



governmentattic.org

"Rummaging in the government's attic"

Description of document: United States Geological Survey (USGS) emails in the accounts of Shellie Zahniser and Chris Hammond containing the words McKinley or Denali or Gulf, January 20-25, 2025

Requested date: 25-January-2025

First Interim Response date: 17-March-2025

Final Response date: 15-July-2025

Posted date: 08-December-2025

Source of document: FOIA Request
USGS FOIA
P.O. Box 66783
Albuquerque, NM 87193
Email: foia@usgs.gov
FOIA.gov

Note: Records released 15-July-2025 begin on PDF page 122.

The governmentattic.org web site ("the site") is a First Amendment free speech web site and is noncommercial and free to the public. The site and materials made available on the site, such as this file, are for reference only. The governmentattic.org web site and its principals have made every effort to make this information as complete and as accurate as possible, however, there may be mistakes and omissions, both typographical and in content. The governmentattic.org web site and its principals shall have neither liability nor responsibility to any person or entity with respect to any loss or damage caused, or alleged to have been caused, directly or indirectly, by the information provided on the governmentattic.org web site or in this file. The public records published on the site were obtained from government agencies using proper legal channels. Each document is identified as to the source. Any concerns about the contents of the site should be directed to the agency originating the document in question. GovernmentAttic.org is not responsible for the contents of documents published on the website.



United States Department of the Interior

U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY
12201 Sunrise Valley Drive
Reston, Virginia 20192-0002

In Reply Refer To:
U.S. Geological Survey
Attention: Judy Cearley
Post Office Box 66783
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87193

March 17, 2025

Re: U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Tracking #
DOI-2025-003260 – First Interim Response

This letter is our first interim response to your FOIA request dated January 25, 2025, for the following:

Copy of each email in the email account of Shellie Zahniser (USGS) between January 20, 2025 and present that contains the word McKinley OR the word Denali OR the word Gulf. A copy of each email in the email account of Chris Hammond (USGS) between January 20, 2025 and present that contains the word McKinley OR the word Denali OR the word Gulf.

We are releasing, in full, four Portable Document Format (PDF) electronic files, consisting of 107 pages, responsive to your request.

We are continuing to process the remaining records associated with your request. Due to the nature of the records, we will need to consult with the other federal agencies and Department of the Interior, Office of the Solicitor (SOL). We anticipate providing another response no later than April 14, 2025.

We classified you as an “other use” and there is no billable fee for the processing of this request.

If you have any questions about our response to your request, please contact me by email at jcearley@usgs.gov.

Sincerely,

**JUDY
CEARLEY**

Digitally signed by
JUDY CEARLEY
Date: 2025.03.17
15:28:42 -07'00'

Judy Cearley
U.S. Geological Survey
Government Information Specialist

Enclosures:

First Interim Combined Records.pdf (93 pages)

MO'Donnell_Chat Messaging.pdf (6 pages)

MTischler_Chat Messaging.pdf (4 pages)

SZahniser_Chat Messaging.pdf (4 pages)

From: [Tischler, Michael A](#)
To: [BGNEXEC, GS-N-MAC](#); [Anderson, Gina R](#); [Pawlitz, Rachel J](#); [Zahniser, Shellie R](#); [St. Onge, Tim](#)
Cc: [O'Donnell, Matthew J](#)
Subject: Re: [EXTERNAL] CBS Tampa Media Question
Date: Tuesday, January 7, 2025 9:55:50 AM
Attachments: [Outlook-A black ba.png](#)
[Outlook-r5kopa42.png](#)
[Outlook-ADDRESS.LI.png](#)
[Outlook-TEGNA.png](#)

Thanks, Matt,

[The Hill](#) is reporting that a congressional member is planning to introduce a bill to rename the feature:

Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene (R-Ga.) said she would quickly introduce a bill renaming the Gulf of Mexico, shortly after Trump's remarks.

"President Trump's second term is off to a GREAT start," she wrote on the social platform X. "I'll be introducing legislation ASAP to officially change the name of the Gulf of Mexico to its rightful name, the Gulf of America!"

Thanks,
m

From: BGNEXEC, GS-N-MAC <bgnexec@usgs.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, January 7, 2025 12:49 PM
To: Anderson, Gina R <granderson@usgs.gov>; Pawlitz, Rachel J <rpawlitz@usgs.gov>; Zahniser, Shellie R <srzahniser@usgs.gov>; Tischler, Michael A <mtischler@usgs.gov>; St. Onge, Tim <tong@loc.gov>
Cc: O'Donnell, Matthew J <mjodonnell@usgs.gov>
Subject: Fw: [EXTERNAL] CBS Tampa Media Question

Hi all, see below.

The [Policy on Names Considered or Established by Congress or the President](#) notes that "Geographic names and their applications specifically established by an act of Congress or Executive order are legally official, and therefore, are not bound by BGN principles, policies, and procedures." This includes name changes.

For any names established by an act of Congress or Executive order (or proclamation), the name is entered into/changed in GNIS once official. Federal data sources are updated from GNIS on their own data refresh cycles.

Matt

From: Akbarpour, Parisa <PAkbarpour@10tampabay.com>

Sent: Tuesday, January 7, 2025 12:45 PM

To: BGNEXEC, GS-N-MAC <bgnexec@usgs.gov>

Cc: WTSP-Verify <verify@10TampaBay.com>

Subject: [EXTERNAL] CBS Tampa Media Question

This email has been received from outside of DOI - Use caution before clicking on links, opening attachments, or responding.

Good afternoon,

I'm a producer at the CBS News affiliate in Tampa/St. Pete and I'm reaching out regarding a comment made by President-Elect Donald Trump during a press conference today. He claimed he will change the name of the Gulf of Mexico to the Gulf of America once he takes office. I'm currently working on a piece looking to verify whether the President has the ability to do such a thing, and if so, what that would look like.

Here is a direct transcription of the claim made:

"We're going to be announcing at a future date pretty soon — we're going to change — because we do most of the work there and it's ours...we're going to be changing the name of the Gulf of Mexico to the Gulf of America, which has a beautiful ring. It covers a lot of territory — the Gulf of America. What a beautiful name, and it's appropriate. It's appropriate."

I have some questions for the U.S. Board on Geographic Names on this topic:

1. Does the President have the authority to change the name of natural features?
2. Hypothetically, what would the process of changing the name of the Gulf of Mexico look like? What steps would need to be taken and what elements would be considered?
 - a. I understand people can propose name changes, but can the BGN initiate a name change on its own? What would that process look like?
3. Does the BGN have any response to the President-Elect's comment/claim?

Any other information you'd like to share and make sure people understand is welcomed and appreciated.

Thank you! My deadline is 3 PM.

PARISA AKBARPOUR • Producer, VERIFY

O: 727.577.1010 **C:** 813.774.0345 **E:** PAkbarpour@10tampabay.com



11450 Gandy Blvd. St. Petersburg, FL 33702

10TampaBay.com

A **TEGNA** Company

From: [O'Donnell, Matthew J](#)
To: [Pawlitz, Rachel J](#); [BGNEXEC, GS-N-MAC](#); [Anderson, Gina R](#); [Tischler, Michael A](#); [St. Onge, Tim](#); [Zahniser, Shellie R](#); [bgnexec@nga.mil](#)
Cc: [NGP NGTOC TNM Help, GS-N-HQ](#)
Subject: Re: [EXTERNAL] Washington Post question for Board of Geographic Names re Gulf of Mexico
Date: Tuesday, January 7, 2025 12:13:22 PM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)

Thanks Rachel and Gina.

If we get more requests, would you like to forward to you or just keep track of them to share later if needed?

Matt

From: Pawlitz, Rachel J <rpawlitz@usgs.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, January 7, 2025 3:07 PM
To: BGNEXEC, GS-N-MAC <bgnexec@usgs.gov>; Anderson, Gina R <granderson@usgs.gov>; Tischler, Michael A <mtischler@usgs.gov>; St. Onge, Tim <tong@loc.gov>; Zahniser, Shellie R <srzahniser@usgs.gov>; bgnexec@nga.mil <bgnexec@nga.mil>
Cc: O'Donnell, Matthew J <mjodonnell@usgs.gov>; NGP NGTOC TNM Help, GS-N-HQ <tnm_help@usgs.gov>
Subject: RE: [EXTERNAL] Washington Post question for Board of Geographic Names re Gulf of Mexico

Hi everyone,

I appreciate the time you put into this for context. However, Gina and I discussed this and we both feel there's a benefit to avoid commenting at all right now. While this is purely political at this stage, in a few days the Trump administration will come in and we cannot speculate as to whether they will initiate some type of EO. So if this continues to be in the news, this could always be revisited later but for now it's purely hypothetical so don't want to give speculative answers.

Thanks for understanding!

--

Rachel Pawlitz (she/her)
Chief Public Affairs Officer & Lead Spokesperson
U.S. Geological Survey
Phone: 571-455-6586



From: BGNEXEC, GS-N-MAC <bgnexec@usgs.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, January 7, 2025 2:43 PM

To: Anderson, Gina R <granderson@usgs.gov>; Pawlitz, Rachel J <rpawlitz@usgs.gov>; Tischler, Michael A <mtischler@usgs.gov>; St. Onge, Tim <tong@loc.gov>; Zahniser, Shellie R <srzahniser@usgs.gov>; bgnexec@nga.mil

Cc: O'Donnell, Matthew J <mjodonnell@usgs.gov>; NGP NGTOC TNM Help, GS-N-HQ <tnm_help@usgs.gov>

Subject: Fw: [EXTERNAL] Washington Post question for Board of Geographic Names re Gulf of Mexico

See below.

Additional answers for these kinds of questions:

What's the process for renaming a foreign name or international name like the Gulf of Mexico? Is it solely under the jurisdiction of the BGN and/or can a name change be made through an act of Congress or an executive action?

The [Principles, Policies, and Procedures](#) says that "A name proposal for a feature that crosses the international boundary with Canada or Mexico is likely to require additional processing time because the BGN must coordinate such proposals with the appropriate foreign names authority." But this is not a proposal to the BGN, but a statement by the President-Elect that he would change the name.

Once a name change is made by the BGN how is it applied? What changes?

BGN would not make the change if done by Executive action or Congress. GNIS would be updated and other federal data sources that use GNIS would be updated on their own refresh cycles.

Are BGN appointees serving at the discretion of the head of each agency/the president? Are they appointed by the head of each agency/the president?

The [BGN bylaws](#) Article II Section 2 states "The Board is comprised of principal members and deputy members. The head of each department and agency represented on the Board shall appoint one principal member and also may designate one or more deputy members."

Matt

From: Vazquez, Maegan <Maegan.Vazquez@washpost.com>

Sent: Tuesday, January 7, 2025 2:14 PM

To: BGNEXEC, GS-N-MAC <bgnexec@usgs.gov>; Pawlitz, Rachel J <rpawlitz@usgs.gov>

Subject: [EXTERNAL] Washington Post question for Board of Geographic Names re Gulf of Mexico

This email has been received from outside of DOI - Use caution before clicking on links, opening attachments, or responding.

Hi USGS –

I'm working on a story for The Washington Post today regarding president-elect Donald Trump's recent comments saying he wants to change the name of the Gulf of Mexico to the Gulf of America.

Is there someone within the USGS/U.S. Board on Geographic Names who would be able to answer these questions for me? It would really go a long way in helping our readers understand how/if the president-elect could do this.

- What's the process for renaming a foreign name or international name like the Gulf of Mexico? Is it solely under the jurisdiction of the BGN and/or can a name change be made through an act of Congress or an executive action?
- Once a name change is made by the BGN how is it applied? What changes?
- Are BGN appointees serving at the discretion of the head of each agency/the president? Are they appointed by the head of each agency/the president?

I know it's a little bit late, but I'm hoping to wrap this up by the end of the day today. Written answers are totally okay. I apologize for the short notice.

Thank you --

--

Maegan Vazquez, Reporter at The Washington Post

+1 (956) 740-8844

maegan.vazquez@washpost.com

From: [Tischler, Michael A](#)
To: [Zehner, Shellie R](#); [O'Donnell, Matthew J](#)
Subject: Fw: [EXTERNAL] Washington Post question for Board of Geographic Names re Gulf of Mexico
Date: Tuesday, January 7, 2025 12:38:34 PM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)

Hi Shellie, Matt,

Please see below. I'll make sure NGTOC is aware, too.

Thanks,
m

From: Tischler, Michael A <mtischler@usgs.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, January 7, 2025 3:32 PM
To: Pawlitz, Rachel J <rpawlitz@usgs.gov>
Cc: Anderson, Gina R <granderson@usgs.gov>
Subject: Re: [EXTERNAL] Washington Post question for Board of Geographic Names re Gulf of Mexico

Ok, thanks. I will pass on that information to my staff, and will also share with NGTOC. One of the requests today came to the tnm_help email, which is managed by NGTOC.

Thanks,
m

From: Pawlitz, Rachel J <rpawlitz@usgs.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, January 7, 2025 3:30 PM
To: Tischler, Michael A <mtischler@usgs.gov>
Cc: Anderson, Gina R <granderson@usgs.gov>
Subject: RE: [EXTERNAL] Washington Post question for Board of Geographic Names re Gulf of Mexico

Hi Mike, I know this is not a typical recommendation, but this is not a circumstance where I would even respond at all. If the situation evolves, we may later want to say something but there's nothing good that would even come out of a "no comment" email response at this point. -Rachel

From: Tischler, Michael A <mtischler@usgs.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, January 7, 2025 3:15 PM
To: Pawlitz, Rachel J <rpawlitz@usgs.gov>
Subject: Re: [EXTERNAL] Washington Post question for Board of Geographic Names re Gulf of Mexico

Hi Rachael,

Does that mean we should just not respond? Or is there a canned 'we have no comment on this topic' statement?

thanks,
m

From: Pawlitz, Rachel J <rpawlitz@usgs.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, January 7, 2025 3:07 PM
To: BGNEXEC, GS-N-MAC <bgnexec@usgs.gov>; Anderson, Gina R <granderson@usgs.gov>; Tischler, Michael A <mtischler@usgs.gov>; St. Onge, Tim <tong@loc.gov>; Zahniser, Shellie R <srzahniser@usgs.gov>; bgnexec@nga.mil <bgnexec@nga.mil>
Cc: O'Donnell, Matthew J <mjodonnell@usgs.gov>; NGP NGTOC TNM Help, GS-N-HQ <tnm_help@usgs.gov>
Subject: RE: [EXTERNAL] Washington Post question for Board of Geographic Names re Gulf of Mexico

Hi everyone,

I appreciate the time you put into this for context. However, Gina and I discussed this and we both feel there's a benefit to avoid commenting at all right now. While this is purely political at this stage, in a few days the Trump administration will come in and we cannot speculate as to whether they will initiate some type of EO. So if this continues to be in the news, this could always be revisited later but for now it's purely hypothetical so don't want to give speculative answers.

Thanks for understanding!

Rachel Pawlitz (she/her)
Chief Public Affairs Officer & Lead Spokesperson
U.S. Geological Survey
Phone: 571-455-6586



From: BGNEXEC, GS-N-MAC <bgnexec@usgs.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, January 7, 2025 2:43 PM
To: Anderson, Gina R <granderson@usgs.gov>; Pawlitz, Rachel J <rpawlitz@usgs.gov>; Tischler, Michael A <mtischler@usgs.gov>; St. Onge, Tim <tong@loc.gov>; Zahniser, Shellie R <srzahniser@usgs.gov>; bgnexec@nga.mil
Cc: O'Donnell, Matthew J <mjodonnell@usgs.gov>; NGP NGTOC TNM Help, GS-N-HQ <tnm_help@usgs.gov>
Subject: Fw: [EXTERNAL] Washington Post question for Board of Geographic Names re Gulf of Mexico

See below.

Additional answers for these kinds of questions:

What's the process for renaming a foreign name or international name like the Gulf of Mexico? Is it solely under the jurisdiction of the BGN and/or can a name change be made through an act of Congress or an executive action?

The [Principles, Policies, and Procedures](#) says that "A name proposal for a feature that crosses the international boundary with Canada or Mexico is likely to require additional processing time because the BGN must coordinate such proposals with the appropriate foreign names authority." But this is not a proposal to the BGN, but a statement by the President-Elect that he would change the name.

Once a name change is made by the BGN how is it applied? What changes?

BGN would not make the change if done by Executive action or Congress. GNIS would be updated and other federal data sources that use GNIS would be updated on their own refresh cycles.

Are BGN appointees serving at the discretion of the head of each agency/the president? Are they appointed by the head of each agency/the president?

The [BGN bylaws](#) Article II Section 2 states "The Board is comprised of principal members and deputy members. The head of each department and agency represented on the Board shall appoint one principal member and also may designate one or more deputy members."

Matt

From: Vazquez, Maegan <Maegan.Vazquez@washpost.com>

Sent: Tuesday, January 7, 2025 2:14 PM

To: BGNEXEC, GS-N-MAC <bgnexec@usgs.gov>; Pawlitz, Rachel J <rpawlitz@usgs.gov>

Subject: [EXTERNAL] Washington Post question for Board of Geographic Names re Gulf of Mexico

This email has been received from outside of DOI - Use caution before clicking on links, opening attachments, or responding.

Hi USGS –

I'm working on a story for The Washington Post today regarding president-elect Donald Trump's recent comments saying he wants to change the name of the Gulf of Mexico to the Gulf of America.

Is there someone within the USGS/U.S. Board on Geographic Names who would be able

to answer these questions for me? It would really go a long way in helping our readers understand how/if the president-elect could do this.

- What's the process for renaming a foreign name or international name like the Gulf of Mexico? Is it solely under the jurisdiction of the BGN and/or can a name change be made through an act of Congress or an executive action?
- Once a name change is made by the BGN how is it applied? What changes?
- Are BGN appointees serving at the discretion of the head of each agency/the president? Are they appointed by the head of each agency/the president?

I know it's a little bit late, but I'm hoping to wrap this up by the end of the day today. Written answers are totally okay. I apologize for the short notice.

Thank you --

--

Maegan Vazquez, Reporter at The Washington Post

+1 (956) 740-8844

maegan.vazquez@washpost.com

From: [Runyon, Jennifer E](#)
To: [O'Donnell, Matthew J](#); [Zahniser, Shellie R](#)
Subject: Fw: [EXTERNAL] Donald Trump Floats Changing Name of Gulf of Mexico: "Gulf of America"
Date: Tuesday, January 7, 2025 3:03:34 PM

I vaguely recall the 2012 bill.

This email has been received from outside of DOI - Use caution before clicking on links, opening attachments, or responding.

Donald Trump Floats Changing Name of Gulf of Mexico: 'Gulf of America'

<https://www.newsweek.com/donald-trump-gulf-mexico-america-2011164>

"In 2012, a Democratic Mississippi state representative had introduced a bill to call the Gulf of Mexico that is bordered by the state to the "Gulf of America." The bill, which was introduced by Representative Stephen Holland, died in committee a month later."

From: Tara Wallace - NOAA Federal
To: [REDACTED], Matthew J. Runyon, Jennifer E. Thaddeus Ellerbe - NOAA Federal
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Fwd: Cartographic Name Change?-
Date: Tuesday, January 7, 2025 3:18:28 PM

This email has been received from outside of DOI - Use caution before clicking on links, opening attachments, or responding.

Sent from my iPhone

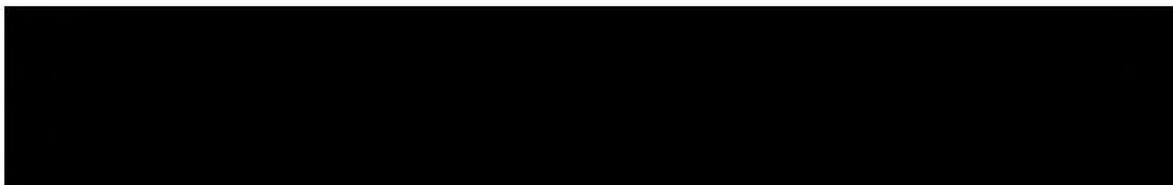
Begin forwarded message:

From: Tim Osborn - NOAA Federal <tim.osborn@noaa.gov>
Date: January 7, 2025 at 4:39:55 PM CST
To: Nicolas Alvarado - NOAA Federal <nicolas.alvarado@noaa.gov>, Tara Wallace - NOAA Federal <tara.wallace@noaa.gov>, Quentin Stubbs - NOAA Federal <quentin.stubbs@noaa.gov>, Michael Gaeta - NOAA Federal <michael.gaeta@noaa.gov>, Thaddeus Ellerbe - NOAA Federal <thaddeus.ellerbe@noaa.gov>
Cc: Darren Wright - NOAA Wright <darren.wright@noaa.gov>, Wayne Weeks - NOAA Federal <wayne.weeks@noaa.gov>, John Lomnický - NOAA Federal <john.lomnický@noaa.gov>, Annabel Jouard - NOAA Federal <annabel.jouard@noaa.gov>, Julia Powell - NOAA Federal <julia.powell@noaa.gov>, Steve Soherr <Steve.Soherr@noaa.gov>, Kathy Carpenter - NOAA Federal <kathy.carpenter@noaa.gov>
Subject: Cartographic Name Change?-

Interesting

<https://apnews.com/article/trump-gulf-of-mexico-bc438f4feca1234475a1a4ef99344da7>

Trump says he will change the name of the Gulf of Mexico



BY [MEG KINNARD](#)

Updated 1:36 PM CST, January 7, 2025

Share

President-elect Donald Trump said Tuesday that he would move to try to rename the Gulf of Mexico to the “Gulf of America,” a name he said has a “beautiful ring to it.”

It’s his latest suggestion to redraw the map of the Western Hemisphere. Trump has [repeatedly referred to Canada](#) as the “51st State,” demanded that [Denmark consider ceding Greenland](#), and [called for Panama to return](#) the Panama Canal.

Here’s a look at his comment and what goes into a name.

Why is Trump talking about renaming the Gulf of Mexico?

Since his first run for the White House in 2016, Trump has repeatedly clashed with Mexico over a number of issues, including border security and the imposition of tariffs on imported goods. He vowed then to build a wall along the U.S.-Mexico border and make Mexico pay for it. The U.S. ultimately [constructed or refurbished about 450 miles of wall](#) during his first term.

The Gulf of Mexico is often referred to as the United States’ “Third Coast” due to its coastline across five southeastern states. Mexicans use a Spanish version of the same name for the gulf: “El Golfo de México.”

Americans and Mexicans diverge on what to call another key body of water, the river that forms the border between Texas and the Mexican states of Chihuahua, Coahuila, Nuevo Leon and Tamaulipas. Americans call it the Rio Grande; Mexicans call it the Rio Bravo.

Can Trump change the name of the Gulf of Mexico?

Maybe, but it’s not a unilateral decision, and other countries don’t have to go along.

The International Hydrographic Organization — of which both the United States and Mexico are members — works to ensure all the world's seas, oceans and navigable waters are surveyed and charted uniformly, and also names some of them. There are instances where countries refer to the same body of water or landmark by different names in their own documentation.

It can be easier when a landmark or body of water is within a country's boundaries. In 2015, then-President Barack Obama approved an order from the Department of Interior to rename Mount McKinley — the highest peak in North America — to Denali, a move that Trump has also said he wants to reverse.

Continued on New Link...<https://apnews.com/article/trump-gulf-of-mexico-bc438f4fec1234475a1ade99344da7>

From: [CaGIS Executive Director](#)
To: [Tischler, Michael A](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Fwd: Help with an ABC News Article
Date: Tuesday, January 7, 2025 3:35:01 PM

This email has been received from outside of DOI - Use caution before clicking on links, opening attachments, or responding.

Hi Mike,

I am thinking this is best handled by someone at the BGN or the Dept of State. Do you have any suggestions? I know this is politically sensitive so if you do want to handle it, let me know and I will see what I can come up with.

Thanks and hope you are doing well,
Kari

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Pereira, Ivan** <Ivan.Pereira@abc.com>
Date: Tue, Jan 7, 2025, 12:42 PM
Subject: Help with an ABC News Article
To: cagisexecdir@gmail.com <cagisexecdir@gmail.com>

Dear Ms. Carun,

My name is Ivan Pereira, a reporter with ABC News Digital. I wanted to see if you were free to chat this afternoon about the wacky story that came out today with President-elect Trump claiming he would change the Gulf of Mexico to Gulf of America. We wanted to get an expert to talk about how bodies of water are named and, and correct me if I'm wrong, it's pretty much hard to do so for the Gulf of Mexico. I can be reached at the number below.

Ivan Pereira [he/him]

Multimedia Reporter

ABC News Digital

Ivan.Pereira@abc.com

Office: 929-349-5231

Mobile: 646-318-0930

From: [Anderson, Gina R](#)
To: [Wilson, Patrick S](#)
Cc: [BGNEXEC, GS-N-MAC](#)
Subject: Re: Renaming the Gulf of Mexico and re-renaming Denali
Date: Wednesday, January 8, 2025 12:12:01 PM
Importance: High

Hi Patrick,

Thanks for reaching out.

Please forward all queries received concerning President-elect Trump saying he wants to rename the Gulf of Mexico, Denali, etc. to me without commenting directly to the sender.

These statements are hypothetical, and it is best to not to respond to at this time. I will however be keeping a log of queries on this topic.

Thanks again,

Gina Anderson

Public Affairs Specialist | Core Science Systems Mission Area
U.S. Geological Survey
Office of Communications and Publishing
405-509-3524 | granderson@usgs.gov

From: Wilson, Patrick S <pswilson@usgs.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, January 8, 2025 1:43 PM
To: BGNEXEC, GS-N-MAC <bgnexec@usgs.gov>; Anderson, Gina R <granderson@usgs.gov>
Subject: Renaming the Gulf of Mexico and re-renaming Denali

Hello,

I am with the USGS Science Information Services team which replies to most questions submitted to USGS. We are beginning to see inquiries regarding comments from the president-elect on renaming the Gulf of Mexico and may also get questions about Denali. We would appreciate some information or guidance on how we should respond to these inquiries.

Patrick S. Wilson
Cartographic Technician

US Geological Survey
Office of Communications and Publishing
Science Information Services

=====

*And there's that one particular harbour, Sheltered from the wind
Where the children play on the shore each day, And all are safe within
~ Jimmy Buffett*

From: [BGNEXEC, GS-N-MAC](#)
To: [Anderson, Gina R](#)
Subject: Fw: [EXTERNAL] Reporter inquiry re: changing the name of the Gulf of Mexico
Date: Wednesday, January 8, 2025 12:14:11 PM

From: Robin Bravender <rbravender@eenews.net>
Sent: Wednesday, January 8, 2025 11:54 AM
To: BGNEXEC, GS-N-MAC <bgnexec@usgs.gov>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Reporter inquiry re: changing the name of the Gulf of Mexico

This email has been received from outside of DOI - Use caution before clicking on links, opening attachments, or responding.

Hi there,

Robin Bravender here with E&E News. I'm working on a story for Thursday about President-elect Trump's plans to change the name of the Gulf of Mexico to the Gulf of America. Would anyone there be willing to speak with me today or tomorrow about the process for doing so?

I'd be happy to speak on background if you'd prefer.

Please let me know and thanks.

Best,

Robin Bravender
E&E News
202-660-2146

From: [BGNEXEC, GS-N-MAC](#)
To: [Anderson, Gina R](#)
Subject: Fw: [EXTERNAL] NBC2 NEWS INQUIRY
Date: Wednesday, January 8, 2025 12:14:27 PM
Attachments: [Outlook-and-p2nkh.png](#)

From: Adams, Madison <Madison.Adams@hearst.com>
Sent: Tuesday, January 7, 2025 3:45 PM
To: BGNEXEC, GS-N-MAC <bgnexec@usgs.gov>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] NBC2 NEWS INQUIRY

This email has been received from outside of DOI - Use caution before clicking on links, opening attachments, or responding.

Good Afternoon,

This is Madison Adams reaching out from NBC2. Today-- US President Donald Trump announced he would change the name of the Gulf of Mexico to "The Gulf of America"

Do you have anyone available on the US Board of Geographic Names to do a Zoom interview this afternoon--- explaining if this is possible.

Thank you!

###

###



Madison Adams
News Reporter
3719 Central Ave. Fort Myers, FL 33901
O: 239.223.5117 C: 304.671.4936
madisonmonroeadams.com

From: [BGNEXEC, GS-N-MAC](#)
To: [Anderson, Gina B](#)
Subject: Fw: [EXTERNAL] Re: CBS EVENING NEWS ON DEADLINE -- Question about renaming Gulf of Mexico
Date: Wednesday, January 8, 2025 12:14:45 PM

From: Ammiano, Kimberly <Kimberly.Ammiano@cbsnews.com>
Sent: Tuesday, January 7, 2025 2:37 PM
To: Pawlitz, Rachel J <rpawlitz@usgs.gov>; BGNEXEC, GS-N-MAC <bgnexec@usgs.gov>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Re: CBS EVENING NEWS ON DEADLINE -- Question about renaming Gulf of Mexico

This email has been received from outside of DOI - Use caution before clicking on links, opening attachments, or responding.

Adding the email for the Board on Geographic Names. Thank you!

From: Ammiano, Kimberly <Kimberly.Ammiano@cbsnews.com>
Sent: Tuesday, January 7, 2025 2:25 PM
To: rpawlitz@usgs.gov <rpawlitz@usgs.gov>
Subject: CBS EVENING NEWS ON DEADLINE -- Question about renaming Gulf of Mexico

Good afternoon Rachel,

Kimberly Ammiano from the CBS Evening News here. I hope you're well. I'm not sure if this is a question your office can answer but given you are always so helpful, reaching out just in case.

Does a sitting President have the power to change the name of the Gulf of Mexico?

Any information we could please have by 4pmET is most helpful and appreciated.

Thank you, as always.

Best,
Kimberly

Kimberly Ammiano
Research Coordinating Producer, **CBS Evening News**
c: 646-634-4356

From: [BGNEXEC, GS-N-MAC](#)
To: [Anderson, Gina B](#)
Subject: Fw: [EXTERNAL] from WSJ/ "Gulf of America"
Date: Wednesday, January 8, 2025 4:34:43 PM

From: Vivian Salama <vivian.salama@wsj.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 8, 2025 5:17 PM
To: BGNEXEC, GS-N-MAC <bgnextec@usgs.gov>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] from WSJ/ "Gulf of America"

This email has been received from outside of DOI - Use caution before clicking on links, opening attachments, or responding.

Hi there,
I cover the incoming White House for WSJ.
I'm writing a quirky story about Trump's proposal to change the name of the Gulf of Mexico to the Gulf of America. I understand that any such changes come from the US Board on Geographic Names. Any chance I can interview someone in your office about the standard protocol behind any such change? It'd be a great element to the story.

let me know! Feel free to reply or call me at 202-285-2368.

--
Vivian Salama
NATIONAL POLITICS REPORTER



O: (202) 862.9264 | M: (202) 285.2368
E: vivian.salama@wsj.com | T: @vmsalama
A: [1025 Connecticut Ave. NW, Suite 800 | Washington, D.C. 20036](#)

From: [Runyon, Jennifer E](#)
To: [O'Donnell, Matthew J](#)
Subject: Fw: [EXTERNAL] Marjorie Taylor Greene to introduce legislation to change name of Gulf of Mexico | Chattanooga Times Free Press
Date: Wednesday, January 8, 2025 6:20:03 PM

I'm sure you're seeing a whole lot of news coverage already, but this one from the Chattanooga paper seems better researched than most.

<https://www.timesfreepress.com/news/2025/ian/07/marjorie-taylor-greene-to-introduce-legislation/>

Jenny

From: [Huggler, Matt](#)
To: [Hines, Vic](#)
Subject: FW: [EXTERNAL] Media Request, NZZ, Switzerland: Geographic Names BGN
Date: Wednesday, January 8, 2025 12:31:00 PM

FYI

Matthew Huggler (he/him)
Deputy Associate Director
Office of Communications and Publishing
U.S. Geological Survey
Reston, VA
mobile: 202-460-8402
mhuggler@usgs.gov

From: Eustis, Christine E <ceustis@usgs.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, January 8, 2025 12:15 PM
To: Pawlitz, Rachel J <rpawlitz@usgs.gov>; Amgott, Seth L <samgott@usgs.gov>
Cc: Friar, Linda <lfriar@usgs.gov>; Huggler, Matt <mhuggler@usgs.gov>
Subject: Fw: [EXTERNAL] Media Request, NZZ, Switzerland: Geographic Names BGN

Passing along for action.

At the COLT, I'd appreciate an update on how we're handling these inquiries.

Thanks

From: Koch Carole <carole.koch@nzz.ch>
Sent: Wednesday, January 8, 2025 11:11 AM
To: BGNEXEC, GS-N-MAC <bgnexec@usgs.gov>
Cc: Eustis, Christine E <ceustis@usgs.gov>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Media Request, NZZ, Switzerland: Geographic Names BGN

This email has been received from outside of DOI - Use caution before clicking on links, opening attachments, or responding.

Dear all

I'm a journalist from NZZ, Switzerland, currently researching on geographic names in

the US after Donald Trumps announcement to rename the Gulf of Mexico. Is there any chance I could discuss a few examples of names (mountains etc), their origins, name changing etc.? My deadline is this coming Saturday and we also have a quite time difference, so I'm hoping to reach one of your experts soon.
Looking forward to hearing from you.

Many thanks and kind regards,

Carole Koch

NZZ

Carole Koch
NZZ am Sonntag Magazin

Neue Zürcher Zeitung AG

Falkenstrasse 11 · Postfach · CH-8021 Zürich

Zentrale +41 44 258 11 11 · Direkt +41 44 258 12 54

From: [BGNEXEC, GS-N-MAC](#)
To: [Anderson, Gina R](#)
Subject: Fw: [EXTERNAL] Reaching out from POLITICO
Date: Thursday, January 9, 2025 11:19:10 AM

Get [Outlook for iOS](#)

From: Catherine Kim <ckim@politico.com>
Sent: Thursday, January 9, 2025 12:15:09 PM
To: BGNEXEC, GS-N-MAC <bgnexec@usgs.gov>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Reaching out from POLITICO

This email has been received from outside of DOI - Use caution before clicking on links, opening attachments, or responding.

Hello,

My name is Catherine Kim, and I'm an editor at Politico Magazine.

With news of Donald Trump wanting to rename the Gulf of Mexico to the Gulf of America, there's growing interest in how exactly that would work and what that would require. We're realizing we don't have a great grasp on how such decisions are made and would love to use this as an opportunity to better understand what the U.S. Board on Geographic Names does, what its goals are, and how it ultimately decides on names.

I'd love to chat with you or anyone else on the board for a Q&A on the topic, and better understand what is considered in the decision-making process.

Would you be free for a 30-minute phone call sometime tomorrow?

Best,
Catherine Kim

Catherine Kim
Phone: 757-567-5136
POLITICO

From: [O'Donnell, Matthew J](#)
To: [Anderson, Gina R](#)
Cc: [Zahniser, Shellie R](#); [Tischler, Michael A](#)
Subject: Fw: [EXTERNAL] Fwd: Response
Date: Thursday, January 9, 2025 11:26:21 AM

See below.

The International Hydrographic Organization emailed NOAA that they are directing inquiries to the BGN.

Matt O'Donnell
BGN research staff
Phone: 703-648-4553 (work) / 571-562-3504 (cell)
Email: miodonnell@usgs.gov

From: Tara Wallace - NOAA Federal <tara.wallace@noaa.gov>
Sent: Thursday, January 9, 2025 2:01 PM
To: Tischler, Michael A <mtischler@usgs.gov>; O'Donnell, Matthew J <miodonnell@usgs.gov>; Zahniser, Shellie R <srzahniser@usgs.gov>; Thaddeus Ellerbe - NOAA Federal <thaddeus.ellerbe@noaa.gov>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Fwd: Response

This email has been received from outside of DOI - Use caution before clicking on links, opening attachments, or responding.

FYI. Is there a planned discussion? Thanks

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: Tara Wallace - NOAA Federal <tara.wallace@noaa.gov>
Date: January 8, 2025 at 4:53:55 PM CST
To: Ben Evans <benjamin.k.evans@noaa.gov>
Cc: Laura Keeling NOAA Federal <Laura.Keeling@noaa.gov>, Amanda Phelps NOAA Federal <Amanda.Phelps@noaa.gov>, Laura Keeling NOAA Federal

<Laura.Keeling@noaa.gov>, Amanda Phelps NOAA Federal
<Amanda.Phelps@noaa.gov>, Julia Powell <Julia.Powell@noaa.gov>
Subject: Re: Response

Thank you Admiral and everyone for this information. Going to get interesting.

Sent from my iPhone

On Jan 8, 2025, at 1:49 PM, Ben Evans
<benjamin.k.evans@noaa.gov> wrote:

FYI, John Nyberg's response has already landed in the NY Times:
<https://www.nytimes.com/live/2025/01/08/us/trump-news#trump-gulf-of-mexico>

On 1/8/2025 14:40, Laura Keeling - NOAA Federal wrote:

Thank you for letting me know. That internal direction makes sense, we'll see how this develops.

Laura

On Wed, Jan 8, 2025 at 2:03 PM Amanda Phelps - NOAA Federal <Amanda.Phelps@noaa.gov> wrote:
Also heard from Public Affairs earlier today about this topic. For any media inquiries we are to send those to oceanservicepress@noaa.gov

On Wed, Jan 8, 2025 at 1:59 PM Ben Evans
<benjamin.k.evans@noaa.gov> wrote:

Hi Tara,

FYI - the President-Elect's comments on a potential change to the name of the Gulf of Mexico has resulted in a number of media inquiries to the IHO. IHO Director Nyberg has been handling these, and shared the stock response he has generated, below. In it, he notes that IHO does not have authority for the names of bodies of water, and refers inquiries to the US Board on Geographic Names. As the lead DOC member of this body, I thought you would want to be aware.

(cc-ing Amanda and Laura at NOS policy for awareness)

Thanks,

Ben

----- Forwarded Message -----

Subject:Response

Date:Wed, 8 Jan 2025 14:38:07 +0000

From:John Nyberg <john.nyberg@iho.int>

To:benjamin.k.evans

<benjamin.k.evans@noaa.gov>

Hello and thank you for your interest in the International Hydrographic Organization.

The IHO co-operates with the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names (UN GEGN) with the objective of achieving international standardization of geographic limits in the marine domain but does not consider itself to be a naming authority. The current 3rd edition of S-23 published in 1953 is intended to provide information on the limits of oceans and seas. The intent is solely for the convenience of National Hydrographic Offices when compiling their nautical products, including Nautical Charts, Sailing Directions, Notices to Mariners, etc. These limits are not intended to have any political significance whatsoever.

As was reported by the IHO to the UN GEGN on many occasions, there have been several attempts over the past decades to prepare a 4th edition of the publication which have been unsuccessful, as consensus was not reached regarding some of the names used in S-23.

Today, there is no formal international agreement or protocol in place for naming maritime areas.

It is up to the national cartographic authorities in relation with their national board on geographic names to define their own policies for producing official maps, charts, geographic databases, and associated geodata services.

The national geographic naming authority of U.S. is The

U.S. Board on Geographic Names

<https://www.usgs.gov/us-board-on-geographic-names>

I suggest contacting this body regarding U.S. policy for seeking an official geographic name change.



Dr John Nyberg

Director /
Directeur

Tel : +377 93 10 81 00

Email : john.nyberg@iho.int

<https://www.iho.int>



Cet email peut contenir des informations confidentielles et est réservé à l'usage exclusif de son destinataire. Toute divulgation de ces informations est strictement interdite et peut être illégale. Si vous avez reçu cet e-mail par erreur, veuillez nous en informer immédiatement et le supprimer. Toutes les précautions raisonnables ont été prises pour s'assurer qu'aucun virus n'est présent dans cet e-mail. Nous déclinons toute responsabilité en cas de perte ou de dommage résultant de l'utilisation de cet e-mail ou des pièces jointes. Nous vous recommandons de les soumettre à vos procédures de vérification antivirus avant toute utilisation.

This e-mail may contain confidential information and is intended solely for the addressee. Any disclosure of this information is strictly prohibited and may be unlawful. If you have received this e-mail by mistake, please notify us immediately and delete this email. All reasonable precautions have been taken to ensure no viruses are present in this email. We cannot accept responsibility for loss or damage arising from the use of this email or attachments. We recommend that you subject these to your virus checking procedures prior to use.

--

RDML Ben Evans, NOAA
Director
Office of Coast Survey
NOAA's National Ocean Service

--

Amanda Phelps (she/her)
NOAA's Office of Coast Survey
Office: (410)-657-2395
Cell: (703)-577-9687

--

Laura Keeling (she/her/hers)
Senior Policy Analyst, Office of Policy
NOAA's National Ocean Service | U.S. Department of
Commerce
laura.keeling@noaa.gov

Google voice: (301) 427-8562
<https://oceanservice.noaa.gov/>

--
RDML Ben Evans, NOAA
Director
Office of Coast Survey
NOAA's National Ocean Service

[EXTERNAL] Greenwire: How Trump could get his 'Gulf of America'

From E&E News <edition@email.eenews.net>
via bounce.politicoemail.com

Date Thu 1/9/2025 1:49 PM

To Applegate, David <applegate@usgs.gov>

This email has been received from outside of DOI - Use caution before clicking on links, opening attachments, or responding.

[View in browser](#)

GREENWIRE

AN E&E NEWS PUBLICATION

THURSDAY, JANUARY 9, 2025

1 How Trump could get his 'Gulf of America'

ROBIN BRAVENDER

The president-elect could spur a name change. The world could ignore it.



President-elect Donald Trump speaks during a news conference at Mar-a-Lago in Palm Beach, Florida, on Tuesday. | Evan Vucci/AP

TOP STORIES

2 The drinking water rule that Trump 'can't ignore'

MIRANDA WILLSON

3 Musk in the middle: Tesla embroiled in policy fights

HANNAH NORTHEY

4 Agency relocation advocate in line for key USDA post

MARC HELLER

POLITICS

5 Musk sees 'target-rich environment' for cuts

ROBIN BRAVENDER, JENNIFER YACHNIN

6 Health experts blast revamped toxics law as 'broken'

ELLIE BORST

7 NOAA rolls out Arctic strategy as Trump turns up geopolitical heat

DANIEL CUSICK

8 Biden boosts lending authority for ex-China minerals

HANNAH NORTHEY

NATURAL RESOURCES

9 Biden declares conservation success as '30x30' winds down

JENNIFER YACHNIN

10 Feds' proposed grizzly bear protections include exceptions

MICHAEL DOYLE

11 Colorado to continue wolf releases despite cattle concerns

AMELIA DAVIDSON

12 Quarter of freshwater animals are threatened with extinction — study

ASSOCIATED PRESS

AIR AND WATER

13 EPA proposal aims to crack down on cancer-causing emissions

SEAN REILLY

14 LA wildfires fill air with thick smoke, threatening the health of millions

ASSOCIATED PRESS

WEATHER

15 Schools close across southern US as more winter storms arrive

ASSOCIATED PRESS

STATES

16 Winds subside as firefighters battle devastating LA blazes

ASSOCIATED PRESS

17 Oil producer's effort to cut light pollution in New Mexico wins praise

ASSOCIATED PRESS

INTERNATIONAL

18 'Let's stop wasting time,' Ontario premier says of Trump taunts

MIKE BLANCHFIELD

ABOUT

GREENWIRE

The leader in Energy and Environment News

Covers the latest essential news on policy, politics, precedents and people affecting natural resources, energy and environmental issues. *Greenwire* publishes daily by 1:30 p.m. Get subscriber access.

E&ENEWS
By POLITICO



[Unsubscribe](#) | [Privacy Policy](#) | [Terms of Service](#)

This email alert has been sent for the exclusive use of E&E News subscriber, applegate@usgs.gov. Forwarding or reproducing the alert without the express, written permission of E&E News is a violation of copyright law and the E&E News subscription agreement. For the avoidance of doubt, occasional, unsystematic sharing and linking to content and use of the E&E News website share tools shall be permitted.

Copyright © 2025 by POLITICO LLC.

E&E News
1000 Wilson Blvd. Arlington, VA 22209 - USA
Phone: 202-628-6500

From: [BGNEXEC, GS-N-MAC](#)
To: [Anderson, Gina R; Elms, Thomas \(Tommy\)](#)
Cc: [Tischler, Michael A; Zahniser, Shellie R](#)
Subject: Fw: [EXTERNAL] Gulf of America
Date: Friday, January 10, 2025 9:48:00 AM

See below and [Greene introduces Gulf of America bill: 'It's our gulf'](#).

No text is posted yet at [H.R.276 - 119th Congress \(2025-2026\): To rename the Gulf of Mexico as the "Gulf of America". | Congress.gov | Library of Congress](#)

From: Dan McCue <dan@thewellnews.com>
Sent: Friday, January 10, 2025 9:00 AM
To: BGNEXEC, GS-N-MAC <bgnexec@usgs.gov>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Gulf of America

This email has been received from outside of DOI - Use caution before clicking on links, opening attachments, or responding.

Good morning. I hope you're well. My name is Dan McCue and I am the editor of The Well News, an online publication that covers Congress, the White House, etc. ...

I'm writing a piece on Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene's bill following up on President-elect Trump's proposal to rename the Gulf of Mexico.

Among other things, her bill directs the chairman of the Board on Geographic Names to rename all federal documents and maps within 180 days of being signed into law.

