Philippines, 2018

National agencies and functioning of a names board

Helen Kerfoot

(Canada)

UNGEGN

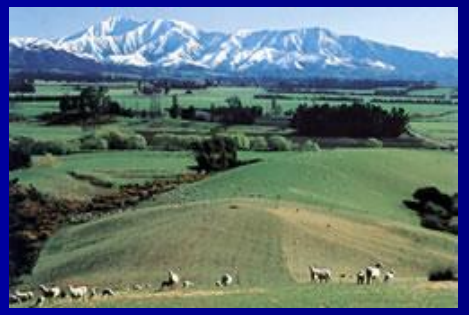
Aims today

- National programmes – premises and justifications
- Some different types of geographical names authorities
- Variations in mandate, composition, etc. of names boards
- Principles of naming – some thoughts

Basic premises

- Geographical names should be clear and unambiguous
- Each country has control over the geographical names in its own territory

- Each country needs a process for standardizing and approving names
- Nationally recognized names are the basis for international use



Justifying a national programme?

- Not always easy to justify the benefits in financial terms
- Considerable money and time are spent on different programmes; overlapping efforts
  - little coordination and conflicting results
- Consolidated, small nucleus of dedicated people
  - at less cost
  - more consistent information in government documents
  - names more readily available to general public
- Names are for the use of all, not only mapping!

Support from the United Nations

- UN resolution I/4a 1967 underlines need to establish national agencies … again V/15 1987
- Importance of toponyms in spatial data infrastructure … UN Regional Cartographic Conferences, 2000, 2001 and UN res. VIII/6, 2002
- Preservation of toponyms as elements of identity and cultural heritage … VIII/9 and IX/4
  + link with UNESCO

Names authorities come in different shapes and sizes

- The choice depends on the nature of the country
- (1) Default if no names board?
- (2) Centralized national names board
  - all decisions under one roof
  - by sub-committees: feature types, language ..
- (3) Decentralized to regional names boards
  - with central umbrella coordinating authority
  - with regional committees

