Director, Surveys and Mapping Division. Neil MacNaughton administers the Newfoundland and Labrador Geographical Names Programme.