My question is, how doable is this and ballpark, how much could it cost?

Also, how is this different from when President Obama renamed Mount McKinley?

And, heck, how likely is the name change, if it were to happen, to catch on?

Thank you for any insight you can provide!!!!

Cordially,

Dan McCue

Dan McCue
Editor

[The Well News](#)

Winner of the 2024 Dateline Award for Online Business reporting, and the 2023 Dateline Awards for Online Breaking News and Feature Reporting from the DC Chapter of the Society of Professional Journalists.

dan@thewellnews.com

843-609-4899

From: [Zahniser, Shellie R](#)
To: [Anderson, Gina R](#)
Subject: FW: [EXTERNAL] Fwd: Response
Date: Friday, January 10, 2025 9:50:00 AM

Gina,

Sending this to you FYSA. There is an email address for the NOAA PAO who are working responses...

oceanservicepress@noaa.gov

Shellie Zahniser, Ph.D.
BGN Executive Secretary
Domestic Names Committee
Honolulu, HI

From: Tischler, Michael A <mtischler@usgs.gov>
Sent: Friday, January 10, 2025 3:40 AM
To: Tara Wallace - NOAA Federal <tara.wallace@noaa.gov>; O'Donnell, Matthew J <mjodonnell@usgs.gov>; Zahniser, Shellie R <srzahniser@usgs.gov>; Thaddeus Ellerbe - NOAA Federal <thaddeus.ellerbe@noaa.gov>
Subject: Re: [EXTERNAL] Fwd: Response

Hi Tara,

Good suggestion - We can share what we know for sure. I am around this morning if you want to have a short phone call (703-344-4348). This afternoon I'm available 12-1:30pm or after 2:30pm if we want to have a wider group meeting with the BGN. I'll leave that to Shellie to schedule/organize if it's desired.

Thanks,
m

From: Tara Wallace - NOAA Federal <tara.wallace@noaa.gov>
Sent: Thursday, January 9, 2025 2:00 PM
To: Tischler, Michael A <mtischler@usgs.gov>; O'Donnell, Matthew J <mjodonnell@usgs.gov>; Zahniser, Shellie R <srzahniser@usgs.gov>; Thaddeus Ellerbe - NOAA Federal <thaddeus.ellerbe@noaa.gov>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Fwd: Response

This email has been received from outside of DOI - Use caution before clicking on links, opening attachments, or responding.

FYI. Is there a planned discussion? Thanks

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: Tara Wallace - NOAA Federal <tara.wallace@noaa.gov>
Date: January 8, 2025 at 4:53:55 PM CST
To: Ben Evans <benjamin.k.evans@noaa.gov>
Cc: Laura Keeling NOAA Federal <Laura.Keeling@noaa.gov>, Amanda Phelps NOAA Federal <Amanda.Phelps@noaa.gov>, Laura Keeling NOAA Federal <Laura.Keeling@noaa.gov>, Amanda Phelps NOAA Federal <Amanda.Phelps@noaa.gov>, Julia Powell <Julia.Powell@noaa.gov>
Subject: Re: Response

Thank you Admiral and everyone for this information. Going to get interesting.

Sent from my iPhone

On Jan 8, 2025, at 1:49 PM, Ben Evans <benjamin.k.evans@noaa.gov> wrote:

FYI, John Nyberg's response has already landed in the NYTimes:
<https://www.nytimes.com/live/2025/01/08/us/trump-news#trump-gulf-of-mexico>

On 1/8/2025 14:40, Laura Keeling - NOAA Federal wrote:

Thank you for letting me know. That internal direction makes sense, we'll see how this develops.

Laura

On Wed, Jan 8, 2025 at 2:03 PM Amanda Phelps - NOAA Federal <Amanda.Phelps@noaa.gov> wrote:

Also heard from Public Affairs earlier today about this topic. For any media inquiries we are to send those to oceanservicepress@noaa.gov

On Wed, Jan 8, 2025 at 1:59 PM Ben Evans <benjamin.k.evans@noaa.gov> wrote:

Hi Tara,

FYI - the President-Elect's comments on a potential change to the name of the Gulf of Mexico has resulted in a number of media inquiries to the IHO. IHO Director Nyberg has been handling these, and shared the stock response he has generated, below. In it, he notes that IHO does not have authority for the names of bodies of water, and refers inquiries to the US Board on Geographic Names. As the lead DOC member of this body, I thought you would want to be aware.

(cc-ing Amanda and Laura at NOS policy for awareness)

Thanks,

Ben

----- Forwarded Message -----

Subject:Response

Date:Wed, 8 Jan 2025 14:38:07 +0000

From:John Nyberg <john.nyberg@iho.int>

To:benjamin.k.evans

<benjamin.k.evans@noaa.gov>

Hello and thank you for your interest in the International Hydrographic Organization.

The IHO co-operates with the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names (UN GEGN) with the objective of achieving international standardization of geographic limits in the marine domain but does not consider itself to be a naming authority. The current 3rd edition of S-23 published in 1953 is intended to provide information on the limits of oceans and seas. The intent is solely for the convenience of National Hydrographic Offices when compiling their nautical products, including Nautical Charts, Sailing Directions, Notices to Mariners, etc. These limits are not intended to have any political significance whatsoever.

As was reported by the IHO to the UN GEGN on many occasions, there have been several attempts over the past decades to prepare a 4th edition of the publication which have been unsuccessful, as consensus was not reached regarding some of the names used in S-23.

Today, there is no formal international agreement or protocol in place for naming maritime areas.

It is up to the national cartographic authorities in relation with their national board on geographic names to define their own policies for producing official maps, charts, geographic databases, and associated geodata services.

The national geographic naming authority of U.S. is The U.S. Board on Geographic Names (<https://www.usgs.gov/us-board-on-geographic-names>). I suggest contacting this body regarding U.S. policy for seeking an official geographic name change.



Dr John Nyberg

Director /
Directeur

Tel : +377 93 10 81 00

Email : john.nyberg@iho.int

<https://www.iho.int>



Cet email peut contenir des informations confidentielles et est réservé à l'usage exclusif de son destinataire. Toute divulgation de ces informations est strictement interdite et peut être illégale. Si vous avez reçu cet e-mail par erreur, veuillez nous en informer immédiatement et le supprimer. Toutes les précautions raisonnables ont été prises pour s'assurer qu'aucun virus n'est présent dans cet e-mail. Nous déclinons toute responsabilité en cas de perte ou de dommage résultant de l'utilisation de cet e-mail ou des pièces jointes. Nous vous recommandons de les soumettre à vos procédures de vérification antivirus avant toute utilisation.

This e-mail may contain confidential information and is intended solely for

the addressee. Any disclosure of this information is strictly prohibited and may be unlawful. If you have received this e-mail by mistake, please notify us immediately and delete this email. All reasonable precautions have been taken to ensure no viruses are present in this email. We cannot accept responsibility for loss or damage arising from the use of this email or attachments. We recommend that you subject these to your virus checking procedures prior to use.

--
RDML Ben Evans, NOAA
Director
Office of Coast Survey
NOAA's National Ocean Service

--
Amanda Phelps (*she/her*)
NOAA's Office of Coast Survey
Office: (410)-657-2395
Cell: (703)-577-9687

--
Laura Keeling (*she/her/hers*)

Senior Policy Analyst, Office of Policy

NOAA's National Ocean Service | U.S. Department of
Commerce

laura.keeling@noaa.gov

Google voice: (301) 427-8562

<https://oceanservice.noaa.gov/>

--
RDML Ben Evans, NOAA
Director
Office of Coast Survey
NOAA's National Ocean Service

From: [Tara Wallace - NOAA Federal](#)
To: [Tischler, Michael A](#)
Subject: Re: [EXTERNAL] Fwd: Response
Date: Friday, January 10, 2025 8:20:57 PM

Hi Mike. I have been on leave today. Driving back from the Midwest in the nasty weather!!
So catch up on Monday? Thanks
Sent from my iPhone

On Jan 10, 2025, at 12:38 PM, Tischler, Michael A <mtischler@usgs.gov> wrote:

Hi Tara,

Let me know if you'd like a quick call to trade notes. I'm not sure if we'll get a broader meeting together today, or not. I'm at a conference next week and will be a little tied up. I'm in my office today - 703-648-4725

Thanks,
m

From: Tara Wallace - NOAA Federal <tara.wallace@noaa.gov>
Sent: Thursday, January 9, 2025 2:00 PM
To: Tischler, Michael A <mtischler@usgs.gov>; O'Donnell, Matthew J <mjodonnell@usgs.gov>; Zahniser, Shellie R <srzahniser@usgs.gov>; Thaddeus Ellerbe - NOAA Federal <thaddeus.ellerbe@noaa.gov>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Fwd: Response

This email has been received from outside of DOI - Use caution before clicking on links, opening attachments, or responding.

FYI. Is there a planned discussion? Thanks

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: Tara Wallace - NOAA Federal <tara.wallace@noaa.gov>

Date: January 8, 2025 at 4:53:55 PM CST

To: Ben Evans <benjamin.k.evans@noaa.gov>

Cc: Laura Keeling NOAA Federal <Laura.Keeling@noaa.gov>, Amanda Phelps NOAA Federal <Amanda.Phelps@noaa.gov>, Laura Keeling NOAA Federal <Laura.Keeling@noaa.gov>, Amanda Phelps NOAA Federal <Amanda.Phelps@noaa.gov>, Julia Powell <Julia.Powell@noaa.gov>

Subject: Re: Response

Thank you Admiral and everyone for this information. Going to get interesting.

Sent from my iPhone

On Jan 8, 2025, at 1:49 PM, Ben Evans
<benjamin.k.evans@noaa.gov> wrote:

FYI, John Nyberg's response has already landed in the NY Times:

<https://www.nytimes.com/live/2025/01/08/us/trump-news#trump-gulf-of-mexico>

On 1/8/2025 14:40, Laura Keeling - NOAA Federal wrote:

Thank you for letting me know. That internal direction makes sense, we'll see how this develops.

Laura

On Wed, Jan 8, 2025 at 2:03 PM Amanda Phelps - NOAA Federal

<Amanda.Phelps@noaa.gov> wrote:

Also heard from Public Affairs earlier today about this topic. For any media inquiries we are to send those to oceanservicepress@noaa.gov

On Wed, Jan 8, 2025 at 1:59 PM Ben Evans <benjamin.k.evans@noaa.gov> wrote:

Hi Tara,

FYI - the President-Elect's comments on a potential change to the name of the Gulf of Mexico has resulted in a number

of media inquiries to the IHO. IHO Director Nyberg has been handling these, and shared the stock response he has generated, below. In it, he notes that IHO does not have authority for the names of bodies of water, and refers inquiries to the US Board on Geographic Names. As the lead DOC member of this body, I thought you would want to be aware.

(cc-ing Amanda and Laura at NOS policy for awareness)

Thanks,

Ben

----- Forwarded Message -----

Subject:Response

Date:Wed, 8 Jan 2025 14:38:07

+0000

From:John Nyberg

[<john.nyberg@iho.int>](mailto:john.nyberg@iho.int)

To:benjamin.k.evans

[<benjamin.k.evans@noaa.gov>](mailto:benjamin.k.evans@noaa.gov)

Hello and thank you for your interest in the International Hydrographic Organization.

The IHO co-operates with the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names (UN GEGN) with the objective of achieving international standardization of geographic limits in the marine domain but does not consider itself to be a naming authority. The current 3rd edition of S-23 published in 1953 is intended to provide information on the limits of oceans and seas. The intent is solely for the convenience of National Hydrographic Offices when compiling their nautical products, including Nautical Charts, Sailing Directions, Notices to Mariners, etc. These limits are not intended to have any political

significance whatsoever.

As was reported by the IHO to the UN GEGN on many occasions, there have been several attempts over the past decades to prepare a 4th edition of the publication which have been unsuccessful, as consensus was not reached regarding some of the names used in S-23.

Today, there is no formal international agreement or protocol in place for naming maritime areas.

It is up to the national cartographic authorities in relation with their national board on geographic names to define their own policies for producing official maps, charts, geographic databases, and associated geodata services.

The national geographic naming authority of U.S. is The U.S. Board on Geographic Names (<https://www.usgs.gov/us-board-on-geographic-names>). I suggest contacting this body regarding U.S. policy for seeking an official geographic name change.



Dr John Nyberg

Director /
Directeur

Tel : +377 93 10 81 00

Email : john.nyberg@iho.int

<https://www.iho.int>



Cet email peut contenir des informations confidentielles et est réservé à l'usage exclusif de son destinataire. Toute divulgation de ces informations est strictement interdite et peut être illégale. Si vous avez reçu cet e-mail par erreur, veuillez nous en informer immédiatement et le supprimer. Toutes les précautions raisonnables ont été prises pour

s'assurer qu'aucun virus n'est présent dans cet e-mail.
Nous déclinons toute responsabilité en cas de perte ou de
dommage résultant de l'utilisation de cet e-mail ou des
pièces jointes. Nous vous recommandons de les soumettre
à vos procédures de vérification antivirus avant toute
utilisation.

This e-mail may contain confidential information and is
intended solely for the addressee. Any disclosure of this
information is strictly prohibited and may be unlawful. If
you have received this e-mail by mistake, please notify us
immediately and delete this email. All reasonable
precautions have been taken to ensure no viruses are
present in this email. We cannot accept responsibility for
loss or damage arising from the use of this email or
attachments. We recommend that you subject these to
your virus checking procedures prior to use.

--

RDML Ben Evans, NOAA
Director
Office of Coast Survey
NOAA's National Ocean Service

--

Amanda Phelps (*she/her*)
NOAA's Office of Coast Survey
Office: (410)-657-2395
Cell: (703)-577-9687

--

Laura Keeling (*she/her/hers*)
Senior Policy Analyst, Office of Policy
NOAA's National Ocean Service | U.S.
Department of Commerce
laura.keeling@noaa.gov
Google voice: (301) 427-8562
<https://oceanservice.noaa.gov/>

--

RDML Ben Evans, NOAA
Director
Office of Coast Survey
NOAA's National Ocean Service

From: [Zahniser, Shellie R](#)
To: [Tischler, Michael A](#)
Subject: RE: BGN issue paper needed for transition
Date: Friday, January 17, 2025 2:04:00 PM
Attachments: [Guidance_Issue Paper BGN.docx](#)

Mike,

Attached is the first of 2 issue papers. This one is a general BGN paper. My intent is to get a second paper to you that lays out Presidential and Congressional name designations.

Shellie Zahniser, Ph.D.
BGN Executive Secretary
Domestic Names Committee
Honolulu, HI

From: Tischler, Michael A <mtischler@usgs.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, January 8, 2025 9:18 AM
To: Zahniser, Shellie R <srzahniser@usgs.gov>
Subject: Fw: BGN issue paper needed for transition

Hi Shellie,

Can you please take the first shot at a draft? This should be pretty straightforward I would think...just borrowing language from our PPP.

Thanks,
m

From: Jones, Leslie W <ljones@usgs.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, January 8, 2025 2:13 PM
To: Tischler, Michael A <mtischler@usgs.gov>
Cc: Lacey, Jennifer A <jlacey@usgs.gov>
Subject: BGN issue paper needed for transition

Hi Mike,

Given the Gulf of Mexico and the Mt. Denali name changes being proposed by the new administration, we think it would be helpful to have an issue paper for our transition library that describes the BGN, its role, what is covered and what is not, and the process for renaming geographic features. I believe that if these proposed changes are done via an EO, SO, or legislation, that the BGN is not likely to be involved.

I've attached the template, and I am assuming you have materials that can be copy/pasted into this format.

Thanks very much,

Leslie

Leslie W. Jones (she/her)

Chief of Staff

U.S. Geological Survey

12201 Sunrise Valley Drive, MS101

Reston, VA 20192

703-969-4158 (cell) ljones@usgs.gov

ISSUE: [U.S. BOARD ON GEOGRAPHIC NAMES]

I. KEY POINTS

The BGN, conjointly with the Secretary of the Interior, is directed to establish and maintain uniform geographic name usage throughout the Federal Government, including solving name discrepancies, approving new names, validating and recording existing names, and promulgating all official names.

The BGN comprises representatives of Federal agencies concerned with geographic information, population, ecology, and management of public lands.

The U.S. Board on Geographic Names follows a set of principles, policies, and procedures approved by the Secretary of the Interior with reference to both domestic and foreign geographic names; and to decide the standard names, orthographies, applications, and their promulgation for official use.

The Geographic Names Information System (GNIS) was established and is maintained by the U.S. Geological Survey in cooperation with the U.S. Board on Geographic Names. It represents the Federal Government's only official repository for identifying official placenames. Its purpose is to have a single efficient source of official placenames for use by all federal agencies so they don't need to maintain their own data sources.

II. OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

The BGN is integral in strengthening and maintaining Tribal relations and developing collaborative opportunities that preserve the history and diverse cultures of Tribes. These activities include Tribal consultation, pronunciation of Tribal geographic names for the public, engaging and requesting input on geographic naming proposals, and attending Tribal Historic Preservation Officer meetings.

The BGN offers the public a way to participate in the Federal geographic naming process. With respect to the Domestic Naming Committee, there are currently no limitations on who can participate in proposing new names, and name changes in the U.S.; something that can be both an opportunity, and a challenge and will require additional considerations as policies and procedures are updated. However, the Foreign Names Committee follows much stricter guidelines.

With the accessibility to the BGN via the internet comes greater visibility to a larger audience. Recently, the BGN has been involved with many high-profile cases that has increased the number of media inquiries, Congressional requests, and Freedom of Information Act requests, and inquiries from the public. With minimal staff and greater visibility, the ability to maintain operational tempo has been degraded.

The current design of GNIS does not meet the needs of agencies for a single efficient source of official placenames, requiring agencies to maintain their own data sources.

In addition to GNIS, the Geographic Names Server (GNS) is the central database for foreign geographic names approved for use on Federal products. Collectively, the two databases cannot communicate/interact with one another, are maintained by different agencies, and are updated independent of one another.

Commented [OM1]: different datasets for different purposes, they don't need to talk to one another or be maintained the same way

The BGN DNC mission is funded through Congressional appropriations allocated to the USGS, which is primarily used to maintain GNIS. The annual appropriation is roughly \$900K; this funding supports the Executive Secretary of the Domestic Names Committee, 2 Federal staff, 1 contracted staff, and multiple technical personnel who maintain the GNIS database. Board members are not funded for their service to the BGN.

III. BACKGROUND

The U.S. Board on Geographic Names (BGN) is a Federal body created in 1890 and established in its present form by Public Law in 1947 to maintain uniform geographic name usage throughout the Federal Government.

By law, the BGN is responsible for promulgating all geographic names except those applying to offices or establishments of Federal agencies (Pub. L. 80-242, sec. 1 and 7; 43 U.S.C. 364 and 364f).

Geographic names and their applications specifically established by an act of Congress, Executive order, Treaty, or Federal proclamation are official by law. This does not apply to geographic names used incidentally in the language of documents intended for other purposes.

If not named by an act of Congress or Executive order, such entities federal land units are named by the administering agency under the authority of an act of Congress.

Commented [OM2]: these aren't even in GNIS anymore. this part of the PPP refers specifically to land unit names, DNC purview features

All proposals are evaluated in cooperation with State geographic names authorities and advisors; Federal, State, and Tribal agencies; local governments; other authoritative bodies; and the public. BGN policies, published usage, and State, Tribal, and local governmental needs, will also be taken into consideration.

Policies include: Policy I. Names Considered or Established by Congress or the President Policy II. Name Changes Policy III. Commemorative Names Policy IV. Wilderness Area Geographic Names Policy V. Derogatory and Offensive Names Policy VI. Diacritics Policy VII. Duplicate and Similar Names Policy VIII. Variant Names Policy IX. Long Names Policy X. Tribal Geographic Names Policy XI. Commercial Names Policy XII. Animal Names

IV. PREPARED BY: Shellie Zahniser, United States Geological Survey, BGN Executive Secretary, 808-260-6150

DATE

10 January, 2025

From: [Connor Herbert](#)
To: [BGNEXEC, GS-N-MAC](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] New Maps
Date: Monday, January 20, 2025 12:00:52 PM

This email has been received from outside of DOI - Use caution before clicking on links, opening attachments, or responding.

Hello,

How long do I have to buy to the old maps before Denali and the Gulf of Mexico are renamed on USGS maps?

Thanks,
Connor Herbert, Fulbright '24

From: [BGNEXEC, GS-N-MAC](#)
To: [Anderson, Gina B](#)
Subject: Fw: [EXTERNAL] trump name changes
Date: Tuesday, January 21, 2025 6:13:35 AM

Get [Outlook for iOS](#)

From: Szilagyi, Seth <sszilagyi@cbs.com>
Sent: Monday, January 20, 2025 10:55:00 AM
To: BGNEXEC, GS-N-MAC <bgnexec@usgs.gov>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] trump name changes

This email has been received from outside of DOI - Use caution before clicking on links, opening attachments, or responding.

Hello,

I am the Executive Producer of Streaming at CBS News Boston.

Would you have anyone available to speak about President Trump's name change proposals for the Gulf of Mexico and Mount Denali?

We would like to have a quick zoom conversation with an authority on the subject and process for that.

Thank you!

Seth

From: [BGNEXEC, GS-N-MAC](#)
To: [Anderson, Gina R](#)
Subject: Fw: [EXTERNAL] CBS News Question Regarding "Gulf of America"
Date: Tuesday, January 21, 2025 6:14:11 AM

Get [Outlook for iOS](#)

From: Wiersema, Alisa <Alisa.Wiersema@cbsnews.com>
Sent: Monday, January 20, 2025 1:28:54 PM
To: BGNEXEC, GS-N-MAC <bgnexec@usgs.gov>; bgnexec@nga.mil <bgnexec@nga.mil>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] CBS News Question Regarding "Gulf of America"

This email has been received from outside of DOI - Use caution before clicking on links, opening attachments, or responding.

Hello,

I hope you and your team are doing well.

Given President Donald Trump's intention to sign an executive order to rename the Gulf of Mexico as the "Gulf of America", I would like to clarify whether your organization would be involved in that change?

If so, what are the steps his administration would be required to take?

Thank you for your help,
Alisa Wiersema

Alisa Wiersema Lucaci
CBS News - Political Producer
C: 202-909-7782

From: [BGNEXEC, GS-N-MAC](#)
To: [Anderson, Gina R](#)
Subject: Fw: [EXTERNAL] Media request - Renaming natural features
Date: Tuesday, January 21, 2025 6:14:00 AM
Attachments: [image002.png](#)

Get [Outlook for iOS](#)

From: Brooke Wagner <Brooke.Wagner@kold.com>
Sent: Monday, January 20, 2025 12:58:46 PM
To: BGNEXEC, GS-N-MAC <bgnexec@usgs.gov>; Anderson, Rebecca (Becci) <rdanderson@usgs.gov>; Lukas, Vicki <vlukas@usgs.gov>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Media request - Renaming natural features

This email has been received from outside of DOI - Use caution before clicking on links, opening attachments, or responding.

Hello,

I am looking for a brief ZOOM interview or statement on the process to change the name of a U.S. natural feature – in this case, Mt. Denali.

Could you please point me in the right direction?

Many Thanks,

Brooke Wagner

Brooke Wagner
Evening Anchor/Executive Talent Coach/Fact Finder
KOLD 13 News
| 7831 N Business Drive | Tucson AZ. 85743

From: [BGNEXEC, GS-N-MAC](#)
To: [Anderson, Gina B](#)
Subject: Fw: [EXTERNAL] Mt. McKinley EO
Date: Tuesday, January 21, 2025 6:14:52 AM

Get [Outlook for iOS](#)

From: Shaun Griswold <shaun.griswold@hcn.org>
Sent: Tuesday, January 21, 2025 12:23:18 AM
To: BGNEXEC, GS-N-MAC <bgnexec@usgs.gov>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Mt. McKinley EO

This email has been received from outside of DOI - Use caution before clicking on links, opening attachments, or responding.

Hello,

I am a journalist based in Albuquerque. I wanted to ask if would you have time to discuss this [executive order](#) that is seeking to fill positions with the U.S. Board on Geographic Names, are you still serving in a capacity to support this work? Can you share anything about how the new EO will impact this work? Do you know how long it will take to rename Mt. McKinley?

I would appreciate you to consider sharing anything you can. Thank you.

--

Shaun Griswold
Acting News Editor
c: 720-601-4895
he/him/they



High Country News
P.O. Box 1090
Paonia, CO 81428

[hcn.org](#) • [Newsletter](#) • [Subscribe](#) • [Twitter](#) • [Facebook](#)

High Country News is a nonprofit 501(c)3 independent media organization that covers the important issues and stories that define the American West. Our mission is to inform and inspire people – through in-depth journalism – to act on behalf of the West's diverse natural and human communities.



gray digital media

— TUCSON —

From: [BGNEXEC, GS-N-MAC](#)
To: [Anderson, Gina R](#)
Subject: Fw: [EXTERNAL] Request for comment
Date: Tuesday, January 21, 2025 6:14:30 AM

Get [Outlook for iOS](#)

From: Tim Balk <tim.balk@nytimes.com>
Sent: Monday, January 20, 2025 2:06:26 PM
To: BGNEXEC, GS-N-MAC <bgnexec@usgs.gov>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Request for comment

This email has been received from outside of DOI - Use caution before clicking on links, opening attachments, or responding.

Hi:

Tim Balk at The New York Times here. I'm writing to request any comment U.S.G.S. or the Board on Geographic Names has on President Trump's vow to rename the Gulf of Mexico as the Gulf of America by executive order? Can he do that, and will the Board rename the gulf if ordered to do so by the president?

Thank you!
tim
508-468-8082

--

Tim Balk
Reporter, The New York Times
Cell: 508-468-8082
Office: 212-556-1973

From: [BGNEXEC, GS-N-MAC](#)
To: bgnexec@nga.mil
Subject: Re: [EXTERNAL] CBS News Question Regarding "Gulf of America"
Date: Tuesday, January 21, 2025 9:17:50 AM

Hi Derek,

FYSA, I forwarded this to USGS OCAP for response.

Matt O'Donnell

From: Wiersema, Alisa <Alisa.Wiersema@cbsnews.com>
Sent: Monday, January 20, 2025 1:28 PM
To: BGNEXEC, GS-N-MAC <bgnexec@usgs.gov>; bgnexec@nga.mil <bgnexec@nga.mil>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] CBS News Question Regarding "Gulf of America"

This email has been received from outside of DOI - Use caution before clicking on links, opening attachments, or responding.

Hello,

I hope you and your team are doing well.

Given President Donald Trump's intention to sign an executive order to rename the Gulf of Mexico as the "Gulf of America", I would like to clarify whether your organization would be involved in that change?

If so, what are the steps his administration would be required to take?

Thank you for your help,
Alisa Wiersema

Alisa Wiersema Lucaci
CBS News - Political Producer
C: 202-909-7782

From: BGNEXEC-GS-NMAC
To: Anderson, Gail
Subject: Fw: [EXTERNAL] Donald Trump decision - article
Date: Tuesday, January 21, 2025 6:40:53 AM
Attachments: [01_saskakum2.jpg](#)
[01_saskakum5.jpg](#)
[01_saskum2.jpg](#)

From: Paulina Ermel <Paulina.Ermel@redakdaonet.pl>
Sent: Tuesday, January 21, 2025 3:59 AM
To: BGNEXEC-GS-NMAC <bgnexec@usgs.gov>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Donald Trump decision - article

This email has been received from outside of DOI - Use caution before clicking on links, opening attachments, or responding.

Hello,

I am a journalist for the largest news media in Poland and I am preparing an article about President Donald Trump wanting to change several geographical names in North America. In connection with this, I have a few questions. Could you answer them for me?

1. Can the president change names such as Gulf of Mexico to Gulf of America? Or Denali to Mount Kinley?
2. What is the process of changing such a name and how long does it take?
3. What criteria must be met for the name to be changed?
4. We know that Barack Obama changed the name of Mount Kinley back to Denali in 2015. Has any previous US president done this yet?

Best regards
Paulina Ermel
Dziennikarka Onet Podróże



Ringier Axel Springer Polska
ul. Domaniewska 52
02-672 Warszawa
tel (+48) 795 105 571

ringier
axel springer



Newsweek

Forbes

JakdoJade

NOZZ

sympat.pl

Fakt

BUSINESS
INSIDER

Ringier Axel Springer Polska sp. z o.o. z siedzibą w Warszawie (02-672), ul. Domaniewska 52, zarejestrowana w rejestrze przedsiębiorców Krajowego Rejestru Sądowego prowadzonym przez Sąd Rejonowy dla m. st. Warszawy, XII. Gospodarczy Krajowego Rejestru Sądowego, pod numerem KRS 0000420730, z kapitałem zakładowym w całości opłaconym 100000 zł, NIP 5272677000, REGON: 140127300.
Treść tej wiadomości jest poufna i prawnie chroniona. Odbiorcą może być jedynie jej adresat z wyłączeniem dostępu osób trzecich. Jeżeli nie jesteś adresatem niniejszej wiadomości lub rozpoznasz ją jako taką, nie należy rozpowszechniać, kopiować, rozprowadzać lub innej działalności o podobnym charakterze, jest prawnie zabronione i może być karane. Jeżeli wiadomość trafiła do Ciebie omyłkowo, uprzejmie prosimy o odstąpienie jej na adres nadawcy i usunięcie kopii.

From: [BGNEXEC, GS-N-MAC](#)
To: [Anderson, Gina R](#)
Subject: Fw: [EXTERNAL] Media Inquiry: Seeking details of next scheduled BGN meeting
Date: Tuesday, January 21, 2025 6:40:22 AM

From: jackbeavers@usbordernews.com <jackbeavers@usbordernews.com>
Sent: Monday, January 20, 2025 5:16 PM
To: BGNEXEC, GS-N-MAC <bgnexec@usgs.gov>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Media Inquiry: Seeking details of next scheduled BGN meeting

This email has been received from outside of DOI - Use caution before clicking on links, opening attachments, or responding.

I am the editor of usbordernews.com.

Can you tell me when the BGN will take up the matter of changing the name of the Gulf of Mexico to the Gulf of America per President Trump's Executive Order?

Regards,
Jack Beavers, Editor
US Border News

From: [Tischler, Michael A](#)
To: [Anderson, Gina R](#)
Subject: Re: Names inquiries
Date: Tuesday, January 21, 2025 9:07:11 AM

Thanks, Gina - let me know what you find out, and if/how I can assist.

From: Anderson, Gina R <granderson@usgs.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, January 21, 2025 9:03 AM
To: Tischler, Michael A <mtischler@usgs.gov>
Subject: Re: Names inquiries

Hi Mike,

I got the query too. I will need to work with Linda Friar who is acting in Rachel's role in the interim as well as DOI for guidance on how they would like us to proceed. Until any new guidance is given, we will not respond.

Thanks,

Gina Anderson

Public Affairs Specialist | Core Science Systems Mission Area
U.S. Geological Survey
Office of Communications and Publishing
405-509-3524 | granderson@usgs.gov

From: Tischler, Michael A <mtischler@usgs.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, January 21, 2025 7:28 AM
To: Anderson, Gina R <granderson@usgs.gov>
Subject: Names inquiries

Hi Gina,

Things are certainly heating up. I received a call on my personal line from a NYT reporter yesterday asking for comment on President Trump's actions. I was rather short with the reporter for contacting me on my personal line and declined to comment.

One of the EOs released yesterday is related to geographic names.

[Restoring Names That Honor American Greatness – The White House](#)

This renames Denali to Mount McKinley, the Gulf of Mexico to the Gulf of America, allows for

changes to the composition of the BGN, and a few other activities.

I also have two email inquiries from the NYT in my inbox from yesterday - one about McKinley and one about Gulf of America. Is the guidance to still be non-responsive? Do we need to start developing statements?

Thanks,
m

Mike Tischler, Ph.D
Director, National Geospatial Program
U.S. Geological Survey
Department of Interior
o: 703-648-4725
c: 703-344-4348
mtischler@usgs.gov

From: [Tischler, Michael A](#)
To: [Lacey, Jennifer A](#)
Subject: Re: Names inquiries
Date: Tuesday, January 21, 2025 8:45:46 AM
Attachments: [Outlook-b1xt1ibi.png](#)

Hi Jenn,

President Trump signed the EO "[Restoring Names that Honor Greatness](#)" the highlights of which are:

- 1 - general promotion of American heritage in naming activities
- 2 - Asks each agency head with BGN appointment authority (i.e., Secretaries of Interior, Commerce, Homeland Security, Ag, etc.) within 7 days to review/renew their appointment
- 3 - Gives Sec. of the Interior ability to personally appoint additional members
- 4 - Reinstate Denali to Mount McKinley within 30 days. The National Park will remain "Denali National Park and Preserve"
- 5 - Rename the Gulf of Mexico to the Gulf of America within 30 days

A few actions I'd request:

- 1 - To date, OCAP's guidance is for BGN, including me, to be non-responsive to media inquiries. I would like to confirm that is still the case. As I mentioned, I've got two inquiries in my inbox and those won't be the last.
- 2 - It would be good to understand with whom we are working and reporting to at DOI on these issues
- 3 - Am I permitted to enact the two name changes in our database ASAP, or do I need to wait for DOI guidance?

Thanks - happy to hop on a call later if necessary.

Thanks,
m

From: Lacey, Jennifer A <jlacey@usgs.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, January 21, 2025 8:34 AM
To: Tischler, Michael A <mtischler@usgs.gov>
Subject: Re: Names inquiries

Mike - can you shoot me a couple statements on what you would like me to say in ELT?

Jennifer Lacey
Associate Director, Core Science Systems
U.S. Geological Survey
Reston, VA

Mobile: 605-305-0140

<http://www.usgs.gov/>

Pronouns: she/her

"Be kind. Be patient. Be safe"



From: Tischler, Michael A <mtischler@usgs.gov>

Sent: Tuesday, January 21, 2025 8:33 AM

To: Lacey, Jennifer A <jlacey@usgs.gov>

Subject: Fw: Names inquiries

Hi Jenn,

See below....

Thanks,

m

From: Tischler, Michael A

Sent: Tuesday, January 21, 2025 8:28 AM

To: Anderson, Gina R <granderson@usgs.gov>

Subject: Names inquiries

Hi Gina,

Things are certainly heating up. I received a call on my personal line from a NYT reporter yesterday asking for comment on President Trump's actions. I was rather short with the reporter for contacting me on my personal line and declined to comment.

One of the EOs released yesterday is related to geographic names.

[Restoring Names That Honor American Greatness – The White House](#)

This renames Denali to Mount McKinley, the Gulf of Mexico to the Gulf of America, allows for changes to the composition of the BGN, and a few other activities.

I also have two email inquiries from the NYT in my inbox from yesterday - one about McKinley and one about Gulf of America. Is the guidance to still be non-responsive? Do we need to start developing statements?

Thanks,
m

Mike Tischler, Ph.D
Director, National Geospatial Program
U.S. Geological Survey
Department of Interior
o: 703-648-4725
c: 703-344-4348
mtischler@usgs.gov

From: [BGNEXEC, GS-N-MAC](#)
To: [Anderson, Rebecca \(Becci\); Lukas, Vicki](#)
Subject: Re: [EXTERNAL] Media request - Renaming natural features
Date: Tuesday, January 21, 2025 9:18:47 AM
Attachments: [image002.png](#)

Hi Becci and Vicki,

FYI, I forwarded this to USGS OCAP (Gina Anderson) for reply.

Matt

From: Brooke Wagner <Brooke.Wagner@kold.com>
Sent: Monday, January 20, 2025 12:58 PM
To: BGNEXEC, GS-N-MAC <bgnexec@usgs.gov>; Anderson, Rebecca (Becci) <rdanderson@usgs.gov>; Lukas, Vicki <vlukas@usgs.gov>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Media request - Renaming natural features

This email has been received from outside of DOI - Use caution before clicking on links, opening attachments, or responding.

Hello,

I am looking for a brief ZOOM interview or statement on the process to change the name of a U.S. natural feature – in this case, Mt. Denali.

Could you please point me in the right direction?

Many Thanks,

Brooke Wagner

Brooke Wagner
Evening Anchor/Executive Talent Coach/Fact Finder
KOLD 13 News
| 7831 N Business Drive | Tucson AZ. 85743



gray digital media

— TUCSON —

From: [Lacey, Jennifer A](#)
To: [Tischler, Michael A](#); [Jones, Leslie W](#)
Subject: Re: BGN issue paper needed for transition
Date: Tuesday, January 21, 2025 9:31:08 AM
Attachments: [Outlook-hde5nwoj.png](#)

Mike - I would suggest go ahead and just send the one. Leslie - I messaged Sarah to ask about implementing the EO. We will work with OCAP to get some information out.

Jennifer Lacey
Associate Director, Core Science Systems
U.S. Geological Survey
Reston, VA
Mobile: 605-305-0140
<http://www.usgs.gov/>
Pronouns: she/her
"Be kind. Be patient. Be safe"



From: Tischler, Michael A <mtischler@usgs.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, January 21, 2025 9:19 AM
To: Jones, Leslie W <ljones@usgs.gov>
Cc: Lacey, Jennifer A <jlacey@usgs.gov>
Subject: Re: BGN issue paper needed for transition

Hi Jenn, Leslie,

We had two issue papers just about ready to send to you. However, given that we now have an EO...one of the papers is now moot. How would you like us to proceed?

Thanks,
m

From: Tischler, Michael A <mtischler@usgs.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, January 8, 2025 2:16 PM
To: Jones, Leslie W <ljones@usgs.gov>
Cc: Lacey, Jennifer A <jlacey@usgs.gov>
Subject: Re: BGN issue paper needed for transition

Hi Leslie,

Sure - we can work on that.

Thanks,
m

From: Jones, Leslie W <ljones@usgs.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, January 8, 2025 2:13 PM
To: Tischler, Michael A <mtischler@usgs.gov>
Cc: Lacey, Jennifer A <jlacey@usgs.gov>
Subject: BGN issue paper needed for transition

Hi Mike,

Given the Gulf of Mexico and the Mt. Denali name changes being proposed by the new administration, we think it would be helpful to have an issue paper for our transition library that describes the BGN, its role, what is covered and what is not, and the process for renaming geographic features. I believe that if these proposed changes are done via an EO, SO, or legislation, that the BGN is not likely to be involved.

I've attached the template, and I am assuming you have materials that can be copy/pasted into this format.

Thanks very much,

Leslie

Leslie W. Jones (she/her)
Chief of Staff
U.S. Geological Survey

12201 Sunrise Valley Drive, MS101
Reston, VA 20192
703-969-4158 (cell) ljones@usgs.gov

From: [Lacey, Jennifer A](#)
To: [Tischler, Michael A](#); [Jones, Leslie W](#)
Subject: Re: BGN issue paper needed for transition
Date: Wednesday, January 8, 2025 2:29:01 PM
Attachments: [Outlooksvw1kcvp.ppt](#)

Also Leslie - Dave has been messaging me specifically on EOs, which fall outside BGN. So we will have the scope be all changes to GNIS. Sound good?

Jennifer Lacey
Associate Director, Core Science Systems
U.S. Geological Survey
Reston, VA
Mobile: 605-305-0140
<http://www.usgs.gov/>
Pronouns: she/her
"Be kind. Be patient. Be safe"



From: Tischler, Michael A <mtischler@usgs.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, January 8, 2025 1:16 PM
To: Jones, Leslie W <ljones@usgs.gov>
Cc: Lacey, Jennifer A <jlacey@usgs.gov>
Subject: Re: BGN issue paper needed for transition

Hi Leslie,

Sure - we can work on that.

Thanks,
m

From: Jones, Leslie W <ljones@usgs.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, January 8, 2025 2:13 PM
To: Tischler, Michael A <mtischler@usgs.gov>
Cc: Lacey, Jennifer A <jlacey@usgs.gov>
Subject: BGN issue paper needed for transition

Hi Mike,

Given the Gulf of Mexico and the Mt. Denali name changes being proposed by the new

administration, we think it would be helpful to have an issue paper for our transition library that describes the BGN, its role, what is covered and what is not, and the process for renaming geographic features. I believe that if these proposed changes are done via an EO, SO, or legislation, that the BGN is not likely to be involved.

I've attached the template, and I am assuming you have materials that can be copy/pasted into this format.

Thanks very much,

Leslie

Leslie W. Jones (she/her)

Chief of Staff

U.S. Geological Survey

12201 Sunrise Valley Drive, MS101

Reston, VA 20192

703-969-4158 (cell) ljones@usgs.gov

From: [James Patrick](#)
To: [BGNEXEC, GS-N-MAC](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Denali
Date: Tuesday, January 21, 2025 10:00:22 AM

This email has been received from outside of DOI - Use caution before clicking on links, opening attachments, or responding.

As a resident of Alaska I strongly oppose President Trump's effort to rename Denali after a robber baron president. The name of the mountain should remain Denali.

From: [BGNEXEC, GS-N-MAC](#)
To: [Anderson, Gina R](#)
Subject: Fw: [EXTERNAL] Media request - NPR's Morning Edition - on deadline
Date: Tuesday, January 21, 2025 10:01:51 AM

From: Lisa Thomson <LThomson@npr.org>
Sent: Tuesday, January 21, 2025 1:00 PM
To: BGNEXEC, GS-N-MAC <bgnexec@usgs.gov>
Cc: Adam Bearne <ABearne@npr.org>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Media request - NPR's Morning Edition - on deadline

This email has been received from outside of DOI - Use caution before clicking on links, opening attachments, or responding.


Dear Executive Secretary,

My name is Lisa Thomson and I'm an Editor with NPR's Morning Edition. I'm putting together a brief radio piece about the renaming of Mt Denali and I'm wondering if one of your colleagues at the Board on Geographic Names is available for an audio interview to talk a bit about the process of renaming a mountain and what it entails logistically.

Ideally, we'd be able to speak today before 6pm ET.

Is one of your members available for this?

Kindest wishes,
Lisa

 | Lisa Thomson (she/her) | Editor, Morning Edition | lthomson@npr.org | +1 (240) 374-1838 (m) | [@lisacthompson](#)

From: [Tara Wallace - NOAA Federal](#)
To: [Tischler, Michael A](#)
Cc: [O'Donnell, Matthew J; Zahniser, Shellie R; Thaddeus Ellerbe - NOAA Federal](#)
Subject: Re: [EXTERNAL] Executive Order - Gulf
Date: Tuesday, January 21, 2025 10:31:32 AM

Many thanks Mike -

On Tue, Jan 21, 2025 at 1:29 PM Tischler, Michael A <mtischler@usgs.gov> wrote:

Hi Tara,

As Matt mentioned, we are waiting on additional guidance from DOI. Once I have that, it should not take long to update GNIS (both McKinley and GOA) at which point we can notify the board that the changes have been made.

Thanks,
m

From: Tara Wallace - NOAA Federal <tara.wallace@noaa.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, January 21, 2025 1:04 PM
To: O'Donnell, Matthew J <mjodonnell@usgs.gov>
Cc: Tischler, Michael A <mtischler@usgs.gov>; Zahniser, Shellie R <srzahniser@usgs.gov>; Thaddeus Ellerbe - NOAA Federal <thaddeus.ellerbe@noaa.gov>
Subject: Re: [EXTERNAL] Executive Order - Gulf

Thanks Matt ~

On Tue, Jan 21, 2025 at 1:03 PM O'Donnell, Matthew J <mjodonnell@usgs.gov> wrote:

We are waiting for USGS/DOI guidance on the process.

Matt

From: Tara Wallace - NOAA Federal <tara.wallace@noaa.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, January 21, 2025 1:01 PM
To: Tischler, Michael A <mtischler@usgs.gov>; Zahniser, Shellie R <srzahniser@usgs.gov>; O'Donnell, Matthew J <mjodonnell@usgs.gov>
Cc: Thaddeus Ellerbe - NOAA Federal <thaddeus.ellerbe@noaa.gov>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Executive Order - Gulf

This email has been received from outside of DOI - Use caution before clicking on links, opening attachments, or responding.

Good afternoon -

The Executive Order states "The Board shall provide guidance..." - will there actually be any guidance from the Board? Do you know how long it will take to update the GNIS?

NOAA - Marine Chart Division is gearing up to update our charts and release them.

Thanks,
Tara

--

Tara Wallace, Branch Chief
Production Branch B, Marine Chart Division
Member, U.S. Board on Geographic Names
Office of Coast Survey, National Ocean Service
Telephone number: 304-506-4046
Telework hours: 6:30 am - 3:00 pm est



--

Tara Wallace, Branch Chief
Production Branch B, Marine Chart Division
Member, U.S. Board on Geographic Names
Office of Coast Survey, National Ocean Service
Telephone number: 304-506-4046
Telework hours: 6:30 am - 3:00 pm est



--

Tara Wallace, Branch Chief
Production Branch B, Marine Chart Division
Member, U.S. Board on Geographic Names
Office of Coast Survey, National Ocean Service
Telephone number: 304-506-4046
Telework hours: 6:30 am - 3:00 pm est



From: [Jeremy Kirkendall](#)
To: [Tischler, Michael A](#)
Subject: RE: [EXTERNAL] GNIS Update
Date: Tuesday, January 21, 2025 11:54:28 AM

Thank you Mike!

I'll let our basemaps team know as well.