- *Is it a board, a commission, a council .....?*

(1) Standardization – central agency / agencies

National Mapping Agency

Municipalities

National Hydrographic Office

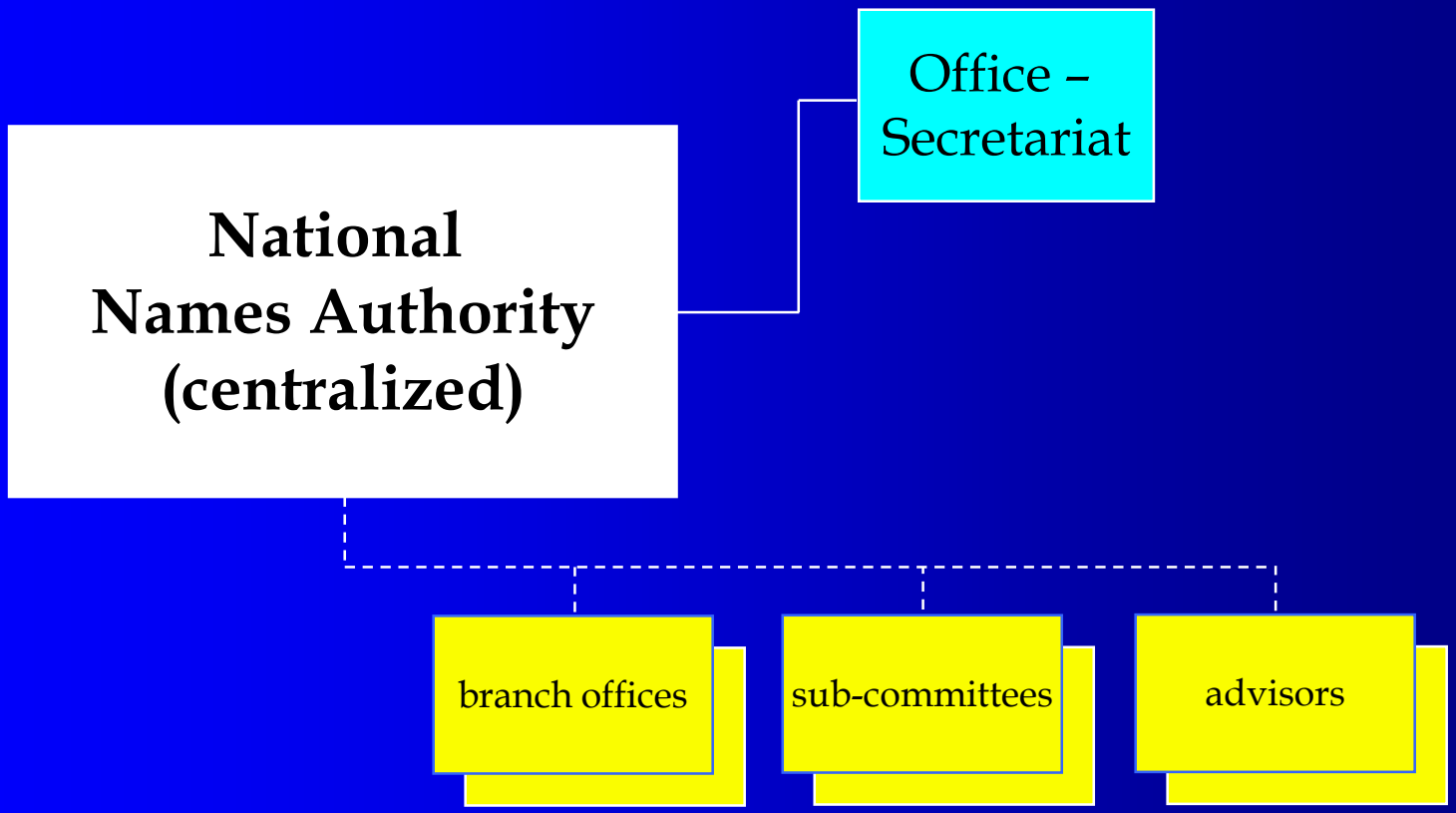
Military Mapping

Is this good or bad ?

- ✓ Expertise in mapping
- ✓ Collect names while doing field survey
- ✓ Continuing user of names
- ✓ Have available finances

- x Perhaps responsibility of one individual
- x Lack of range of expertise
- x Have own agenda
- x No shield from political pressure

(2) Standardization – names authority (centralized)



Hungarian Committee on Geographical Names

Responsibility **- Under Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development**

Legal basis **- Decree 1989 and 1992**

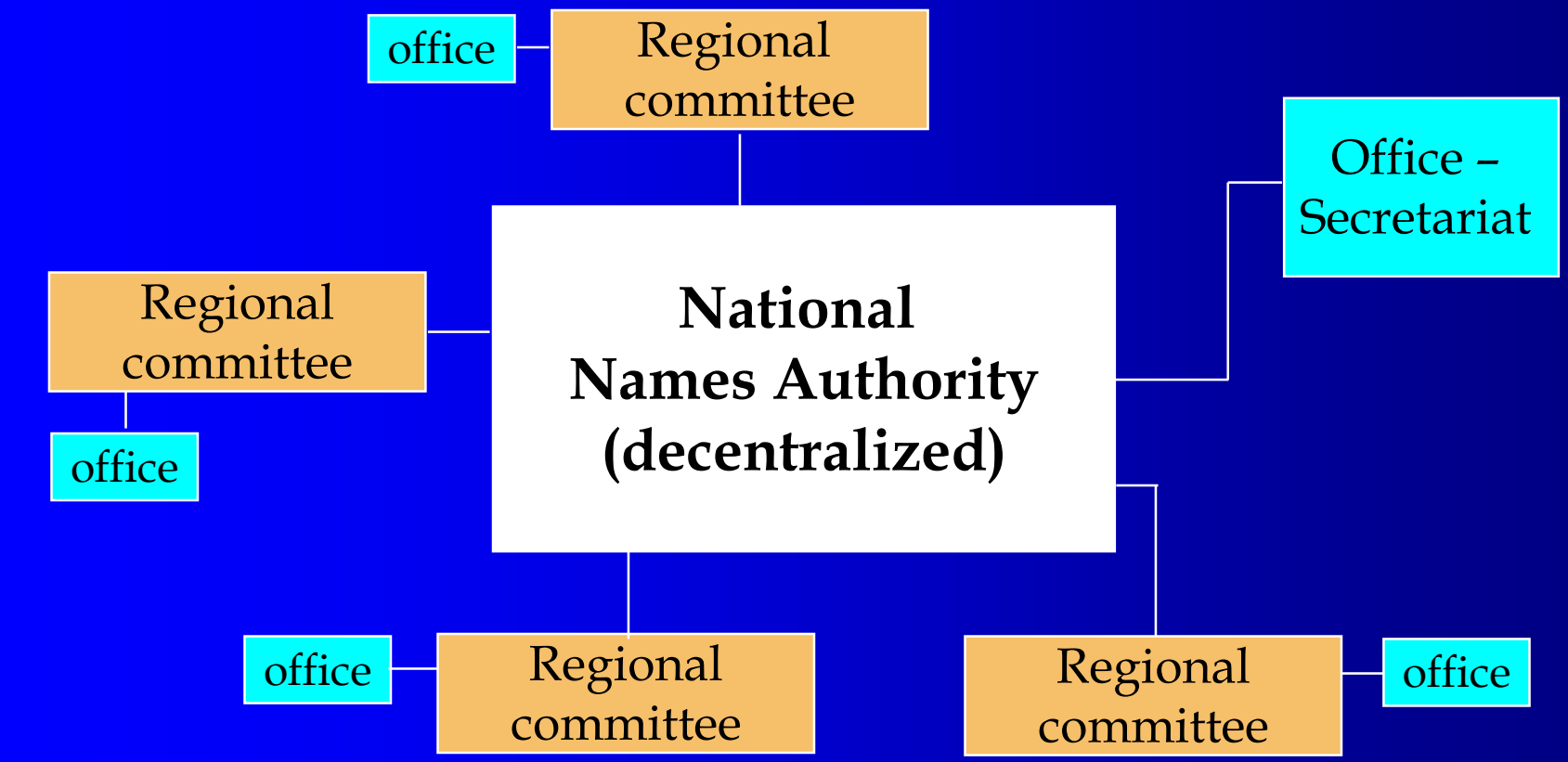
Decisions **– physical and transport features**