Thanks,
Jeremy Kirkendall, GISP | Senior Account Manager
Esri | 167 S. Taylor Avenue | Louisville CO 80027 | USA
M 970 231 1793 | jkirkendall@esri.com | esri.com

THE SCIENCE OF WHERE®

From: Tischler, Michael A <mtischler@usgs.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, January 21, 2025 9:42 AM
To: Jeremy Kirkendall <jkirkendall@esri.com>
Subject: Re: [EXTERNAL] GNIS Update

Hi Jeremy,

We are working through implementation of name changes associated with the Executive Order, but no schedule has been established at this point. I'll let you know if/when I know more.

Thanks,
mike

From: Jeremy Kirkendall <jkirkendall@esri.com>
Sent: Tuesday, January 21, 2025 11:31 AM
To: Tischler, Michael A <mtischler@usgs.gov>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] GNIS Update

This email has been received from outside of DOI - Use caution before clicking on links, opening attachments, or responding.

Hi Mike,

I hope you had a great holiday weekend! We have a lot of staff supporting the border patrol

and they've been asking when the Gulf of Mexico will be officially changed in GNIS.

Do you have any idea of how quickly that change may go through?

Thanks,

Jeremy Kirkendall, GISP | Senior Account Manager

Esri | 167 S. Taylor Avenue | Louisville CO 80027 | USA

M 970 231 1793 | jkirkendall@esri.com | esri.com

THE SCIENCE OF WHERE®

From: [Tischler, Michael A](#)
To: [Anderson, Gina B](#)
Subject: Fw: [EXTERNAL] GNIS Update
Date: Tuesday, January 21, 2025 11:37:33 AM

Hi Gina,

My response is that we are working through implementation of name changes associated with the EO, but no timeline has been established. Is there any issue if I respond, given that this isn't a media outlet?

Thanks,
m

From: Jeremy Kirkendall <jkirkendall@esri.com>
Sent: Tuesday, January 21, 2025 11:31 AM
To: Tischler, Michael A <mtischler@usgs.gov>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] GNIS Update

This email has been received from outside of DOI - Use caution before clicking on links, opening attachments, or responding.

Hi Mike,

I hope you had a great holiday weekend! We have a lot of staff supporting the border patrol and they've been asking when the Gulf of Mexico will be officially changed in GNIS.

Do you have any idea of how quickly that change may go through?

Thanks,
Jeremy Kirkendall, GISP | Senior Account Manager
Esri | 167 S. Taylor Avenue | Louisville CO 80027 | USA
M 970 231 1793 | jkirkendall@esri.com | esri.com

THE SCIENCE OF WHERE®

From: [Eustis, Christine E](#)
To: [Frier, Linda; Anderson, Gina R](#)
Cc: [Hines, Vic; Corbett, Miel R; Gray, Gina L; Huggler, Matt; Onizuk, Jeffrey M](#)
Subject: BGN Name Changes from EO
Date: Tuesday, January 21, 2025 7:18:31 PM

Gina - Linda and I connected today and are hoping you'll have the bandwidth to be OCAP's lead for working with CSS and the BGN on a communications plan around the EO that proposes name changes to the Denali and the Gulf of Mexico etc.

If you can connect with Mike Tischler this week to get that plan started, that would be great. Feel free to coordinate with other parts of OCAP since there will be Congressional and External partner interest in this process.

Christine

Christine Eustis (she/her)
Office of Communications and Publishing
U.S. Geological Survey
Reston, VA
mobile: 571) 539-7546
ceustis@usgs.gov

From: [Huggler, Matt](#)
To: [Woods, Tim](#); [Eustis, Christine E](#)
Subject: RE: Gulf of America changes in Drupal
Date: Tuesday, January 21, 2025 9:34:00 AM

Thanks Tim.

I expect we will get specific direction on what actions to take with deadlines at some point.

Same for all the other Executive Orders that were signed that impact USGS.

Unless directed otherwise, I think we hold off on changing anything until provided with guidance.

Matt

Matthew Huggler (he/him)
Deputy Associate Director
Office of Communications and Publishing
U.S. Geological Survey
Reston, VA
mobile: 202-460-8402
mhuggler@usgs.gov

From: Woods, Tim <twoods@usgs.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, January 21, 2025 9:06 AM
To: Huggler, Matt <mhuggler@usgs.gov>; Eustis, Christine E <ceustis@usgs.gov>
Subject: Gulf of America changes in Drupal

Hi,
We're investigating it already. I know the executive order has a few hoops it has to jump through before it's finalized. So things to know:

1. If you do a search on WWW right now we have 2033 peieces of content (Gulf of Mexico).
2. We've identifed 6 base layer maps in the sites mapping tools that use the words "Gulf of Mexico". I'm going to have the base layers blocked/drop support for them in the next sprint with will deploy on 2/12. If I need to speed that up or slow it down I can.
3. We have a special topic site named Gulf of Mexico - <https://www.usgs.gov/special-topics/gulf-of-mexico>
4. I have no idea the number of publications we have with the phrase.

The Alasks mountain name change will require a bit more digging.
I'm on stand by.
Thanks,
Tim

Tim Woods
OCAP - Digital Services, Web & Social Media Chief
twoods@usgs.gov
(571) 509-1506(c)

CONFIDENTIALITY NOTICE

This message (including any attachments) is intended exclusively for the individual or entity to which it is addressed. This communication may contain proprietary, privileged, confidential information, or otherwise legally exempt from disclosure. If you are not the named addressee, you are not authorized to read, print, retain, copy or disseminate this message or any part. If you have received this message in error, please notify the sender immediately by email and delete all copies of the message.



Greetings from USGS

From Eustis, Christine E <ceustis@usgs.gov>

Date Wed 1/22/2025 8:16 AM

To Martin, Kathryn A <kathryn_martin@ios.doi.gov>; Baptiste, Thomas P <thomas_baptiste@ios.doi.gov>

Cc Friar, Linda <lfriar@usgs.gov>; Huggler, Matthew <mhuggler@usgs.gov>; Barrett, Anne <abarrett@usgs.gov>

Dear Katie and Thomas:

I am the Associate Director for the Office of Communications and Publishing at the U.S. Geological Survey.

I understand Thomas reached out to Linda Friar who is our External Affairs Chief and oversees our public affairs program.

I look forward to working with you. A few items for your information.

- 1) We will direct all media inquiries regarding the EOs and memos from the Administration to InteriorPress -and if you want us to direct them to someone else, please let me know.
- 2) We have been getting media inquiries on the name changes to the Gulf and Mt. McKinley (since USGS oversees the Bureau on Geographic Names). We have been collecting those inquiries but not responding. If you want us to direct those to InteriorPress or someone else, please let us know.
- 3) We understand that the memo from Acting OPM director regarding DEIA activities directs each agency to send out an all employee memo by 5pm today. Do you have any insights on when that might be issued - USGS will defer to the Department on any communications to employees on that action unless you direct us to send our own memo.

Please reach out if you have any needs. Matt Huggler is the Deputy for our office and he, Linda and I are all available to support you.

Christine

Christine Eustis (she/her), Associate Director
Office of Communications and Publishing
U.S. Geological Survey
Reston, VA
mobile: 571) 539-7546
ceustis@usgs.gov

From: [BGNEXEC, GS-N-MAC](#)
To: [Anderson, Gina R](#)
Subject: Fw: [EXTERNAL] Changing terminology questions -- Gulf of Mexico to Gulf of America?
Date: Wednesday, January 22, 2025 9:46:13 AM
Attachments: [image002.png](#)

From: Mikaila Adams <madams@endeavorb2b.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 22, 2025 12:43 PM
To: BGNEXEC, GS-N-MAC <bnexec@usgs.gov>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Changing terminology questions -- Gulf of Mexico to Gulf of America?

This email has been received from outside of DOI - Use caution before clicking on links, opening attachments, or responding.

Hello. My name is Mikaila Adams and I'm writing as an editor of Oil & Gas Journal based in Houston, Tex.

I'm inquiring about what action, if any, the U.S. Board on Geographic Names is taking now that President Trump signed an order ("Restoring Names that Honor American Greatness") to rename the Gulf of Mexico to the "Gulf of America". It says the Secretary of the Interior now has 30 days to "update the [Geographic Names Information System, to reflect the renaming of the Gulf and remove all references to the Gulf of Mexico from the GNIS." It's my understanding that the order does not extend to state governments or private companies, meaning there is no nationwide mandate to switch terminology.

What action does US Board on Geographic Names take? If there are still policy change matters to be resolved before a name change becomes 'official,' what are they?

Thank you for your time.

Mikaila

E. Mikaila Adams
Managing Editor-News, [Oil & Gas Journal](#)
Houston, TX



From: [Friar, Linda](#)
To: mrcarlock@sbgstv.com
Cc: [Interior Press; GS-DO-OCAP-OC-East](#)
Subject: Re: [EXTERNAL] Question regarding the Gulf
Date: Thursday, January 23, 2025 2:46:53 PM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
[Outlook-jkspe45x.png](#)

Good afternoon Mr. Carlock

Your inquiry was forwarded to me this afternoon and with this correspondence am looping in the Dept of the Interior Communications team who are handling questions on this topic.

Regards
Linda Friar

Linda Friar, AICP

Chief External Affairs, Acting Public Affairs Officer

USGS, Science for a Changing World

Office of Communications and Publishing

Desk 703-648-4447 Mobile 786-385-0067

E-mail lfriar@usgs.gov

 [Book time to meet with me](#)

From: Melvin Carlock <mrcarlock@sbgstv.com>
Sent: Thursday, January 23, 2025 2:04 PM
To: GS-DO-OCAP-OC-East <gs-do-ocap-oc-east@usgs.gov>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Question regarding the Gulf

I am reaching out about the Gulf of Mexico and the President's executive order to rename it the Gulf of America. I am reaching out to you because decisions on maps, including naming, fall on cartographers.

The National Cartographic Information Center appears to be the agency this might fall to. Has the agency begun preparations to change future maps to include the new name? Has the agency received the official request to begin the work?

Thank you for your help.

Melvin Carlock
Dayside Assignment Editor

WPEC CBS12 News
1100 Fairfield Circle
West Palm Beach, FL 33407

mccarlock@shgtv.com

(561) 847-5222 (Cell)

(561) 681-3436 (Office)

<http://cbs12.com>



From: [Magirl, Christopher S](#)
To: [Eustis, Christine E](#); [Friar, Linda](#); [Hines, Vic](#); [Huggler, Matthew](#); [Onizuk, Jeffrey M](#); [Corbett, Miel R](#); [Gray, Gina L](#)
Subject: Re: Gulf of America in upcoming publications?
Date: Tuesday, January 28, 2025 4:39:45 PM
Attachments: [Outlook-dznkat3v.png](#)

I agree with Christine.

I'll also add that federal law (*Public Law 80-242*) stipulates that USGS pubs follow the naming convention, for geographic names, listed in the U.S. Board of Geographic Names's [GNIS database](#). As of right now, the official name is still "[Gulf of Mexico](#)" and "[Denali](#)."

We will continue to follow GNIS until the Department has different guidance.

Christopher Magirl
[Science Publishing Network \(SPN\) Manager](#)
[Office of Communications and Publishing \(OCAP\)](#)

U.S. Geological Survey
Tucson, Arizona 85716

phone: 520-268-2350

email: magirl@usgs.gov

<https://www.usgs.gov/staff-profiles/christopher-magirl>

"Brevity is the key to effective science communication."

From: Eustis, Christine E <ceustis@usgs.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, January 28, 2025 2:14 PM
To: Friar, Linda <lfriar@usgs.gov>; Hines, Vic <vhines@usgs.gov>; Magirl, Christopher S <magirl@usgs.gov>; Huggler, Matthew <mhuggler@usgs.gov>; Onizuk, Jeffrey M <jonizuk@usgs.gov>; Corbett, Miel R <mcorbett@usgs.gov>; Gray, Gina L <glgray@usgs.gov>
Subject: Re: Gulf of America in upcoming publications?

We do not have any guidance on how to handle publications yet - so let's not take any action on those until we receive guidance.

Thanks for flagging Vic!

From: Friar, Linda <lfriar@usgs.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, January 28, 2025 2:29 PM
To: Hines, Vic <vhines@usgs.gov>; Magirl, Christopher S <magirl@usgs.gov>; Eustis, Christine E <ceustis@usgs.gov>; Huggler, Matthew <mhuggler@usgs.gov>; Onizuk, Jeffrey M <jonizuk@usgs.gov>; Corbett, Miel R <mcorbett@usgs.gov>; Gray, Gina L <glgray@usgs.gov>
Subject: Re: Gulf of America in upcoming publications?

FYSA - this is what OCO is sending to reporters

From a media response

"We aren't available for an interview at this time, but here is a link to the press release we sent out:

<https://www.doi.gov/pressreleases/interior-department-advances-restoration-historic-names-honoring-american-greatness>

On background: The Board on Geographic Names under the Department of the Interior has purview over names for federal use. BGN names are only binding to federal departments and agencies. Historically, the U.S. Geological Survey and the Board on Geographic Names will update the Geographic Names Information System (GNIS) for federal use effective immediately, and the Department of State will update the Geographic Names Server (GNS). It is up to each federal agency and office to change their signage and websites per their own budgetary needs and website update scheduling. "

Linda Friar, AICP

Chief External Affairs

USGS, Science for a Changing World

Office of Communications and Publishing

Desk 703-648-4447 Mobile 786-385-0067

E-mail lfriar@usgs.gov



[Book time to meet with me](#)

From: Hines, Vic <vhines@usgs.gov>

Sent: Tuesday, January 28, 2025 2:23 PM

To: Magirl, Christopher S <magirl@usgs.gov>; Eustis, Christine E <ceustis@usgs.gov>; Huggler, Matthew <mhuggler@usgs.gov>; Friar, Linda <lfriar@usgs.gov>; Onizuk, Jeffrey M <jonizuk@usgs.gov>; Corbett, Miel R <mcorbett@usgs.gov>; Gray, Gina L <ggray@usgs.gov>

Subject: Gulf of America in upcoming publications?

Hi Chris,

Has there been any discussion on whether "Gulf of Mexico" references should be changed to "Gulf of America" in upcoming publications? I fielded that question during today's SE Region meeting, and several people were interested in the answer of how to handle this issue in publications their staffs were working.

Thanks,

Vic

Vic Hines

Chief of Communications, Eastern States

Office of Communications and Publishing

U.S. Geological Survey

vhines@usgs.gov

Mobile: 813-855-3125

From: [Huggler, Matthew](#)
To: [Woods, Tim](#); [Eustis, Christine E](#)
Cc: [Friar, Linda](#)
Subject: RE: Gulf of America change on WWW
Date: Wednesday, January 29, 2025 2:24:00 PM

Thanks Tim.

We understand there is a lot of confusion on this issue and we are trying to get additional guidance.

Matt

Matthew Huggler
Deputy Associate Director
Office of Communications and Publishing
U.S. Geological Survey
Reston, VA
mobile: 202-460-8402
mhuggler@usgs.gov

From: Woods, Tim <twoods@usgs.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, January 29, 2025 1:39 PM
To: Eustis, Christine E <ceustis@usgs.gov>; Huggler, Matthew <mhuggler@usgs.gov>
Cc: Friar, Linda <lfriar@usgs.gov>
Subject: Gulf of America change on WWW

Hi,

Currently, all of the base maps that are available on WWW either feature gulf of mexico or no place name at all. I have no ability to change the words on a map. Talking with CSS will be of zero benefit to WWW.

Actions I'm taking:

1. I'm going to drop support(they won't be a user option) for any with the GoM place name for now.
2. We will monitor their status over the next few weeks and add them back in as support for it grows.
3. A lot of these map companys inherit the USGS place names on maps, so it's only a matter of time.

Web page content. Click the link to see the total volume of content on WWW.

<https://www.usgs.gov/search?keywords=gulf+of+mexico>

We have a full microsite about all things GoM as an example.

Actions I'm taking:

1. Creating an inventory of content.

Direction and guidance required.

1. Do we do a bulk search and replace for GoM and replace it with GoA?
 - a. Digital Services can do this, should we?
2. Do we only go so far back in time with updating web page content?
 - a. Other scope considerations?
3. Publications are outside of my wheel house and I cannot do anything with those.
4. We need to give guidance to content managers across USGS on the expected use of GoA.

The mountain name change is identical to these as well.

That's the status and what I need to move forward beyond my simple actions.

Thanks,

Tim

Tim Woods

OACAP - Digital Services, Web & Social Media Chief

twoods@usgs.gov

(571) 509-1506(c)

CONFIDENTIALITY NOTICE

This message (including any attachments) is intended exclusively for the individual or entity to which it is addressed. This communication may contain proprietary, privileged, confidential information, or otherwise legally exempt from disclosure. If you are not the named addressee, you are not authorized to read, print, retain, copy or disseminate this message or any part. If you have received this message in error, please notify the sender immediately by email and delete all copies of the message.

Wednesday, December 4, 2024

12/4/2024 4:01 PM

I'm sorry that Shelby is bugging you about the Denali wilderness names, but I guess we don't officially have your recommendation against the names from NPS to BGN, just to AHC...

Shelton, Michael 12/4/2024 4:01 PM



Have I already weighed in with Alaska??

12/4/2024 4:02 PM

maybe not... I might be thinking of a different Denali wilderness name. Probably Mount Carola. These new three aren't on your list of active proposals. Never mind!

Monday, December 23, 2024

Zehriser, Shellie R 12/23/2024 3:23 AM



<https://www.reuters.com/world/us/trump-vows-rename-denali-north-americas-tallest-mountain-mt-mckinley-2024-12-22/>



Trump vows to rename Denali as Mount McKinley

The U.S. changed its name to the Athabascan "Denali" in 2015.

www.reuters.com

12/23/2024 9:42 AM

I saw that

12/23/2024 9:51 AM

<https://www.adn.com/politics/2024/12/22/trump-wants-to-change-the-name-of-denali-back-to-mount-mckinley/>



Trump wants to change the name of Denal... X

Alaska's two Republican U.S. senators, Lisa Murkowski and Dan Sullivan, immediately pushed back, saying they...

www.adn.com

12/23/2024 10:07 AM

<https://www.cnn.com/2017/10/24/politics/trump-denali-mt-mckinley/index.html>




Trump asked about renaming Denali as Mt... X

President Donald Trump, during a meeting earlier this year with Alaska's two Republican senators, asked about...

www.cnn.com

12/23/2024 10:21 AM

This was a 2016 campaign talking point when the 2015 Secretary's Order changed the name but it didn't go anywhere. Sen Murkowski and Sen Sullivan reportedly advised against it in 2017, because AK has called it Denali since the 1970s. AK isn't just advisory to the BGN. They decide names for state use. We're pretty sure that only a secretary order (SO) or presidential proclamation/executive order (EO) can be used to change a name set by SO/EO/proclamation. So anything to do with the name Denali for the summit it not under BGN purview anymore. I think.




Runyon, Jennifer E Chat Shared

1/7 1:27 PM

It's not relevant at all to this inquiry/bill, but didn't someone proposed Gulf of America in the 1990s? I can't find it in the history.

Runyon, Jennifer E 1/7 1:32 PM




There's a folder in Incomplete Cases: LA Gulf of America (initial inquiry 2006/followed up with preferred name 2011). It looks like Lou said we would process it but I'll need to poke around some more. I'm pretty sure it never got as far as a BGN vote. I vaguely recall Leo from State Dept having something to say about the matter, presumably at a full board meeting.

(But no, we don't want to let on that this is has come up before, especially if we can't explain why the BGN didn't vote on it.)


1/7 1:49 PM

I think because it's not just a domestic name, that the DNC couldn't vote on it until someone (FNC?) worked with at least Mexico about it and I doubt they did.

Runyon, Jennifer E 1/7 1:50 PM





Yes, it definitely would have been a joint DNC-FNC activity. I'm sure FNC had zero interest in dealing with it, especially as they don't receive and process proposals like the DNC does.



Runyon, Jennifer E Chat Shared


Runyon, Jennifer E 1/7 3:26 PM

Just FYI, I misspoke earlier about the 2011 date for the Gulf of America request. That's simply when Lou shared the 2006 proposal/email with me. Not sure why it came up again five years later, but please disregard 2011. If the Full Board did review it, it would likely have been in 2006-07. I will continue to poke around.



Runyon, Jennifer E, Zahniser, Shellie R Chat Shared

Runyon, Jennifer E 1/7 3:45 PM




From DNC meeting 860 (July 13, 2006): "As reported at the June meeting, a proposal has been received to rename the Gulf of Mexico.

The proposed replacement is Gulf of America, a name that the proponent suggests is more appropriate as "Mexico is not the major border of this gulf." After an e-mail dialogue among members and staff, it was determined that this is an issue for the full BGN, with input from both the domestic and foreign names committees. The topic will be on the agenda for discussion at the July 18th meeting. The DNC members were asked at this meeting how they wished to proceed. It was noted that this is an international high seas feature and therefore beyond the DNC's sole purview. Yost asked whether each State Names Authority along the Gulf Coast should be asked to provide a formal recommendation, to which several members responded that this would not be necessary. A motion was made and seconded not to place the issue on a DNC Review List but to forward it to the full BGN for review. The motion carried unanimously. A motion was then made and seconded not to recommend approval of the proposed name change, citing long-standing local, regional, national, and international use and historical significance of the existing name. The motion passed unanimously."


And the following meeting 861 (Aug. 10, 2006): "Yost announced that the Board voted against the proposal to rename the Gulf of Mexico to Gulf of America at its July 18th meeting. Yost reminded the DNC members that they chose not to address the proposal, and that they determined it was a matter to be decided by the full Board. A notification letter has been sent to the proponent."

(Again, my advice is to keep this background on the lowdown, as it has no bearing on the current situation. No one needs to know this has come up before. At least not right now. It looks like Betsy and Meredith are the only two members who were around then and might remember it.)



Stauffer, Andy J Chat Shared

Stauffer, Andy J 1/7 1:09 PM




how many of these gulf of america requests have you gotten?







I have a call with NGP User Engagement in a few hours. I can mention that this is an "issue" right now and not to respond on the topic?

1/7 1:19 PM

just the BBC one and one from CBS Tampa Media


Thanks, probably best. You can tell UE that the BGN has nothing to do with any renaming proposed or done by the President or Congress. Point them to the [Policy on Names Considered or Established by Congress or the President](#)







**Zahniser, Shellie R** Chat Shared




1/8 8:27 PM

That was me forwarding the public comment opposed to changing the name of the Gulf of Mexico, not Gina. I want her to track the inevitable emails we get saying "BGN please do/don't change the name" that OCAP could have staved off if at least some articles had said "the BGN is not involved if the President or Congress acts to name or rename a feature."

**Runyon, Jennifer E** Chat Shared



1/8 12:11 PM



Yes, I'm home. We had the hour-long meet & greet with the JMU student, and I just finished chatting with Ron Grim about the Wash Map Soc. presentation. He's going to start by calling Tim. So I haven't accomplished much today. Sorry you had to drive all the way to your parents'.


1/8 1:01 PM

I see we got two more Gulf of Mexico media Q's. Did Rachel say if she wanted to see all of these? It doesn't feel right to just ignore them, but when it comes to the media, we have to trust OCAP knows what it's doing.

Was I supposed to be on the call with the student?

Rachel didn't say if I should fwd them or not, so I'm not going to.

1/8 1:13 PM



O'Donnell, Matthew J 1/8/2025 1:04 PM
Was I supposed to be on the call with the student?

No, there'll be plenty of time to meet him, if he volunteers over the summer.


1/8 1:18 PM

O'Donnell, Matthew J 1/8/2025 1:08 PM
Rachel didn't say if I should fwd them or not, so I'm not going to.


Works for me. Is there any benefit to saving them in a folder, or just delete them?

1/8 1:56 PM


probably a **folder**. We shouldn't delete them









1/8 1:51 PM




I'll go ahead and save them in the existing folder.

**Runyon, Jennifer E** Chat Shared



1/8 2:49 PM



So Shellie says we should straighten Roger out re: Gulf of Mexico, but how do I do that without including the FedSmith guy and telling Roger not to share it with him? I can guarantee Roger won't agree with OCAP's policy not to say anything to anyone who asks. I suppose I can simply quote Policy I and that it would be premature for the BGN to comment.

1/8 2:52 PM

I think we don't include Ralph and we can't control how Roger reacts, unfortunately. I emailed Shellie to ask if she wanted to send the email. But I assume she will have us send it

1/8 3:12 PM

Gina just said she's logging all the inquiries, so I'll forward those emails to her

**Runyon, Jennifer E** Chat Shared



1/10 10:12 AM



I will share that he & I chatted a little bit about the Gulf of Mexico and he shared the MTG proposed legislation (apparently not yet in congress.gov but somewhere on her social media). He questioned why the GNIS entry lists LA as the state, so we reviewed the entry and I explained it requires a primary location and it was likely just the approx. center along the coastline. I showed him there's a point per quad and that all states and counties are listed, and that's just the way GNIS is set up. Apparently he and Marilyn and Brooke were discussing how the entries look very different in GNIS vs. GNS, which I said is inevitable (they likely have a centroid and of course (I presume) a polygon). Anyhow, he seemed happy with the explanation. His biggest concern is that Fox News will want to interview him, haha.

1/10 10:29 AM



Sorry, just saw that you already found the draft legislation and shared it with OCAP 🙌





Friday, January 10

Tischler, Michael A 1/10 9:53 AM



Hi Matt - I think MTG released the text on social media. I found a reference on reddit this morning.



1/10 9:53 AM

Thanks, I had seen an earlier one that the Secretary of Commerce would be the one to implement the change throughout the govt.

Tischler, Michael A 1/10 9:54 AM



I also separately emailed gina and rachael and asked if a revision in their policy of non-answer should change, since this calls out SOI and the BGN specifically.

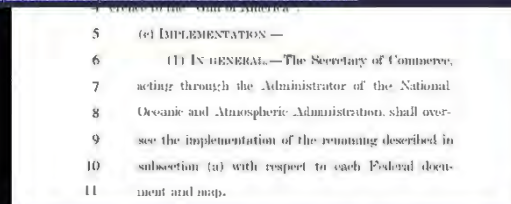
1/10 9:55 AM

I'll be surprised if they change their minds, but I'm hoping that the submitted bill actually changes things. I personally disagreed with them about the initial non-response.



Here was the original draft Rep Green posted

<https://www.congress.gov/bills/116/1876756973644837111>



10 subsection (a) with respect to each Federal docu-
11 ment and map.

This was just to X

The IHC communication to NOAA was surprising. A lot of articles are reporting that IHC names "high seas" and international waters. It's more complicated and I think we need input from FNC for a fuller story. Of course, the US could legislate the name change for US use and the rest of the world doesn't have to follow. Like you said, like Sea of Japan/East Sea.

Tischler, Michael A 1/10 11:25 AM



I've have a short back-and-forth with FNC about the difference in the databases (GNIS, GNS) and how the feature is represented. I'm sure we're heading for a larger discussion shortly

it looks like MTG updated her original X post with the revised language for DOI and BGN

1/10 11:26 AM

Let Shellie and me know how DNC support staff can help.

Tischler, Michael A 1/10 11:26 AM



yep. maybe lindsey, too.

1/10 11:27 AM

GNIS and GNS are fundamentally different databases for different purposes, so it's understandable that they differ.

Tischler, Michael A 1/10 11:28 AM



yes...I think not just in how the geometry is captured/stored, but in the application as well.

1/10 11:29 AM

Shellie and I would be interested in those discussions, and yes, Lindsay too.




We want to learn more about how GNIS and GNS compare and contrast.

Tischler, Michael A 1/10 11:29 AM



also, now that there is proposed legislation, the BGN is definitely not in the decision making process.



Tischler, Michael A

Chat Shared


Tuesday 9:52 AM


The EO only affects the US waters of Gulf of Mexico, so we'd need to talk to FNC to see how GNS would handle that. The EO also didn't mention GNS/FNC.

Tuesday 10:03 AM

Also, the [Molok Luyuk Executive Proclamation text](#) didn't state that the name was to be changed. It just started using the name. The [Fact Sheet about the EP](#) said it changed the name. So does the EO text saying "The area formerly known as the Gulf of Mexico" automatically imply the name is changed by the EO, despite the order for SOL to implement the change under 43 U.S.C. 364?

Tischler, Michael A Tuesday 10:07 AM

 While I'm not a legal scholar, that is my interpretation. The name has been changed through EO, and implementation is handled through the SOL.




Glover, Robert P

Chat Shared

December 31, 2024. Losing someone like Jenny or Susan is tough for those around and left behind.

Tuesday


Glover, Robert P Tuesday 7:52 AM


 Hi Matt, I am sorry to hear about the EO.

Tuesday 9:00 AM

We're all tracking it. Today will be busy but it's unlikely to affect our daily work too much. We're under the SOL, so we do what the SOL/POTUS directs. But all this would just result in GNIS changes, possibly more public proposals, and an agency review of BGN membership. Of course this is all focused on DNC and not FNC.

Glover, Robert P Tuesday 9:05 AM

 Good Morning. Cannot believe it is a Day 1 priority. The whiplash hurts and it is frustrating. Especially for something as silly as Denali (state recognized 1975, Native American name, almost happenstance it was named McKinley, etc) and Gulf of America. Makes me wonder about the future of the old SQ names.

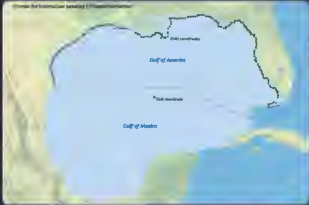


Zahniser, Shellie R


Chat Shared

Tuesday 4:07 PM


for reference




Gulf outline from marineregions.org, intl boundary from NOAA. The most recent 24k quad of the border in TX has the label on the US side of the border



Zahniser, Shellie R Tuesday 4:14 PM

 So NOAA updated their data already?

Jenny is now off of the staff sync invites.



Tuesday 4:32 PM

No they didn't. I just got the intl boundary. I made the map/labels



Zahniser, Shellie R Chat Shared



Wednesday 4:04 PM Edited

[Coast Guard announces immediate action in support of Presidential Executive Orders >](#) [United States Coast Guard News > Press Releases](#)

The maritime border between Texas and Mexico in the Gulf of America

This doesn't have any bearing on the implementation of the EO, just FYSA.

Zahniser, Shellie R Wednesday 5:52 PM



3 more FOIAs

Wednesday 5:54 PM

Need me online now?

Zahniser, Shellie R Wednesday 5:57 PM



No. Tomorrow we need to focus on getting these pulled together. I will start pulling what I can and will send you the requests. All are on Gulf of America/Mt. McKinley.

If you have estimates on these, please send to me so that I can inform FOIA office.

Wednesday 5:57 PM

I will need to make up hours this evening anyways. In 2 hours or so. We have so much about Mt. McKinley

Zahniser, Shellie R Wednesday 6:02 PM



Last one requests records from OSQI. Mike is trying to make sure FOIA touches base with Chris.

Wednesday 6:05 PM

I can't give time estimates until I know the request scope. It could be as much as 4 hours for Denali depending on how it's phrased

Lacey, Jennifer A 1/24/21 PM



Right before the noon meeting, I asked Christine & Leslie what types of BGN (Denali/McKinley, Gulf) responses we're preparing for the media. They recommended that if I got asked today, a good starting point would be: If Congress puts a name change in legislation, the BGN doesn't need to engage; if it becomes an entirely Executive Branch action, the BGN would run their process & we can brief on how that works.

1/25/21 PM

I think that is generally correct. A more formal statement would be something like I shared with you earlier. The [Policy on Names Considered or Established by Congress or the President](#) notes that "Geographic names and their applications specifically established by an act of Congress or Executive order are legally official, and therefore, are not bound by BGN principles, policies, and procedures." This includes name changes.

For any names established by an act of Congress or Executive order (or proclamation), the name is entered into/changed in GNIS once official. Federal data sources are updated from GNIS on their own data refresh cycles.

We do have a list of FAQs that we publish on our website regarding name proposals, but we do not have an FAQ regarding renaming via executive/congressional action. [Guidance on Name Proposals | U.S. Geological Survey](#)



Guidance on Name Proposals | U.S. Geolog... X

Listed here are answers to some of the most frequently asked questions received by the U.S. Board on Geographi...

www.usgs.gov

Our staff is considering adding a couple questions, but is not sure of the level of effort or how quickly they can update the FAQ. CAP may have an opinion about us adding to the FAQ as well, and we would have to coordinate with them.



Lacey, Jennifer A 1/25/21 PM



Thanks I have responded to her. I just did a quick cut and paste to you earlier in between meetings. Sorry about that. Thanks!



Wednesday, January 8

Stoker Jason 1/8 11:49 AM



Hi would this go through the BGN, or would we just respond to IHO and change our maps (if this actually got approved)?
[Trump says he will change the name of the Gulf of Mexico. Can he do that? - Los Angeles Times](#)



Trump says he will change the name of the Gulf of Mexico. Can he do that? - Los Angeles Times

Meg Kinnard

Trump has referred to Canada as the '51st State,' demanded that Denmark consider ceding Greenland, and called for Panama to return the Panama Canal.

Los Angeles Times

1/8 11:54 AM

well, it depends on how the name change is requested. According to The Hill, MTG plans to introduce a bill to rename. If that's the case, we would make the name change in GNIS and update the maps. IHO, along with many other countries, likely would not recognize the change. If that's the case, we'd be in a "sea of Japan" situation where the same feature is recognized differently by multiple countries.



Stoker Jason 1/8 11:55 AM



i can imagine a bill on this would pass, but we are in interesting times

1/8 11:55 AM

I'm not taking any bets one way or the other



Stoker Jason 1/8 11:55 AM



also saw some passing statement that they may want to 'undo' the Denali name change

1/8 11:56 AM

yes, I've heard that as well.

Tuesday, January 7

1/7 12:48 PM

oh my -[Goodbye Gulf of Mexico—Trump says he's renaming it 'Gulf of America' | Fortune](#)



Goodbye Gulf of Mexico—Trump says he's ...
"We're going to be changing the name of the Gulf of Mexico to Gulf of America, which has a beautiful ring," he...
fortune.com

Rep. [Marjorie Taylor Greene](#) (R-Ga) said she would quickly introduce a bill renaming the Gulf of Mexico shortly after Trump's remarks.

"President Trump's second term is off to a GREAT start," [she wrote](#) on the social platform X. "I'll be introducing legislation ASAP to officially change the name of the Gulf of Mexico to its rightful name, the Gulf of America!" [Trump wants to rename Gulf of Mexico to Gulf of America](#)

Zahniser, Shellie R 1/7 3:20 PM



Based on Rachel's response RE: Gulf of America... would you like me to send an email to the Full Board stating USGS's stance on media inquiries or would you like to do that as the Chair?

1/7 3:21 PM

I followed up asking her if we should just not respond, or provide a canned "no comment" type of response. haven't heard back

Lacey, Jennifer A 1/10 3:05 PM



Can you let your admin know and tell me when ready



If you have 5-10m, I can give you a short update on Gulf of Mexico naming, and I could also use your input on a different BGN issue

Lacey, Jennifer A 1/10 3:11 PM



Okay will do - just have a couple fires right now and then I'll message



O'Donnell, Matthew J Tuesday 9:52 AM



MO

The EO only affects the US waters of Gulf of Mexico, so we'd need to talk to FNC to see how GNS would handle that. The EO also didn't mention GNS/FNC.

O'Donnell, Matthew J Tuesday 10:03 AM

MO

Also, the [Molok Luyuk Executive Proclamation text](#) didn't state that the name was to be changed. It just started using the name. The [Fact Sheet about the EP](#) said it changed the name. So does the EO text saying "The area formerly known as the Gulf of Mexico" automatically imply the name is changed by the EO, despite the order for SOI to implement the change under 43 U.S.C. 364?

Tuesday 10:07 AM

While I'm not a legal scholar, that is my interpretation. The name has been changed through EO, and implementation is handled through the SOI.

I'm seeking direction from USGS on when we are to implement. Theoretically, we can make the change today in GNIS. But, I am confirming that we should do that, or if we should wait for DOI guidance. I'm in favor of waiting for guidance, btw.



Tuesday, January 7



FYI...we now have two media requests (BBC, CBS) related to Trump's comments about renaming the Gulf of Mexico. We are working with OCAP to respond. The Hill is reporting that a member (Taylor-Greene) is planning to submit a bill to rename the feature. If that's the case, the IGIN is not involved. Our only role would be to record the change in the authoritative database and work to update any maps with the new feature name. We are working with OCAP on the media responses.

Lacey Jennifer A 1/7 1:14 PM



Do we oversee the naming of the Gulf? Isn't that part of the international board?

Sorry yet I see that

I am going to give Dave a heads up

Tuesday 10:20 AM



One item of consideration from Trumps EO about names...we may have to reprint/remake any congressional district maps that have Gulf of Mexico or Denali

Sagehy David L Tuesday 10:02 AM



I can only imagine. Can the name change request be dictated by executive order, or does it need to follow the same process as everything else?

We likely need to discuss with Kim if this becomes a get it done right now priority



O'Donnell, Matthew J

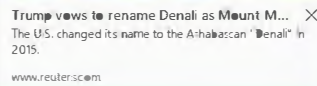
Chat Shared



Sunday December 22, 2024



<https://www.reuters.com/world/us/trump-wants-rename-denali-north-america-tallest-mountain-mt-mckinley-2024-12-22/>



Monday December 23, 2024

O'Donnell, Matthew J 12/23/2024 4:42 AM

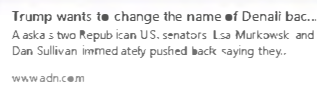


I saw that

O'Donnell, Matthew J 12/23/2024 4:51 AM



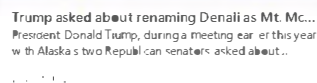
<https://www.adn.com/politics/2024/12/22/trump-wants-to-change-the-name-of-denali-back-to-mount-mckinley/>



O'Donnell, Matthew J 12/23/2024 5:07 AM



<https://www.cnn.com/2017/10/24/politics/trump-denali-mt-mckinley/index.html>



O'Donnell, Matthew J 12/23/2024 5:21 AM



This was a 2016 campaign talking point when the 2015 Secretary's Order changed the name but it didn't go anywhere. Sen Murkowski and Sen Sullivan reportedly advised against it in 2017, because AK has called it Denali since the 1970s. AK isn't just advisory to the BGN. They decide names for state use. We're pretty sure that only a secretary order (SO) or presidential proclamation/executive order (EO) can be used to change a name set by SO/EO/proclamation. So anything to do with the name Denali for the summit is not under BGN purview anymore. I think

Type a message





Tuesday, January 7

Tischler, Michael A 1/7 7:48 AM



oh my -Goodbye Gulf of Mexico—Trump says he's renaming it 'Gulf of America' | Fortune



Goodbye Gulf of Mexico—Trump says he's rena...

'We're going to be changing the name of the Gulf of Mexico to Gulf of America, which has a beautiful ring,' he...

fortune.com

Rep. [Marionne Taylor Greene](#) (R-Ga.) said she would quickly introduce a bill renaming the Gulf of Mexico, shortly after Trump's remarks.

"President Trump's second term is off to a GREAT start," [she wrote](#) on the social platform X. "I'll be introducing legislation ASAP to officially change the name of the Gulf of Mexico to its rightful name, the Gulf of America!" [Trump wants to rename Gulf of Mexico to Gulf of America](#)

1/7 10:20 AM

Based on Rachel's response RE: Gulf of America, would you like me to send an email to the Full Board stating USGS's stance on media inquiries or would you like to do that as the Chair?

Tischler, Michael A 1/7 10:21 AM



I followed up asking her if we should just not respond, or provide a canned "no comment" type of response. haven't heard back

so haven't heard from derrick on the ACAN request

1/7 10:22 AM

OK. I'll standby. Let me know what you need from me.

Type a message



1/8

Wednesday, January 8

1/8 7:32 AM

We have an inquiry from the FedSmith newsletter asking about Gulf of America. Not sure if that is technically considered media. I have drafted a response informing them to route all BGN inquiries through OCAP and have you listed as the POC, but wanted to confirm with you before sending that that is the correct approach for this situation.

Anderson, Gina R 1/8 7:35 AM



Hi! We are not responding to any queries on this topic. If you would please send me the initial email for my tracking purposes I would appreciate it.

1/8 7:36 AM

Yeah I have concerns though that it went to a member of ACAN who has misstated some information about processes. I'll send you the whole email chain and if you think any sort of response is warranted, let me know.



1/8 1:41 PM

Anderson, Gina R is out of office and may not respond



Type a message



Wednesday, January 8

1/8 11:41 AM

Will you be notifying the Board wrt commenting on Gulf of America or would you like me to do it?

We have some folks going rogue so we need to make sure we're all on the same page

Tischler, Michael A 1/8 11:42 AM

I've been stacked up in meetings almost all day. I can send a note explaining how we've been instructed to respond. I would hope the board members know not to go rogue, but maybe I'm being naive.

1/8 11:42 AM

Roger

Tischler, Michael A 1/8 11:43 AM

I'm not sure if it's appropriate for me to tell/direct folks not to answer, though. That should be their own agency decision?

1/8 11:43 AM

Yes, but in this instance it was Roger from ACAN>

Tischler, Michael A 1/8 11:43 AM

roger payne?

1/8 11:43 AM

Yes.

I've shared the comms with Gina for her awareness

Tischler, Michael A 1/8 11:44 AM

ugh. that guy just won't go away. he's not even a gov't employee.

I'm wrapping a meeting and then have to do one thing. can I call after that?

1/8 11:46 AM

Yes.

Tischler, Michael A 1/8 11:56 AM

Type a message



Tuesday, January 7

Runyon, Jennifer E 1/7 10:35 AM

From DNC meeting 860 (July 13, 2006): "As reported at the June meeting, a proposal has been received to rename the Gulf of Mexico.

The proposed replacement is Gulf of America, a name that the proponent suggests is more appropriate as "Mexico is not the major border of this gulf." After an e-mail dialogue among members and staff, it was determined that this is an issue for the full BGN, with input from both the domestic and foreign names committees. The topic will be on the agenda for discussion at the July 18th meeting. The DNC members were asked at this meeting how they wished to proceed. It was noted that this is an international high seas feature and therefore beyond the DNC's sole purview. Yost asked whether each State Names Authority along the Gulf Coast should be asked to provide a formal recommendation, to which several members responded that this would not be necessary. A motion was made and seconded not to place the issue on a DNC Review List but to forward it to the full BGN for review. The motion carried unanimously. A motion was then made and seconded not to recommend approval of the proposed name change, citing long-standing local, regional, national, and international use and historical significance of the existing name. The motion passed unanimously."

And the following meeting 861 (Aug. 10, 2006): "Yost announced that the Board voted against the proposal to rename the Gulf of Mexico to Gulf of America at its July 18th meeting. Yost reminded the DNC members that they chose not to address the proposal, and that they determined it was a matter to be decided by the full Board. A notification letter has been sent to the proponent."

(Again, my advice is to keep this background on the lowdown, as it has no bearing on the current situation. No one needs to know this has come up before. At least not right now. It looks like Betty and Meredith are the only two members who were around then and might remember it.)

Runyon, Jennifer E is out of office and may not respond

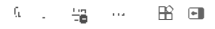
Type a message





O'Donnell, Matthew J

Chat Shared



O'Donnell, Matthew J Yesterday 11:04 AM Edited



[Coast Guard announces immediate action in support of Presidential Executive Orders > United States Coast Guard News > Press Releases](#)

The maritime border between Texas and Mexico in the Gulf of America

This doesn't have any bearing on the implementation of the EO, just FYSA.

Guests and External Access

Published 6/17/2024

^ O365 Guest Access Policy

Teams Meetings where users join anonymously are not affected by DOI guest policy. For example, a user invited to a meeting for an interview.

DOI invited guests should only be given access to resources they need, and at the appropriate levels (read, write).

DOI guests must login to O365 resources at least once every 30days or will be disabled.

- Two notification emails (seven days prior and one day prior) will be sent to the guest account prior to disabling the account.
- The notification emails will include information to login to the account, as well as how to reactivate the account if it becomes disabled.
- A Ticket can be sent to ServiceDesk@usgs.gov for re-enable.

DOI guests who do not login after 90 days will be deleted. Once deleted, the user can be re-invited back again when needed.

DOI guests will be required to use MFA to authenticate (as seen below).

✓ Inviting External Guests

^ MFA

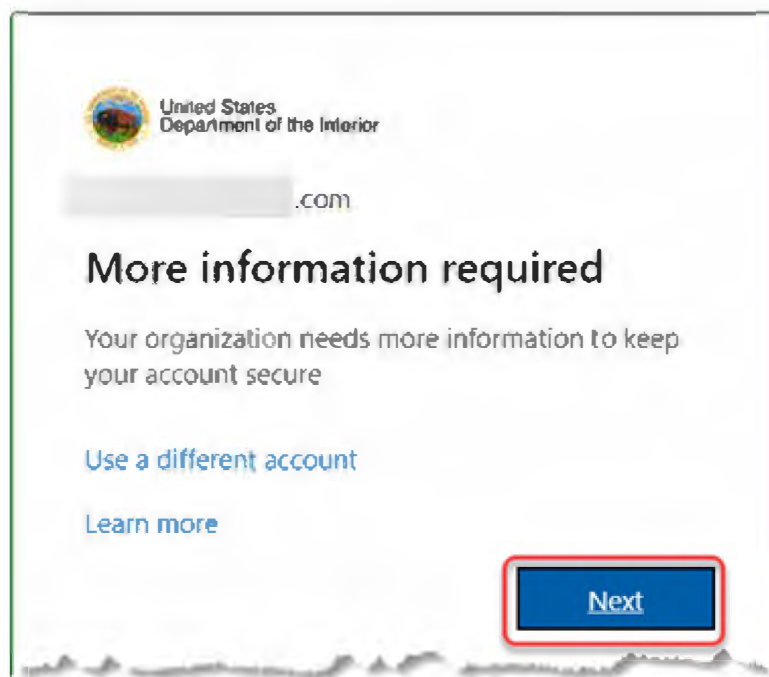
Entra ID / O365 Guest Account MFA Setup

Starting April 22, 2024, DOI will implement a required Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA) for individuals invited to participate and utilize DOI resources using Entra ID and O365.