Advice **– administrative names; treatment of names outside Hungary**

Members **– national mapping, departments of both domestic and foreign affairs; transport; geographical science, education and higher learning; experts in linguistics; local authorities, minorities; major map publishers; national press**

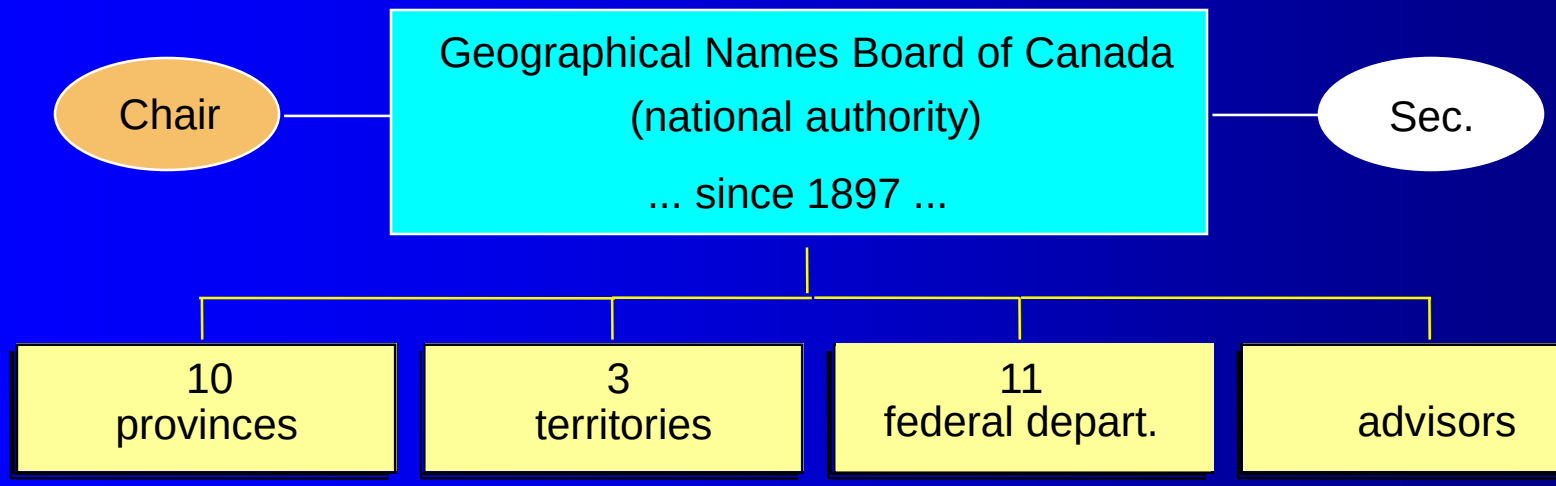
Meetings **– 3 to 5 times a year**

(3) Standardization – names authority (decentralized)



Geographical names - Canada

Administrative structure



GNBC …

- √ Forum for discussion
- √ Development of policies
- √ International, United Nations activities
- √ Receive advice on toponymic problems
- √ Work on common projects
- X .. Name decisions

(except undersea; Antarctica)

Provincial and territorial names authorities

- Some have administrative structures
- Some have names boards

Public appointees

- **academia**
- **First Nations**
- **Northern Ontario**
- **francophone rep.**

Ex officio

Ministry of Natural Resources

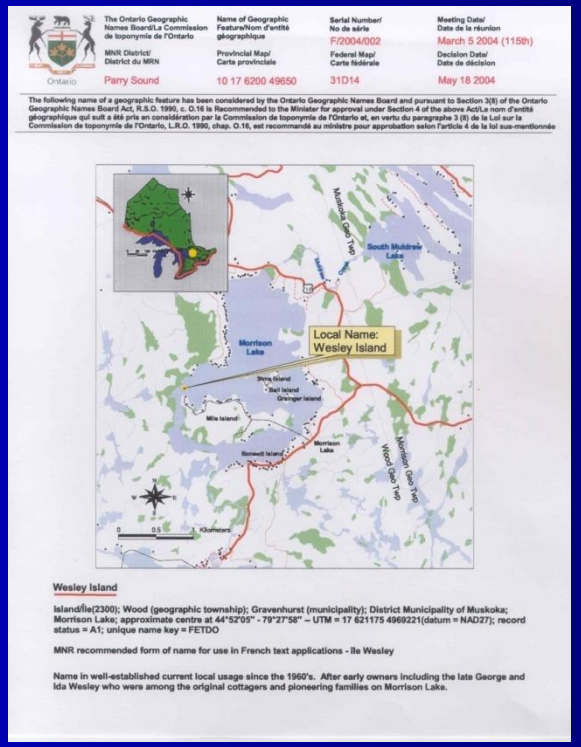
ONTARIO

OGNB

Chair

Advisory to Minister

In general …
Board meeting results …



The Ontario Geographic Names Board/La Commission de toponymie de l'Ontario	Name of Geographic Feature/Nom d'entité géographique	Serial Number/ No de série	Meeting Date/ Date de la réunion
		F/2004/002	March 5 2004 (115th)
MNR District/ District du MRN	Provincial Map/ Carte provinciale	Federal Map/ Carte fédérale	Decision Date/ Date de décision
Parry Sound	10 17 6200 49650	31D14	May 18 2004

The following name of a geographic feature has been considered by the Ontario Geographic Names Board and pursuant to Section 3(8) of the Ontario Geographic Names Board Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. O.16 is Recommended to the Minister for approval under Section 4 of the above Act/La nom d'entité géographique qui suit a été pris en considération par la Commission de toponymie de l'Ontario et, en vertu du paragraphe 3 (8) de la Loi sur la Commission de toponymie de l'Ontario, L.R.O. 1990, chap. O.16, est recommandé au ministre pour approbation selon l'article 4 de la loi sus-mentionnée

Wesley Island

Island/île(2300); Wood (geographic township); Gravenhurst (municipality); District Municipality of Muskoka; Morrison Lake; approximate centre at 44°52'05" - 79°27'58" – UTM = 17 621175 4969221(datum = NAD27); record status = A1; unique name key = FETDO

MNR recommended form of name for use in French text applications - Ile Wesley

Name in well-established current local usage since the 1960's. After early owners including the late George and Ida Wesley who were among the original cottagers and pioneering families on Morrison Lake.

Decisions of a Board

GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES BOARD OF CANADA

BRITISH COLUMBIA DECISIONS

The decision noted hereunder was approved:

DATE: 19 NOVEMBER 2012

BY: *Provincial Toponymist*
Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations

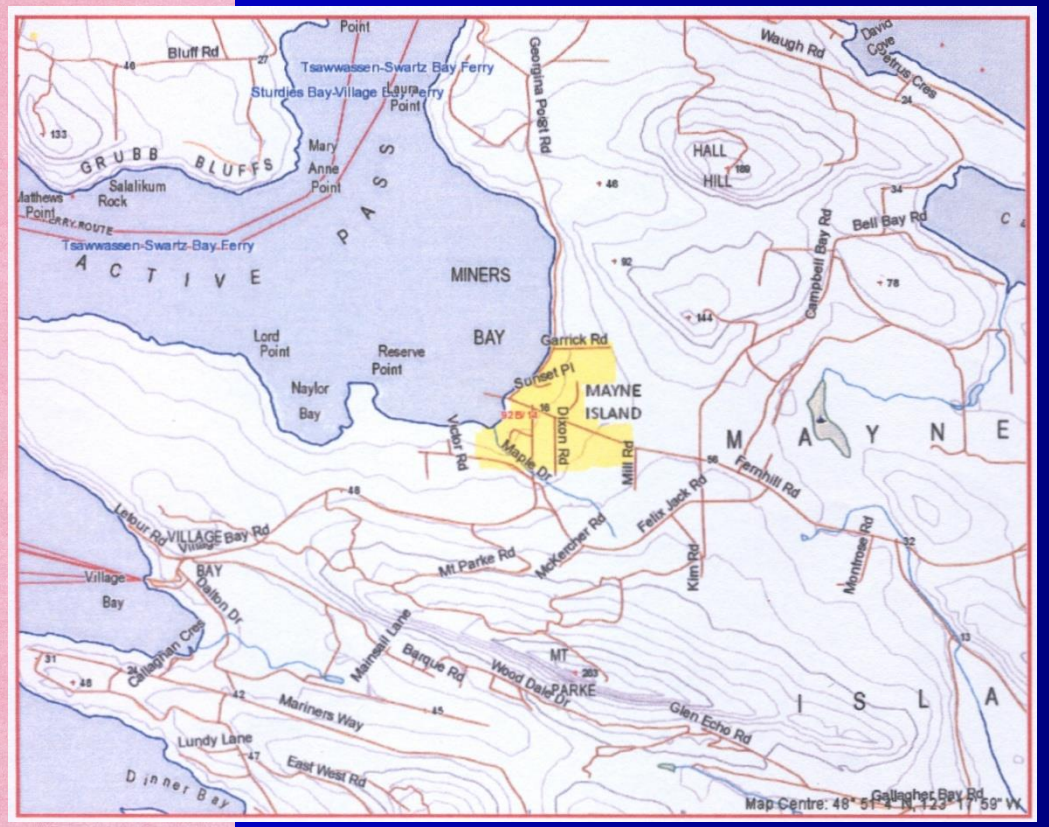
RESCINDED
CGNDB Status: B4 (Gazetteer Cross-Reference)

JANGI Mayne
Feature type: Community
92B/14 - Mayne Island, British Columbia
NW side of Mayne Island, facing Active Pass, Cowichan Land District
Geographical Coordinates: 485104 1231759

ADOPTED
CGNDB Status: A4 (Change in the Form of a Name)

JDLLC Mayne Island
Feature type: Community
92B/14 - Mayne Island, British Columbia
NW side of Mayne Island, facing Active Pass, Cowichan Land District
Geographical Coordinates: 485104 1231759

Mayne (Post Office) adopted 12 December 1939, as labelled on BC Lands' map 2A, 1913 et seq. Form of name changed to Mayne (community) 29 November 1984 on Ottawa file 203-2. Form of name changed to Mayne Island (community) 19 November 2012, as requested by Islands Trust and endorsed by residents groups and area representatives, including Ratepayers Association, regional government, and elected provincial & federal representatives.



Decisions of a Board

NOVA SCOTIA

GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES BOARD OF CANADA - DECISIONS

The decisions noted hereunder were approved:

Date: Dec 6, 2010

As confirmed by:

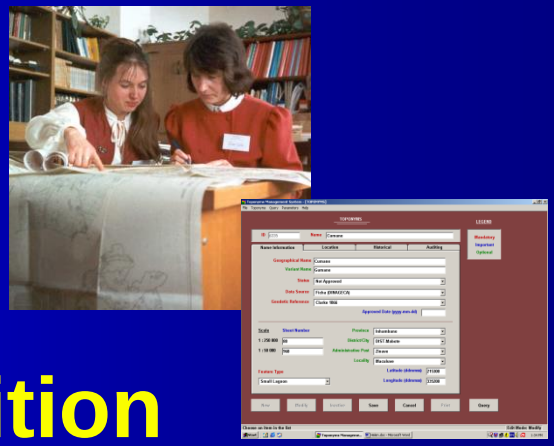
Nancy Saunders, Nova Scotia Member of the GNBC