Teams Meetings where users join anonymously are not affected by DOI guest policy. For example, a user invited to a meeting for an interview.

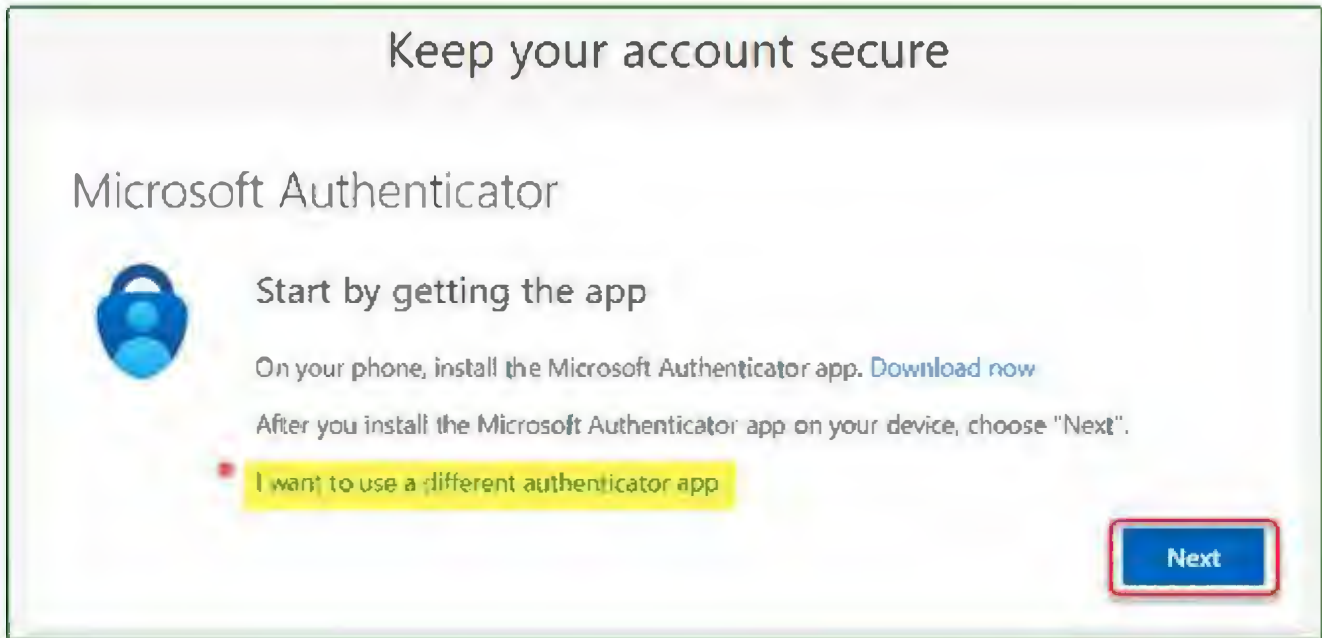
When MFA is enabled, customers will need to use an authentication app to complete the secondary authentication. Before starting this process, it is recommended the chosen authenticator application be preloaded. The steps outlined below walk you through using the Microsoft Authenticator app on an iPhone. If other apps or platforms are used, the customer will need to adjust accordingly based upon this information.

- Install Microsoft Authenticator app on a mobile device (IOS or Android Phone or Tablet)
- Upon login and once user has authenticated to the DOI resource, user will receive the following screen indicating more information is needed, click <Next>:

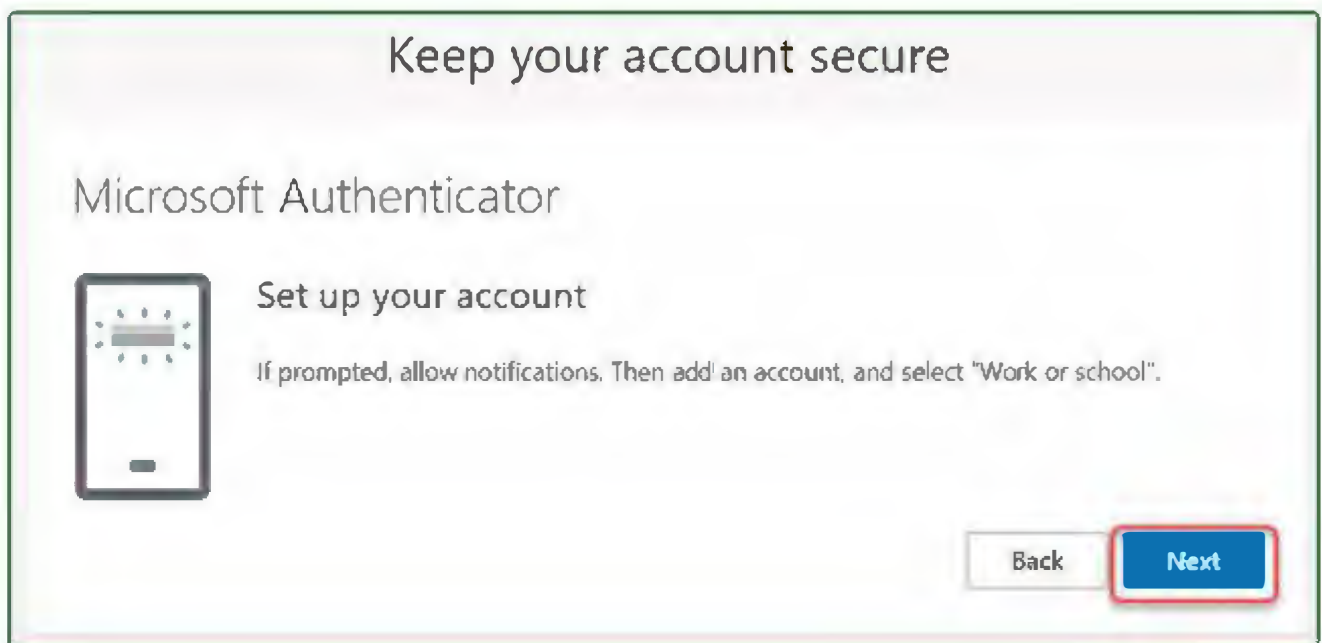


Depending on the chosen platform, users may be required to authenticate via a one-time password or a preestablished two-factor authentication method. Once that authentication is completed, proceed to the next step.

- Begin Microsoft Authenticator setup. Click <Next>. (* not covered in this how-to, but this is where individuals could setup other authenticator tools



- Click <Next>:



- On this screen, switch to the Authenticator application to pair the account with Authenticator:

Keep your account secure

Microsoft Authenticator

Scan the QR code

Use the Microsoft Authenticator app to scan the QR code. This will connect the Microsoft Authenticator app with your account.

After you scan the QR code, choose "Next".



Can't scan image?

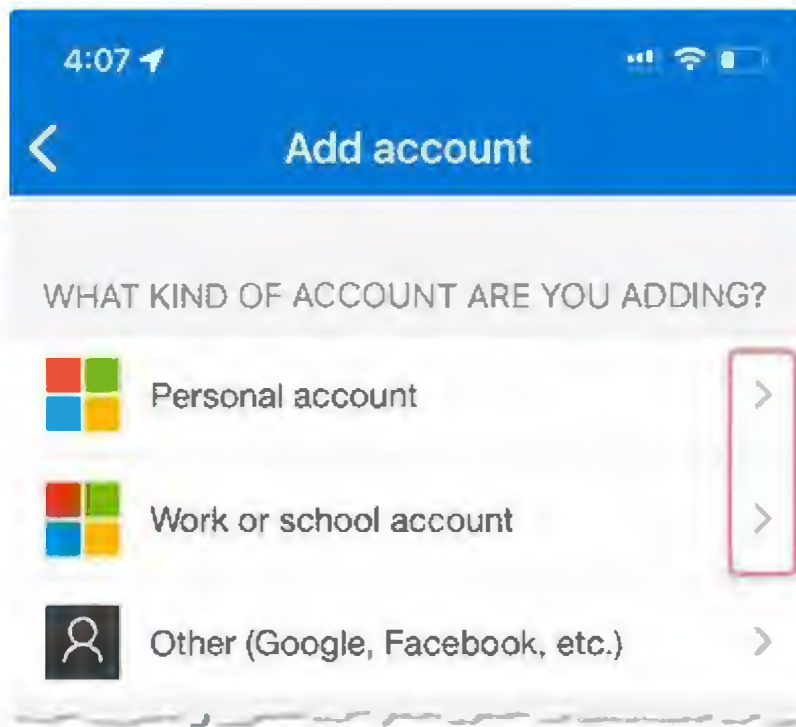
Back

Next

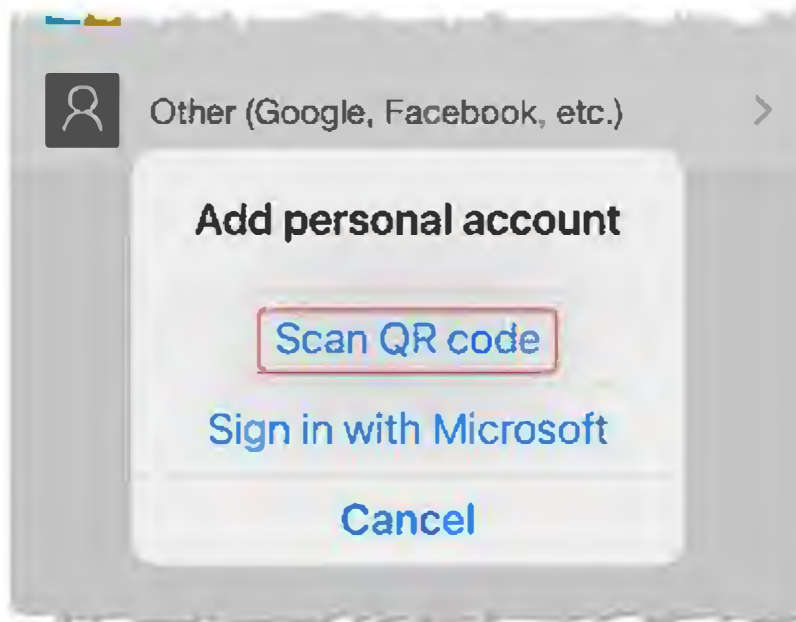
- Launch Authenticator, the screen will resemble this:



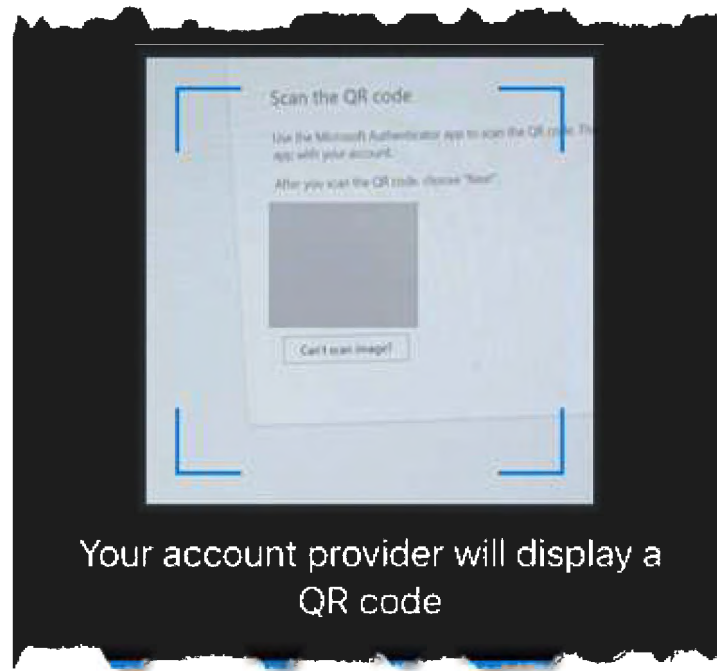
- Click the "+" icon to add an entry.
 - Select the type of account. Use a "Personal account" or "Work or school account" as appropriate. Personal accounts are generally @gmail.com, @hotmail.com. Work or school accounts would be @organization.org or @organization.gov and similar.



- Select "Scan QR Code":



- When camera turns on for the phone, hold it near the screen such that the QR Code fits within the isolated window:



Your account provider will display a
QR code

- Authenticator will then prompt individual to enter the value on the computer screen in the Authenticator prompt. Once entered, hit "Yes":

Keep your account secure

Microsoft Authenticator



Let's try it out

Approve the notification we're sending to your app by entering the number shown below.

53

Back

Are you trying to sign in?

DOI

#EXT#@d

oimspp.onmicrosoft.com

Enter the number shown to
sign in.

53

No, it's not me

Yes



Change password

- Confirmation screen will appear. Click <Next>:

Keep your account secure

Microsoft Authenticator



 Notification approved

Back

Next

- Individual should receive "Success!" message. Click <Done>:

Keep your account secure

Success!

Great job! You have successfully set up your security info. Choose "Done" to continue signing in.

Default sign-in method:



Microsoft Authenticator

Done

- If the customer has not previously accepted the "DOI terms of use", then the sponsored guest will need to read and accept the terms. Click on the "Guest Access" text to expand the passage, read, and then click <Accept>:

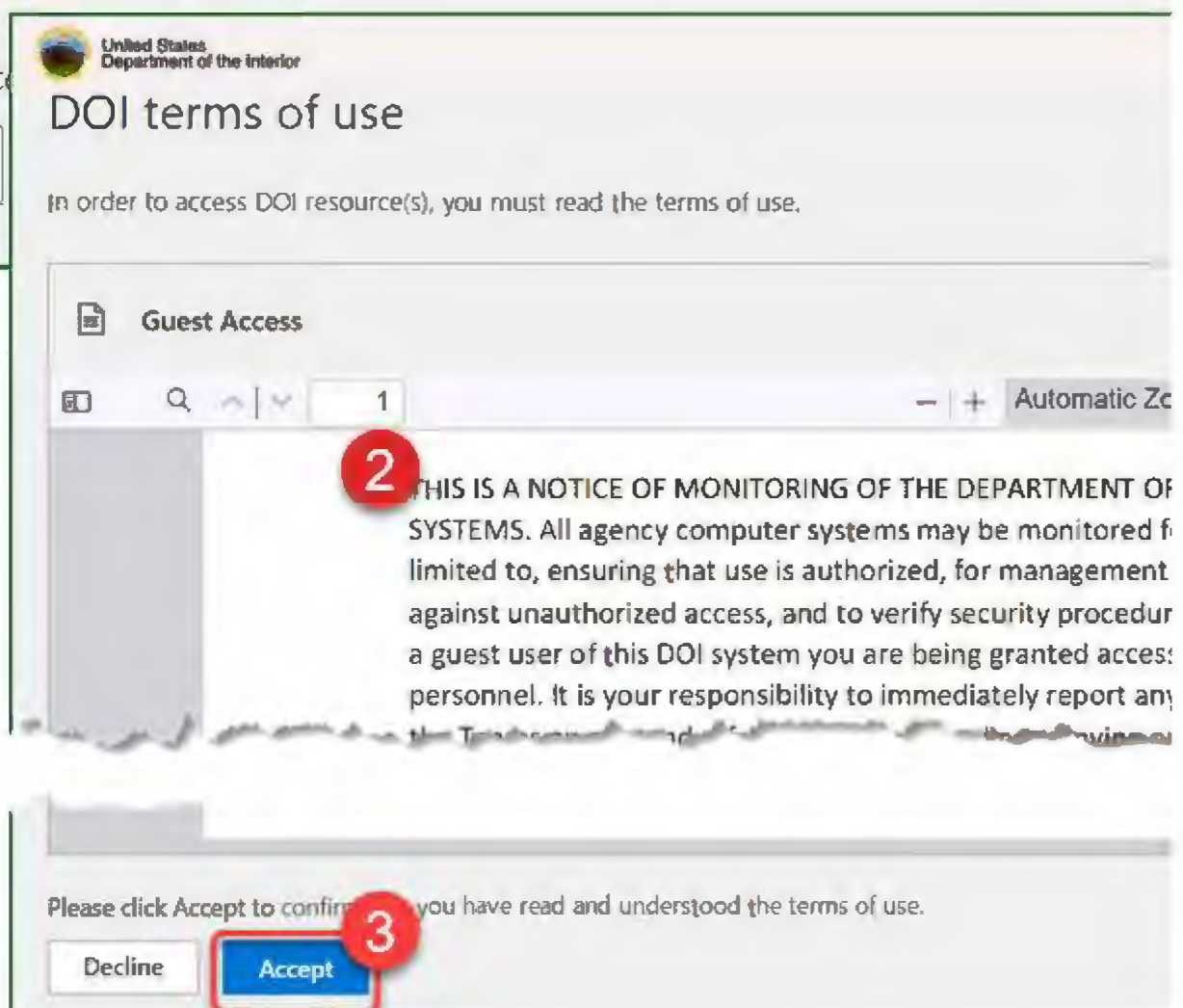
DOI terms of use

In order to access DOI resource(s), you must read the terms of use.

1 Guest Access

Click Accept

Decline



The user may receive a dialog box similar to the following confirming the process is completed, click <Next> to close the box and begin using the permitted tool.



You're joining Teams as a guest

Welcome! As a guest, you can work and chat with others and navigate across topics, files, and more through channels.

[Next](#)



United States Department of the Interior

U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY
12201 Sunrise Valley Drive
Reston, Virginia 20192-0002

In Reply Refer To:
U.S. Geological Survey
Attention: Judy Cearley
Post Office Box 66783
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87193

July 15, 2025

Re: U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Tracking #
DOI-2025-003260 – Final Response

This letter is our final response to your FOIA request dated January 25, 2025, for the following:

Copy of each email in the email account of Shellie Zahniser (USGS) between January 20, 2025 and present that contains the word McKinley OR the word Denali OR the word Gulf. A copy of each email in the email account of Chris Hammond (USGS) between January 20, 2025 and present that contains the word McKinley OR the word Denali OR the word Gulf.

On March 17, 2025, we released 107 pages in our first interim response.

In this response, we are releasing one Portable Document Format (PDF) electronic file, consisting of 141 pages, in part. We reasonably foresee that disclosure would harm an interest protected by one or more of the nine exemptions to the FOIA's general rule of disclosure and disclosure would be prohibited by law; therefore, portions of these materials are being withheld under the following FOIA exemptions. Please note that some pages contain redactions pursuant to more than one exemption.

Exemption 3

Exemption 3 allows the withholding of information protected by a nondisclosure provision in a federal statute other than the FOIA. Specifically, disclosure of organizational and personnel information: exemption for specified intelligence agencies, 10 U.S. Code § 424b(3), prohibits the release of the number of persons employed by or assigned or detailed to any such organization or the name, official title, occupational series, grade, or salary of any organization or any function

of, and certain information pertaining to employees of the Defense Intelligence Agency, the National Reconnaissance Office, and the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency. Approximately 15 pages contain redactions per Exemption 3.

Exemption 5

Exemption 5 allows an agency to withhold “inter-agency or intra-agency memorandums or letters which would not be available by law to a party ... in litigation with the agency.” 5 U.S.C. § 552(b)(5). Exemption 5 therefore incorporates the privileges that protect materials from discovery in litigation, including the deliberative process, attorney work-product, attorney-client, and commercial information privileges. Approximately 19 pages contain redactions under Exemption 5 because they qualify to be withheld under the following privileges:

Deliberative Process Privilege

The deliberative process privilege protects the decision-making process of government agencies and encourages the frank exchange of ideas on legal or policy matters by ensuring agencies are not forced to operate in a fishbowl. A number of policy purposes have been attributed to the deliberative process privilege, such as: (1) assuring that subordinates will feel free to provide the decisionmaker with their uninhibited opinions and recommendations; (2) protecting against premature disclosure of proposed policies; and (3) protecting against confusing the issues and misleading the public.

The deliberative process privilege protects materials that are both predecisional and deliberative. The privilege covers records that reflect the give-and-take of the consultative process and may include recommendations, draft documents, proposals, suggestions, and other subjective documents which reflect the personal opinions of the writer rather than the policy of the agency.

The materials that have been withheld under the deliberative process privilege of Exemption 5 are both predecisional and deliberative. They do not contain or represent formal or informal agency policies or decisions. They are the result of frank and open discussions among employees of the Department of the Interior. Their contents have been held confidential by all parties and public dissemination of this information would expose the agency’s decision-making process in such a way as to discourage candid discussion within the agency, and thereby undermine its ability to perform its mandated functions.

Attorney-Client Privilege

The attorney-client privilege protects confidential communications between an attorney and his client relating to a legal matter for which the client has sought professional advice and is not limited to the context of litigation. Moreover, although it fundamentally applies to confidential facts divulged by a client to his/her attorney, this privilege also encompasses any opinions given by an attorney to his/her client based upon, and thus reflecting, those facts, as well as communications between attorneys that reflect confidential client-supplied information.

The information that has been withheld under the attorney-client privilege of Exemption 5 constitutes confidential communications between federal attorneys and agency clients, related to

legal matters for which the client sought professional legal assistance and services. It also encompasses opinions given by attorneys to their clients based on client-supplied facts about a personnel action. Additionally, the USGS employees who communicated with the attorneys regarding this information were clients of the attorneys at the time the information was generated and the attorneys were acting in their capacities as lawyers at the time they communicated legal advice. The USGS has held this information confidential and has not waived the attorney-client privilege.

Exemption 6

Exemption 6 allows an agency to withhold “personnel and medical files and similar files the disclosure of which would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy.” 5 U.S.C. § 552(b)(6). The phrase “similar files” covers any agency records containing information about a particular individual that can be identified as applying to that individual. To determine whether releasing records containing information about a particular individual would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy, we are required to balance the privacy interest that would be affected by disclosure against any public interest in the information.

Under the FOIA, the only relevant public interest to consider under the exemption is the extent to which the information sought would shed light on agency’s performance of its statutory duties or otherwise let citizens “know what their government is up to.” The burden is on the requester to establish that disclosure would serve the public interest. When the privacy interest at stake and the public interest in disclosure have been determined, the two competing interests must be weighed against one another to determine which is the greater result of disclosure: the harm to personal privacy or the benefit to the public. The purposes for which the request for information is made do not impact this balancing test, as a release of information requested under the FOIA constitutes a release to the general public.

The information that has been withheld under Exemption 6 consists of personal email addresses, home addresses, mobile phone numbers, names and email addresses of military personnel, names and identifying information of State Department personnel, and other personal matters. We have determined that the individuals to whom the information pertains have a substantial privacy interest in withholding it. Additionally, you have not provided information that explains a relevant public interest under the FOIA in the disclosure of this personal information and we have determined that the disclosure of this information would shed little or no light on the performance of the agency’s statutory duties. Because the harm to personal privacy is greater than whatever public interest may be served by disclosure, release of the information would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of the privacy of these individuals and we are withholding the information under Exemption 6. Approximately 55 pages have been redacted under exemption 6.

Judy Cearley, Government Information Specialist, is responsible for this partial denial. Jennifer Heindl, Attorney Advisor with the Department of Interior, Office of the Solicitor, was consulted regarding this response.

Appeal Rights

You may appeal this response to the Department of the Interior's FOIA/Privacy Act Appeals Officer. If you choose to appeal, the FOIA/Privacy Act Appeals Officer must receive your FOIA appeal **no later than 90 workdays** from the date of this letter. Appeals arriving or delivered after 5 p.m. Eastern Time, Monday through Friday, will be deemed received on the next workday.

Your appeal must be made in writing. You may submit your appeal and accompanying materials to the FOIA/Privacy Act Appeals Officer by mail, courier service, fax, or email. All communications concerning your appeal should be clearly marked with the words: "FREEDOM OF INFORMATION APPEAL." You must include an explanation of why you believe the USGS's response is in error. You must also include with your appeal copies of all correspondence between you and USGS concerning your FOIA request, including your original FOIA request and USGS's response. Failure to include with your appeal all correspondence between you and USGS will result in the Department's rejection of your appeal, unless the FOIA/Privacy Act Appeals Officer determines (in the FOIA/Privacy Act Appeals Officer's sole discretion) that good cause exists to accept the defective appeal.

Please include your name and daytime telephone number (or the name and telephone number of an appropriate contact), email address and fax number (if available) in case the FOIA/Privacy Act Appeals Officer needs additional information or clarification of your appeal.

DOI FOIA/Privacy Act Appeals Office Contact Information

Department of the Interior
Office of the Solicitor
1849 C Street, Northwest
MS-6556 MIB
Washington, DC 20240
Attn: FOIA/Privacy Act Appeals Office
Telephone: (202) 208-5339
Fax: (202) 208-6677
Email: FOIA.Appeals@sol.doi.gov

The 2007 FOIA amendments created the Office of Government Information Services (OGIS) to offer mediation services to resolve disputes between FOIA requesters and Federal agencies as a non-exclusive alternative to litigation. Using OGIS services does not affect your right to pursue litigation. You may contact OGIS in any of the following ways:

Office of Government Information Services
National Archives and Records Administration
8601 Adelphi Road – OGIS
College Park, Maryland 20740-6001
Telephone: (202) 741-5770
Fax: (202) 741-5769
Toll-free: 1-877-684-6448

E-mail: ogis@nara.gov
Web: <https://www.archives.gov/ogis>

Please note that using OGIS services does not affect the timing of filing an appeal with the Department's FOIA & Privacy Act Appeals Officer. Contact information for the Department's FOIA Public Liaison, who you may also seek dispute resolution services from, is available at <https://www.doi.gov/foia/foiacenters>.

This completes our response to your request. If you have any questions about our response to your request, please contact me by email at jcearley@usgs.gov.

Sincerely,

**JUDY
CEARLEY**

Judy Cearley
U.S. Geological Survey
Government Information Specialist

Digitally signed by
JUDY CEARLEY
Date: 2025.07.15
09:12:48 -07'00'

Enclosure:
Final Combined Records_Redacted.pdf (141 pages)

From: O'Donnell, Matthew J
To: NGP NGTOC TNM Help, GS-N-HQ; BGNEXEC, GS-N-MAC; Pawlitz, Rachel J; Tischler, Michael A; Zahniser, Shellie R; St. Onge, Tim; Anderson, Gina R
Cc: Rufe, Philip P; bgnexec@nga.mil
Subject: Re: [EXTERNAL] BBC News - Media Request
Date: Tuesday, January 7, 2025 10:47:44 AM

Hi all,

I'm ccing the Foreign Names Committee Executive Secretary on here. My initial answer was correct, but given that the United States, Mexico, and Cuba all have shorelines on the Gulf of Mexico, the answer may be more complicated.

(b) (6), (b) (3), (b) (5) can you provide any information on how the President or Congress renaming the Gulf of Mexico might work from an international/Foreign Names Committee perspective?

Mtt

Matt O'Donnell
BGN research staff
Phone: 703-648-4553 (work) / 571-562-3504 (cell)
Email: mjdodonnell@usgs.gov

From: O'Donnell, Matthew J <mjdodonnell@usgs.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, January 7, 2025 1:09 PM
To: NGP NGTOC TNM Help, GS-N-HQ <tnm_help@usgs.gov>; BGNEXEC, GS-N-MAC <bgnextec@usgs.gov>; Pawlitz, Rachel J <rpawlitz@usgs.gov>; Tischler, Michael A <mtischler@usgs.gov>; Zahniser, Shellie R <srzahniser@usgs.gov>; St. Onge, Tim <tong@loc.gov>; Anderson, Gina R <granderson@usgs.gov>
Cc: Rufe, Philip P <prufe@usgs.gov>
Subject: Re: [EXTERNAL] BBC News - Media Request

I've provided some basic talking points to OCAP already. We'd prefer that OCAP handle this.

- The Policy on Names Considered or Established by Congress or the President notes that "Geographic names and their applications specifically established by an act of Congress or Executive order are legally official, and therefore, are not bound by BGN principles, policies, and procedures." This includes name changes.
- For any names established by an act of Congress or Executive order (or proclamation), the name is entered into/changed in GNIS once official. Federal data sources are updated from GNIS on their own data refresh cycles.

The other request had some other details but this is the basic information people should know.

The BGN has nothing to do with any naming by Congress or the President.

Matt

From: NGP NGTOC TNM Help, GS-N-HQ <tnm_help@usgs.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, January 7, 2025 1:07 PM
To: BGNEXEC, GS-N-MAC <bgnexec@usgs.gov>; Pawlitz, Rachel J <rpawlitz@usgs.gov>; Tischler, Michael A <mtischler@usgs.gov>; Zahniser, Shellie R <srzahniser@usgs.gov>; St. Onge, Tim <tong@loc.gov>; Anderson, Gina R <granderson@usgs.gov>
Cc: Rufe, Philip P <prufe@usgs.gov>; O'Donnell, Matthew J <mjodonnell@usgs.gov>
Subject: Re: [EXTERNAL] BBC News - Media Request

Uhoh... sounds like this one may eat our lunch this week. If any more similar requests come in, I'll sit on them but keep in touch with Matt on what we get...

Please keep me in the loop with what y'all come up with.

Andy

From: BGNEXEC, GS-N-MAC <bgnexec@usgs.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, January 7, 2025 12:02 PM
To: Pawlitz, Rachel J <rpawlitz@usgs.gov>; Tischler, Michael A <mtischler@usgs.gov>; Zahniser, Shellie R <srzahniser@usgs.gov>; St. Onge, Tim <tong@loc.gov>; Anderson, Gina R <granderson@usgs.gov>
Cc: NGP NGTOC TNM Help, GS-N-HQ <tnm_help@usgs.gov>; Rufe, Philip P <prufe@usgs.gov>; O'Donnell, Matthew J <mjodonnell@usgs.gov>
Subject: Fw: [EXTERNAL] BBC News - Media Request

And another one. Gina, should we coordinate a statement we can share/adapt with every request about this?

Matt

From: NGP NGTOC TNM Help, GS-N-HQ <tnm_help@usgs.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, January 7, 2025 12:56 PM
To: Anderson, Gina R <granderson@usgs.gov>; BGNEXEC, GS-N-MAC <bgnexec@usgs.gov>
Cc: Rufe, Philip P <prufe@usgs.gov>
Subject: Fw: [EXTERNAL] BBC News - Media Request

Hi Gina & Matt -

See the below request for a press data call. I would like for y'all to draft a statement. Let me know if you want to provide the info directly or if you want me to provide the information.

Andy

From: Brandon Drenon <brandon.k.drenon@bbc.co.uk>
Sent: Tuesday, January 7, 2025 11:51 AM
To: NGP NGTOC TNM Help, GS-N-HQ <tnm_help@usgs.gov>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] BBC News - Media Request

This email has been received from outside of DOI - Use caution before clicking on links, opening attachments, or responding.

Good afternoon,

The BBC is reporting on what the process is to change the names of bodies of water after Donald Trump made remarks on Tuesday suggesting he would like to change the Gulf of Mexico to the Gulf of America.

We'd like to understand the process, whether this is possible, and how it might work.

Can someone please contact me at your earliest convenience.

My number is (b) (6)

Cheers,

Brandon Drenon

This email, including attachments, is private and confidential and may contain personal views which are not the views of the Company unless specifically stated. If you have received this email in error, please notify the sender and delete it from your system. Any commercial terms contained in this e-mail or any attachments are for discussion purposes only, and do not constitute a legal agreement. No binding agreement will exist unless and until written execution of a long form contract signed by all parties to the agreement. Please note that the Company monitors e-mails sent or received. Further communication will signify your consent to this.

From: Anderson, Rebecca (Becci)
To: GS-CSS NGP SLT
Subject: Fw: BGN Response to Media Inquiry (Gulf of America)
Date: Tuesday, January 7, 2025 5:02:48 PM

Hi NGP SLT,

Sharing for general awareness -

Please note the emails below regarding OCAP's guidance related to media queries related changing the name of the Gulf of Mexico.

I am going to inform UE to send any inquiries to me for awareness but will follow OCAP guidance to hold off on responding.

Becci Anderson

Chief, User Engagement Office
USGS National Geospatial Program
rdanderson@usgs.gov | 907 201 9124
NGP User Engagement Office



From: NGP NGTOC TNM Help, GS-N-HQ <tnm_help@usgs.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, January 7, 2025 12:24 PM
To: Altheide, Phyllis S <paltheide@usgs.gov>; Postolovski, Ray <rpostolovski@usgs.gov>; Nimetz, Joshua D <jnimetz@usgs.gov>; Rufe, Philip P <prufe@usgs.gov>; Boggs, Hannah K <hboggs@usgs.gov>
Cc: Mantey, Kimberly S <kmantey@usgs.gov>; Anderson, Rebecca (Becci) <rdanderson@usgs.gov>
Subject: Re: BGN Response to Media Inquiry (Gulf of America)

FYI - Here is the guidance provided by OCAP:

I appreciate the time you put into this for context. However, Gina and I (Rachel Pawlitz) discussed this and we both feel there's a benefit to avoid commenting at all right now. While this is purely political at this stage, in a few days the Trump administration will come in and we cannot speculate as to whether they will initiate some type of EO. So if this continues to be in the news, this could always be revisited later but for now it's purely hypothetical so don't want to give speculative answers.

Thanks for understanding!

Andy

From: NGP NGTOC TNM Help, GS-N-HQ <tnm_help@usgs.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, January 7, 2025 12:25 PM
To: Altheide, Phyllis S <paltheide@usgs.gov>; Postolovski, Ray <rpostolovski@usgs.gov>; Nimetz,

Joshua D <jnimetz@usgs.gov>; Rufe, Philip P <prufe@usgs.gov>; Boggs, Hannah K <hboggs@usgs.gov>

Cc: Mantey, Kimberly S <kmantey@usgs.gov>; Anderson, Rebecca (Becci) <rdanderson@usgs.gov>

Subject: BGN Response to Media Inquiry (Gulf of America)

Hi all,

Looks like the media has picked up on President-Elect Trump's recent statement about renaming the Gulf of Mexico to Gulf of America. NGP Leadership appears to be aware and is working with the Office of Communications and Publishing.

BGN has indicated that a [name established by Congress or the President](#) can sidestep BGN processes. They have requested that communication be coordinated with OCAP.

So far TNM_HELP has received a single media request.

I wanted to forward for NGTOC Sr Staff awareness.

Andy

From: O'Donnell, Matthew J <mjodonnell@usgs.gov>

Sent: Tuesday, January 7, 2025 12:09 PM

To: NGP NGTOC TNM Help, GS-N-HQ <tnm_help@usgs.gov>; BGNEXEC, GS-N-MAC <bgnexec@usgs.gov>; Pawlitz, Rachel J <rpawlitz@usgs.gov>; Tischler, Michael A <mtischler@usgs.gov>; Zahniser, Shellie R <srzahniser@usgs.gov>; St. Onge, Tim <tong@loc.gov>; Anderson, Gina R <granderson@usgs.gov>

Cc: Rufe, Philip P <prufe@usgs.gov>

Subject: Re: [EXTERNAL] BBC News - Media Request

I've provided some basic talking points to OCAP already. We'd prefer that OCAP handle this.

- The Policy on Names Considered or Established by Congress or the President notes that "Geographic names and their applications specifically established by an act of Congress or Executive order are legally official, and therefore, are not bound by BGN principles, policies, and procedures." This includes name changes.
- For any names established by an act of Congress or Executive order (or proclamation), the name is entered into/changed in GNIS once official. Federal data sources are updated from GNIS on their own data refresh cycles.

The other request had some other details but this is the basic information people should know.

The BGN has nothing to do with any naming by Congress or the President.

Matt

From: NGP NGTOC TNM Help, GS-N-HQ <tnm_help@usgs.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, January 7, 2025 1:07 PM
To: BGNEXEC, GS-N-MAC <bgnexec@usgs.gov>; Pawlitz, Rachel J <rpawlitz@usgs.gov>; Tischler, Michael A <mtischler@usgs.gov>; Zahniser, Shellie R <srzahniser@usgs.gov>; St. Onge, Tim <tong@loc.gov>; Anderson, Gina R <granderson@usgs.gov>
Cc: Rufe, Philip P <prufe@usgs.gov>; O'Donnell, Matthew J <mjodonnell@usgs.gov>
Subject: Re: [EXTERNAL] BBC News - Media Request

Uhoh... sounds like this one may eat our lunch this week. If any more similar requests come in, I'll sit on them but keep in touch with Matt on what we get...

Please keep me in the loop with what y'all come up with.

Andy

From: BGNEXEC, GS-N-MAC <bgnexec@usgs.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, January 7, 2025 12:02 PM
To: Pawlitz, Rachel J <rpawlitz@usgs.gov>; Tischler, Michael A <mtischler@usgs.gov>; Zahniser, Shellie R <srzahniser@usgs.gov>; St. Onge, Tim <tong@loc.gov>; Anderson, Gina R <granderson@usgs.gov>
Cc: NGP NGTOC TNM Help, GS-N-HQ <tnm_help@usgs.gov>; Rufe, Philip P <prufe@usgs.gov>; O'Donnell, Matthew J <mjodonnell@usgs.gov>
Subject: Fw: [EXTERNAL] BBC News - Media Request

And another one. Gina, should we coordinate a statement we can share/adapt with every request about this?

Matt

From: NGP NGTOC TNM Help, GS-N-HQ <tnm_help@usgs.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, January 7, 2025 12:56 PM
To: Anderson, Gina R <granderson@usgs.gov>; BGNEXEC, GS-N-MAC <bgnexec@usgs.gov>
Cc: Rufe, Philip P <prufe@usgs.gov>
Subject: Fw: [EXTERNAL] BBC News - Media Request

Hi Gina & Matt -

See the below request for a press data call. I would like for y'all to draft a statement. Let me

know if you want to provide the info directly or if you want me to provide the information.

Andy

From: Brandon Drenon <brandon.k.drenon@bbc.co.uk>
Sent: Tuesday, January 7, 2025 11:51 AM
To: NGP NGTOC TNM Help, GS-N-HQ <tnm_help@usgs.gov>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] BBC News - Media Request

This email has been received from outside of DOI - Use caution before clicking on links, opening attachments, or responding.

Good afternoon,

The BBC is reporting on what the process is to change the names of bodies of water after Donald Trump made remarks on Tuesday suggesting he would like to change the Gulf of Mexico to the Gulf of America.

We'd like to understand the process, whether this is possible, and how it might work.

Can someone please contact me at your earliest convenience.

My number is (b) (6).

Cheers,

Brandon Drenon

This email, including attachments, is private and confidential and may contain personal views which are not the views of the Company unless specifically stated. If you have received this email in error, please notify the sender and delete it from your system. Any commercial terms contained in this e-mail or any attachments are for discussion purposes only, and do not constitute a legal agreement. No binding agreement will exist unless and until written execution of a long form contract signed by all parties to the agreement. Please note that the Company monitors e-mails sent or received. Further communication will signify your consent to this.

From: Tischler, Michael A
To: (b) (3) (B), (b) (6) NGA-SFGG USA CIV; (b) (6)
Cc: Zahniser, Shellie R; St. Onge, Tim; (b) (3) (B), (b) (6) NGA-SFGGW USA CIV
Subject: Re: [EXTERNAL] Re: [Non-DoD Source] Gulf of Mexico renaming
Date: Tuesday, January 7, 2025 5:09:24 PM

Hi (b) (3) (B), (b) (6), (b) (3) (B), (b) (6),

Yes, indeed...lots of churn from Denali to the Gulf of Mexico.

We have received inquiries today from both CBS and the BBC and our communications office has instructed us to not respond. I don't mean "...has no comment at this time...", I mean do not respond at all. Perhaps that will change at a later date, but that's the guidance we have now.

It is speculation at this point, but were legislation to pass that renamed The Gulf, would that put us in a "Sea of Japan" scenario with a disputed name?

Thanks,
m

From: (b) (3) (B), (b) (6) NGA-SFGG USA CIV <(b) (3) (B), (b) (6)>
Sent: Tuesday, January 7, 2025 5:02 PM
To: (b) (6) (b) (6) @state.gov; Tischler, Michael A <mtischler@usgs.gov>
Cc: Zahniser, Shellie R <srzahniser@usgs.gov>; St. Onge, Tim <tong@loc.gov>; (b) (3) (B), (b) (6) NGA-SFGGW USA CIV <(b) (3) (B), (b) (6)>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Re: [Non-DoD Source] Gulf of Mexico renaming

This email has been received from outside of DOI - Use caution before clicking on links, opening attachments, or responding.

Where's that "it has begun" meme from Lord of the Rings...?

From: "(b) (6)" <(b) (6) @state.gov>
Date: Tuesday, January 7, 2025 at 4:01:48 PM
To: "Tischler, Michael [I-Net]" <mtischler@usgs.gov>
Cc: "(b) (3) (B), (b) (6) NGA-SFGG USA CIV" (b) (3) (B), (b) (6) "Zahniser, Shellie R" <srzahniser@usgs.gov>, "St. Onge, Tim" <tong@loc.gov>, (b) (3) (B), (b) (6) NGA-SFGGW USA CIV" <(b) (3) (B), (b) (6)>
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Gulf of Mexico renaming

Hi Mike,

I hope you had a relaxing break and a Happy New Year. (b) (5) DPP

(b) (5) DPP

Cheers,

(b) (6)

(b) (6)

(b) (6)

U.S. Department of State

(b) (6)

From: [Tischler, Michael A](#)
To: (b) (6)
Cc: [GeoNames](#)
Subject: Re: [EXTERNAL] RE: GOA EO
Date: Tuesday, January 21, 2025 5:02:37 PM

Hi (b) (6)

Thanks for the follow-up. I have asked for further guidance from DOI regarding implementation, but have yet to receive anything. I will be in touch with you when I hear more, though.

Thanks,
Mike

From: (b) (6) <(b) (6)@state.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, January 21, 2025 4:59 PM
To: Tischler, Michael A <mtischler@usgs.gov>
Cc: GeoNames <GeoNames@state.gov>
Subject: RE: [EXTERNAL] RE: GOA EO

Hi Mike,

(b) (5) ACP / DPP

(b) (6)

(b) (6)

U.S. Department of State

(b) (6)

From: Tischler, Michael A <mtischler@usgs.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, January 21, 2025 2:33 PM
To: (b) (6) <(b) (6)@state.gov>

Cc: GeoNames <GeoNames@state.gov>

Subject: Re: [EXTERNAL] RE: GOA EO

Thanks, (b) (6) - appreciate the clarification, and we'll wait to hear more.

thanks,
mike

From: (b) (6) <(b) (6)@state.gov>

Sent: Tuesday, January 21, 2025 2:32 PM

To: Tischler, Michael A <mtischler@usgs.gov>

Cc: GeoNames <GeoNames@state.gov>

Subject: [EXTERNAL] RE: GOA EO

This email has been received from outside of DOI - Use caution before clicking on links, opening attachments, or responding.

Hi Mike,

(b) (5) DPP

Thanks,

(b) (6)

(b) (6)

U.S. Department of State

(b) (6)

From: Tischler, Michael A <mtischler@usgs.gov>

Sent: Tuesday, January 21, 2025 1:40 PM

To: (b) (6) <(b) (6)@state.gov>

Subject: GOA EO

Hi (b) (6)

I have a question for you regarding the renaming of Gulf of America. We are awaiting DOI guidance before reflecting the change in GNIS. But, we are wondering how the feature will be reflected in GNS. The EO states that

"...The Secretary of the Interior shall...rename as the "Gulf of America" the U.S. Continental Shelf area bounded on the northeast, north, and northwest by the States of Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama and Florida and extending to the seaward boundary with Mexico and Cuba in the area formerly named as the Gulf of Mexico. "

Does this definition constitute the entire Gulf? Or are we going to splitting the feature into two - Gulf of Mexico in the southern portion and Gulf of America in the northern portion?

Thanks,
Mike

Mike Tischler, Ph.D
Director, National Geospatial Program
U.S. Geological Survey
Department of Interior
o: 703-648-4725
c: 703-344-4348
mtischler@usgs.gov

From: [St Onge, Timothy](#)
To: [Tischler, Michael A](#)
Subject: RE: [EXTERNAL] RE: DOI BGN appointments
Date: Wednesday, January 22, 2025 9:15:36 AM

Yea I think that seems like the best way to spread the word. No additional thoughts on this at the moment.

Thanks,
Tim

From: Tischler, Michael A <mtischler@usgs.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, January 22, 2025 9:00 AM
To: St Onge, Timothy <tong@loc.gov>
Subject: Re: [EXTERNAL] RE: DOI BGN appointments

CAUTION: This email message has been received from an external source. Please use caution when opening attachments, or clicking on links.

Thanks, Tim. I guess I'll email the principal members this morning...seems like the best way to get the word out? Any additional thoughts?

From: St Onge, Timothy <tong@loc.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, January 22, 2025 8:57 AM
To: Tischler, Michael A <mtischler@usgs.gov>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] RE: DOI BGN appointments

This email has been received from outside of DOI - Use caution before clicking on links, opening attachments, or responding.

Hi Mike,

Yes this makes sense to me. This seems like a proper way to start meeting Section 2 of the EO. While I'm not sure how other departments will handle the specifics, it seems like we should try to be uniform in how we respond to this across the departments as best we can, especially if this is the course of action deemed appropriate at DOS and DOI.

Thanks,
Tim

Tim St. Onge

Cartographer

Geography & Map Division
LM-B02
202-707-9044
tong@loc.gov



From: Tischler, Michael A <mtischler@usgs.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, January 21, 2025 5:54 PM
To: St Onge, Timothy <tong@loc.gov>
Subject: Fw: DOI BGN appointments

CAUTION: This email message has been received from an external source. Please use caution when opening attachments, or clicking on links.

Hi Tim,

I spoke this afternoon with (b) (6) at the DOS. (b) (5) ACP / DPP

A large black rectangular redaction box covering several lines of text in the email body.

What do you think? Would it make sense to email the other members and ask them to submit short information memos to their secretary offices?

Thanks,
m

From: Tischler, Michael A
Sent: Tuesday, January 21, 2025 5:49 PM
To: Brown, Wendi-Starr <Wendi-Starr.Brown@bia.gov>; Hammond, Chris W <chammond@usgs.gov>; Mahoney, Patrick M <pmmahone@blm.gov>; Shelton, Michael <Michael_Shelton@nps.gov>; Smith, Jeremy C <Jeremy_Smith@boem.gov>; Campbell, Jessica L <jessica_campbell@fws.gov>
Subject: DOI BGN appointments

Good evening!

At this point I am assuming you are all aware of the recent EO "[RESTORING NAMES THAT HONOR AMERICAN GREATNESS](#)" that was signed yesterday. We are

waiting for additional DOI guidance and confirmation for the renaming of both Denali->Mount McKinley and Gulf of Mexico-> Gulf of America.

You will also notice the following section in the EO:

Sec. 2. Appointments to the U.S. Board on Geographic Names. (a) Within seven days of the date of this order, each agency head with authority to appoint members to the Board on Geographic Names (Board) pursuant to 43 U.S.C. 364a, shall review their respective appointees and consider replacing those appointees in accordance with applicable law.

I will be pulling together a short informational memo for the Secretary to review to be responsive to this request. As current DOI deputy members, this memo will contain each of your names and biographical information that you provided to the BGN staff during the most recent appointment letter request in June 2023.

Please let me know if you have any concerns or questions. We'll be moving quickly to meet the deadline.

Thanks,
mike

Mike Tischler, Ph.D
Director, National Geospatial Program
U.S. Geological Survey
Department of Interior
o: 703-648-4725
c: 703-344-4348
mtischler@usgs.gov

From: Tischler, Michael A
To: Zahniser, Shellie R
Subject: Fw: DOI BGN appointments
Date: Tuesday, January 21, 2025 6:20:33 PM

fyi

From: Tischler, Michael A <mtischler@usgs.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, January 21, 2025 5:53 PM
To: Tim St. Onge <tong@loc.gov>
Subject: Fw: DOI BGN appointments

Hi Tim,

I spoke this afternoon with (b) (6) at the DOS. (b) (5) ACP / DPP

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

What do you think? Would it make sense to email the other members and ask them to submit short information memos to their secretary offices?

Thanks,
m

From: Tischler, Michael A
Sent: Tuesday, January 21, 2025 5:49 PM
To: Brown, Wendi-Starr <Wendi-Starr.Brown@bia.gov>; Hammond, Chris W <chammond@usgs.gov>; Mahoney, Patrick M <pmmahone@blm.gov>; Shelton, Michael <Michael_Shelton@nps.gov>; Smith, Jeremy C <Jeremy.Smith@boem.gov>; Campbell, Jessica L <jessica_campbell@fws.gov>
Subject: DOI BGN appointments

Good evening!

At this point I am assuming you are all aware of the recent EO "[RESTORING NAMES THAT HONOR AMERICAN GREATNESS](#)" that was signed yesterday. We are waiting for additional DOI guidance and confirmation for the renaming of both Denali->Mount McKinley and Gulf of Mexico-> Gulf of America.

You will also notice the following section in the EO:

Sec. 2. Appointments to the U.S. Board on Geographic Names. (a) Within seven days of the date of this order, each agency head with authority to appoint members to the Board on Geographic Names (Board) pursuant to 43 U.S.C. 364a, shall review their respective appointees and consider replacing those appointees in accordance with applicable law.

I will be pulling together a short informational memo for the Secretary to review to be responsive to this request. As current DOI deputy members, this memo will contain each of your names and biographical information that you provided to the BGN staff during the most recent appointment letter request in June 2023.

Please let me know if you have any concerns or questions. We'll be moving quickly to meet the deadline.

Thanks,
mike

Mike Tischler, Ph.D
Director, National Geospatial Program
U.S. Geological Survey
Department of Interior
o: 703-648-4725
c: 703-344-4348
mtischler@usgs.gov

From: Tischler, Michael A
To: O'Donnell, Matthew J
Cc: Zahniser, Shellie R
Subject: Re: [EXTERNAL] BBC News - Media Request
Date: Tuesday, January 7, 2025 10:49:04 AM

Yeah, I was wondering if this might put us in a 'Sea of Japan' type of situation...

From: O'Donnell, Matthew J <mjodonnell@usgs.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, January 7, 2025 1:44 PM
To: Tischler, Michael A <mtischler@usgs.gov>
Cc: Zahniser, Shellie R <srzahniser@usgs.gov>
Subject: Re: [EXTERNAL] BBC News - Media Request

I also appreciate your support for my diligence on this kind of issue. I do take it seriously and want to help as I can and is appropriate for my expertise and job level as a GS-11.

That's a shame about Rachel. I think Gina has learned a lot and has been helping with most of the recent BGN inquiries.

(b) (6) who works in communications, said just that—we can never prevent a reporter from emailing us or TNM directly.

One thing that Shellie and I will work on in the post-Jenny era is more delineation of duties around the BGN mission and communication. Jenny and I would just jump on anything to get it moving the fastest and I think that has a lot to do with a lack of Executive Secretary for some of the time between 2019 and 2024. Shellie and I plan to hash out who is responsible for what and when.

Part of my stress around this job is not having any confidence or familiarity with best practices for dealing with media requests, especially how to best work with OCAP on tight deadlines. I have been learning and practicing (honest!) on providing shorter more relevant answers rather than providing too many details.

Of course, I'm just now realizing that because the Gulf of Mexico is a trans-boundary name, the answer that "the President and Congress can act on the name however they choose" isn't quite correct. I'll loop in (b) (3) (E), (b) (6) to see FNC's take. The gulf borders Mexico and Cuba.

Matt

Matt O'Donnell
BGN research staff

Phone: 703-648-4553 (work) / 571-562-3504 (cell)
Email: mjdodonnell@usgs.gov

From: Tischler, Michael A <mtischler@usgs.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, January 7, 2025 1:29 PM
To: O'Donnell, Matthew J <mjdodonnell@usgs.gov>
Cc: Zahniser, Shellie R <srzahniser@usgs.gov>
Subject: Re: [EXTERNAL] BBC News - Media Request

Thanks, Matt - appreciate the follow up.

Unfortunately, it may get worse before it gets better. I learned today that Rachael P will be leaving for a position with the NPS. Rachael was very familiar with our work, and had pretty positive relationships with us. Like all other positions, it will take time to backfill.

However, that shouldn't stop us from making sure we have a process in place that is most effective. I can't stop a reporter from emailing bgnexec or tnm_help...but perhaps we can put notices for media inquiries on the websites, and ensure that the media are directed to ocap correctly.

I'll raise the issue with Gina, to start.

Thanks,
m

From: O'Donnell, Matthew J <mjdodonnell@usgs.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, January 7, 2025 1:23 PM
To: Tischler, Michael A <mtischler@usgs.gov>
Cc: Zahniser, Shellie R <srzahniser@usgs.gov>
Subject: Re: [EXTERNAL] BBC News - Media Request

Apoligies, that came off with the wrong tone.

I understand that this is part of my job, but the inefficient process of media inquiries coming to bgnexec, OCAP, and tnm_help independently, and then needing to have OCAP review them all and send them out, given unreasonable reporter timelines is stressful. How can we improve this?

I would like to develop a sharepoint resource for UE, OCAP, and tnm_help where they have the basic answers for high level process questions. Then they can handle most inquiries quickly and accurately without media inquiry crises interrupting my main BGN mission work. For

complicated questions, I would absolutely provide talking points for OCAP to use.

Matt

From: O'Donnell, Matthew J <mjodonnell@usgs.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, January 7, 2025 1:12 PM
To: Tischler, Michael A <mtischler@usgs.gov>
Cc: Zahniser, Shellie R <srzahniser@usgs.gov>
Subject: Re: [EXTERNAL] BBC News - Media Request

I can't stay on top of this AND do my day job.

From: Tischler, Michael A <mtischler@usgs.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, January 7, 2025 1:11 PM
To: O'Donnell, Matthew J <mjodonnell@usgs.gov>
Cc: Zahniser, Shellie R <srzahniser@usgs.gov>
Subject: Re: [EXTERNAL] BBC News - Media Request

Thanks for staying on top of this, Matt - never a dull moment.

From: O'Donnell, Matthew J <mjodonnell@usgs.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, January 7, 2025 1:09 PM
To: NGP NGTOC TNM Help, GS-N-HQ <tnm_help@usgs.gov>; BGNEXEC, GS-N-MAC <bgnexec@usgs.gov>; Pawlitz, Rachel J <rpawlitz@usgs.gov>; Tischler, Michael A <mtischler@usgs.gov>; Zahniser, Shellie R <srzahniser@usgs.gov>; St. Onge, Tim <tong@loc.gov>; Anderson, Gina R <granderson@usgs.gov>
Cc: Rufe, Philip P <prufe@usgs.gov>
Subject: Re: [EXTERNAL] BBC News - Media Request

I've provided some basic talking points to OCAP already. We'd prefer that OCAP handle this.

- The Policy on Names Considered or Established by Congress or the President notes that "Geographic names and their applications specifically established by an act of Congress or Executive order are legally official, and therefore, are not bound by BGN principles, policies, and procedures." This includes name changes.
- For any names established by an act of Congress or Executive order (or proclamation), the name is entered into/changed in GNIS once official. Federal data sources are updated from GNIS on their own data refresh cycles.

The other request had some other details but this is the basic information people should know.

The BGN has nothing to do with any naming by Congress or the President.

Matt

From: NGP NGTOC TNM Help, GS-N-HQ <tnm_help@usgs.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, January 7, 2025 1:07 PM
To: BGNEXEC, GS-N-MAC <bgnexec@usgs.gov>; Pawlitz, Rachel J <rpawlitz@usgs.gov>; Tischler, Michael A <mtischler@usgs.gov>; Zahniser, Shellie R <srzahniser@usgs.gov>; St. Onge, Tim <tong@loc.gov>; Anderson, Gina R <granderson@usgs.gov>
Cc: Rufe, Philip P <prufe@usgs.gov>; O'Donnell, Matthew J <mjodonnell@usgs.gov>
Subject: Re: [EXTERNAL] BBC News - Media Request

Uhoh... sounds like this one may eat our lunch this week. If any more similar requests come in, I'll sit on them but keep in touch with Matt on what we get...

Please keep me in the loop with what y'all come up with.

Andy

From: BGNEXEC, GS-N-MAC <bgnexec@usgs.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, January 7, 2025 12:02 PM
To: Pawlitz, Rachel J <rpawlitz@usgs.gov>; Tischler, Michael A <mtischler@usgs.gov>; Zahniser, Shellie R <srzahniser@usgs.gov>; St. Onge, Tim <tong@loc.gov>; Anderson, Gina R <granderson@usgs.gov>
Cc: NGP NGTOC TNM Help, GS-N-HQ <tnm_help@usgs.gov>; Rufe, Philip P <prufe@usgs.gov>; O'Donnell, Matthew J <mjodonnell@usgs.gov>
Subject: Fw: [EXTERNAL] BBC News - Media Request

And another one. Gina, should we coordinate a statement we can share/adapt with every request about this?

Matt

From: NGP NGTOC TNM Help, GS-N-HQ <tnm_help@usgs.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, January 7, 2025 12:56 PM
To: Anderson, Gina R <granderson@usgs.gov>; BGNEXEC, GS-N-MAC <bgnexec@usgs.gov>
Cc: Rufe, Philip P <prufe@usgs.gov>
Subject: Fw: [EXTERNAL] BBC News - Media Request

Hi Gina & Matt -

See the below request for a press data call. I would like for y'all to draft a statement. Let me know if you want to provide the info directly or if you want me to provide the

information.

Andy

From: Brandon Drenon <brandon.k.drenon@bbc.co.uk>
Sent: Tuesday, January 7, 2025 11:51 AM
To: NGP NGTOC TNM Help, GS-N-HQ <tnm_help@usgs.gov>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] BBC News - Media Request

This email has been received from outside of DOI - Use caution before clicking on links, opening attachments, or responding.

Good afternoon,

The BBC is reporting on what the process is to change the names of bodies of water after Donald Trump made remarks on Tuesday suggesting he would like to change the Gulf of Mexico to the Gulf of America.

We'd like to understand the process, whether this is possible, and how it might work.

Can someone please contact me at your earliest convenience.

My number is (b) (6).

Cheers,

Brandon Drenon

This email, including attachments, is private and confidential and may contain personal views which are not the views of the Company unless specifically stated. If you have received this email in error, please notify the sender and delete it from your system. Any commercial terms contained in this e-mail or any attachments are for discussion purposes only, and do not constitute a legal agreement. No binding agreement will exist unless and until written execution of a long form contract signed by all parties to the agreement. Please note that the Company monitors e-mails sent or received. Further communication will signify your consent to this.

From: [Zahniser, Shellie R](#)
To: [O'Donnell, Matthew J](#); [Runyon, Jennifer E](#)
Subject: RE: [EXTERNAL] Re: Gulf of America?
Date: Wednesday, January 8, 2025 1:40:00 PM

I can do it.

Shellie Zahniser, Ph.D.
BGN Executive Secretary
Domestic Names Committee
Honolulu, HI

From: O'Donnell, Matthew J <mjodonnell@usgs.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, January 8, 2025 9:51 AM
To: Zahniser, Shellie R <srzahniser@usgs.gov>; Runyon, Jennifer E <jrunyon@usgs.gov>
Subject: Re: [EXTERNAL] Re: Gulf of America?

Shellie,

Would you like us to email Roger or will you?

Matt

From: Zahniser, Shellie R <srzahniser@usgs.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, January 8, 2025 2:05 PM
To: O'Donnell, Matthew J <mjodonnell@usgs.gov>; Runyon, Jennifer E <jrunyon@usgs.gov>
Subject: RE: [EXTERNAL] Re: Gulf of America?

I explained this to Gina. We just need to tell Roger what is up. I sent the email exchange to Gina but she does not intend to respond.

Shellie Zahniser, Ph.D.
BGN Executive Secretary
Domestic Names Committee
Honolulu, HI

From: O'Donnell, Matthew J <mjodonnell@usgs.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, January 8, 2025 8:17 AM
To: Runyon, Jennifer E <jrunyon@usgs.gov>; Zahniser, Shellie R <srzahniser@usgs.gov>
Subject: Re: [EXTERNAL] Re: Gulf of America?

I honestly have no idea what to do with this. Anything "newsletter"-ish should probably be considered media.

But we don't want Roger providing inaccurate information even to such a minor outlet.

Matt

Matt O'Donnell
BGN research staff

Phone: 703-648-4553 (work) / 571-562-3504 (cell)

Email: mjodonnell@usgs.gov

From: Runyon, Jennifer E <jrunyon@usgs.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, January 8, 2025 12:04 PM
To: O'Donnell, Matthew J <mjodonnell@usgs.gov>; Zahniser, Shellie R <szahniser@usgs.gov>
Subject: Fw: [EXTERNAL] Re: Gulf of America?

Good grief, I'd prefer not to respond to this, but if you want to provide a short statement to Ralph, feel free.

Then again, I'm not familiar with the FedSmith newsletter (maybe I should be. It looks like it has useful info for retirees!), and perhaps they'd be considered media so we can't comment anyway?

Of course, Roger has misspoken re: the BGN's involvement and what the President can do, but I don't feel like explaining it all. If I'm lucky, Ralph won't follow up for a couple days and he'll get my "I've retired" message. I'm glad Roger's traveling, otherwise, I know he'd have called me already.

Or I could just respond to them both and tell Ralph to contact OCAP? Suggestions?

Jenny

From: RRSFLA <(b) (6) Ralph Smith [@gmail.com](mailto:(b) (6) @gmail.com)>
Sent: Wednesday, January 8, 2025 10:55 AM
To: Roger Payne <(b) (6) [@gmail.com](mailto:(b) (6) @gmail.com)>; Runyon, Jennifer E <jrunyon@usgs.gov>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Re: Gulf of America?

Enjoy the cruises, Roger!

Numerous articles on changing the name of the Gulf of Mexico but this is one of them.

<https://www.cbsnews.com/amp/news/trump-change-gulf-of-mexico-to-gulf-of-america/>

On Wed, Jan 8, 2025 at 9:49 AM Roger Payne <(b) (6)@gmail.com> wrote:

Hello Ralph,

I hope you had a nice holiday.

This is a first for me as I've never heard of that before now. Can you forward that article to me and please copy Jenny Runyon whom I have copied on this response.

I would do more on this but we are presently in Fort Lauderdale and will be doing two back-to-back cruises in the Caribbean for the next three weeks and so I have zero resources and limited email.

Jenny Runyon is the best at almost everything and would deal with this straight away, but unfortunately for the realm of applied toponymy and the world she is retiring as of January 15. Anyway, I am sure she will respond as to whom will be taking over her duties, but as far as I know no one has been chosen nor has it even been advertised. Her assistant is Matt (sorry, don't recall his last name) and might be able to assist.

Of course, there would have to be a formal proposal to the U.S. Board on Geographic Names (Domestic Names Committee) and the Foreign Names Committee would be involved I'm sure. Anyway, this would take quite a long time and probably never happen.

Anyway, it is interesting. We'll stay in touch.

Roger

On Wed, Jan 8, 2025 at 09:19 Ralph Smith <(b) (6)@gmail.com> wrote:

Good morning, Roger

I thought of you reading an article about changing the name of the Gulf of Mexico to the Gulf of America. How does that work? It does not seem that one country can pass a law changing the name of a large body of water by itself.

It might make a good article for the FedSmith newsletter. What is the process for changing the name to the Gulf of America? I assume Geographic Names gets involved in that somehow?

Ralph

From: [Zahniser, Shellie R](#)
To: [O'Donnell, Matthew J](#); [Runyon, Jennifer E](#)
Subject: RE: [EXTERNAL] Re: Gulf of America?
Date: Wednesday, January 8, 2025 2:19:00 PM

Mike T is going to send an email out to EXCOM and then we will each notify our respective groups. I will notify ACAN when that email comes out.

Shellie Zahniser, Ph.D.
BGN Executive Secretary
Domestic Names Committee
Honolulu, HI

From: O'Donnell, Matthew J <mjodonnell@usgs.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, January 8, 2025 9:51 AM
To: Zahniser, Shellie R <srzahniser@usgs.gov>; Runyon, Jennifer E <jrunyon@usgs.gov>
Subject: Re: [EXTERNAL] Re: Gulf of America?

Shellie,

Would you like us to email Roger or will you?

Matt

From: Zahniser, Shellie R <srzahniser@usgs.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, January 8, 2025 2:05 PM
To: O'Donnell, Matthew J <mjodonnell@usgs.gov>; Runyon, Jennifer E <jrunyon@usgs.gov>
Subject: RE: [EXTERNAL] Re: Gulf of America?

I explained this to Gina. We just need to tell Roger what is up. I sent the email exchange to Gina but she does not intend to respond.

Shellie Zahniser, Ph.D.
BGN Executive Secretary
Domestic Names Committee
Honolulu, HI

From: O'Donnell, Matthew J <mjodonnell@usgs.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, January 8, 2025 8:17 AM
To: Runyon, Jennifer E <jrunyon@usgs.gov>; Zahniser, Shellie R <srzahniser@usgs.gov>
Subject: Re: [EXTERNAL] Re: Gulf of America?

I honestly have no idea what to do with this. Anything "newsletter"-ish should probably be considered media.

But we don't want Roger providing inaccurate information even to such a minor outlet.

Matt

Matt O'Donnell
BGN research staff

Phone: 703-648-4553 (work) / 571-562-3504 (cell)

Email: mjodonnell@usgs.gov

From: Runyon, Jennifer E <jrunyon@usgs.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, January 8, 2025 12:04 PM
To: O'Donnell, Matthew J <mjodonnell@usgs.gov>; Zahniser, Shellie R <szahniser@usgs.gov>
Subject: Fw: [EXTERNAL] Re: Gulf of America?

Good grief, I'd prefer not to respond to this, but if you want to provide a short statement to Ralph, feel free.

Then again, I'm not familiar with the FedSmith newsletter (maybe I should be. It looks like it has useful info for retirees!), and perhaps they'd be considered media so we can't comment anyway?

Of course, Roger has misspoken re: the BGN's involvement and what the President can do, but I don't feel like explaining it all. If I'm lucky, Ralph won't follow up for a couple days and he'll get my "I've retired" message. I'm glad Roger's traveling, otherwise, I know he'd have called me already.

Or I could just respond to them both and tell Ralph to contact OCAP? Suggestions?

Jenny

From: RRSFLA <(b) (6) Ralph Smith [@gmail.com](mailto:(b) (6)@gmail.com)>
Sent: Wednesday, January 8, 2025 10:55 AM
To: Roger Payne <(b) (6) [@gmail.com](mailto:(b) (6)@gmail.com)>; Runyon, Jennifer E <jrunyon@usgs.gov>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Re: Gulf of America?

Enjoy the cruises, Roger!

Numerous articles on changing the name of the Gulf of Mexico but this is one of them.

<https://www.cbsnews.com/amp/news/trump-change-gulf-of-mexico-to-gulf-of-america/>

On Wed, Jan 8, 2025 at 9:49 AM Roger Payne <(b) (6)@gmail.com> wrote:

Hello Ralph,

I hope you had a nice holiday.

This is a first for me as I've never heard of that before now. Can you forward that article to me and please copy Jenny Runyon whom I have copied on this response.

I would do more on this but we are presently in Fort Lauderdale and will be doing two back-to-back cruises in the Caribbean for the next three weeks and so I have zero resources and limited email.

Jenny Runyon is the best at almost everything and would deal with this straight away, but unfortunately for the realm of applied toponymy and the world she is retiring as of January 15. Anyway, I am sure she will respond as to whom will be taking over her duties, but as far as I know no one has been chosen nor has it even been advertised. Her assistant is Matt (sorry, don't recall his last name) and might be able to assist.

Of course, there would have to be a formal proposal to the U.S. Board on Geographic Names (Domestic Names Committee) and the Foreign Names Committee would be involved I'm sure. Anyway, this would take quite a long time and probably never happen.

Anyway, it is interesting. We'll stay in touch.

Roger

On Wed, Jan 8, 2025 at 09:19 Ralph Smith <(b) (6)@gmail.com> wrote:

Good morning, Roger

I thought of you reading an article about changing the name of the Gulf of Mexico to the Gulf of America. How does that work? It does not seem that one country can pass a law changing the name of a large body of water by itself.

It might make a good article for the FedSmith newsletter. What is the process for changing the name to the Gulf of America? I assume Geographic Names gets involved in that somehow?

Ralph

From: Zahniser, Shellie R
To: Anderson, Gina R
Subject: RE: [EXTERNAL] Re: Gulf of America?
Date: Wednesday, January 8, 2025 9:37:00 AM

Gina,

Please see email chain below. I can also follow up with Roger and inform him of the guidance you and Rachel laid out for us.

Shellie Zahniser, Ph.D.
BGN Executive Secretary
Domestic Names Committee
Honolulu, HI

From: RRSFLA <(b) (6) Ralph Smith@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 8, 2025 10:55 AM
To: Roger Payne <(b) (6)@gmail.com>; Runyon, Jennifer E <jrunyon@usgs.gov>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Re: Gulf of America?

Enjoy the cruises, Roger!

Numerous articles on changing the name of the Gulf of Mexico but this is one of them.

<https://www.cbsnews.com/amp/news/trump-change-gulf-of-mexico-to-gulf-of-america/>

On Wed, Jan 8, 2025 at 9:49 AM Roger Payne <(b) (6)@gmail.com> wrote:

Hello Ralph,

I hope you had a nice holiday.

This is a first for me as I've never heard of that before now. Can you forward that article to me and please copy Jenny Runyon whom I have copied on this response.

I would do more on this but we are presently in Fort Lauderdale and will be doing two back-to-back cruises in the Caribbean for the next three weeks and so I have zero resources and limited email.

Jenny Runyon is the best at almost everything and would deal with this straight away, but unfortunately for the realm of applied toponymy and the world she is retiring as of January 15. Anyway, I am sure she will respond as to whom will be taking over her duties, but as far as I know no one has been chosen nor has it even been advertised. Her assistant is Matt (sorry, don't recall his last name) and might be able to assist.

Of course, there would have to be a formal proposal to the U.S. Board on Geographic Names (Domestic Names Committee) and the Foreign Names Committee would be involved I'm sure. Anyway, this would take quite a long time and probably never happen.

Anyway, it is interesting. We'll stay in touch.

Roger

On Wed, Jan 8, 2025 at 09:19 Ralph Smith <(b) (6)@gmail.com> wrote:

Good morning, Roger

I thought of you reading an article about changing the name of the Gulf of Mexico to the Gulf of America. How does that work? It does not seem that one country can pass a law changing the name of a large body of water by itself.

It might make a good article for the FedSmith newsletter. What is the process for changing the name to the Gulf of America? I assume Geographic Names gets involved in that somehow?

Ralph

From: [Anderson, Gina R](#)
To: [Elms, Thomas \(Tommy\)](#); [Pawlitz, Rachel J](#); [Tischler, Michael A](#)
Subject: Re: [EXTERNAL] Washington Post question for Board of Geographic Names re Gulf of Mexico
Date: Friday, January 10, 2025 11:47:48 AM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)

All,

I am about to be out for the day at 11 AM CST but can check my emails for any guidance that is decided. (b) (6)

Thanks,

Gina Anderson

Public Affairs Specialist | Core Science Systems Mission Area
U.S. Geological Survey
Office of Communications and Publishing
405-509-3524 | granderson@usgs.gov

From: Elms, Thomas (Tommy) <telms@usgs.gov>
Sent: Friday, January 10, 2025 10:45 AM
To: Pawlitz, Rachel J <rpawlitz@usgs.gov>; Tischler, Michael A <mtischler@usgs.gov>
Cc: Anderson, Gina R <granderson@usgs.gov>
Subject: RE: [EXTERNAL] Washington Post question for Board of Geographic Names re Gulf of Mexico

Hi team,

I have limited availability today and will be on a work trip to Denver next week. I could potentially meet around 4pm?

Tommy Elms (he/him)
Congressional Liaison
Office of Communications and Publishing
U.S. Geological Survey
Reston, VA
mobile: 571-334-7969
telms@usgs.gov

From: Pawlitz, Rachel J <rpawlitz@usgs.gov>
Sent: Friday, January 10, 2025 10:45 AM
To: Tischler, Michael A <mtischler@usgs.gov>
Cc: Anderson, Gina R <granderson@usgs.gov>; Elms, Thomas (Tommy) <telms@usgs.gov>

Subject: RE: [EXTERNAL] Washington Post question for Board of Geographic Names re Gulf of Mexico

Hi Mike,

I'm bringing in Tommy – it doesn't change my general advice to avoid commenting... but having no comment whatsoever (not even a holding statement) is probably not a great long-term strategy, so perhaps we at least need a simple holding statement to use for the press. Do all of you want to try and meet quickly today?

Adding to the challenge, (b) (6)

So I will quickly be switching gears next week – I don't want to leave you without any suggestions on how to handle this.

-Rachel

From: Tischler, Michael A <mtischler@usgs.gov>

Sent: Friday, January 10, 2025 8:21 AM

To: Pawlitz, Rachel J <rpawlitz@usgs.gov>

Cc: Anderson, Gina R <granderson@usgs.gov>

Subject: Re: [EXTERNAL] Washington Post question for Board of Geographic Names re Gulf of Mexico

Gina, Rachael,

Rep. Taylor-Greene introduced HR 256 yesterday, and released the attached text (I think on social media). This specifies DOI and my position (Chair of the BGN) as the implementing officials, and sets a deadline of 180 days to update **all** federal mapping products.

I don't know if this changes your stance on responding to media, and/or if we need to develop prepared statements.

The U.N. Group of Experts on Geographic Names has also been receiving questions from media and asked my perspective. I've let them know we are not responding to media and provided my technical input. I do not know if they intend to release any comment or not.

Thanks,
m

From: Pawlitz, Rachel J <rpawlitz@usgs.gov>

Sent: Tuesday, January 7, 2025 3:30 PM

To: Tischler, Michael A <mtischler@usgs.gov>

Cc: Anderson, Gina R <granderson@usgs.gov>

Subject: RE: [EXTERNAL] Washington Post question for Board of Geographic Names re Gulf of

Mexico

Hi Mike, I know this is not a typical recommendation, but this is not a circumstance where I would even respond at all. If the situation evolves, we may later want to say something but there's nothing good that would even come out of a "no comment" email response at this point. -Rachel

From: Tischler, Michael A <mtischler@usgs.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, January 7, 2025 3:15 PM
To: Pawlitz, Rachel J <rpawlitz@usgs.gov>
Subject: Re: [EXTERNAL] Washington Post question for Board of Geographic Names re Gulf of Mexico

Hi Rachael,

Does that mean we should just not respond? Or is there a canned 'we have no comment on this topic' statement?

thanks,
m

From: Pawlitz, Rachel J <rpawlitz@usgs.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, January 7, 2025 3:07 PM
To: BGNEXEC, GS-N-MAC <bgnexec@usgs.gov>; Anderson, Gina R <granderson@usgs.gov>; Tischler, Michael A <mtischler@usgs.gov>; St. Onge, Tim <tong@loc.gov>; Zahniser, Shellie R <srzahniser@usgs.gov>; bgnexec@nga.mil <bgnexec@nga.mil>
Cc: O'Donnell, Matthew J <mjodonnell@usgs.gov>; NGP NGTOC TNM Help, GS-N-HQ <tnm_help@usgs.gov>
Subject: RE: [EXTERNAL] Washington Post question for Board of Geographic Names re Gulf of Mexico

Hi everyone,

I appreciate the time you put into this for context. However, Gina and I discussed this and we both feel there's a benefit to avoid commenting at all right now. While this is purely political at this stage, in a few days the Trump administration will come in and we cannot speculate as to whether they will initiate some type of EO. So if this continues to be in the news, this could always be revisited later but for now it's purely hypothetical so don't want to give speculative answers.

Thanks for understanding!

Rachel Pawlitz (she/her)
Chief Public Affairs Officer & Lead Spokesperson
U.S. Geological Survey
Phone: 571-455-6586



From: BGNEXEC, GS-N-MAC <bgnexec@usgs.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, January 7, 2025 2:43 PM
To: Anderson, Gina R <granderson@usgs.gov>; Pawlitz, Rachel J <rpawlitz@usgs.gov>; Tischler, Michael A <mtischler@usgs.gov>; St. Onge, Tim <tong@loc.gov>; Zahniser, Shellie R <srzahniser@usgs.gov>; bgnexec@nga.mil
Cc: O'Donnell, Matthew J <mjodonnell@usgs.gov>; NGP NGTOC TNM Help, GS-N-HQ <tnm_help@usgs.gov>
Subject: Fw: [EXTERNAL] Washington Post question for Board of Geographic Names re Gulf of Mexico

See below.

Additional answers for these kinds of questions:

What's the process for renaming a foreign name or international name like the Gulf of Mexico? Is it solely under the jurisdiction of the BGN and/or can a name change be made through an act of Congress or an executive action?

The [Principles, Policies, and Procedures](#) says that "A name proposal for a feature that crosses the international boundary with Canada or Mexico is likely to require additional processing time because the BGN must coordinate such proposals with the appropriate foreign names authority." But this is not a proposal to the BGN, but a statement by the President-Elect that he would change the name.

Once a name change is made by the BGN how is it applied? What changes?

BGN would not make the change if done by Executive action or Congress. GNIS would be updated and other federal data sources that use GNIS would be updated on their own refresh cycles.

Are BGN appointees serving at the discretion of the head of each agency/the president? Are they appointed by the head of each agency/the president?

The [BGN bylaws](#) Article II Section 2 states "The Board is comprised of principal members and deputy members. The head of each department and agency represented on the Board shall appoint one principal member and also may designate one or more deputy members."

Matt

From: Vazquez, Maegan <Maegan.Vazquez@washpost.com>
Sent: Tuesday, January 7, 2025 2:14 PM
To: BGNEXEC, GS-N-MAC <bgnexec@usgs.gov>; Pawlitz, Rachel J <rpawlitz@usgs.gov>

Subject: [EXTERNAL] Washington Post question for Board of Geographic Names re Gulf of Mexico

This email has been received from outside of DOI - Use caution before clicking on links, opening attachments, or responding.

Hi USGS –

I'm working on a story for The Washington Post today regarding president-elect Donald Trump's recent comments saying he wants to change the name of the Gulf of Mexico to the Gulf of America.

Is there someone within the USGS/U.S. Board on Geographic Names who would be able to answer these questions for me? It would really go a long way in helping our readers understand how/if the president-elect could do this.

- What's the process for renaming a foreign name or international name like the Gulf of Mexico? Is it solely under the jurisdiction of the BGN and/or can a name change be made through an act of Congress or an executive action?
- Once a name change is made by the BGN how is it applied? What changes?
- Are BGN appointees serving at the discretion of the head of each agency/the president? Are they appointed by the head of each agency/the president?

I know it's a little bit late, but I'm hoping to wrap this up by the end of the day today. Written answers are totally okay. I apologize for the short notice.

Thank you --

--

Maegan Vazquez, Reporter at The Washington Post
+1 (956) 740-8844
maegan.vazquez@washpost.com

From: Anderson, Gina R
To: Zahniser, Shellie R; BGNEXEC, GS-N-MAC
Subject: Re: [EXTERNAL] Gulf of Mexico
Date: Friday, January 10, 2025 7:50:58 AM

Hi Matt and Shellie,

Yes, let's continue not responding until we receive other guidance.

Thanks,

Gina Anderson

Public Affairs Specialist | Core Science Systems Mission Area
U.S. Geological Survey
Office of Communications and Publishing
405-509-3524 | granderson@usgs.gov

From: Zahniser, Shellie R <srzahniser@usgs.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, January 8, 2025 6:40 PM
To: BGNEXEC, GS-N-MAC <bgnexec@usgs.gov>; Anderson, Gina R <granderson@usgs.gov>
Subject: RE: [EXTERNAL] Gulf of Mexico

Gina,

WILCO
Thanks

Shellie Zahniser, Ph.D.
BGN Executive Secretary
Domestic Names Committee
Honolulu, HI

From: BGNEXEC, GS-N-MAC <bgnexec@usgs.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, January 8, 2025 2:36 PM
To: Anderson, Gina R <granderson@usgs.gov>
Cc: Zahniser, Shellie R <srzahniser@usgs.gov>
Subject: Fw: [EXTERNAL] Gulf of Mexico

FYI. If we get a lot of emails from the public either for or against changing the name, we will not respond unless instructed otherwise.

Matt

From: Susan Gordon <(b) (6)>

Sent: Wednesday, January 8, 2025 4:48 PM
To: BGNEXEC, GS-N-MAC <bgnexec@usgs.gov>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Gulf of Mexico

This email has been received from outside of DOI - Use caution before clicking on links, opening attachments, or responding.

Good afternoon.

Please do not tamper with the historical name Gulf of Mexico.

Thanks,

Susan Gordon

(b) (6)

Sent from my iPhone

From: Zahniser, Shellie R
To: (b) (6); Tischler, Michael A; (b) (3) (B), (b) (6) NGA-SF USA CIV; (b) (3) (B), (b) (6) NGA-SFGGW USA CIV; Tim St. Onge
Subject: RE: [EXTERNAL] Re: Washington Times reporter inquiry: Gulf of Mexico renaming
Date: Friday, January 10, 2025 10:11:00 AM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
[image002.png](#)
[image003.png](#)
[image004.png](#)
[image005.png](#)
[image006.png](#)
[image007.png](#)
[image008.png](#)
[image009.png](#)
[image010.png](#)
[image011.png](#)
[image012.png](#)
[image013.png](#)

Mike,

I also notice that you have HR 256 in your text, but Congress.gov is listing it as HR 276. Concur with distinguishing the 2 databases in a concise manner, and also agree that we shouldn't get too far ahead of ourselves. We don't know if the bill is going to pass so I would caution against any speculations in the text.

Shellie Zahniser, Ph.D.
BGN Executive Secretary
Domestic Names Committee
Honolulu, HI

From: (b) (6) <(b) (6)@state.gov>
Sent: Friday, January 10, 2025 5:13 AM
To: Tischler, Michael A <mtischler@usgs.gov>; (b) (3) (B), (b) (6) NGA-SF USA CIV <(b) (3) (B), (b) (6)>; (b) (3) (B), (b) (6) NGA-SFGGW USA CIV <(b) (3) (B), (b) (6)>; Zahniser, Shellie R <srzahniser@usgs.gov>; Tim St. Onge <tong@loc.gov>
Subject: RE: [EXTERNAL] Re: Washington Times reporter inquiry: Gulf of Mexico renaming

It would be updated in the GNS. I'm not certain what the feature in the GNIS is – perhaps this referring to the area of U.S. claimed waters within the larger gulf? I suspect it would be updated there as well. As a shared international feature, it falls under FNC purview. Changing the name of the feature was proposed once before (2011 maybe?), which the FNC did not approve. An executive proclamation or congressional action would, of course, supersede FNC procedure. I caution we not get ahead of ourselves.

From: Tischler, Michael A <mtischler@usgs.gov>
Sent: Friday, January 10, 2025 9:40 AM
To: (b) (6) <(b) (6)@state.gov>; (b) (3) (B), (b) (6) NGA-SF USA CIV <(b) (3) (B), (b) (6)>; (b) (3) (B), (b) (6) NGA-SFGGW USA CIV <(b) (3) (B), (b) (6)>; Zahniser, Shellie R <srzahniser@usgs.gov>; Tim St. Onge

<tong@loc.gov>

Subject: Re: [EXTERNAL] Re: Washington Times reporter inquiry: Gulf of Mexico renaming

Hi (b) (6)

Thanks for the clarification. Should this occur by exec or congressional action, the renamed feature would just be updated as official in GNS as well as GNIS, then?

Thanks,
m

From: (b) (6) <(b) (6)@state.gov>

Sent: Friday, January 10, 2025 9:04 AM

To: Tischler, Michael A <mtischler@usgs.gov>; (b) (3) (B), (b) (6) NGA-SF USA CIV

(b) (3) (B), (b) (6) >; (b) (3) (B), (b) (6) NGA-SFGGW USA CIV

(b) (3) (B), (b) (6) >; Zahniser, Shellie R <srzahniser@usgs.gov>; Tim St. Onge <tong@loc.gov>

Subject: RE: [EXTERNAL] Re: Washington Times reporter inquiry: Gulf of Mexico renaming

Hi Mike,

Happy to discuss further at the EXCOM. I don't think it's too in-the-weeds. It's an important distinction. Going forward, the response could just add "...databases (GNIS and GNS)". Additionally, and I don't think that it changes anything in the end, but the Policy I is only in the DNC PPP (not FNC).

(b) (6)

From: Tischler, Michael A <mtischler@usgs.gov>

Sent: Friday, January 10, 2025 8:46 AM

To: (b) (6) <(b) (6)@state.gov>; (b) (3) (B), (b) (6) NGA-SF USA CIV

(b) (3) (B), (b) (6) >; (b) (3) (B), (b) (6) NGA-SFGGW USA CIV

(b) (3) (B), (b) (6) >; Zahniser, Shellie R <srzahniser@usgs.gov>; Tim St. Onge <tong@loc.gov>

Subject: Re: [EXTERNAL] Re: Washington Times reporter inquiry: Gulf of Mexico renaming

Hi (b) (6),

Perhaps this might be good discussion for the upcoming excom? The media question(s) were more about the process and global recognition by other countries...would your comments be a little too in-the-weeds for UNGEGN?

Should I continue to receive more questions I'll do my best to better coordinate. I was already a day behind since we were closed yesterday for the day of mourning, and wanted to get a response to UNGEGN quickly.

I'll take comments as you have them, though.

Thanks,
m

From: (b) (6) <(b) (6)@state.gov>
Sent: Friday, January 10, 2025 8:40 AM
To: Tischler, Michael A <mtischler@usgs.gov>; (b) (3) (B), (b) (6) NGA-SF USA CIV <(b) (3) (B), (b) (6)>; (b) (3) (B), (b) (6) NGA-SFGGW USA CIV <(b) (3) (B), (b) (6)>; Zahniser, Shellie R <srzahniser@usgs.gov>; Tim St. Onge <tong@loc.gov>
Subject: RE: [EXTERNAL] Re: Washington Times reporter inquiry: Gulf of Mexico renaming

Hi Mike,

Thank you for looping us in and providing us an opportunity to review. When do you need comments by?

Not sure how others feel, but I'm of the mind we need to distinguish between/identify both the GNS and GNIS. Gulf of Mexico is in both databases, but in the GNIS it's contained to Louisiana whereas in the GNS, it's an international body of water.

(b) (6)

From: Tischler, Michael A <mtischler@usgs.gov>
Sent: Friday, January 10, 2025 8:24 AM
To: (b) (3) (B), (b) (6) NGA-SF USA CIV <(b) (3) (B), (b) (6)>; (b) (3) (B), (b) (6) NGA-SFGGW USA CIV <(b) (3) (B), (b) (6)>; Zahniser, Shellie R <srzahniser@usgs.gov>; Tim St. Onge <tong@loc.gov>; (b) (6)

<(b) (6) @state.gov>

Subject: Fw: [EXTERNAL] Re: Washington Times reporter inquiry: Gulf of Mexico renaming

EXCOM,

I wanted to share the inquiry received by UNGEGN and my response. Please let me know if any revisions/edits are needed.

Thanks,

m

From: Tischler, Michael A <mtischler@usgs.gov>

Sent: Friday, January 10, 2025 8:13 AM

To: Sungjae Choo <sjchoo@khu.ac.kr>; Cecille Blake <blake1@un.org>; Wendy Shaw <wshaw@linz.govt.nz>; Ana Cristina da Rocha Berenger Resende <ana.resende@ibge.gov.br>; Adam Greenland <agreenland@linz.govt.nz>

Cc: Pierre Jaillard [JAILLARD] <pierre@jaillard.net>; Charlotte Jones <CJones@linz.govt.nz>; Mark Iliffe <mark.iliffe@un.org>; Stefan Schweinfest <schweinfest@un.org>

Subject: Re: [EXTERNAL] Re: Washington Times reporter inquiry: Gulf of Mexico renaming

Good morning,

My apologies for the delay - Federal offices in the US were closed yesterday as a day of mourning for former President Carter.

There are a few things I'd like to mention from the perspective of the US BGN.

1 - My home agency (USGS) has provided guidance that BGN staff (including me) are not to respond at this time to media inquiries. As you might guess, we have received a few questions from high-profile media outlets. But, we are currently not providing a response of any kind.

2 - The process by which the name would be changed in the US depends on the type of action taken to make the renaming official. Of course, by far the most common method to name or rename a geographic feature is a proposal to the BGN, and allow the deliberative process to run its course. However, The BGN [Policy on Names Considered or Established by Congress or the President](#) notes that "Geographic names and their applications specifically established by an act of Congress or Executive order are legally official, and therefore, are not bound by BGN principles, policies, and procedures." This includes name changes. For any names established by an act of Congress or Executive order (or proclamation), the name is entered into/changed in GNIS once official. Federal data sources are updated from GNIS on their own data refresh cycles.

3 - As of this morning, there is draft legislation to rename the Gulf of Mexico offered in the US House of Representatives ([HR 256](#)). I have attached the text which has been released (I believe on social media) by the sponsor, Rep. Taylor-Greene. If this were to pass into law the name would become official. The BGN would not be involved in the decision-making process and our authoritative database (GNIS) would be updated to reflect the new official name. The draft bill also dictates a schedule for update of Federal mapping products.

4 - As others have stated, I am also unable to offer any additional information on how other national naming authorities would recognize this name change.

Thank you,

Mike

Mike Tischler, Ph.D

Director, National Geospatial Program

Chair, U.S. Board on Geographic Names

U.S. Geological Survey

Department of Interior

o: 703-648-4725

c: 703-344-4348

mtischler@usgs.gov

From: Sungjae Choo <sjchoo@khu.ac.kr>

Sent: Thursday, January 9, 2025 7:12 PM

To: Cecille Blake <blake1@un.org>; Wendy Shaw <wshaw@linz.govt.nz>; Ana Cristina da Rocha Berenger Resende <ana.resende@ibge.gov.br>; Adam Greenland <agreenland@linz.govt.nz>

Cc: Pierre Jaillard [JAILLARD] <pierre@jaillard.net>; Tischler, Michael A <mtischler@usgs.gov>; Charlotte Jones <CJones@linz.govt.nz>; Mark Iliffe <mark.iliffe@un.org>; Stefan Schweinfest <schweinfest@un.org>

Subject: [EXTERNAL] Re: Washington Times reporter inquiry: Gulf of Mexico renaming

This email has been received from outside of DOI - Use caution before clicking on links, opening attachments, or responding.

Dear all,

I agree with Ana that UNGEGN has to reply and do it as simply as possible. This is especially so, considering the political inclination of this media house, the Washington Times.

I am suggesting the following points be included:

- UNGEGN does not deal with individual geographical names.
- Naming authorities of each Member State have their own principles and procedures of geographical naming.
- Naming of water bodies outside of territorial waters is a subject of the International Hydrographic Organization (IHO), which has liaison with UNGEGN.

With best regards,

Sungjae

2025년 1월 10일 (금) 오전 7:55, Adam Greenland <agreenland@linz.govt.nz>님이 작성:

UNCLASSIFIED

Kia ora,

The IHO does not adjudicate on the names of oceans and seas in international waters.

What is managed by the IHO on behalf of Member States (MS) is the Naming Standard and the Publication of the names of oceans and seas in international waters.

I agree with Ana email comments. In my opinion, this is a topic that is/has been highly contentious with IHO MS and best to leave well alone.

Ngā mihi

Adam Greenland
National Hydrographer

Location Information

agreenland@linz.govt.nz | **DDI** 04 460 0136 | **MOB** +64 (0)21 243 1577



Wellington Office, Level 7, Radio New Zealand House,
155 The Terrace
PO Box 5501, Wellington 6145, New Zealand

www.linz.govt.nz | data.linz.govt.nz



UNCLASSIFIED

From: Ana Cristina da Rocha Berenger Resende <ana.resende@ibge.gov.br>
Sent: Friday, 10 January 2025 10:58 am
To: Cecille Blake <blake1@un.org>; Wendy Shaw <wshaw@linz.govt.nz>; Pierre Jaillard [JAILLARD] <pierre@jaillard.net>; Sungjae Choo [KHU AC] <sjchoo@khu.ac.kr>; mtischler@usgs.gov
Cc: Charlotte Jones <C.Jones@linz.govt.nz>; Adam Greenland <agreenland@linz.govt.nz>; Mark Iliffe <mark.iliffe@un.org>; Stefan Schweinfest <schweinfest@un.org>
Subject: Re: Washington Times reporter inquiry: Gulf of Mexico renaming

Hi, everyone!

I think it would be important to answer right away that this is not UNGEGN's role to deal with such things.

I wouldn't know how to answer what they call their "general question": "What would have to happen for the rest of the world to accept the change?". There are issues that are never solved, such as The East Sea/Sea of Japan, and I really don't think this kind of dispute ever has a "solution". And, sincerely, I think the less we say, the better, to avoid further inquiries. So, I would keep our response to the first part of Wendy's suggested response.

Best regards,

Ana

Ana Cristina da Rocha Bérenger Resende

ana.resende@ibge.gov.br

Gerente de Nomes Geográficos

Diretoria de Geociências - IBGE

+55 21 2431-0123 r. 5020

+55 21 99614-2453

De: Cecille Blake <blake1@un.org>

Enviado: Thursday, January 9, 2025 6:35:15 PM

Para: Wendy Shaw <wshaw@linz.govt.nz>; Pierre Jaillard [JAILLARD] <pierre@jaillard.net>; Sungjae Choo [KHU AC] <sjchoo@khu.ac.kr>; Ana Cristina da Rocha Berenger Resende <ana.resende@ibge.gov.br>; mtischler@usgs.gov <mtischler@usgs.gov>
Cc: Charlotte Jones <CJones@linz.govt.nz>; Adam Greenland <agreenland@linz.govt.nz>; Mark Iliffe <mark.iliffe@un.org>; Stefan Schweinfest <schweinfest@un.org>
Assunto: RE: Washington Times reporter inquiry: Gulf of Mexico renaming

[CUIDADO] Este e-mail foi recebido de fora da organização. Por favor, verifique cuidadosamente o remetente antes de abrir anexos ou clicar em links. Caso tenha dúvidas sobre a confiabilidade da mensagem, não interaja e encaminhe o e-mail para a caixa postal abuse@ibge.gov.br. Sua atenção e colaboração são essenciais para garantir a segurança dos dados do IBGE.

Dear Wendy

Thank you for your prompt response.

Looking forward to receiving the input from other Bureau Members.

Kind regards

Cecille

Cecille Blake (Ms.)

Global Geospatial Information Management

Environment Statistics and Geospatial Information Branch

Statistics Division| Department of Economic and Social Affairs

United Nations | 2 UN Plaza |Room DC2-1634

e-mail: blake1@un.org

Web: <http://ggim.un.org> and [UNSD — United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names](#)



UN-GGIM

UNEGN

From: Wendy Shaw <wshaw@linz.govt.nz>
Sent: Thursday, 09 January, 2025 4:15 PM
To: Cecille Blake <blake1@un.org>; Pierre Jaillard [JAILLARD] <pierre@jaillard.net>; Sungjae Choo [KHU AC] <sjchoo@khu.ac.kr>; Ana Cristina da Rocha Berenger Resende <ana.resende@ibge.gov.br>; mtischler@usgs.gov
Cc: Charlotte Jones <CJones@linz.govt.nz>; Adam Greenland <agreenland@linz.govt.nz>
Subject: RE: Washington Times reporter inquiry: Gulf of Mexico renaming

UNCLASSIFIED

Thanks Cecille – UNEG N should not respond. Only the US Board on Geographical Names, Mexico's INEGA and/or IHO should respond.

However, if UNEG N must respond, we could say something like this:

'The role of UNEG N is to provide guidance to Member States on good toponymic practice. UNEG N does not adjudicate on geographical name proposals. Rather, national naming authorities have the responsibility for processing and deciding on geographical name proposals:

- United States Board on Geographical Names. Contact the USBGN member: Michael Tischler mtischler@usgs.gov . [Also maybe Betsy Kanalley bkanalley@fs.fed.us who is an UNEG N member, as well as on the USBGN Board.]
- INEGA for Mexico. Contact Mr Francisco Javier Medina Parra, Deputy Director General for Basic Geographic Information, National Institute of Statistics and Geography (INEGI) <https://www.inegi.org.mx/>
- Cuba – not sure. Are they a Member State?

Typically the names of oceans and seas in international waters are managed by the International Hydrographic Organisation (IHO), who have stringent processes and standards that must be followed before names of this scale, which border multiple countries, are agreed to be changed. International maritime navigation relies on authoritative names to eliminate ambiguity and confusion, and ultimately avoid loss of life.

Should the US President proceed without following a proper consultative process through the USBGN, Mexico and/or the IHO, then the international community would likely continue using Gulf of Mexico.

Bit of a tricky one. I have cc'd our Comms person, Charlotte Jones, and our National Hydrographer, Adam Greenland, who may wish to offer some further insights/advice. I know you will have a deadline, so hopefully we can respond in a timely manner.

Kia ora

Wendy Shaw

Hēkeretari/Secretary

Ngā Pou Taunaha o Aotearoa New Zealand Geographic Board

Office of the Surveyor-General

wshaw@linz.govt.nz or wshaw@toitutewhenua.govt.nz | DDI 04 460 0581 | MOB 027 480 7082

Wellington Office,

Level 7, 155 The Terrace,

PO Box 5501, Wellington 6145, New Zealand

www.linz.govt.nz | data.linz.govt.nz



UNCLASSIFIED

From: Cecille Blake <blake1@un.org>
Sent: Friday, 10 January 2025 9:01 a.m.
To: Pierre Jaillard [JAILLARD] <pierre@jaillard.net>; Wendy Shaw <wshaw@linz.govt.nz>; Sungjae Choo [KHU AC] <sjchoo@khu.ac.kr>; Ana Cristina da Rocha Berenger Resende <ana.resende@ibge.gov.br>; mtischler@usgs.gov
Subject: FW: Washington Times reporter inquiry: Gulf of Mexico renaming

Dear Bureau and Michael

Please see below inquiry from the Washington Times.

I would be grateful for your opinion on possible responses.

Kind regards

Cecille

Cecille Blake (Ms.)

Global Geospatial Information Management

Environment Statistics and Geospatial Information Branch

Statistics Division| Department of Economic and Social Affairs

United Nations | 2 UN Plaza |Room DC2-1634

e-mail: blake1@un.org

Web: <http://ggim.un.org> and [UNSD — United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names](#)



UN-GGIM UNGEGN

From: UNGEGN <geoinfo_unsd@un.org>
Sent: Thursday, 09 January, 2025 2:58 PM
To: Cecille Blake <blake1@un.org>
Subject: FW: Washington Times reporter inquiry: Gulf of Mexico renaming

Dear Cecille,

Please see the below email.

Thanks.

Vilma

From: Seth McLaughlin <smclaughlin@washingtontimes.com>
Sent: Thursday, 09 January, 2025 9:58 AM
To: UNGEGN <geoinfo_unsd@un.org>
Subject: Washington Times reporter inquiry: Gulf of Mexico renaming

You don't often get email from smclaughlin@washingtontimes.com. [Learn why this is important](#)
Hello,

Reaching out to get information on what the process would be for the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names if the incoming Trump administration renamed the Gulf of Mexico the Gulf of America- either through federal legislation or federal agencies.

My general question is: What would have to happen for the rest of the world to accept the change?

Please let me know who best to reach out to for a response.

Thanks,

--

Seth McLaughlin

The Washington Times

202 340-4048 (cell)

smclaughlin@washingtontimes.com

Twitter @sethmclaughlin1

The information contained in this electronic transmission is intended for the exclusive use of the individuals to whom it is addressed and may contain information that is privileged and confidential, the disclosure of which is prohibited by law. If the reader of this transmission is not the intended recipient, you are hereby notified that any dissemination, distribution or copying of this communication is strictly prohibited. In addition, any unauthorized copying, disclosure or distribution of the material in this e-mail and any attachments is strictly forbidden.

This message contains information, which may be in confidence and may be subject to legal privilege. If you are not the intended recipient, you must not peruse, use, disseminate, distribute or copy this message. If you have received this message in error, please notify us immediately (Phone 0800 665 463 or customersupport@linz.govt.nz) and destroy the original message. LINZ accepts no responsibility for changes to this email, or for any attachments, after its transmission from LINZ. Thank You.

Esta mensagem é reservada. Sua divulgação, distribuição, reprodução ou qualquer forma de uso é proibida e depende de prévia autorização desta Instituição. O remetente utiliza o correio eletrônico no exercício do seu trabalho ou em razão dele, eximindo esta Instituição de qualquer responsabilidade por utilização indevida. Se você recebeu esta mensagem por engano, favor eliminá-la imediatamente.

This message is reserved. Its disclosure, distribution, reproduction, or any other form of use is prohibited and shall depend upon previous proper authorization. The sender uses electronic mail in the exercise of his/her work or by virtue thereof, and the Institution accepts no liability for its undue use. If you have received this e-mail by mistake, please delete it immediately.

From: Tischler, Michael A
To: Cecille Blake; Sungjae Choo [KHU AC]; Wendy Shaw; Ana Cristina da Rocha Berenger Resende; Adam Greenland
Cc: Pierre Jaillard [JAILLARD]; Charlotte Jones; Mark Iliffe; Stefan Schweinfest
Subject: Re: [EXTERNAL] Re: Washington Times reporter inquiry: Gulf of Mexico renaming
Date: Friday, January 10, 2025 12:29:05 PM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
[image002.png](#)
[image003.png](#)
[image004.png](#)
[image005.png](#)
[image006.png](#)
[image007.png](#)
[image008.png](#)
[image009.png](#)
[image010.png](#)
[image011.png](#)
[image012.png](#)
[image013.png](#)

Hi Cecille,

Thank you!

I should mention for the record that the US BGN has two standing committees...the Domestic Names Committee which maintains official domestic names records in the Geographic Names Information System (GNIS), and the Foreign Names Committee which maintains the Geographic Names Server. The Geographic Names Server (GNS) is the official repository of standard spellings of all foreign geographic names, sanctioned by the United States Board on Geographic Names (BGN).

A name change for a trans-boundary feature would require updating both GNIS and GNS. Of course, that is only the official US name and does not reflect any wider recognition by other countries.

Thanks,
Mike

From: Cecille Blake <blake1@un.org>
Sent: Friday, January 10, 2025 12:21 PM
To: Tischler, Michael A <mtischler@usgs.gov>; Sungjae Choo [KHU AC] <sjchoo@khu.ac.kr>; Wendy Shaw <wshaw@linz.govt.nz>; Ana Cristina da Rocha Berenger Resende <ana.resende@ibge.gov.br>; Adam Greenland <agreenland@linz.govt.nz>
Cc: Pierre Jaillard [JAILLARD] <pierre@jaillard.net>; Charlotte Jones <CJones@linz.govt.nz>; Mark Iliffe <mark.iliffe@un.org>; Stefan Schweinfest <schweinfest@un.org>
Subject: RE: [EXTERNAL] Re: Washington Times reporter inquiry: Gulf of Mexico renaming

Dear Michael

Thank you for your detailed and timely response.

The UNGEGN Bureau will be meeting later today and am sure will decide on the approach to be adopted to the inquiry and others that we may received.

I will let you know the outcome.

Best regards

Cecille

Cecille Blake (Ms.)

Global Geospatial Information Management

Environment Statistics and Geospatial Information Branch

Statistics Division | Department of Economic and Social Affairs

United Nations | 2 UN Plaza | Room DC2-1634

e-mail: blake1@un.org

Web: <http://ggim.un.org> and [UNSD — United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names](http://un.org/ungegn)



UN-GGIM



UNGE GN

From: Tischler, Michael A <mtischler@usgs.gov>

Sent: Friday, 10 January, 2025 8:14 AM

To: Sungjae Choo [KHU AC] <sjchoo@khu.ac.kr>; Cecille Blake <blake1@un.org>; Wendy Shaw <wshaw@linz.govt.nz>; Ana Cristina da Rocha Berenger Resende <ana.resende@ibge.gov.br>; Adam Greenland <agreenland@linz.govt.nz>

Cc: Pierre Jaillard [JAILLARD] <pierre@jaillard.net>; Charlotte Jones <CJones@linz.govt.nz>; Mark Iliffe <mark.iliffe@un.org>; Stefan Schweinfest <schweinfest@un.org>

Subject: Re: [EXTERNAL] Re: Washington Times reporter inquiry: Gulf of Mexico renaming

Good morning,

My apologies for the delay - Federal offices in the US were closed yesterday as a day of mourning for former President Carter.

There are a few things I'd like to mention from the perspective of the US BGN.

1 - My home agency (USGS) has provided guidance that BGN staff (including me) are not to respond at this time to media inquiries. As you might guess, we have received a few questions from high-profile media outlets. But, we are currently not providing a response of any kind.

2 - The process by which the name would be changed in the US depends on the type of action taken to make the renaming official. Of course, by far the most common method to name or rename a geographic feature is a proposal to the BGN, and allow

the deliberative process to run its course. However, The BGN [Policy on Names Considered or Established by Congress or the President](#) notes that "Geographic names and their applications specifically established by an act of Congress or Executive order are legally official, and therefore, are not bound by BGN principles, policies, and procedures." This includes name changes. For any names established by an act of Congress or Executive order (or proclamation), the name is entered into/changed in GNIS once official. Federal data sources are updated from GNIS on their own data refresh cycles.

3 - As of this morning, there is draft legislation to rename the Gulf of Mexico offered in the US House of Representatives ([HR 256](#)). I have attached the text which has been released (I believe on social media) by the sponsor, Rep. Taylor-Greene. If this were to pass into law the name would become official. The BGN would not be involved in the decision-making process and our authoritative database (GNIS) would be updated to reflect the new official name. The draft bill also dictates a schedule for update of Federal mapping products.

4 - As others have stated, I am also unable to offer any additional information on how other national naming authorities would recognize this name change.

Thank you,

Mike

Mike Tischler, Ph.D
Director, National Geospatial Program
Chair, U.S. Board on Geographic Names
U.S. Geological Survey
Department of Interior
o: 703-648-4725
c: 703-344-4348
mtischler@usgs.gov

From: Sungjae Choo <sjchoo@khu.ac.kr>

Sent: Thursday, January 9, 2025 7:12 PM

To: Cecille Blake <blake1@un.org>; Wendy Shaw <wshaw@linz.govt.nz>; Ana Cristina da Rocha Berenger Resende <ana.resende@ibge.gov.br>; Adam Greenland <agreenland@linz.govt.nz>

Cc: Pierre Jaillard [JAILLARD] <pierre@jaillard.net>; Tischler, Michael A <mtischler@usgs.gov>; Charlotte Jones <CJones@linz.govt.nz>; Mark Iliffe <mark.iliffe@un.org>; Stefan Schweinfest <schweinfest@un.org>

Subject: [EXTERNAL] Re: Washington Times reporter inquiry: Gulf of Mexico renaming

This email has been received from outside of DOI - Use caution before clicking on links, opening attachments, or responding.

Dear all,

I agree with Ana that UNGEGN has to reply and do it as simply as possible. This is especially so, considering the political inclination of this media house, the Washington Times.

I am suggesting the following points be included:

- UNGEGN does not deal with individual geographical names.
- Naming authorities of each Member State have their own principles and procedures of geographical naming.
- Naming of water bodies outside of territorial waters is a subject of the International Hydrographic Organization (IHO), which has liaison with UNGEGN.

With best regards,
Sungjae

2025년 1월 10일 (금) 오전 7:55, Adam Greenland <agreenland@linz.govt.nz>님이 작성:

UNCLASSIFIED

Kia ora,

The IHO does not adjudicate on the names of oceans and seas in international waters. What is managed by the IHO on behalf of Member States (MS) is the Naming Standard and the Publication of the names of oceans and seas in international waters.

I agree with Ana email comments. In my opinion, this is a topic that is/has been highly contentious with IHO MS and best to leave well alone.

Ngā mihi

Adam Greenland
National Hydrographer

Location Information

agreenland@linz.govt.nz | **DDI** 04 460 0136 | **MOB** +64 (0)21 243 1577



Wellington Office, Level 7, Radio New Zealand House, 155 The Terrace

PO Box 5501, Wellington 6145, New Zealand

www.linz.govt.nz | data.linz.govt.nz



UNCLASSIFIED

From: Ana Cristina da Rocha Berenger Resende <ana.resende@ibge.gov.br>
Sent: Friday, 10 January 2025 10:58 am
To: Cecille Blake <blake1@un.org>; Wendy Shaw <wshaw@linz.govt.nz>; Pierre Jaillard [JAILLARD] <pierre@jaillard.net>; Sungjae Choo [KHU AC] <sjchoo@khu.ac.kr>; mtischler@usgs.gov
Cc: Charlotte Jones <CJones@linz.govt.nz>; Adam Greenland <agreenland@linz.govt.nz>; Mark Iliffe <mark.iliffe@un.org>; Stefan Schweinfest <schweinfest@un.org>
Subject: Re: Washington Times reporter inquiry: Gulf of Mexico renaming

Hi, everyone!

I think it would be important to answer right away that this is not UNGEGN's role to deal with such things.

I wouldn't know how to answer what they call their "general question": "What would have to happen for the rest of the world to accept the change?". There are issues that are never solved, such as The East Sea/Sea of Japan, and I really don't think this kind of dispute ever has a "solution". And, sincerely, I think the less we say, the better, to avoid further inquiries. So, I would keep our response to the first part of Wendy's suggested response.

Best regards,

Ana

Ana Cristina da Rocha Bérenger Resende

ana.resende@ibge.gov.br
Gerente de Nomes Geográficos
Diretoria de Geociências - IBGE
+55 21 2431-0123 r. 5020
+55 21 99614-2453

De: Cecille Blake <blake1@un.org>
Enviado: Thursday, January 9, 2025 6:35:15 PM
Para: Wendy Shaw <wshaw@linz.govt.nz>; Pierre Jaillard [JAILLARD] <pierre@jaillard.net>; Sungjae Choo [KHU AC] <sjchoo@khu.ac.kr>; Ana Cristina da Rocha Berenger Resende <ana.resende@ibge.gov.br>; mtischler@usgs.gov <mtischler@usgs.gov>
Cc: Charlotte Jones <CJones@linz.govt.nz>; Adam Greenland <agreenland@linz.govt.nz>; Mark Iliffe <mark.iliffe@un.org>; Stefan Schweinfest <schweinfest@un.org>
Assunto: RE: Washington Times reporter inquiry: Gulf of Mexico renaming

[CUIDADO] Este e-mail foi recebido de fora da organização. Por favor, verifique cuidadosamente o

remetente antes de abrir anexos ou clicar em links. Caso tenha dúvidas sobre a confiabilidade da mensagem, não interaja e encaminhe o e-mail para a caixa postal abuse@ibge.gov.br. Sua atenção e colaboração são essenciais para garantir a segurança dos dados do IBGE.

Dear Wendy

Thank you for your prompt response.
Looking forward to receiving the input from other Bureau Members.

Kind regards

Cecille

Cecille Blake (Ms.)
Global Geospatial Information Management
Environment Statistics and Geospatial Information Branch
Statistics Division | Department of Economic and Social Affairs
United Nations | 2 UN Plaza | Room DC2-1634
e-mail: blake1@un.org
Web: <http://ggim.un.org> and [UNSD — United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names](http://un.org/geonames)



UN-GGIM



UNEGN

From: Wendy Shaw <wshaw@linz.govt.nz>
Sent: Thursday, 09 January, 2025 4:15 PM
To: Cecille Blake <blake1@un.org>; Pierre Jaillard [JAILLARD] <pierre@jaillard.net>; Sungjae Choo [KHU AC] <sjchoo@khu.ac.kr>; Ana Cristina da Rocha Berenger Resende <ana.resende@ibge.gov.br>; mtischler@usgs.gov,
Cc: Charlotte Jones <CJones@linz.govt.nz>; Adam Greenland <agreenland@linz.govt.nz>
Subject: RE: Washington Times reporter inquiry: Gulf of Mexico renaming

UNCLASSIFIED

Thanks Cecille – UNEG should not respond. Only the US Board on Geographical Names, Mexico's INEGA and/or IHO should respond.

However, if UNEG must respond, we could say something like this:

'The role of UNEG is to provide guidance to Member States on good toponymic practice. UNEG does not adjudicate on geographical name proposals. Rather, national naming authorities have the responsibility for processing and deciding on geographical name proposals:

- United States Board on Geographical Names. Contact the USBGN member:

Michael Tischler mtischler@usgs.gov . [Also maybe Betsy Kanalley bkanalley@fs.fed.us who is an UNGEGN member, as well as on the USBGN Board.]

- INEGA for Mexico. Contact Mr Francisco Javier Medina Parra, Deputy Director General for Basic Geographic Information, National Institute of Statistics and Geography (INEGI) <https://www.inegi.org.mx/>
- Cuba – not sure. Are they a Member State?

Typically the names of oceans and seas in international waters are managed by the International Hydrographic Organisation (IHO), who have stringent processes and standards that must be followed before names of this scale, which border multiple countries, are agreed to be changed. International maritime navigation relies on authoritative names to eliminate ambiguity and confusion, and ultimately avoid loss of life.

Should the US President proceed without following a proper consultative process through the USBGN, Mexico and/or the IHO, then the international community would likely continue using Gulf of Mexico.

Bit of a tricky one. I have cc'd our Comms person, Charlotte Jones, and our National Hydrographer, Adam Greenland, who may wish to offer some further insights/advice. I know you will have a deadline, so hopefully we can respond in a timely manner.

Kia ora

Wendy Shaw

Hēkeretari/Secretary

Ngā Pou Taunaha o Aotearoa New Zealand Geographic Board

Office of the Surveyor-General

wshaw@linz.govt.nz or wshaw@toitutewhenua.govt.nz | DDI 04 460 0581 | MOB 027 480 7082

Wellington Office,

Level 7, 155 The Terrace,

PO Box 5501, Wellington 6145, New Zealand

www.linz.govt.nz | data.linz.govt.nz



UNCLASSIFIED

From: Cecille Blake <blake1@un.org>

Sent: Friday, 10 January 2025 9:01 a.m.

To: Pierre Jaillard [JAILLARD] <pierre@jaillard.net>; Wendy Shaw <wshaw@linz.govt.nz>; Sungjae

Choo [KHU AC] <sjchoo@khu.ac.kr>; Ana Cristina da Rocha Berenger Resende
<ana.resende@ibge.gov.br>; mtischler@usgs.gov

Subject: FW: Washington Times reporter inquiry: Gulf of Mexico renaming

Dear Bureau and Michael

Please see below inquiry from the Washington Times.
I would be grateful for your opinion on possible responses.

Kind regards

Cecille

Cecille Blake (Ms.)

Global Geospatial Information Management

Environment Statistics and Geospatial Information Branch

Statistics Division | Department of Economic and Social Affairs

United Nations | 2 UN Plaza | Room DC2-1634

e-mail: blake1@un.org

Web: <http://ggim.un.org> and [UNSD — United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names](#)



UN-GGIM



UNEGN

From: UNEG N <geoinfo_unsd@un.org>

Sent: Thursday, 09 January, 2025 2:58 PM

To: Cecille Blake <blake1@un.org>

Subject: FW: Washington Times reporter inquiry: Gulf of Mexico renaming

Dear Cecille,

Please see the below email.

Thanks.

Vilma

From: Seth McLaughlin <smclaughlin@washingtontimes.com>

Sent: Thursday, 09 January, 2025 9:58 AM

To: UNEG N <geoinfo_unsd@un.org>

Subject: Washington Times reporter inquiry: Gulf of Mexico renaming

You don't often get email from smclaughlin@washingtontimes.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Hello,

Reaching out to get information on what the process would be for the United Nations Group

of Experts on Geographical Names if the incoming Trump administration renamed the Gulf of Mexico the Gulf of America- either through federal legislation or federal agencies.

My general question is: What would have to happen for the rest of the world to accept the change?

Please let me know who best to reach out to for a response.

Thanks,

--

Seth McLaughlin
The Washington Times
202 340-4048 (cell)
smclaughlin@washingtontimes.com
Twitter @sethmclaughlin1

The information contained in this electronic transmission is intended for the exclusive use of the individuals to whom it is addressed and may contain information that is privileged and confidential, the disclosure of which is prohibited by law. If the reader of this transmission is not the intended recipient, you are hereby notified that any dissemination, distribution or copying of this communication is strictly prohibited. In addition, any unauthorized copying, disclosure or distribution of the material in this e-mail and any attachments is strictly forbidden.

This message contains information, which may be in confidence and may be subject to legal privilege. If you are not the intended recipient, you must not peruse, use, disseminate, distribute or copy this message. If you have received this message in error, please notify us immediately (Phone 0800 665 463 or customersupport@linz.govt.nz) and destroy the original message. LINZ accepts no responsibility for changes to this email, or for any attachments, after its transmission from LINZ. Thank You.

Esta mensagem é reservada. Sua divulgação, distribuição, reprodução ou qualquer forma de uso é proibida e depende de prévia autorização desta Instituição. O remetente utiliza o correio eletrônico no exercício do seu trabalho ou em razão dele, eximindo esta Instituição de qualquer responsabilidade por utilização indevida. Se você recebeu esta mensagem por engano, favor eliminá-la imediatamente.

This message is reserved. Its disclosure, distribution, reproduction, or any other form of use is prohibited and shall depend upon previous proper authorization. The sender uses electronic mail in the exercise of his/her work or by virtue thereof, and the Institution accepts no liability for its undue use. If you have received this e-mail by mistake, please delete it immediately.

From: (b) (3) (B), (b) (6) NGA-SFGGW USA CIV
To: (b) (6) Tischler, Michael A; (b) (3) (B), (b) (6) NGA-SFGG USA CIV; Zahniser, Shellie R; Tim St. Onge
Subject: RE: [EXTERNAL] Re: Washington Times reporter inquiry: Gulf of Mexico renaming
Date: Friday, January 10, 2025 8:48:02 AM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
[image002.png](#)
[image003.png](#)
[image004.png](#)
[image005.png](#)
[image006.png](#)
[image007.png](#)
[image008.png](#)
[image009.png](#)
[image010.png](#)
[image011.png](#)
[image012.png](#)
[image013.png](#)

Classification: UNCLASSIFIED

Good morning Mike (+ team) ,

Thank you for the opportunity to review. I will do so shortly and respond quickly should I have any suggestions. I do agree with (b) (6); we need to clearly distinguish between the GNS and GNIS. While both databases include the Gulf of Mexico, it is limited to Louisiana in the GNIS, whereas the GNS categorizes it as an international body of water. This distinction does/could delineate a different course of action for the way the name(s) are reflected in the GNS, specifically if this gets into 'disputed territory' issues. Clarifying this distinction in advance may help prevent future issues or questions.

Just my initial – very under caffeinated – thoughts.

V/r,

(b) (3) (B), (b) (6)

(b) (6)

National Geospatial Intelligence Agency

(U) (b) (3) (B), (b) (6) Office
(U) (b) (3) (B), (b) (6) Telework

From: (b) (6) <(b) (6)@state.gov>
Sent: Friday, January 10, 2025 7:40 AM
To: Tischler, Michael [I-Net] <mtischler@usgs.gov>; (b) (3) (B), (b) (6) NGA-SFGG USA CIV
<(b) (3) (B), (b) (6)>; (b) (3) (B), (b) (6) NGA-SFGGW USA CIV
<(b) (3) (B), (b) (6)>; Zahniser, Shellie R <srzahniser@usgs.gov>; Tim St. Onge
<tong@loc.gov>

Subject: [Non-DoD Source] RE: [EXTERNAL] Re: Washington Times reporter inquiry: Gulf of Mexico

renaming

Hi Mike,

Thank you for looping us in and providing us an opportunity to review. When do you need comments by?

Not sure how others feel, but I'm of the mind we need to distinguish between/identify both the GNS and GNIS. Gulf of Mexico is in both databases, but in the GNIS it's contained to Louisiana whereas in the GNS, it's an international body of water.

(b) (6)

From: Tischler, Michael A <mtischler@usgs.gov>

Sent: Friday, January 10, 2025 8:24 AM

To: (b) (3) (B), (b) (6) NGA-SF USA CIV <(b) (3) (B), (b) (6)>; (b) (3) (B), (b) (6) NGA-SFGGW USA CIV <(b) (3) (B), (b) (6)>; Zahniser, Shellie R <srzahniser@usgs.gov>; Tim St. Onge <tong@loc.gov>; (b) (6) <(b) (6)@state.gov>

Subject: Fw: [EXTERNAL] Re: Washington Times reporter inquiry: Gulf of Mexico renaming

EXCOM,

I wanted to share the inquiry received by UNGEGN and my response. Please let me know if any revisions/edits are needed.

Thanks,
m

From: Tischler, Michael A <mtischler@usgs.gov>

Sent: Friday, January 10, 2025 8:13 AM

To: Sungjae Choo <sjchoo@khu.ac.kr>; Cecille Blake <blake1@un.org>; Wendy Shaw <wshaw@linz.govt.nz>; Ana Cristina da Rocha Berenger Resende <ana.resende@ibge.gov.br>; Adam Greenland <agreenland@linz.govt.nz>

Cc: Pierre Jaillard [JAILLARD] <pierre@jaillard.net>; Charlotte Jones <CJones@linz.govt.nz>; Mark Illiffe <mark.illiffe@un.org>; Stefan Schweinfest <schweinfest@un.org>

Subject: Re: [EXTERNAL] Re: Washington Times reporter inquiry: Gulf of Mexico renaming

Good morning,

My apologies for the delay - Federal offices in the US were closed yesterday as a day of mourning for former President Carter.

There are a few things I'd like to mention from the perspective of the US BGN.

1 - My home agency (USGS) has provided guidance that BGN staff (including me) are not to respond at this time to media inquiries. As you might guess, we have

received a few questions from high-profile media outlets. But, we are currently not providing a response of any kind.

2 - The process by which the name would be changed in the US depends on the type of action taken to make the renaming official. Of course, by far the most common method to name or rename a geographic feature is a proposal to the BGN, and allow the deliberative process to run its course. However, The BGN [Policy on Names Considered or Established by Congress or the President](#) notes that "Geographic names and their applications specifically established by an act of Congress or Executive order are legally official, and therefore, are not bound by BGN principles, policies, and procedures." This includes name changes. For any names established by an act of Congress or Executive order (or proclamation), the name is entered into/changed in GNIS once official. Federal data sources are updated from GNIS on their own data refresh cycles.

3 - As of this morning, there is draft legislation to rename the Gulf of Mexico offered in the US House of Representatives ([HR 256](#)). I have attached the text which has been released (I believe on social media) by the sponsor, Rep. Taylor-Greene. If this were to pass into law the name would become official. The BGN would not be involved in the decision-making process and our authoritative database (GNIS) would be updated to reflect the new official name. The draft bill also dictates a schedule for update of Federal mapping products.

4 - As others have stated, I am also unable to offer any additional information on how other national naming authorities would recognize this name change.

Thank you,

Mike

Mike Tischler, Ph.D
Director, National Geospatial Program
Chair, U.S. Board on Geographic Names
U.S. Geological Survey
Department of Interior
o: 703-648-4725
c: 703-344-4348
mtischler@usgs.gov

From: Sungjae Choo <sjchoo@khu.ac.kr>

Sent: Thursday, January 9, 2025 7:12 PM

To: Cecille Blake <blake1@un.org>; Wendy Shaw <wshaw@linz.govt.nz>; Ana Cristina da Rocha Berenger Resende <ana.resende@ibge.gov.br>; Adam Greenland <agreenland@linz.govt.nz>

Cc: Pierre Jaillard [JAILLARD] <pierre@jaillard.net>; Tischler, Michael A <mtischler@usgs.gov>; Charlotte Jones <CJones@linz.govt.nz>; Mark Iliffe <mark.iliffe@un.org>; Stefan Schweinfest

<schweinfest@un.org>

Subject: [EXTERNAL] Re: Washington Times reporter inquiry: Gulf of Mexico renaming

This email has been received from outside of DOI - Use caution before clicking on links, opening attachments, or responding.

Dear all,

I agree with Ana that UNGEGN has to reply and do it as simply as possible. This is especially so, considering the political inclination of this media house, the Washington Times.

I am suggesting the following points be included:

- UNGEGN does not deal with individual geographical names.
- Naming authorities of each Member State have their own principles and procedures of geographical naming.
- Naming of water bodies outside of territorial waters is a subject of the International Hydrographic Organization (IHO), which has liaison with UNGEGN.

With best regards,
Sungjae

2025년 1월 10일 (금) 오전 7:55, Adam Greenland <agreenland@linz.govt.nz>님이 작성:

UNCLASSIFIED

Kia ora,

The IHO does not adjudicate on the names of oceans and seas in international waters.

What is managed by the IHO on behalf of Member States (MS) is the Naming Standard and the Publication of the names of oceans and seas in international waters.

I agree with Ana email comments. In my opinion, this is a topic that is/has been highly contentious with IHO MS and best to leave well alone.

Ngā mihi

Adam Greenland
National Hydrographer

Location Information

agreenland@linz.govt.nz | **DDI** 04 460 0136 | **MOB** +64 (0)21 243 1577

Wellington Office, Level 7, Radio New Zealand House, 155 The Terrace

PO Box 5501, Wellington 6145, New Zealand

www.linz.govt.nz | data.linz.govt.nz



UNCLASSIFIED

From: Ana Cristina da Rocha Berenger Resende <ana.resende@ibge.gov.br>

Sent: Friday, 10 January 2025 10:58 am

To: Cecille Blake <blake1@un.org>; Wendy Shaw <wshaw@linz.govt.nz>; Pierre Jaillard [JAILLARD] <pierre@jaillard.net>; Sungjae Choo [KHU AC] <sjchoo@khu.ac.kr>; mtischler@usgs.gov

Cc: Charlotte Jones <CJones@linz.govt.nz>; Adam Greenland <agreenland@linz.govt.nz>; Mark Iliffe <mark.iliffe@un.org>; Stefan Schweinfest <schweinfest@un.org>

Subject: Re: Washington Times reporter inquiry: Gulf of Mexico renaming

Hi, everyone!

I think it would be important to answer right away that this is not UNGEGN's role to deal with such things.

I wouldn't know how to answer what they call their "general question": "What would have to happen for the rest of the world to accept the change?". There are issues that are never solved, such as The East Sea/Sea of Japan, and I really don't think this kind of dispute ever has a "solution". And, sincerely, I think the less we say, the better, to avoid further inquiries. So, I would keep our response to the first part of Wendy's suggested response.

Best regards,

Ana

Ana Cristina da Rocha Bérenger Resende

ana.resende@ibge.gov.br

Gerente de Nomes Geográficos

Diretoria de Geociências - IBGE

+55 21 2431-0123 r. 5020

+55 21 99614-2453

De: Cecille Blake <blake1@un.org>

Enviado: Thursday, January 9, 2025 6:35:15 PM

Para: Wendy Shaw <wshaw@linz.govt.nz>; Pierre Jaillard [JAILLARD] <pierre@jaillard.net>; Sungjae Choo [KHU AC] <sjchoo@khu.ac.kr>; Ana Cristina da Rocha Berenger Resende <ana.resende@ibge.gov.br>; mtischler@usgs.gov <mtischler@usgs.gov>

Cc: Charlotte Jones <CJones@linz.govt.nz>; Adam Greenland <agreenland@linz.govt.nz>; Mark Iliffe <mark.iliffe@un.org>; Stefan Schweinfest <schweinfest@un.org>

Assunto: RE: Washington Times reporter inquiry: Gulf of Mexico renaming

[CUIDADO] Este e-mail foi recebido de fora da organização. Por favor, verifique cuidadosamente o remetente antes de abrir anexos ou clicar em links. Caso tenha dúvidas sobre a confiabilidade da mensagem, não interaja e encaminhe o e-mail para a caixa postal abuse@ibge.gov.br. Sua atenção e colaboração são essenciais para garantir a segurança dos dados do IBGE.

Dear Wendy

Thank you for your prompt response.

Looking forward to receiving the input from other Bureau Members.

Kind regards

Cecille

Cecille Blake (Ms.)

Global Geospatial Information Management

Environment Statistics and Geospatial Information Branch

Statistics Division | Department of Economic and Social Affairs

United Nations | 2 UN Plaza | Room DC2-1634

e-mail: blake1@un.org

Web: <http://ggim.un.org> and [UNSD — United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names](#).



UN-GGIM UNGEGN

From: Wendy Shaw <wshaw@linz.govt.nz>

Sent: Thursday, 09 January, 2025 4:15 PM

To: Cecille Blake <blake1@un.org>; Pierre Jaillard [JAILLARD] <pierre@jaillard.net>; Sungjae Choo

[KHU AC] <sjchoo@khu.ac.kr>; Ana Cristina da Rocha Berenger Resende

<ana.resende@ibge.gov.br>; mtischler@usgs.gov

Cc: Charlotte Jones <CJones@linz.govt.nz>; Adam Greenland <agreenland@linz.govt.nz>

Subject: RE: Washington Times reporter inquiry: Gulf of Mexico renaming

UNCLASSIFIED

Thanks Cecille – UNGEGN should not respond. Only the US Board on Geographical Names, Mexico's INEGA and/or IHO should respond.

However, if UNGEGN must respond, we could say something like this:

'The role of UNGEGN is to provide guidance to Member States on good toponymic practice. UNGEGN does not adjudicate on geographical name proposals. Rather, national naming authorities have the responsibility for processing and deciding on geographical name proposals:

- United States Board on Geographical Names. Contact the USBGN member: Michael Tischler mtischler@usgs.gov . [Also maybe Betsy Kanalley bkanalley@fs.fed.us who is an UNGEGN member, as well as on the USBGN Board.]
- INEGA for Mexico. Contact Mr Francisco Javier Medina Parra, Deputy Director General for Basic Geographic Information, National Institute of Statistics and Geography (INEGI) <https://www.inegi.org.mx/>
- Cuba – not sure. Are they a Member State?

Typically the names of oceans and seas in international waters are managed by the International Hydrographic Organisation (IHO), who have stringent processes and standards that must be followed before names of this scale, which border multiple countries, are agreed to be changed. International maritime navigation relies on authoritative names to eliminate ambiguity and confusion, and ultimately avoid loss of life.

Should the US President proceed without following a proper consultative process through the USBGN, Mexico and/or the IHO, then the international community would likely continue using Gulf of Mexico.

Bit of a tricky one. I have cc'd our Comms person, Charlotte Jones, and our National Hydrographer, Adam Greenland, who may wish to offer some further insights/advice. I know you will have a deadline, so hopefully we can respond in a timely manner.

Kia ora

Wendy Shaw

Hēkeretari/Secretary

Ngā Pou Taunaha o Aotearoa New Zealand Geographic Board

Office of the Surveyor-General

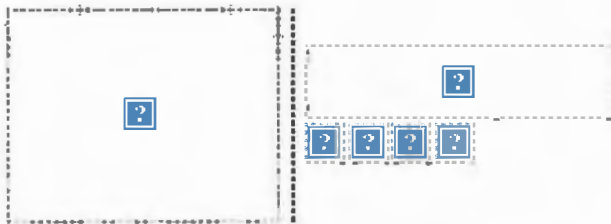
wshaw@linz.govt.nz or wshaw@tpitutewhenua.govt.nz | DDI 04 460 0581 | MOB 027 480 7082

Wellington Office,

Level 7, 155 The Terrace,

PO Box 5501, Wellington 6145, New Zealand

www.linz.govt.nz | data.linz.govt.nz



UNCLASSIFIED

From: Cecille Blake <blake1@un.org>

Sent: Friday, 10 January 2025 9:01 a.m.

To: Pierre Jaillard [JAILLARD] <pierre@jaillard.net>; Wendy Shaw <wshaw@linz.govt.nz>; Sungjae Choo [KHU AC] <sjchoo@khu.ac.kr>; Ana Cristina da Rocha Berenger Resende <ana.resende@ibge.gov.br>; mtischler@usgs.gov

Subject: FW: Washington Times reporter inquiry: Gulf of Mexico renaming

Dear Bureau and Michael

Please see below inquiry from the Washington Times.

I would be grateful for your opinion on possible responses.

Kind regards

Cecille

Cecille Blake (Ms.)

Global Geospatial Information Management

Environment Statistics and Geospatial Information Branch

Statistics Division | Department of Economic and Social Affairs

United Nations | 2 UN Plaza | Room DC2-1634

e-mail: blake1@un.org

Web: <http://ggim.un.org> and [UNSD — United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names](http://un.org/unsgn/)



UN-GGIM UNGEGN

From: UNGEGN <geoinfo_unsd@un.org>

Sent: Thursday, 09 January, 2025 2:58 PM

To: Cecille Blake <blake1@un.org>

Subject: FW: Washington Times reporter inquiry: Gulf of Mexico renaming

Dear Cecille,

Please see the below email.

Thanks.

Vilma

From: Seth McLaughlin <smclaughlin@washingtontimes.com>
Sent: Thursday, 09 January, 2025 9:58 AM
To: UNGEGN <geoinfo_unsd@un.org>
Subject: Washington Times reporter inquiry: Gulf of Mexico renaming

You don't often get email from smclaughlin@washingtontimes.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Hello,

Reaching out to get information on what the process would be for the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names if the incoming Trump administration renamed the Gulf of Mexico the Gulf of America- either through federal legislation or federal agencies.

My general question is: What would have to happen for the rest of the world to accept the change?

Please let me know who best to reach out to for a response.

Thanks,

--

Seth McLaughlin

The Washington Times

202 340-4048 (cell)

smclaughlin@washingtontimes.com

Twitter @sethmclaughlin1

The information contained in this electronic transmission is intended for the exclusive use of the individuals to whom it is addressed and may contain information that is privileged and confidential, the disclosure of which is prohibited by law. If the reader of this transmission is not the intended recipient, you are hereby notified that any dissemination, distribution or copying of this communication is strictly prohibited. In addition, any unauthorized copying, disclosure or distribution of the material in this e-mail and any attachments is strictly forbidden.

This message contains information, which may be in confidence and may be subject to legal privilege. If you are not the intended recipient, you must not peruse, use, disseminate, distribute or copy this message. If you have received this message in error, please notify us immediately (Phone 0800 665 463 or customersupport@linz.govt.nz) and destroy the original message. LINZ accepts no responsibility for changes to this email, or for any attachments, after its transmission from LINZ. Thank You.

Esta mensagem é reservada. Sua divulgação, distribuição, reprodução ou qualquer forma de uso é proibida e depende de prévia autorização desta Instituição. O remetente utiliza o correio eletrônico no exercício do seu trabalho ou em razão dele, eximindo esta Instituição de qualquer responsabilidade por utilização indevida. Se você recebeu esta mensagem por engano, favor eliminá-la imediatamente.

This message is reserved. Its disclosure, distribution, reproduction, or any other form of use is prohibited and shall depend upon previous proper authorization. The sender uses electronic mail in the exercise of his/her work or by virtue thereof, and the Institution accepts no liability for its undue use. If you have received this e-mail by mistake, please delete it immediately.

=====
Classification: UNCLASSIFIED

From: Anderson, Gina R
To: BGNEXEC, GS-N-MAC
Cc: Zahniser, Shellie R; Tischler, Michael A; St. Onge, Tim
Subject: Re: [EXTERNAL] Gulf of AMERICA
Date: Tuesday, January 14, 2025 6:56:14 AM

Thanks, Matt.

Gina Anderson

Public Affairs Specialist | Core Science Systems Mission Area
U.S. Geological Survey
Office of Communications and Publishing
405-509-3524 | granderson@usgs.gov

From: BGNEXEC, GS-N-MAC <bgnexec@usgs.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, January 14, 2025 8:45 AM
To: Anderson, Gina R <granderson@usgs.gov>
Cc: Zahniser, Shellie R <srzahniser@usgs.gov>; Tischler, Michael A <mtischler@usgs.gov>; St. Onge, Tim <tong@loc.gov>
Subject: Fw: [EXTERNAL] Gulf of AMERICA

Hi Gina,

FYI, another public comment on the Gulf of Mexico name.

As before, we will not respond.

Matt

From: Harith <(b) (6)@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, January 13, 2025 7:17 PM
To: BGNEXEC, GS-N-MAC <bgnexec@usgs.gov>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Gulf of AMERICA

This email has been received from outside of DOI - Use caution before clicking on links, opening attachments, or responding.

I think you should call the Gulf of “Mexico” to Gulf of America because unlike “Mexico” America can apply both to the US and Mexico making it much more fair.

From: (b) (3) (B), (b) (6) [NGA-SFGGW USA CIV](#)
To: [Tischler, Michael A](#); [Zahniser, Shellie R](#); (b) (6) [@state.gov](#); (b) (3) (B), (b) (6) [NGA-SFGG USA CIV](#); ["tong@loc.gov"](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] January EXCOM [Minutes Enclosed]
Date: Wednesday, January 15, 2025 12:02:30 PM
Attachments: [EXTERNAL January EXCOM Minutes Enclosed.msg](#)

This email has been received from outside of DOI - Use caution before clicking on links, opening attachments, or responding.

U.S. Board on Geographic Names
Executive Committee Meeting
Virtual Meeting
Tuesday, January 14, 2025, 10:30 a.m. EST

Attendees

(b) (6), Department of State
Timothy ST. ONGE, Library of Congress
Michael TISCHLER, Department of the Interior/U.S. Geological Survey (BGN Chair)
(b) (3) (B), (b) (6), Department of Defense (Chair)
Shellie ZAHNISER, Executive Secretary, U.S. Board on Geographic Names for Domestic Names

1. Opening

(b) (3) (B), (b) (6) opened EXCOM Meeting of the U.S. Board on Geographic Names (BGN) at 10:30 a.m. EST.

2. Communications

2.1 BGN Chairman's Report (TISCHLER)

TISCHLER expressed his gratitude for the prompt response and understanding regarding H.R. 276, which involves the renaming of the Gulf of Mexico.

TISCHLER inquired about the status of the BGN Communications Chair and the response received. The Executive Committee discussed the status of nominating a new member for the position of BGN Communications Chair. (b) (5) DPP

(b) (5) DPP

The Executive Committee discussed RUNYON's departure and the resulting significant gap in the workforce. (b) (5) DPP

2.2 BGN Vice-Chair's Report (b) (3) (B), (b) (6))

(b) (5) DPP

(b) (3) (B), (b) (6) gave an update to the current FNC staffing situation following changes that occurred prior to the BGN/PCGN Conference in November. (b) (3) (B), (b) (6) has been selected to fulfill

the role of FNC Assistant. TBD on the final date and tempo/capability assessment as things transition.

3. Executive Discussions

Domestic Names Committee (ZAHNISER)

BGN Annual Report

ZAHNISER provided a status update on the BGN Annual Reports, which have not been produced since FY2021. She emphasized the need for (b) (3) (B), (b) (5) to contribute input on the UNGEGN US/CAN Division. ZAHNISER also mentioned that the 24 wrap-up will serve as the US country report for UNGEGN.

(b) (3) (B), (b) (6) offered to notify (b) (3) (B), (b) (6).

Solicitor Guidance Discussion

(b) (5) ACP

Agency Appointment Letters

(b) (5) DPP

(b) (5) DPP

Congressional Bill H.R. 276 Status

The Executive Committee discussed the status of Congressional Bill H.R. 276, noting that Representative Greene officially submitted the document. ZAHNISER reiterated previous guidance to refrain from responding to any inquiries. TISCHLER raised concerns about the need for consistency and awareness among agencies, emphasizing the importance of collaborating on a unified response message should the need arise. He noted documentation stating the BGN Chair would be held responsible, with a 180-day deadline for completion.

4. Other Business

4.1 Advisory Committees

4.1.i. Advisory Committee on Extra- Terrestrial Features

(b) (5) DPP

5. Other Business

(b) (6) noted a potential conflict for the January quarterly full board meeting of the US Board on Geographic Names, as it follows the US Presidential inauguration. The Executive Committee agreed to postpone the meeting due to the anticipated impacts.

TISCHLER offered to update the status of Advisory Committee 3405.

ZAHNISER raised the issue of scheduling a planning meeting for the upcoming review sessions of the DNC Principles, Policies, and Procedures working group. The Executive Committee agreed to set the meeting for February 4, 2025, at 1:00 p.m. EST.

6. Closing

(b) (3), (b) (5), (b) (6) adjourned the meeting at 12:32 a.m. EST.

7. Next Meeting

The next Executive Committee Meeting is expected to take place 2-3 weeks prior to the next Full Board quarterly meeting, scheduled for April 2025.

From: [Zahniser, Shellie R](#)
To: [Tischler, Michael A](#)
Subject: RE: BGN issue paper needed for transition
Date: Friday, January 17, 2025 2:04:00 PM
Attachments: [Guidance Issue Paper BGN.docx](#)

Mike,

Attached is the first of 2 issue papers. This one is a general BGN paper. My intent is to get a second paper to you that lays out Presidential and Congressional name designations.

Shellie Zahniser, Ph.D.
BGN Executive Secretary
Domestic Names Committee
Honolulu, HI

From: Tischler, Michael A <mtischler@usgs.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, January 8, 2025 9:18 AM
To: Zahniser, Shellie R <srzahniser@usgs.gov>
Subject: Fw: BGN issue paper needed for transition

Hi Shellie,

Can you please take the first shot at a draft? This should be pretty straightforward I would think...just borrowing language from our PPP.

Thanks,
m

From: Jones, Leslie W <ljones@usgs.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, January 8, 2025 2:13 PM
To: Tischler, Michael A <mtischler@usgs.gov>
Cc: Lacey, Jennifer A <jlacey@usgs.gov>
Subject: BGN issue paper needed for transition

Hi Mike,

Given the Gulf of Mexico and the Mt. Denali name changes being proposed by the new administration, we think it would be helpful to have an issue paper for our transition library that describes the BGN, its role, what is covered and what is not, and the process for renaming geographic features. I believe that if these proposed changes are done via an EO, SO, or legislation, that the BGN is not likely to be involved.

I've attached the template, and I am assuming you have materials that can be copy/pasted into this format.

Thanks very much,

Leslie

Leslie W. Jones (she/her)

Chief of Staff

U.S. Geological Survey

12201 Sunrise Valley Drive, MS101

Reston, VA 20192

703-969-4158 (cell) ljones@usgs.gov

ISSUE: [U.S. BOARD ON GEOGRAPHIC NAMES]

I. KEY POINTS

The BGN, conjointly with the Secretary of the Interior, is directed to establish and maintain uniform geographic name usage throughout the Federal Government, including solving name discrepancies, approving new names, validating and recording existing names, and promulgating all official names.

The BGN comprises representatives of Federal agencies concerned with geographic information, population, ecology, and management of public lands.

The U.S. Board on Geographic Names follows a set of principles, policies, and procedures approved by the Secretary of the Interior with reference to both domestic and foreign geographic names; and to decide the standard names, orthographies, applications, and their promulgation for official use.

The Geographic Names Information System (GNIS) was established and is maintained by the U.S. Geological Survey in cooperation with the U.S. Board on Geographic Names. It represents the Federal Government's only official repository for identifying official placenames. Its purpose is to have a single efficient source of official placenames for use by all federal agencies so they don't need to maintain their own data sources.

II. OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

The BGN is integral in strengthening and maintaining Tribal relations and developing collaborative opportunities that preserve the history and diverse cultures of Tribes. These activities include Tribal consultation, pronunciation of Tribal geographic names for the public, engaging and requesting input on geographic naming proposals, and attending Tribal Historic Preservation Officer meetings.

The BGN offers the public a way to participate in the Federal geographic naming process. With respect to the Domestic Naming Committee, there are currently no limitations on who can participate in proposing new names, and name changes in the U.S.; something that can be both an opportunity, and a challenge and will require additional considerations as policies and procedures are updated. However, the Foreign Names Committee follows much stricter guidelines.

With the accessibility to the BGN via the internet comes greater visibility to a larger audience. Recently, the BGN has been involved with many high-profile cases that has increased the number of media inquiries, Congressional requests, and Freedom of Information Act requests, and inquiries from the public. With minimal staff and greater visibility, the ability to maintain operational tempo has been degraded.

The current design of GNIS does not meet the needs of agencies for a single efficient source of official placenames, requiring agencies to maintain their own data sources.

In addition to GNIS, the Geographic Names Server (GNS) is the central database for foreign geographic names approved for use on Federal products.

The BGN DNC mission is funded through Congressional appropriations allocated to the USGS, which is primarily used maintain GNIS. The annual appropriation is roughly \$900K; this funding supports the Executive Secretary of the Domestic Names Committee, 2 Federal staff, 1 contracted staff, and multiple technical personnel who maintain the GNIS database. Board members are not funded for their service to the BGN.

III. BACKGROUND

The U.S. Board on Geographic Names (BGN) is a Federal body created in 1890 and established in its present form by Public Law in 1947 to maintain uniform geographic name usage throughout the Federal Government.

By law, the BGN is responsible for promulgating all geographic names except those applying to offices or establishments of Federal agencies (Pub. L. 80–242, sec. 1 and 7; 43 U.S.C. 364 and 364f).

Geographic names and their applications specifically established by an act of Congress, Executive order, Treaty, or Federal proclamation are official by law. This does not apply to geographic names used incidentally in the language of documents intended for other purposes.

If not named by an act of Congress or Executive order, federal land units are named by the administering agency under the authority of an act of Congress.

All proposals are evaluated in cooperation with State geographic names authorities and advisors; Federal, State, and Tribal agencies; local governments; other authoritative bodies; and the public. BGN policies, published usage, and State, Tribal, and local governmental needs, will also be taken into consideration.

Policies include: Policy I. Names Considered or Established by Congress or the President Policy II. Name Changes Policy III. Commemorative Names Policy IV. Wilderness Area Geographic Names Policy V. Derogatory and Offensive Names Policy VI. Diacritics Policy VII. Duplicate and Similar Names Policy VIII. Variant Names Policy IX. Long Names Policy X. Tribal Geographic Names Policy XI. Commercial Names Policy XII. Animal Names

IV. PREPARED BY: Shellie Zahniser, United States Geological Survey, BGN Executive Secretary, 808-260-6150

DATE

10 January, 2025

From: BGNEXEC, GS-N-MAC,
To: Tischler, Michael A; Zahniser, Shellie R
Subject: Fw: [EXTERNAL] ST_GeographicName
Date: Tuesday, January 21, 2025 12:57:13 PM
Attachments: S tate GeographicNameProposed 1.pdf
S tate GeographicNameProposed.pdf

Our question about BGN purview over Executive or Congressional naming is a reality.

Two proposals, only one of which is relevant to the question:

change Denali to "Denali McKinley"

change Flattop (no feature in GNIS and FID in proposal is for Chugach Mountains , perhaps Flattop Mountain, which is in the Chugach Mountains?) to "Mount McKinley"

Matt

From: Shane Carlson (b) (6) @myyahoo.com>
Sent: Tuesday, January 21, 2025 3:42 PM
To: BGNEXEC, GS-N-MAC <bgnexec@usgs.gov>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] ST_GeographicName

This email has been received from outside of DOI - Use caution before clicking on links, opening attachments, or responding.

Petition to change the name of two mountains in Alaska.



THE BOARD ON GEOGRAPHIC NAMES DOMESTIC NAMES COMMITTEE PROPOSAL FORM

This document is for those interested in proposing:

1. **A new name for a currently unnamed geographic feature, or**
2. **A change to an existing name, spelling, or where a name is applied.**

By submitting this form, the proponent acknowledges the BGN Policies and agrees to work with BGN staff regarding their proposal.



Domestic Geographic Name Proposal Form

The U.S. Board on Geographic Names (BGN) is responsible for standardizing the names of geographic features within the 50 States and in other areas under the sovereignty of the United States. The BGN retains the legal authority to promulgate all official names and locations of natural features (e.g. mountains, rivers, valleys), as well as canals, channels, reservoirs, and other select feature types.

This form is to propose a new name or name, spelling, or application change for a geographic feature for Federal use. A proponent should carefully review the proposal prior to submission to ensure that it is consistent with the [BGN policies](#). Please note all fields with a red outline are required prior to submitting this form.

The proponent should also be aware that the entire proposal—including personal identifying information and any associated correspondence—is in the public domain and may be made publicly available at any time.

Submit
Proposal:

1. Download and email this form and supporting documentation to:

BGNEXEC@usgs.gov

OR 2. Send by mail to:

U.S. BGN Executive Secretary, Domestic Names
12201 Sunrise Valley Drive, MS-523
Reston, VA 20192

Contact Us:

BGNEXEC@usgs.gov

i. Save PDF using this format:

'State_GeographicNameProposed'

ii. Email Subject: *ST_GeographicName*

Please note that anything submitted by mail will be delayed.

Naming Basics

Proposed Name:

Mount McKinley

Is this to change an existing name? ☒ Y ☐ N

If yes, please provide the official name and Feature ID as it appears in [the Geographic Names Information System \(GNIS\)](#).

Is this name in current local use? ☒ Y ☐ N

What is the Feature Type?

Please Select One

GNIS Name: Flattop

GNIS ID: 1412401

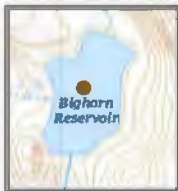
Location Basics



Where is the feature?

Latitude: 61.0895166 (38.94741)

Longitude: -149.6680014 (-77.36839)



For Linear Features (e.g. stream or valley):

Mouth/Confluence

Latitude: (38.94741)

Longitude: (-77.36839)



Source/Headwater

Latitude: (38.94741)

Longitude: (-77.36839)

General Location:

State: Alaska

County:

City/Town/

Township/

Borough:

Public Land Survey System:

Section(s), Township, Range, Meridian

Anchorage Alaska and Chugach State Park

Feature Description

Physical shape, length, width, etc. (Maps can be submitted separately by email)

It is flat on the top but still looks like a mountain. Offers great views of the city and of surrounding areas.

Name Details

Name information:

Please provide relevant information about the proposed name, such as origin, meaning, how long it has been in current use, as well as current or historical significance. Also include why you believe the feature requires a name or name change and why the proposed name is appropriate. Describe any documents that you will be submitting (separately by email) to support your proposal.

Mount McKinley honors former President William McKinley who was our 25th President and honors his legacy. The nearby Mount Daneli was renamed to Daneli in 2015 to reflect the Alaska natives and culture. FlatTop Mountain has no meaning and does not appeal to our younger Generation. Renaming FlatTop to Mount McKinley would most certainly represent our 25th President William McKinley and allow the younger generation to stand on Mount McKinley.

Please provide a list of supporting documentation, including any web links:

Examples: Published sources showing the proposed name or letters of support (local government, historical society, etc.).

As of writing I have none at this time.

Is the name commemorative? Does the name honor or refer to a person or persons? ☒ Y ☐ N

Please note that the BGN will only accept proposals for names that are intended to honor a person or persons deceased at least five years. The BGN will disapprove names that could be construed to honor living persons. The person being honored should have had either (1) some direct or long-term association with the feature, or (2) have made a significant contribution to the area, community, or State in which it is located; or (3) have outstanding national or international recognition. The BGN discourages the use of an individual's full name except to avoid ambiguity.

If yes, please provide the following:

Honoree's Date of Birth: 1/29/1843 Honoree's Date of Death: 9/18/1901

Short biography and significance or association with the geographic feature: *(list any additional honorees here)*

President William McKinley may have at one point visited Anchorage and had the oppertunity to step foot on flattop but President William McKinley never did step foot on Mount Denali. Not many but few presidents have had the oppertunity to step onto flattop. Thus the reason Flattop should be renamed to Mount McKinley.

Is the feature in a Wilderness Area or Wilderness Study Area? ☒ Y ☐ N ☐ Unknown

If yes, please provide your justification for making an exception to the Wilderness Policy:

Please note that the BGN will not approve new names for unnamed features within wilderness areas or wilderness study areas, unless an overriding need can be demonstrated by the proponent.

The Proposed mountain is located in Anchorage Alaska and Chugach State Park.

Is the name you are proposing intended to honor Native Americans, their language, or culture? ☒ Y ☐ N

If yes, to ensure that the proposed name is appropriate, the BGN strongly advises proponents to work with Tribal Leaders, Tribal Historic Preservation Officers, and/or Native American linguists or other expert(s) associated with the Tribe to determine the acceptability of the proposed name and application. Please review [the BGN's Cultural Sensitivity for Native American Names guidance](#).

Proponents should also seek letters of endorsement from the governments (e.g., Tribal Councils) of any affected Tribes. Please indicate below, or in documentation submitted separately (with this proposal or any time after the proposal is submitted), any efforts to solicit Tribal input.

Additional Information +

Is there any local opposition or conflict with the proposed name? ☐ Y ☒ N

If yes, please explain and describe any opposition:

Additional notes, including any Tribal input details

All parties are currently in agreement and wish to see FlatTop Renamed to Mount McKinley as soon as possibal.

Proponent Information

Please provide one form of contact (email preferred):



Proponent's Name: Shane Carlson

Agency or Organization, if applicable:



Email: (b) (6) @myyahoo.com



Mailing Address:



Phone:



Are you completing this form for someone else?

☐ Y ☒ N

If yes, please fill out the following:

Completed by:

Full Name:

Email:

Mailing Address:

Phone:



THE BOARD ON GEOGRAPHIC NAMES DOMESTIC NAMES COMMITTEE PROPOSAL FORM

This document is for those interested in proposing:

1. **A new name for a currently unnamed geographic feature, or**
2. **A change to an existing name, spelling, or where a name is applied.**

By submitting this form, the proponent acknowledges the BGN Policies and agrees to work with BGN staff regarding their proposal.



Domestic Geographic Name Proposal Form

The U.S. Board on Geographic Names (BGN) is responsible for standardizing the names of geographic features within the 50 States and in other areas under the sovereignty of the United States. The BGN retains the legal authority to promulgate all official names and locations of natural features (e.g. mountains, rivers, valleys), as well as canals, channels, reservoirs, and other select feature types.

This form is to propose a new name or name, spelling, or application change for a geographic feature for Federal use. A proponent should carefully review the proposal prior to submission to ensure that it is consistent with the [BGN policies](#). Please note all fields with a red outline are required prior to submitting this form.

The proponent should also be aware that the entire proposal—including personal identifying information and any associated correspondence—is in the public domain and may be made publicly available at any time.

Submit Proposal: 1. Download and email this form and supporting documentation to: BGNEXEC@usgs.gov OR 2. Send by mail to: U.S. BGN Executive Secretary, Domestic Names
12201 Sunrise Valley Drive, MS-523
Reston, VA 20192

Contact Us: BGNEXEC@usgs.gov i. Save PDF using this format: 'State_GeographicNameProposed'
ii. Email Subject: *ST_GeographicName* *Please note that anything submitted by mail will be delayed.*

Naming Basics

Proposed Name:

Denali McKinley

Is this to change an existing name? ☒ Y ☐ N

If yes, please provide the official name and Feature ID as it appears in [the Geographic Names Information System \(GNIS\)](#).

Is this name in current local use? ☒ Y ☐ N

What is the Feature Type?

Please Select One

GNIS Name: Denali

GNIS ID: 1414314

Location Basics



Where is the feature?

Latitude: 63.0691018, 63.081 (38.94741)

Longitude: -151.0062617, -150.999 (-77.36839)



General Location:

State: Alaska

County:

City/Town/
Township/
Borough: Denali Borough

For Linear Features (e.g. stream or valley):

Mouth/Confluence

Latitude: (38.94741)

Longitude: (-77.36839)



Source/Headwater

Latitude: (38.94741)

Longitude: (-77.36839)

Public Land Survey System:

Section(s), Township, Range, Meridian

Denali Borough

Feature Description

Physical shape, length, width, etc. (Maps can be submitted separately by email)

Has an Elevation 20,310 ft. and is the highest point in North America.

Name Details

Name information:

Please provide relevant information about the proposed name, such as origin, meaning, how long it has been in current use, as well as current or historical significance. Also include why you believe the feature requires a name or name change and why the proposed name is appropriate. Describe any documents that you will be submitting (separately by email) to support your proposal.

The name Denali McKinley would honor both the Koyukon people and William McKinley. Denali McKinley has been called and known as Mount McKinley by many and by the many Alaskans, Alaska Natives and The Alaska Board of Geographic Names it has been know as Mount Denali. The Koyukon people who inhabit the area around the mountain have referred to the peak as "Denali" for centuries. In 1896, a gold prospector named it "Mount McKinley" in support of then-presidential candidate William McKinley.

Please provide a list of supporting documentation, including any web links:

Examples: Published sources showing the proposed name or letters of support (local government, historical society, etc.).

<https://www.murkowski.senate.gov/press/release/senator-murkowski-opposes-denali-name-change>

Is the name [commemorative](#)? Does the name honor or refer to a person or persons? ☒ Y ☐ N

Please note that the BGN will only accept proposals for names that are intended to honor a person or persons deceased at least five years. The BGN will disapprove names that could be construed to honor living persons. The person being honored should have had either (1) some direct or long-term association with the feature, or (2) have made a significant contribution to the area, community, or State in which it is located; or (3) have outstanding national or international recognition. The BGN discourages the use of an individual's full name except to avoid ambiguity.

If yes, please provide the following:

Honoree's Date of Birth: 1/29/1842 Honoree's Date of Death: 9/14/1901

Short biography and significance or association with the geographic feature: *(list any additional honorees here)*

The Koyukon people who inhabit the area around the mountain have referred to the peak as "Denali" for centuries. In 1896, a gold prospector named it "Mount McKinley" in support of then-presidential candidate William McKinley. Named in 1896 by William A. Dickey, prospector, "after William McKinley of Ohio, who had been nominated for the Presidency and that was the first news we received on our way out of that wonderful wilderness." McKinley, 1854-1901, was the 25th President of the United States. The first mention of the massif was by Captain George Vancouver, who when seeing it from Cook Inlet in 1794, referred to the "stupendous snow mountains." The Russians descriptively called it "Bolshaya (Bulshaia) Gora" or "big mountain." Alfred Mayo and Arthur Harper, pioneer Alaska traders, after a trip up the Tanana River in 1878, reported, "a great ice mountain to the south," but did not name it. A prospector, Frank Densmore, spoke so enthusiastically after seeing the mountain from Lake Minchumina in 1889, that it was known for years among prospectors as "Densmores Peak." The north summit was first reached on April 3, 1913, by Archdeacon Hudson Stuck, Walter Harper, Robert Tatum, and Harry Karstens (later park superintendent). On August 28, 2015, the name Mount McKinley was changed by Secretarial Order No. 3337 to Denali, the name that had been official in the State of Alaska since 1976.

Is the feature in a Wilderness Area or Wilderness Study Area? ☒ Y ☐ N ☐ Unknown

If yes, please provide your justification for making an exception to [the Wilderness Policy](#):

Please note that the BGN will not approve new names for unnamed features within wilderness areas or wilderness study areas, unless an overriding need can be demonstrated by the proponent.

Denali Borough

Is the name you are proposing intended to honor Native Americans, their language, or culture? ☒ Y ☐ N

If yes, to ensure that the proposed name is appropriate, the BGN strongly advises proponents to work with Tribal Leaders, Tribal Historic Preservation Officers, and/or Native American linguists or other expert(s) associated with the Tribe to determine the acceptability of the proposed name and application. Please review [the BGN's Cultural Sensitivity for Native American Names guidance](#).

Proponents should also seek letters of endorsement from the governments (e.g., Tribal Councils) of any affected Tribes. Please indicate below, or in documentation submitted separately (with this proposal or any time after the proposal is submitted), any efforts to solicit Tribal input.

Additional Information +

Is there any local opposition or conflict with the proposed name? ☐ Y ☒ N


If yes, please explain and describe any opposition:

Additional notes, including any Tribal input details


As noted above the Koyukon people who inhabit the area around the mountain have referred to the peak as "Denali" for centuries. A gold prospector named it "Mount McKinley" in support of then-presidential candidate William McKinley. The name Denali McKinley would honor both the Koyukon people and William McKinley.

Proponent Information

Please provide one form of contact (email preferred):


 Proponent's Name: Shane Carlson

Agency or Organization, if applicable:

 Email: (b) (6) @myyahoo.com

 Mailing Address:

 Phone:

 Are you completing this form for someone else? ☐ Y ☒ N

If yes, please fill out the following:

Completed by:

Full Name:

Email:

Mailing Address:

Phone:

From: BGNEXEC, GS-N-MAC
To: Anderson, Gina R
Subject: Fw: [EXTERNAL] geographic place name changes
Date: Tuesday, January 21, 2025 9:33:19 AM

I don't think this is a media request, but sharing anyway. We won't respond to general non-media inquiries unless instructed.

Matt

From: Lisa Norby(b) (6) @gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, January 21, 2025 12:29 PM
To: BGNEXEC, GS-N-MAC <bgnexec@usgs.gov>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] geographic place name changes

This email has been received from outside of DOI - Use caution before clicking on links, opening attachments, or responding.

Hello,

I am writing to inquire whether place names can be changed by Presidential Executive Order and whether the public can weigh in on these changes. As examples, can Mt Denali be changed back to Mt McKinley and can the Gulf of Mexico be changed to the Gulf of America just because the U.S. President wants to do it?

Thank you in advance for your reply,

Lisa Norby

From: BGNEXEC, GS-N-MAC
To: Anderson, Gina R
Subject: Fw: [EXTERNAL] Gulf of Mexico name
Date: Tuesday, January 21, 2025 6:13:47 AM

Get [Outlook for iOS](#)

From: Sheryl Bowles <(b) (6)@yahoo.com>
Sent: Monday, January 20, 2025 11:45:26 AM
To: BGNEXEC, GS-N-MAC <bgnexec@usgs.gov>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Gulf of Mexico name

This email has been received from outside of DOI - Use caution before clicking on links, opening attachments, or responding.

PLEASE do not change the name of the Gulf of Mexico just because Felon34 Trump wants it changed. He is a toddler with the most stupid ideas. It is embarrassing for the United States.

Sincerely,
Sheryl Miller
Concerned Citizen
Sent from my iPhone

From: BGNEXEC, GS-N-MAC
To: Anderson, Gina R
Subject: Fw: [EXTERNAL] Gulf of Mexico or Americas
Date: Tuesday, January 21, 2025 6:41:23 AM

From: Trevor Pettiford <(b) (6)@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, January 21, 2025 9:40 AM
To: BGNEXEC, GS-N-MAC <bgnexec@usgs.gov>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Gulf of Mexico or Americas

This email has been received from outside of DOI - Use caution before clicking on links, opening attachments, or responding.

What is your organization's response to Pres. Trump's renaming the Gulf?

Is it necessary?
Thanks!

Trevor D. Pettiford, reporter (retired) Spectrum News.
Member, Tampa Bay Association of Black Journalists

(b) (6) (mobile)

From: BGNEXEC, GS-N-MAC
To: Anderson, Gina R
Subject: Fw: [EXTERNAL] Names of the Gulf of Mexico and of Mount Denali
Date: Tuesday, January 21, 2025 6:41:05 AM

From: Gregory Elmes <(b) (6)@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, January 21, 2025 4:03 AM
To: BGNEXEC, GS-N-MAC <bgnexec@usgs.gov>
Cc: Gregory Elmes (b) (6)@gmail.com
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Names of the Gulf of Mexico and of Mount Denali

This email has been received from outside of DOI - Use caution before clicking on links, opening attachments, or responding.

Dear Members of the Board

I write about the proposal of President Donald J. Trump to rename the Gulf of Mexico to the American Sea and to return the name of Mount Denali to Mount McKinley. I urge the members of the Board of Geographic Names to respect their decisions in naming these geographic features.

On August 30, 2015, Sally Jewell announced that the mountain would be renamed Denali, under authority of federal law which permits her as Secretary of the Interior to name geographic features if the Board on Geographic Names does not act within a "reasonable" period of time.

The International Hydrographic Organization — of which both the United States and Mexico are members — works to ensure all the world's seas, oceans and navigable waters are surveyed and charted uniformly, and also names some of them. There are some instances where countries refer to the same body of water or landmark by different names in their own documentation.

Clearly the incoming Secretary of the Interior has the power to direct the Board of Geographic Names to rename Mount Denali. It does not have the power to instruct the Board to rename the Gulf of Mexico which is in preview of an international organization.

Please respect the decisions the currently accepted names and resist the attempts of the current administration to change them. The rest of the world will continue to use them. Hundreds of thousands of Atlases, digital and physical, will retain them. The acceptance of the changes will only cause confusion and result in the isolation of the United States of America which is perhaps what the President wants.

Yours sincerely
Gregory A Elmes, Ph D
Professor Emeritus of Geography

Sent from my iPad

Sent from my iPad

From: BGNEXEC, GS-N-MAC
To: Anderson, Gina R
Subject: Fw: [EXTERNAL]
Date: Tuesday, January 21, 2025 6:39:05 AM

From: Hassan R.Elzelayf <(b) (6)@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, January 21, 2025 6:10 AM
To: BGNEXEC, GS-N-MAC <bgnexec@usgs.gov>
Subject: [EXTERNAL]

This email has been received from outside of DOI - Use caution before clicking on links, opening attachments, or responding.

Good morning, sir. My name is Hassan Ramadan. I work as a journalist for the Egyptian newspaper Al-Watan. I wanted to talk for a few minutes about President trump order to change the name Gulf of Mexico as the Gulf of America.

I am sending you some questions and I hope you can answer them as soon as possible?

Is there a formal international agreement or protocol for naming marine areas?

Are there steps that will be taken to change the name of the Gulf of Mexico to US Gulf?

Can Mexico resort to international justice to object to Trump's decision?

From: Tom Parris
To: BGNEXEC, GS-N-MAC
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Opposition to renaming the "Gulf of Mexico."
Date: Tuesday, January 21, 2025 6:19:02 PM

This email has been received from outside of DOI - Use caution before clicking on links, opening attachments, or responding.

Dear Members of the U.S. Board on Geographic Names:

I am writing to express my opposition to the presidential directive to rename the "Gulf of Mexico" to the "Gulf of America" on several grounds:

1. Cost. The cost of reprinting operational mapping products that include place names (e.g. operational navigation charts) will be prohibitive and will come out of budgets that would otherwise be used for more pressing matters.
2. Conflicting mapping standards. There is little likelihood that countries bordering the Gulf of Mexico will change its name as well. This will create unnecessary differences and confusion between maps produced by different countries. This could cause miscommunication urgent situations such as search and rescue and extreme weather warnings.
3. Contentious Symbolism. The new name creates an enduring public symbol of cultural and policy differences between the U.S. and the other countries bordering the Gulf, much like the difference between the "Persian Gulf" and the "Arabian Gulf." In a time of greatly increasing international tensions we do not need additional artifacts that can be used to mobilize conflict.

With best regards,

Thomas M. Parris

(b) (6)

tom@toonkitchen.com

From: [Friar, Linda](#)
To: [Interior Press](#)
Cc: [Huggler, Matthew](#); [Eustis, Christine E](#); [Anderson, Gina R](#)
Subject: USGS media queries on name changes
Date: Wednesday, January 22, 2025 3:48:01 PM
Attachments: [USGS media queries.docx](#)
[Outlook-gggdava3.png](#)

Good Afternoon

Following up on the guidance you shared in the OCO weekly meeting today and sharing a list of the queries we've received on this topic.

As of last week USGS has been receiving media inquiries related to the Executive Order that came out on Monday. Several of these queries came in before the EO was issued. We've not provided any comment to these queries, just logged them until received more specific guidance. Let us know if you'd like any of the original emails - we can forward those. Didn't want to send so many to interior press at once.

If you'd like additional information on the Board on Geographic Names - here is a link.
[U.S. Board on Geographic Names | U.S. Geological Survey](#)

Regards
Linda

Linda Friar, AICP
Chief External Affairs
U.S. Geological Survey - Science for a Changing World

Office of Communications and Publishing
12201 Sunrise Valley Dr., Reston, Virginia
Phone 703-648-4447 Cell 786-385-0067
E-mail lfriar@usgs.gov

 [Book time to meet with me](#)

Pre-Executive Order Media queries about Gulf of Mexico

Date	Outlet	Reporter/Producer	
01/07/2025	CBS Evening News	Kimberly Ammiano	Kimberly.Ammiano@cbsnews.com
01/07/2025	CBS Tampa	Parisa Akbarpour	PAkbarpour@10tampabay.com
01/07/2025	BBC	Brandon Drenon	brandon.k.drenon@bbc.co.uk
01/07/2025	The Washington Post	Maegan Vazquez	maegan.vazquez@washpost.com
01/07/2025	USA TODAY	Trevor Hughes	thughes21@usatoday.com
01/07/2025	NBC Ft. Meyers, FL	Madison Adams	Madison.Adams@hearst.com
01/08/2025	FedSmith newsletter	Ralph?	(b) (6) @gmail.com
01/08/2025	NZZ-Switzerland	Carole Koch	carole.koch@nzz.ch
01/08/2025	E&E News	Robin Bravender	rbravender@eenews.net
01/08/2025	WPTV News-West Palm Beach	Todd Wilson	todd.wilson@wptv.com
01/08/2025	Fresh Take Florida-University of Florida	Libby Clifton Aidan Bush	libby.clifton@ufl.edu aidanbush@ufl.edu
01/08/2025	San Antonio Express-News	Annasofia Scheve	Annasofia.Scheve@express-news.net
01/08/2025	The Wall Street Journal	Vivian Salama	vivian.salama@wsj.com
01/10/2025	The Well News	Dan McCue	dan@thewellnews.com

Media queries from Restoring Names That Honor American Greatness Executive Order.

Date	Outlet	Reporter/Producer	Topic of Questions
01/20/2025	The New York Times	Tim Balk tim.balk@nytimes.com	Gulf of Mexico
01/20/2025	TV 2 Norway	Silje Vassdal silje.vassdal@tv2.no	Gulf of Mexico
01/20/2025	CBS News Boston	Seth Szilagyi sszilagyi@cbs.com	Gulf of Mexico and Mount Denali
01/20/2025	KOLD 13 Tuscon	Brooke Wagner Brooke.Wagner@kold.com	Mount Denali
01/20/2025	CBS News	Alisa Wiersema Lucaci Alisa.Wiersema@cbsnews.com	Gulf of Mexico

01/20/2025	High Country News	Shaun Griswold shaun.griswold@hcn.org	Mount Denali /filling BGN Positions
01/20/2025	Egyptian newspaper Al-Watan.	Hassan Ramadan (b) (6) @gmail.com	Gulf of Mexico
01/20/2025	US Border News	Jack Beavers jackbeavers@usbordernews.com	Gulf of Mexico
01/20/2025	Ringier Axel Springer Polska (Poland)	Paulina Ermel Paulina.Ermel@redakcjaonet.pl	Gulf of Mexico/ Mount Denali
01/20/2025	NPR	Lisa Thomson LThomson@npr.org	Mount Denali
01/20/2025	CNN	Jon Passantino jon.passantino@cnn.com	Gulf of Mexico/ Mount Denali
01/21/2025	The Hollywood Reporter	Ben Svetkey (b) (6)	Gulf of Mexico
01/22/2025	Oil & Gas Journal	E. Mikaila Adams madams@endeavorb2b.com	Gulf of Mexico
01/22/2025	Slate Magazine	Henry Grabar henry.grabar@slate.com	Gulf of Mexico/ Mount Denali

From: Tischler, Michael A
To: [Anderson, Gina B](#)
Subject: Fw: [EXTERNAL] Denali or Mt. McKinley? Alaska Lawmakers Weigh In on Trump's Renaming Plan. - The New York Times
Date: Wednesday, January 22, 2025 6:19:38 PM
Attachments: [Denali or Mt. McKinley Alaska Lawmakers Weigh In on Trump's Renaming Plan. - The New York Times.pdf](#)

Hi Gina,

Wanted to pass along

Thanks,

m

From: Vanessa Baez <(b) (6) @gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 22, 2025 6:13 PM
To: Baez, Vanessa <vbaez@usgs.gov>
Cc: Tischler, Michael A <mtischler@usgs.gov>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Denali or Mt. McKinley? Alaska Lawmakers Weigh In on Trump's Renaming Plan. - The New York Times

This email has been received from outside of DOI - Use caution before clicking on links, opening attachments, or responding.

Hi Mike,

Hope you are well. Your name is referenced in this article
<https://www.nytimes.com/2025/01/22/climate/denali-mckinley-alaska-trump.html>

Vanessa Baez
{via mobile}

From: Forrest, Brenda-Anne (Judiciary-Rep)
To: Tischler, Michael A; St Onge, Timothy; elizabeth.kanalley@usda.gov; melanie.riley@usda.gov; alexander.stum@usda.gov; tara.wallace@noaa.gov; kenja.allen@noaa.gov; thaddeus.ellerbe@noaa.gov; Rikki J. Wortham (CENSUS/GEO FED); (b) (6) Susan Lyon; (b) (6) Andrew Griffin; (b) (3) (B), (b) (6); Meghan.Barrett@hq.dhs.gov; Hammond, Chris W; Brown, Wendi-Starr; Mahoney, Patrick M; Konzek, Daniel S; Shelton, Michael; Black, Marielle L; Smith, Jeremy C; Hasier, Paulette; Ranieri, Veronica; alesha.t.perdomo@usgs.gov; liz.flake@usgs.gov
Cc: Zahniser, Shellie R
Subject: RE: [EXTERNAL] RE: BGN-DNC: Comms Guidance - Renaming via Executive/Congressional Action
Date: Wednesday, January 22, 2025 11:00:51 AM
Attachments: image001.jpg

Correction:

Please note that my email correspondence yesterday used a previous distribution list with an incorrect email address for Deputy Member Rikki Wortham, Bureau of the Census.

The correct address is Rikki.J.Wortham@census.gov, if you could please update your records on her behalf. Apologies, Rikki, and thank you for the clarification.

B.C. Forrest

U.S. Senate Committee on the Judiciary | 164 Dirksen Senate Office Building | Washington, DC 20510-6275 | Brenda-Anne_Forrest@judiciary-rep.senate.gov

From: Tischler, Michael A <mtischler@usgs.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, January 22, 2025 10:40 AM
To: Forrest, Brenda-Anne (Judiciary-Rep) <Brenda-Anne_Forrest@judiciary-rep.senate.gov>; St Onge, Timothy <tong@loc.gov>; elizabeth.kanalley@usda.gov; melanie.riley@usda.gov; alexander.stum@usda.gov; tara.wallace@noaa.gov; kenja.allen@noaa.gov; thaddeus.ellerbe@noaa.gov; Rikki.wortham@census.gov; (b) (6) - Susan Lyon; (b) (6) Andrew Griffin; (b) (3) (B), (b) (6); Meghan.Barrett@hq.dhs.gov; Hammond, Chris W <chammond@usgs.gov>; Brown, Wendi-Starr <Wendi-Starr.Brown@bia.gov>; Mahoney, Patrick M <pmmahone@blm.gov>; Konzek, Daniel S <daniel_konzek@fws.gov>; Shelton, Michael <Michael_Shelton@nps.gov>; Black, Marielle L <mblack@usbr.gov>; Smith, Jeremy C <Jeremy.Smith@boem.gov>; Hasier, Paulette <phasier@loc.gov>; Ranieri, Veronica <vera@loc.gov>; alesha.t.perdomo@usps.gov; liz.flake@usps.gov
Cc: Zahniser, Shellie R <srzahniser@usgs.gov>
Subject: Re: [EXTERNAL] RE: BGN-DNC: Comms Guidance - Renaming via Executive/Congressional Action

Hi B.C.,

I will defer to Tim as it's his meeting, but I would be reluctant to discuss the implementation of this action during a meeting open to the public. I would suggest instead that we hold the discussion as part of the full board meeting next week. If you feel we need to discuss the issue prior to next week's full board meeting, we can certainly try to accommodate.

In general, I am awaiting official implementation instruction from the Secretary of the Interior before performing any renaming action.

Thanks,
m

From: Forrest, Brenda-Anne (Judiciary-Rep) <Brenda-Anne_Forrest@judiciary-rep.senate.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, January 21, 2025 6:34 PM
To: St Onge, Timothy <tong@loc.gov>; elizabeth.kanalley@usda.gov <elizabeth.kanalley@usda.gov>;
melanie.riley@usda.gov <melanie.riley@usda.gov>; alexander.stum@usda.gov
<alexander.stum@usda.gov>; tara.wallace@noaa.gov <tara.wallace@noaa.gov>;
kenia.allen@noaa.gov <kenia.allen@noaa.gov>; thaddeus.ellerbe@noaa.gov
<thaddeus.ellerbe@noaa.gov>; Rikki.wortham@census.gov <Rikki.wortham@census.gov>;
(b) (6) - Susan Lyon >; (b) (6) Andrew Griffin
(b) (6) Andrew Griffin >; (b) (3) (B), (b) (6) <(b) (3) (B), (b) (6) >;
Meghan.Barrett@hq.dhs.gov <Meghan.Barrett@hq.dhs.gov>; Hammond, Chris W
<chammond@usgs.gov>; Brown, Wendi-Starr <Wendi-Starr.Brown@bia.gov>; Mahoney, Patrick M
<pmmahone@blm.gov>; Konzek, Daniel S <daniel_konzek@fws.gov>; Shelton, Michael
<Michael_Shelton@nps.gov>; Black, Marielle L <mblack@usbr.gov>; Smith, Jeremy C
<Jeremy.Smith@boem.gov>; Hasier, Paulette <phasier@loc.gov>; Ranieri, Veronica <vera@loc.gov>;
alesha.t.perdomo@usps.gov <alesha.t.perdomo@usps.gov>; liz.flake@usps.gov
<liz.flake@usps.gov>
Cc: Zahniser, Shellie R <srzahniser@usgs.gov>; Tischler, Michael A <mtischler@usgs.gov>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] RE: BGN-DNC: Comms Guidance - Renaming via Executive/Congressional Action

This email has been received from outside of DOI - Use caution before clicking on links, opening attachments, or responding.

Good evening, Chair St. Onge.:

Re: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/2025/01/restoring-names-that-honor-american-greatness/>

Permission to discuss Section 2(a) of yesterday's Presidential EO at next Tuesday's BGN FB 295 meeting? Or advance the request to appropriate leadership? OFR assigned 14170 as the number for this signed EO.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
B.C. Forrest

U.S. Senate Committee on the Judiciary | 164 Dirksen Senate Office Building | Washington, DC 20510-6275 |
Brenda-Anne_Forrest@judiciary-rep.senate.gov

From: St Onge, Timothy <tong@loc.gov>
Sent: Friday, January 10, 2025 9:39 AM
To: elizabeth.kanalley@usda.gov; melanie.riley@usda.gov; alexander.stum@usda.gov;
tara.wallace@noaa.gov; kenia.allen@noaa.gov; thaddeus.ellerbe@noaa.gov;
Rikki.wortham@census.gov; (b) (6) - Susan Lyon ; (b) (6) Andrew Griffin
(b) (3) (B), (b) (6) ; Forrest, Brenda-Anne (Judiciary-Rep) <Brenda-Anne_Forrest@judiciary-rep.senate.gov>

rep.senate.gov>; Meghan.Barrett@hq.dhs.gov; chammond@usgs.gov; Wendi-Starr.Brown@bia.gov; pmmahone@blm.gov; daniel_konzek@fws.gov; Michael_Shelton@nps.gov; mblack@usbr.gov; Jeremy.Smith@boem.gov; Hasier, Paulette <phasier@loc.gov>; Ranieri, Veronica <vera@loc.gov>; St Onge, Timothy <tong@loc.gov>; alesha.t.perdomo@usps.gov; liz.flake@usps.gov

Cc: Zahniser, Shellie R <srzahniser@usgs.gov>; Tischler, Michael A <mtischler@usgs.gov>

Subject: BGN-DNC: Comms Guidance - Renaming via Executive/Congressional Action

Good morning DNC members and deputy members,

I'm passing along the following guidance (below) from our BGN Chair Mike Tischler, regarding media inquiries relating to renaming a geographic feature via executive or congressional action. Please read and let Mike or I know if you have any questions.

Thank you,
Tim

Tim St. Onge
Cartographer

Geography & Map Division
LM-B02
202-707-9044
tong@loc.gov

LOC_Logo_EmailSignature



From: Tischler, Michael A <mtischler@usgs.gov>

Sent: Wednesday, January 8, 2025 5:30 PM

To: (b) (3) (B), (b) (6) NGA-SF USA CIV <(b) (3) (B), (b) (6)>; (b) (6) <(b) (6) @state.gov>; Zahniser, Shellie R <srzahniser@usgs.gov>; St Onge, Timothy <tong@loc.gov>; (b) (3) (B), (b) (6) NGA-SFGGW USA CIV <(b) (3) (B), (b) (6)>

Subject: Comms - renaming via executive action

CAUTION: This email message has been received from an external source. Please use caution when opening attachments, or clicking on links.

Good afternoon BGN Excom,

I'd like to share the communications guidance that the BGN staff has been given by USGS and ask that you please share this with your standing committees and advisory committees (DNC, FNC, ACAN, ACUF).

USGS has received multiple media inquiries regarding the process associated with renaming a feature via executive or congressional action (e.g., executive order, act of congress). We have been instructed not to respond - at all - to media inquiries about this topic at this time. That guidance may change in the future, but that is our current direction.

Should any members of the BGN committees receive media inquiries, I would encourage them to follow the same guidance if they are able.

For internal reference, I am sure you are all aware that the [Policy on Names Considered or Established by Congress or the President](#) notes that "Geographic names and their applications specifically established by an act of Congress or Executive order are legally official, and therefore, are not bound by BGN principles, policies, and procedures." This includes name changes. For any names established by an act of Congress or Executive order (or proclamation), the name is entered into/changed in GNIS once official. Federal data sources are updated from GNIS on their own data refresh cycles.

Thank you!

Mike

Mike Tischler, Ph.D
Director, National Geospatial Program
U.S. Geological Survey
Department of Interior
o: 703-648-4725
c: 703-344-4348
mtischler@usgs.gov

From: [Jordan Shenefield](#)
To: [BGNEXEC](#), [GS-N-MAC](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Opposition to changing the name of Denali
Date: Wednesday, January 22, 2025 4:28:02 PM

This email has been received from outside of DOI - Use caution before clicking on links, opening attachments, or responding.

Good morning. I'm writing to oppose the proposed name change of Denali (The High One in the native Athabascan language). I have worked in Denali for several years as a Tour Guide Bus Driver and Shuttle Driver, so I have experienced first-hand the confusion about the name of both the national park and the highest point in North America. I share with my guests that a gold prospector in the Kantishna mining area of what is now Denali National Park wanted to show his support for presidential candidate William McKinley in the 1896 election. In his own self-interest (since he was a gold prospector), he wrote Mt. McKinley on a map of the High One, thus wiping out 10,000 years of Athabascan culture. No hearings; no public comments; no input. The Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act created changed the name to Denali National Park and Preserve, while Mt. McKinley remained...until action by the Secretary of the Interior to BGN to finally correct the name of The High One to the original name of Denali.

I hope BGN will accept public comments about this outrageous and unnecessary abuse of executive power and follow the correct path of what history proscribes and what our country stands for - indigenous names for indigenous places. Please leave Denali Denali.

Jordan Shenefield

(b) (6)

From: BGNEXEC, GS-N-MAC
To: (b) (6) Jack Butler@gmail.com
Subject: Re: [EXTERNAL] RE: Decision on new name for reservoir in the Town of Pittsford
Date: Wednesday, January 22, 2025 9:26:19 AM

Hi Jack,

Jenny retired on January 11. I've been working with her since 2013.

Unfortunately, we can't send any maps showing the name. You can make your own map through the USGS [topoBuilder](#), though the hydrology layer names are not being updated at this time and there is no estimate of when that will occur. BGN staff has no role in how or when the names are applied on maps. That is handled by the broader [National Geospatial Program](#). The name Lake Fairchild is official, however, due to the GNIS record: <https://edits.nationalmap.gov/apps/gaz-domestic/public/gaz-record/2832415>.

Cheers,

Matt O'Donnell

From: (b) (6) Jack Butler@gmail.com <(b) (6) Jack Butler@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, January 21, 2025 8:46 AM
To: BGNEXEC, GS-N-MAC <bgnexec@usgs.gov>
Subject: RE: [EXTERNAL] RE: Decision on new name for reservoir in the Town of Pittsford

Good morning, Jennifer,

Looks like your department is going to have some new tasks!

- Changing the Gulf of Mexico to the Gulf of America
- Changing Denali back to Mount McKinley. I guess Native American input will have to be turned off!

Good luck! BTW, we had a very nice dedication ceremony here in Pittsford in November regarding the naming of Lake Fairchild. It was held on a piece of private property overlooking the Lake. The owner did not want the event opened to the public. Attending were various key supporters from the Town of Pittsford, Pittsford's Historical Society, the Town Historian, various members of the Monroe County Parks Department, and yours truly in the long black coat. Wish you were there!

Does the USGS have a local map you could send me showing the Lake Fairchild name?
Happy New Year!!

Jack

From: BGNEXEC, GS-N-MAC <bgnexec@usgs.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, October 15, 2024 9:05 AM
To: (b) (6) Jack Butler@gmail.com
Subject: Re: [EXTERNAL] RE: Decision on new name for reservoir in the Town of Pittsford

Field trip!!!

From: (b) (6) Jack Butler@gmail.com (b) (6) Jack Butler@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, October 15, 2024 8:51 AM
To: BGNEXEC, GS-N-MAC <bgnexec@usgs.gov>
Subject: RE: [EXTERNAL] RE: Decision on new name for reservoir in the Town of Pittsford

No problem!! Thanks Jennifer. You'll have to come up to Pittsford for the dedication and some champagne!

From: BGNEXEC, GS-N-MAC <bgnexec@usgs.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, October 15, 2024 8:50 AM
To: (b) (6) Jack Butler@gmail.com
Subject: Re: [EXTERNAL] RE: Decision on new name for reservoir in the Town of Pittsford

I wanted to get a head start on the week and sent out many of the notification emails last night (even though it was a Federal holiday). No particular reason, but yours was one of the batch I set up to go out this morning. I doubt any of the local officials were checking email at 7:30 p.m.

~ Jennifer

From: (b) (6) Jack Butler@gmail.com <(b) (6) Jack Butler@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, October 15, 2024 8:23 AM
To: BGNEXEC, GS-N-MAC <bgnexec@usgs.gov>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] RE: Decision on new name for reservoir in the Town of Pittsford

This email has been received from outside of DOI - Use caution before clicking on links, opening attachments, or responding.

It is rather interesting that USGS notified them before informing me as the applicant!!
Oh well. All's good. Must just have been a timing 'thing'.
Thanks Jennier
Jack

From: (b) (6) Jack Butler@gmail.com (b) (6) Jack Butler@gmail.com>

Sent: Tuesday, October 15, 2024 8:13 AM

To: 'BGNEEXEC, GS-N-MAC' <bgnexec@usgs.gov>

Subject: RE: Decision on new name for reservoir in the Town of Pittsford

OK. Thanks. I'm going to set up a meeting with some of these Town of Pittsford officials.

Jack

From: BGNEEXEC, GS-N-MAC <bgnexec@usgs.gov>

Sent: Tuesday, October 15, 2024 8:02 AM

To: Jack Butler <(b) (6) [\[REDACTED\]@gmail.com](mailto:[REDACTED]@gmail.com)>

Subject: Fw: Decision on new name for reservoir in the Town of Pittsford

And one last email from me. This is just for your records, so you're aware that local authorities were also notified. We also informed the New York State Names Committee.

Jenny

From: BGNEEXEC, GS-N-MAC

Sent: Monday, October 14, 2024 8:25 PM

To: Rkoegel@townofpittsford.org <Rkoegel@townofpittsford.org>;
countyexecutive@monroecounty.gov <countyexecutive@monroecounty.gov>;
presidenttroman@monroecounty.gov <presidenttroman@monroecounty.gov>;
VProfitt@townofpittsford.org <VProfitt@townofpittsford.org>;
(b) (6) Margaret Brizee [\[REDACTED\]@gmail.com](mailto:[REDACTED]@gmail.com) <(b) (6) Margaret Brizee [\[REDACTED\]@gmail.com](mailto:[REDACTED]@gmail.com)>

Subject: Decision on new name for reservoir in the Town of Pittsford

Mr. Robert Koegel
Pittsford Town Attorney

Yversha Román, President
Monroe County Legislature

Mr. Michael Yudelson, Majority Leader
Mr. Adam Bello, County Executive

Ms. Vicki Profitt, Town of Pittsford Historian
Town Historical Society

Ms. Margaret Caraberis Brizee, President
Historic Pittsford

Good morning:

This is to inform you that the U.S. Board on Geographic Names, at its October 10, 2024 meeting, approved the proposal to apply the new name **Lake Fairchild** to a previously unnamed reservoir in Monroe County.

The name has been added to the Geographic Names Information System, the nation's official geographic names repository, available at <https://edits.nationalmap.gov/apps/gaz-domestic/public/search/names>. Federal maps will be updated during the normal revision cycle. The decision reads as follows:

Lake Fairchild; reservoir, approx. 11 acres, in the Town of Pittsford, 1 mi. N of Hundred Acre Pond, 10 mi. S of Rochester; the name commemorates Professor Herman LeRoy Fairchild (1850-1943), head of Geology at the University of Rochester (1888-1920) and a founder of the Geological Society of America; Monroe County, New York; USGS Map – Pittsford 1:24,000.

Regards,
Jennifer Runyon, research staff
Office of the Executive Secretary
U.S. Board on Geographic Names
U.S. Geological Survey
Reston, VA 20192
(703) 648-4550
Domestic Names | U.S. Geological Survey (usgs.gov)

From: Tara Wallace - NOAA Federal
To: Tischler, Michael A
Cc: Amanda Phelps - NOAA Federal
Subject: Re: [EXTERNAL] RE: BGN review of appointments
Date: Wednesday, January 22, 2025 1:38:06 PM

Thanks Mike for clarifying.

On Wed, Jan 22, 2025 at 1:36 PM Tischler, Michael A <mtischler@usgs.gov> wrote:
Hi Tara,

Correct, but this action is for each agency head to review their *own* appointees. Not for the Sec. of the Interior to review the entire board.

Thanks,
m

From: Tara Wallace - NOAA Federal <tara.wallace@noaa.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, January 22, 2025 1:34 PM
To: Tischler, Michael A <mtischler@usgs.gov>; Amanda Phelps - NOAA Federal <amanda.phelps@noaa.gov>
Subject: Re: [EXTERNAL] RE: BGN review of appointments

Hey Mike -

Last appointment letter, NOAA addressed to the Secretary of Interior and was signed by our NOAA Administrator.

Thanks

On Wed, Jan 22, 2025 at 12:35 PM Tischler, Michael A <mtischler@usgs.gov> wrote:
Hi Meghan,

Apologies for the confusion.

The EO asks that " *each agency head with authority to appoint members to the Board on Geographic Names (Board) pursuant to 43 U.S.C. 364a, shall review their respective appointees* ".

I am recommending that the principal members of each agency author memos to their respective agency heads with details on the membership (principal and any deputy members) from the agency. For DHS, I would recommend that you submit a memo to the Secretary of Homeland Security (or whomever is acting in that role at the moment). Tara would send to the (acting) Secretary of Commerce, Betsy to the acting Sec. of Agriculture, (b) (6) to the Secretary of State, me to the Secretary of the Interior, etc.

Hope that makes sense - let me know if/how I can help.

Thanks,
Mike

From: Barrett, Meghan <[Meghan.Barrett@hq.dhs.gov](mailto: Meghan.Barrett@hq.dhs.gov)>
Sent: Wednesday, January 22, 2025 12:27 PM
To: Tischler, Michael A <[mtischler@usgs.gov](mailto: mtischler@usgs.gov)>; [elizabeth.kanalley@usda.gov](mailto: elizabeth.kanalley@usda.gov) <[elizabeth.kanalley@usda.gov](mailto: elizabeth.kanalley@usda.gov)>; [christmg@ucia.gov](mailto: christmg@ucia.gov) <[christmg@ucia.gov](mailto: christmg@ucia.gov)>; Tara Wallace - NOAA Federal <[tara.wallace@noaa.gov](mailto: tara.wallace@noaa.gov)>; Lyon, Susan <(b) (6)>; [Brenda-Anne_Forrest@judiciary-rep.senate.gov](mailto: Brenda-Anne_Forrest@judiciary-rep.senate.gov) <[Brenda-Anne_Forrest@judiciary-rep.senate.gov](mailto: Brenda-Anne_Forrest@judiciary-rep.senate.gov)>; Paulette Hasier <[phasier@loc.gov](mailto: phasier@loc.gov)>; Perdomo, Alesha T - Memphis, TN <[alesha.t.perdomo@usps.gov](mailto: alesha.t.perdomo@usps.gov)>; (b) (6) <(b) (6)@state.gov>
Cc: Tim St. Onge <[tong@loc.gov](mailto: tong@loc.gov)>; (b) (3) (B), (b) (6) NGA-SF USA CIV <(b) (3) (B), (b) (6)>; (b) (3) (B), (b) (6) NGA-SFGGW USA CIV <(b) (3) (B), (b) (6)>; Zahniser, Shellie R <[srzahniser@usgs.gov](mailto: srzahniser@usgs.gov)>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] RE: BGN review of appointments

This email has been received from outside of DOI - Use caution before clicking on links, opening attachments, or responding.

Mike – The memos that we are preparing for the agency heads, to whom are those memos being sent? Would this be a memo from the DHS Secretary to the DOI secretary?

v/r,
Meghan

From: Tischler, Michael A <[mtischler@usgs.gov](mailto: mtischler@usgs.gov)>
Sent: Wednesday, January 22, 2025 10:22 AM
To: [elizabeth.kanalley@usda.gov](mailto: elizabeth.kanalley@usda.gov); [christmg@ucia.gov](mailto: christmg@ucia.gov); Tara Wallace - NOAA Federal <[tara.wallace@noaa.gov](mailto: tara.wallace@noaa.gov)>; Lyon, Susan <(b) (6)>; [Brenda-Anne_Forrest@judiciary-rep.senate.gov](mailto: Brenda-Anne_Forrest@judiciary-rep.senate.gov); Barrett, Meghan <[Meghan.Barrett@hq.dhs.gov](mailto: Meghan.Barrett@hq.dhs.gov)>; Paulette Hasier <[phasier@loc.gov](mailto: phasier@loc.gov)>; Perdomo, Alesha T - Memphis, TN <[alesha.t.perdomo@usps.gov](mailto: alesha.t.perdomo@usps.gov)>; (b) (6) <(b) (6)@state.gov>
Cc: Tim St. Onge <[tong@loc.gov](mailto: tong@loc.gov)>; (b) (3) (B), (b) (6) NGA-SF USA CIV <(b) (3) (B), (b) (6)>; (b) (3) (B), (b) (6) NGA-SFGGW USA CIV <(b) (3) (B), (b) (6)>; Zahniser, Shellie R <[srzahniser@usgs.gov](mailto: srzahniser@usgs.gov)>
Subject: BGN review of appointments

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of DHS. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you recognize and/or trust the sender. Contact your component SOC with questions or concerns.

BGN principal members,

At this point I am assuming you are all aware of the recent EO "[RESTORING NAMES THAT HONOR AMERICAN GREATNESS](#)" that was signed Monday. We are waiting for additional DOI guidance and confirmation for the renaming of both Denali->Mount McKinley and Gulf of Mexico-> Gulf of America. I will be in touch when I have that information.

You will also notice the following section in the EO:

Sec. 2. Appointments to the U.S. Board on Geographic Names. (a) Within seven days of the date of this order, each agency head with authority to appoint members to the Board on Geographic Names (Board) pursuant to 43 U.S.C. 364a, shall review their respective appointees and consider replacing those appointees in accordance with applicable law.

After talking with colleagues and legal council, I am recommending that each of you prepare a short memo for your department heads to review to be responsive to this request. I will be providing a letter for DOI, and I understand (b) (6) will be providing a memo for the Dept. of State. The memo does not need to be lengthy, but should include the names and biographical information of the members of each department. I have cc'd the bios that were provided to the BGN exec sec in 2023 for appointment - please note this file is FOUO.

Please let me know if you have any concerns or questions. We'll be moving quickly to meet the deadline.

Thanks,

mike

Mike Tischler, Ph.D

Director, National Geospatial Program
U.S. Geological Survey
Department of Interior
o: 703-648-4725
c: 703-344-4348
mtischler@usgs.gov

--

Tara Wallace, Branch Chief
Production Branch B, Marine Chart Division
Member, U.S. Board on Geographic Names
Office of Coast Survey, National Ocean Service
Telephone number: 304-506-4046
Telework hours: 6:30 am - 3:00 pm est



--

Tara Wallace, Branch Chief
Production Branch B, Marine Chart Division
Member, U.S. Board on Geographic Names
Office of Coast Survey, National Ocean Service
Telephone number: 304-506-4046
Telework hours: 6:30 am - 3:00 pm est



From: Tara Wallace - NOAA Federal
To: Tischler, Michael A
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Re: BGN review of appointments
Date: Wednesday, January 22, 2025 10:27:27 AM

This email has been received from outside of DOI - Use caution before clicking on links, opening attachments, or responding.

Thanks Mike - will send it over today.

On Wed, Jan 22, 2025 at 10:24 AM Tischler, Michael A <mtischler@usgs.gov> wrote:

BGN principal members,

At this point I am assuming you are all aware of the recent EO "[RESTORING NAMES THAT HONOR AMERICAN GREATNESS](#)" that was signed Monday. We are waiting for additional DOI guidance and confirmation for the renaming of both Denali->Mount McKinley and Gulf of Mexico-> Gulf of America. I will be in touch when I have that information.

You will also notice the following section in the EO:

Sec. 2. Appointments to the U.S. Board on Geographic Names. (a) Within seven days of the date of this order, each agency head with authority to appoint members to the Board on Geographic Names (Board) pursuant to 43 U.S.C. 364a, shall review their respective appointees and consider replacing those appointees in accordance with applicable law.

After talking with colleagues and legal council, I am recommending that each of you prepare a short memo for your department heads to review to be responsive to this request. I will be providing a letter for DOI, and I understand (b) (6) will be providing a memo for the Dept. of State. The memo does not need to be lengthy, but should include the names and biographical information of the members of each department. I have cc'd the bios that were provided to the BGN exec sec in 2023 for appointment - please note this file is FOUO.

Please let me know if you have any concerns or questions. We'll be moving quickly to meet the deadline.

Thanks,
mike

Mike Tischler, Ph.D
Director, National Geospatial Program
U.S. Geological Survey
Department of Interior
o: 703-648-4725
c: 703-344-4348
mtischler@usgs.gov

--

Tara Wallace, Branch Chief
Production Branch B, Marine Chart Division
Member, U.S. Board on Geographic Names
Office of Coast Survey, National Ocean Service
Telephone number: 304-506-4046
Telework hours: 6:30 am - 3:00 pm est



From: Friar, Linda
To: Webb, Kyle W; Anderson, Gina R
Cc: Nobles, Gary A; Lopez, Sabra A; Huggler, Matthew
Subject: Re: Renaming the Gulf of Mexico emails 1/28/25
Date: Tuesday, January 28, 2025 10:23:58 AM

Good morning
Please be sure that SIS all is aware that they should not respond to these queries.
Linda

Get [Outlook for iOS](#)

From: Webb, Kyle W <kwebb@usgs.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, January 28, 2025 8:12:38 AM
To: Anderson, Gina R <granderson@usgs.gov>
Cc: Friar, Linda <lfriar@usgs.gov>
Subject: Renaming the Gulf of Mexico emails 1/28/25

Good morning,

We had three open tickets this morning with comments about renaming the Gulf of Mexico. Two of the messages had genuine questions while one was expressing frustration at the lack of a change on our websites. I've copied their messages along with their email addresses below:

There is so much talk now about changing names of places. Does any president have the authority to change a name unilaterally? Will this action, if taken, change all U.S. maps, or only those published by the government? Will it affect maps from other countries? I realize this is a general topic of concern, and you may not be able to publish an answer, but I'd appreciate an honest and transparent response.

- larksongster@**(b) (6)**.com

Hey, the Gulf of America has not been updated on your website. We've got a new President, he's not messing around and it's time for you monkeys to dance! This is a simple change in any well designed website. Do it or he'll fire your asses!

- contact@weforum.org

Are you changing the map like Google did? From Gulf of Mexico to Gulf of America? In the earthquake maps etc.

- live66@**(b) (6)**.com

Best,
Kyle

Kyle W. Webb
Technical Information Specialist
United States Geological Survey
12201 Sunrise Valley Drive
National Center, Mail Stop 119
Reston, VA 20192-0002
(703) 648-5927

From: [Huggler, Matthew](#)
To: [Magirl, Christopher S](#)
Subject: FW: EO/SO on renaming, FW: BGN follow-up
Date: Wednesday, January 29, 2025 11:35:00 AM

FYI only, but wanted you to be aware of the latest on this topic.

Matt

Matthew Huggler
Deputy Associate Director
Office of Communications and Publishing
U.S. Geological Survey
Reston, VA
mobile: 202-460-8402
mhuggler@usgs.gov

From: Eustis, Christine E <ceustis@usgs.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, January 29, 2025 11:21 AM
To: Tischler, Michael A <mtischler@usgs.gov>; Ryker, Sarah J <sryker@usgs.gov>; Lacey, Jennifer A <jlacey@usgs.gov>; Killpack, Darcee <dkillpack@usgs.gov>; Woods, Tim <twoods@usgs.gov>
Cc: Jones, Leslie W <ljones@usgs.gov>; Lukas, William A <wlukas@usgs.gov>; Doumbouya, Ariel T <atdoumbouya@usgs.gov>; Mantey, Kimberly S <kmantey@usgs.gov>; Davis, Larry R <lrdavis@usgs.gov>; Huggler, Matthew <mhuggler@usgs.gov>
Subject: Re: EO/SO on renaming, FW: BGN follow-up

Mike - Tim Woods on our Digital Team may be able to offer some web-based options - so just looping him in if that is helpful. We're not the map experts but are standing by to provide support!

From: Tischler, Michael A <mtischler@usgs.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, January 29, 2025 11:14 AM
To: Ryker, Sarah J <sryker@usgs.gov>; Lacey, Jennifer A <jlacey@usgs.gov>; Killpack, Darcee <dkillpack@usgs.gov>
Cc: Jones, Leslie W <ljones@usgs.gov>; Lukas, William A <wlukas@usgs.gov>; Eustis, Christine E <ceustis@usgs.gov>; Doumbouya, Ariel T <atdoumbouya@usgs.gov>; Mantey, Kimberly S <kmantey@usgs.gov>; Davis, Larry R <lrdavis@usgs.gov>
Subject: Re: EO/SO on renaming, FW: BGN follow-up

Including a few others from NGP and NGTOC...

While we can show an update to the GNIS record (nearly) immediately, I do not think a newly labeled map (or basemap) would be available immediately.

For reference/example, attached is the current GNIS record for "Gulf of Mexico" - this is what I believe would be immediately updated, in addition to the web-based GNIS system. I do not think the web-based basemap that is shown in GNIS will be updated immediately, but will confirm what users will see.

Let us also consider what we can do in the short term to demonstrate an updated map product (one-off, publicly accessible, or both) and we will get back to you.

thanks,
m

From: Ryker, Sarah J <sryker@usgs.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, January 29, 2025 11:01 AM
To: Lacey, Jennifer A <jlacey@usgs.gov>; Killpack, Darcee <dkillpack@usgs.gov>; Tischler, Michael A <mtischler@usgs.gov>
Cc: Jones, Leslie W <ljones@usgs.gov>; Lukas, William A <wlukas@usgs.gov>; Eustis, Christine E <ceustis@usgs.gov>
Subject: FW: EO/SO on renaming, FW: BGN follow-up

All,

Scott raises a good point: we'll no doubt receive a request for some sort of visual (not from Google Maps!) of the new names. Your folks produce beautiful maps – but this sounds like it might be not for a wall hanging but for press opportunities. CCing Christine for any additional guidance on what might be useful.

Sarah J Ryker, PhD
Acting Director, U.S. Geological Survey
sryker@usgs.gov

From: Cameron, Scott J <scott_cameron@ios.doj.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, January 29, 2025 10:27 AM
To: Ryker, Sarah J <sryker@usgs.gov>
Cc: Farmer, Isis U <isis_farmer@ios.doj.gov>
Subject: RE: EO/SO on renaming, FW: BGN follow-up

Hi Sarah,

I am guessing that once the new Secretary signs the SO on the Gulf of America he would shortly thereafter like to see some sort of map, or maybe more realistically a screen shot of a webpage, that shows the new name. Might as well do one for Mt. McKinley, too, while we are at it. Can you start the process to figuring out how mechanically we could

make that happen, please?

Thanks,
Scott

Scott J. Cameron

Senior Advisor to the Secretary, exercising the delegated authority of the Assistant Secretary – Water and Science and exercising the delegated authority of the Assistant Secretary – Insular and International Affairs

202.330.1398

From: Ryker, Sarah J <sryker@usgs.gov>
Sent: Monday, January 27, 2025 8:21 PM
To: Myrick, Brett H <brett.myrick@sol.doi.gov>; Cameron, Scott J <scott_cameron@ios.doi.gov>
Cc: Farmer, Isis U <isis_farmer@ios.doi.gov>; Lukas, William A <wluke@usgs.gov>; Jones, Leslie W <ljones@usgs.gov>; Lacey, Jennifer A <jlacey@usgs.gov>; Killpack, Darcee <dkillpack@usgs.gov>; Tischler, Michael A <mtischler@usgs.gov>; Irish, Tony C <Tony.Irish@sol.doi.gov>; Patnaik, Bivan R <bivan_patnaik@ios.doi.gov>
Subject: RE: EO/SO on renaming, FW: BGN follow-up

(b) (5) ACP

If the Department wanted to conduct some outreach to affected states before starting that sequence of actions, USGS could help support DOI on that.

Sarah J Ryker, PhD
Acting Director, U.S. Geological Survey
sryker@usgs.gov

From: Myrick, Brett H <brett.myrick@sol.doi.gov>
Sent: Monday, January 27, 2025 6:43 PM
To: Cameron, Scott J <scott_cameron@ios.doi.gov>; Ryker, Sarah J <sryker@usgs.gov>
Cc: Farmer, Isis U <isis_farmer@ios.doi.gov>; Lukas, William A <wluke@usgs.gov>; Jones, Leslie W <ljones@usgs.gov>; Lacey, Jennifer A <jlacey@usgs.gov>; Killpack, Darcee <dkillpack@usgs.gov>; Tischler, Michael A <mtischler@usgs.gov>; Irish, Tony C <Tony.Irish@sol.doi.gov>; Patnaik, Bivan R <bivan_patnaik@ios.doi.gov>
Subject: Re: EO/SO on renaming, FW: BGN follow-up

Scott-

(b) (5) ACP

Thanks,
Brett

Brett H. Myrick
Attorney-Adviser
Department of the Interior
Division of General Law - General Legal Services
brett.myrick@sol.doi.gov
202-208-3820 (work)
312-576-4798 (personal cell)

From: Cameron, Scott J <scott_cameron@ios.doi.gov>

Sent: Monday, January 27, 2025 6:05 PM

To: Myrick, Brett H <brett.myrick@sol.doi.gov>; Ryker, Sarah J <sryker@usgs.gov>

Cc: Farmer, Isis U <isis_farmer@ios.doi.gov>; Lukas, William A <wluke@usgs.gov>; Jones, Leslie W <ljones@usgs.gov>; Lacey, Jennifer A <jlacey@usgs.gov>; Killpack, Darcee <dkillpack@usgs.gov>; Tischler, Michael A <mtischler@usgs.gov>; Irish, Tony C <Tony.Irish@sol.doi.gov>; Patnaik, Bivan R <bivan_patnaik@ios.doi.gov>

Subject: RE: EO/SO on renaming, FW: BGN follow-up

Brett,

(b) (5) ACP

Thanks,
Scott

Scott J. Cameron
Senior Advisor to the Secretary, exercising the delegated authority of the Assistant
Secretary – Water and Science and exercising the delegated authority of the Assistant
Secretary – Insular and International Affairs

202.330.1398

From: Myrick, Brett H <brett.myrick@sol.doi.gov>

Sent: Monday, January 27, 2025 6:02 PM

To: Cameron, Scott J <scott_cameron@ios.doi.gov>; Ryker, Sarah J <sryker@usgs.gov>
Cc: Farmer, Isis U <isis_farmer@ios.doi.gov>; Lukas, William A <wlukas@usgs.gov>; Jones, Leslie W <ljones@usgs.gov>; Lacey, Jennifer A <jlacey@usgs.gov>; Killpack, Darcee <dkillpack@usgs.gov>; Tischler, Michael A <mtischler@usgs.gov>; Irish, Tony C <Tony.Irish@sol.doi.gov>; Patnaik, Bivan R <bivan_patnaik@ios.doi.gov>
Subject: Re: EO/SO on renaming, FW: BGN follow-up

Scott-

(b) (5) ACP

Thank you,
Brett

Brett H. Myrick
Attorney-Adviser
Department of the Interior
Division of General Law - General Legal Services
brett.myrick@sol.doi.gov
202-208-3820 (work)
312-576-4798 (personal cell)

From: Cameron, Scott J <scott_cameron@ios.doi.gov>
Sent: Monday, January 27, 2025 5:46 PM
To: Ryker, Sarah J <sryker@usgs.gov>
Cc: Farmer, Isis U <isis_farmer@ios.doi.gov>; Lukas, William A <wlukas@usgs.gov>; Jones, Leslie W <ljones@usgs.gov>; Lacey, Jennifer A <jlacey@usgs.gov>; Killpack, Darcee <dkillpack@usgs.gov>; Tischler, Michael A <mtischler@usgs.gov>; Irish, Tony C <Tony.Irish@sol.doi.gov>; Myrick, Brett H <brett.myrick@sol.doi.gov>; Patnaik, Bivan R <bivan_patnaik@ios.doi.gov>
Subject: RE: EO/SO on renaming, FW: BGN follow-up

All,

(b) (5) ACP

[Redacted]

Thanks,
Scott

Scott J. Cameron

Senior Advisor to the Secretary, exercising the delegated authority of the Assistant Secretary – Water and Science and exercising the delegated authority of the Assistant Secretary – Insular and International Affairs

202.330.1398

From: Ryker, Sarah J <sryker@usgs.gov>
Sent: Monday, January 27, 2025 4:12 PM
To: Cameron, Scott J <scott_cameron@ios.doi.gov>
Cc: Farmer, Isis U <isis_farmer@ios.doi.gov>; Lukas, William A <wlukas@usgs.gov>; Jones, Leslie W <ljones@usgs.gov>; Lacey, Jennifer A <jlacey@usgs.gov>; Killpack, Darcee <dkillpack@usgs.gov>; Tischler, Michael A <mtischler@usgs.gov>; Irish, Tony C <Tony.Irish@sol.doi.gov>; Myrick, Brett H <brett.myrick@sol.doi.gov>; Patnaik, Bivan R <bivan_patnaik@ios.doi.gov>
Subject: EO/SO on renaming, FW: BGN follow-up

Scott,

Attached is a draft Secretary's Order to implement the Executive Order "Restoring Names That Honor American Greatness". This draft was developed collaboratively by the USGS and the Solicitor's office, with input from key BGN officials including the BGN State Dept. representative. A few notes:

1. Sec. 2 of the EO calls for agency review of all agency BGN appointees. The USGS has sent forward through DTS a memo to the Secretary's office in support of the DOI membership review. Therefore, this draft does not include any additional guidance for implementation of that request. However, additional instruction can be added if the department feels it appropriate.
2. Sec. 4c of the draft corresponds to EO sec. 2d, but this is a situation that we don't anticipate will arise.
3. Sec. 4d of the draft corresponds to EO sec. 5. This section of the draft is less detailed because it is not a BGN or USGS function and will need some additional DOI decision-making over who should implement and in what timeframe. (E.g. I'll posit that it might be a responsibility for DOI's Office of Intergovernmental and External Affairs, and note that the need to prepare announcements in time for July 4, 2026, will be time-constraining on that process.)

This draft aims to help DOI address all relevant sections of the EO, but we can edit/adjust based on

your feedback.

I'm CCing our leads at USGS and SOL, as well as Bivan – thank you, all!

Sarah J Ryker, PhD
Acting Director, U.S. Geological Survey
sryker@usgs.gov

From: Cameron, Scott J <scott_cameron@ios.doi.gov>
Sent: Friday, January 24, 2025 5:24 PM
To: Ryker, Sarah J <sryker@usgs.gov>; Caminiti, Mariagrazia <Marigrace.Caminiti@sol.doi.gov>
Cc: Farmer, Isis U <isis_farmer@ios.doi.gov>; Jones, Leslie W <ljones@usgs.gov>; Lukas, William A <wlukas@usgs.gov>; Lacey, Jennifer A <jlacey@usgs.gov>; Irish, Tony C <Tony.Irish@sol.doi.gov>; Patnaik, Bivan R <bivan_patnaik@ios.doi.gov>
Subject: Re: BGN follow-up

Hi Sarah,

Please have USGS draft a secretarial order telling USGS to execute the EO. Talk with Tony Irish in Sol so we get it in the right format to hand off to Bivan in Exec Sec.

It would be much appreciated if you could get a draft to Tony on Monday.

Get [Outlook for iOS](#)

From: Ryker, Sarah J <sryker@usgs.gov>
Sent: Friday, January 24, 2025 5:02:29 PM
To: Cameron, Scott J <scott_cameron@ios.doi.gov>
Cc: Farmer, Isis U <isis_farmer@ios.doi.gov>; Jones, Leslie W <ljones@usgs.gov>; Lukas, William A <wlukas@usgs.gov>; Lacey, Jennifer A <jlacey@usgs.gov>
Subject: BGN follow-up

Scott,

I just asked the USGS folks who support the Board on Geographic Names to confirm that we don't need a fully populated and sitting BGN to implement name changes initiated by EO/SO. I just got this confirmation back:

The BGN plays essentially no part when the name change is the result of an EO or SO. The BGN does not need to approve the name, because it has already been

approved by someone with the authority.

As a side note, our folks are anxious to get the BGN populated as the Board fields a lot of changes requested by the public. But that process can continue in parallel with the EO-directed changes.

In case you could use more detail on this, I'm CCing Jenn Lacey, our Associate Director for Core Science Systems – she oversees the BGN processes.

Sarah J Ryker, PhD

Acting Director, U.S. Geological Survey

sryker@usgs.gov

From: [Zahniser, Shellie R](#)
To: [O'Donnell, Matthew J](#); [Tischler, Michael A](#)
Subject: RE: Geographic Names EO
Date: Tuesday, January 21, 2025 10:48:31 AM

(b) (5) DPP

Shellie Zahniser, Ph.D.
BGN Executive Secretary
Domestic Names Committee
Honolulu, HI

From: O'Donnell, Matthew J <mjodonnell@usgs.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, January 21, 2025 5:00 AM
To: Tischler, Michael A <mtischler@usgs.gov>; Zahniser, Shellie R <srzahniser@usgs.gov>
Subject: Re: Geographic Names EO

(b) (5) DPP

Matt

From: Tischler, Michael A <mtischler@usgs.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, January 21, 2025 9:57 AM
To: O'Donnell, Matthew J <mjodonnell@usgs.gov>; Zahniser, Shellie R <srzahniser@usgs.gov>
Subject: Re: Geographic Names EO

Hi Matt,

(b) (5) DPP

(b) (5) DPP

Thanks,
m

From: O'Donnell, Matthew J <mjodonnell@usgs.gov>

Sent: Tuesday, January 21, 2025 9:48 AM

To: Tischler, Michael A <mtischler@usgs.gov>; Zahniser, Shellie R <srzahniser@usgs.gov>

Subject: Re: Geographic Names EO

Shellie and I talked last night. I noted that too.

(b) (5) ACP/DPP

Matt

Matt O'Donnell
BGN research staff

Email: mjodonnell@usgs.gov

From: Tischler, Michael A <mtischler@usgs.gov>

Sent: Tuesday, January 21, 2025 9:41 AM

To: O'Donnell, Matthew J <mjodonnell@usgs.gov>; Zahniser, Shellie R <srzahniser@usgs.gov>

Subject: Fw: Geographic Names EO

Hi Matt, Shellie,

I wanted to check with the solicitor (b) (5) ACP

(b) (5) ACP

Thanks,
m

From: Tischler, Michael A <mtischler@usgs.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, January 21, 2025 9:38 AM
To: Myrick, Brett H <brett.myrick@sol.doi.gov>
Subject: Re: Geographic Names EO

Hi Brett,

(b) (5) ACP

Thanks,
m

From: Myrick, Brett H <brett.myrick@sol.doi.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, January 21, 2025 9:32 AM
To: Tischler, Michael A <mtischler@usgs.gov>
Subject: Re: Geographic Names EO

Mike-

(b) (5) ACP

Thanks,
Brett

Brett H. Myrick

Attorney-Adviser
Department of the Interior
Division of General Law - General Legal Services
brett.myrick@sol.doi.gov
202-208-3820 (work)
312-576-4798 (personal cell)

From: Tischler, Michael A <mtischler@usgs.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, January 21, 2025 9:28 AM
To: Myrick, Brett H <brett.myrick@sol.doi.gov>
Subject: Geographic Names EO

Hi Brett,

(b) (5) ACP

Thanks,
m

Mike Tischler, Ph.D
Director, National Geospatial Program
U.S. Geological Survey
Department of Interior
o: 703-648-4725
c: 703-344-4348
mtischler@usgs.gov

From: [Myrick, Brett H](#)
To: [Tischler, Michael A](#)
Subject: Re: Geographic Names EO
Date: Tuesday, January 21, 2025 12:56:35 PM

(b) (5) ACP

Brett H. Myrick
Attorney-Adviser
Department of the Interior
Division of General Law - General Legal Services
brett.myrick@sol.doi.gov
202-208-3820 (work)
312-576-4798 (personal cell)

From: Tischler, Michael A <mtischler@usgs.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, January 21, 2025 10:06 AM
To: Myrick, Brett H <brett.myrick@sol.doi.gov>
Subject: Re: Geographic Names EO

Hi Brett,

(b) (5) ACP

Thanks,
m

From: Myrick, Brett H <brett.myrick@sol.doi.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, January 21, 2025 9:32 AM
To: Tischler, Michael A <mtischler@usgs.gov>
Subject: Re: Geographic Names EO

Mike-

(b) (5) ACP

Thanks,
Brett

Brett H. Myrick
Attorney-Adviser
Department of the Interior
Division of General Law - General Legal Services
brett.myrick@sol.doi.gov
202-208-3820 (work)
312-576-4798 (personal cell)

From: Tischler, Michael A <mtischler@usgs.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, January 21, 2025 9:28 AM
To: Myrick, Brett H <brett.myrick@sol.doi.gov>
Subject: Geographic Names EO

Hi Brett,

(b) (5) ACP

(b) (5) ACP

Thanks,
m

Mike Tischler, Ph.D
Director, National Geospatial Program
U.S. Geological Survey
Department of Interior
o: 703-648-4725
c: 703-344-4348
mtischler@usgs.gov

From: Tischler, Michael A
To: BGNEXEC, GS-N-MAC; Zahniser, Shellie R
Subject: Re: [EXTERNAL] ST_GeographicName
Date: Wednesday, January 22, 2025 11:47:41 AM

Unless you feel there is a need to respond soon, I'd say that we could wait a little longer. I know DOI is working on a media statement.

From: BGNEXEC, GS-N-MAC <bgnexec@usgs.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, January 22, 2025 2:46 PM
To: Zahniser, Shellie R <srzahniser@usgs.gov>; Tischler, Michael A <mtischler@usgs.gov>
Subject: Re: [EXTERNAL] ST_GeographicName

Hi Mike and Shellie, I haven't responded to the proponent. What is your advice? Respond now or wait until OCAP provides guidance about responding to anything about the EO in general?

Matt

From: BGNEXEC, GS-N-MAC <bgnexec@usgs.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, January 22, 2025 11:59 AM
To: St Onge, Timothy <tong@loc.gov>; Zahniser, Shellie R <srzahniser@usgs.gov>
Cc: Tischler, Michael A <mtischler@usgs.gov>
Subject: Re: [EXTERNAL] ST_GeographicName

Thanks Mike and Tim, I will let the proponent know.

Matt

From: St Onge, Timothy <tong@loc.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, January 21, 2025 5:12 PM
To: Zahniser, Shellie R <srzahniser@usgs.gov>
Cc: Tischler, Michael A <mtischler@usgs.gov>; BGNEXEC, GS-N-MAC <bgnexec@usgs.gov>
Subject: RE: [EXTERNAL] ST_GeographicName

Hi everyone,

I'm in concurrence that the Flattop proposal be rejected, given that the EO establishes Mount McKinley as official and therefore makes the Flattop name change a duplicative name issue, citing Policy VII, Sec. 1. Name duplication may not have been in the original logic of the proposal, but that is the scenario following the EO.

Thank you,
Tim

Tim St. Onge
Cartographer

Geography & Map Division
LM-B02
202-707-9044
tong@loc.gov



From: Zahniser, Shellie R <srzahniser@usgs.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, January 21, 2025 4:57 PM
To: St Onge, Timothy <tong@loc.gov>
Cc: Tischler, Michael A <mtischler@usgs.gov>; BGNEXEC, GS-N-MAC <bgnexec@usgs.gov>
Subject: FW: [EXTERNAL] ST_GeographicName

CAUTION: This email message has been received from an external source. Please use caution when opening attachments, or clicking on links.

Tim,

Seeking your input on this matter.

BLUF: Proposal to change [Flattop](#) (no feature in GNIS and FID in proposal is for [Chugach Mountains](#), perhaps [Flattop Mountain](#), which is in the Chugach Mountains?) to "Mount McKinley"

Now that the EO has been signed to re-instate the name Mount McKinley, should we outright reject the Flattop proposal?

Shellie Zahniser, Ph.D.
BGN Executive Secretary
Domestic Names Committee
Honolulu, HI

From: Tischler, Michael A <mtischler@usgs.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, January 21, 2025 11:51 AM
To: Zahniser, Shellie R <srzahniser@usgs.gov>; BGNEXEC, GS-N-MAC <bgnexec@usgs.gov>
Subject: Re: [EXTERNAL] ST_GeographicName

If we received a proposal for a living relative, we would outright dismiss the proposal because it violates a standing policy, right?

I would like to have concurrence from Tim, but I would say we could dismiss the proposal as being in violation of Policy VII, Sec. 1:

The BGN will normally disapprove a name proposed for a geographic feature that is already applied to another nearby feature.

Given the extraordinary prominence of Mount McKinley, it would be confusing to have any other feature in the State share the same name.

From: Zahniser, Shellie R <srzahniser@usgs.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, January 21, 2025 4:34 PM
To: Tischler, Michael A <mtischler@usgs.gov>; BGNEXEC, GS-N-MAC <bgnexec@usgs.gov>
Subject: RE: [EXTERNAL] ST_GeographicName

Should we even process it? If there is already a Mount McKinley via EO, then I would think that any proposal for that name, in AK should be outright denied without processing.

Shellie Zahniser, Ph.D.
BGN Executive Secretary
Domestic Names Committee
Honolulu, HI

From: Tischler, Michael A <mtischler@usgs.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, January 21, 2025 11:21 AM
To: Zahniser, Shellie R <srzahniser@usgs.gov>; BGNEXEC, GS-N-MAC <bgnexec@usgs.gov>
Subject: Re: [EXTERNAL] ST_GeographicName

I didn't ask about that...

What would I be seeking resolution or clarification on? The feature that's being renamed (Flattop) was not named by EO, nor is there any pending legislation, right?

I could see that proposal (Flattop -> McKinley) as not being approved, though, as it would be confusing.

From: Zahniser, Shellie R <srzahniser@usgs.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, January 21, 2025 4:12 PM
To: Tischler, Michael A <mtischler@usgs.gov>; BGNEXEC, GS-N-MAC <bgnexec@usgs.gov>
Subject: RE: [EXTERNAL] ST_GeographicName

Are you seeking resolution to that second question as well?

Shellie Zahniser, Ph.D.
BGN Executive Secretary

Domestic Names Committee
Honolulu, HI

From: Tischler, Michael A <mtischler@usgs.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, January 21, 2025 11:11 AM
To: BGNEXEC, GS-N-MAC <bgnexec@usgs.gov>; Zahniser, Shellie R <srzahniser@usgs.gov>
Subject: Re: [EXTERNAL] ST_GeographicName

I asked the DOI Solicitor about (b) (5) - ACP

(b) (5) - ACP

However, it's a different question as to whether we want to name another feature to Mount McKinley.

From: BGNEXEC, GS-N-MAC <bgnexec@usgs.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, January 21, 2025 3:57 PM
To: Tischler, Michael A <mtischler@usgs.gov>; Zahniser, Shellie R <srzahniser@usgs.gov>
Subject: Fw: [EXTERNAL] ST_GeographicName

Our question about BGN purview over Executive or Congressional naming is a reality.

Two proposals, only one of which is relevant to the question:
change [Denali](#) to "Denali McKinley"
change [Flattop](#) (no feature in GNIS and FID in proposal is for [Chugach Mountains](#), perhaps [Flattop Mountain](#), which is in the Chugach Mountains?) to "Mount McKinley"

Matt

From: Shane Carlson <(b) (6) @myyahoo.com>
Sent: Tuesday, January 21, 2025 3:42 PM
To: BGNEXEC, GS-N-MAC <bgnexec@usgs.gov>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] ST_GeographicName

This email has been received from outside of DOI - Use caution before clicking on links,

opening attachments, or responding.

Petition to change the name of two mountains in Alaska.