Status Code

CGNDB Key	Altered Application	Generic Code	Feature Name	County	Gazetteer Map	Location	Current Latitiude	Current Longitude
CAAHM	A4	108	Academy	Pictou	011E10	NE. of New Glasgow	453634	623557
CAAMG	A4	108	Allen Heights	Halifax	011D12	W. of Halifax	444102	635359
CAANM	A4	108	Alpena	Annapolis	021A14	SE. of Middleton	445002	650239
CABBY	A1	108	Avondale Station	Pictou	011E09	NE. of New Glasgow	453733	621745
CABRQ	A4	108	Barrachois Harbour	Cape Breton	011K01	W. of Sydney	460852	602531
CABUW	A4	108	Barrys Corner	Lunenburg	021A08	NW. of Lunenburg	442545	642834
CACND	A4	108	Beechmont North	Cape Breton	011K01	SW. of Sydney	460645	601957
CACOJ	A4	108	Belgiumtown	Cape Breton	011K01	NE. of Sydney	461127	600041
CACQZ	A4	108	Benacadie West	Cape Breton	011F15	N. of Bras d'Or Lake	455616	604352
CACUH	A1	108	Berichan	Colchester	011E11	SE. of Tatamagouche	453614	630501
CACWW	A1	108	Bickerton West	Guysborough	011F04	SE. of Sherbrooke	450611	614354
CACXQ	A4	108	Big Beach	Cape Breton	011F15	SW. of Sydney	460000	604146
CACZF	A4	108	Big Brook	Cape Breton	011K02	SW. of Sydney	460020	604106
CADCS	A4	108	Big Glace Bay	Cape Breton	011J04	E. of Glace Bay	461040	595437
CADPU	A4	108	Birch Hill	Colchester	011E05	E. of Bass River	452424	634604
CAETO	A4	108	Boularderie West	Cape Breton; Victoria	011K01	Boularderie Island	461044	602836
CAEZB	A4	108	Breac Brook	Cape Breton	011F15	SE. of Baddeck	455444	603044
CAFAY	A4	108	Brickyard Road	Cape Breton	011K01	SE. of Sydney	460137	600144
CAGQZ	A4	108	Centre Musquodoboit	Halifax	011E03	SW. of Governor Lake	450556	630220
CAGRJ	A4	108	Centreville Reserve Mines	Cape Breton	011K01	NE. of Sydney	461123	600130
CAIAB	A4	108	Cove Road	Colchester	011E05	NW. of Truro	452319	635259
CAIVD	A4	108	Dalhousie Road	Kings	021A10	NW. of Sherbrooke Lake	444343	644136
CAJAZ	A4	108	Davison Street	Kings	021H01	SE. of Kentville	450132	642116
CAKSO	A4	108	East Halls Harbour Road	Kings	021H02	NE. of Berwick	451056	643426
CAKUO	A4	108	East Mines	Colchester	011E06	NW. of Truro	452625	632933
CAKWO	A1	108	East River Point	Lunenburg	021A09	NE. of Chester	443433	640945
CAKWQ	A4	108	East River Sheet Harbour	Halifax	011D15	NE. of Tangier Grand Lake	445511	623050
CAKZJ	A4	108	Economy Point	Colchester	011E05	NW. of Truro	452242	635345
CAKZN	A4	108	Ecum Secum Bridge	Halifax	011D16	NE. of Sheet Harbour	445826	621004

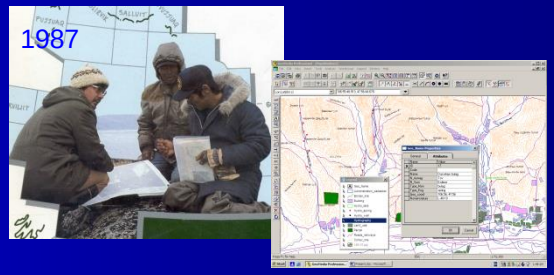
Process .....

- Gathering names
  - field collection from local use
  - other sources



- Processing in office
  - to database, etc.

- **Official recognition**
- Dissemination



Aim - clarity and avoiding ambiguity

- Correctly recorded names data
  - based on local usage
  - “standardized” - through an authority
- Available and easily accessible

Responsibilities of a names authority

- Responsibilities and scope of decisions?
- Developing policies and guidelines to support names approval or rejection
- Making decisions/recommendations on names
- Assuring minutes, names decisions … are made generally available
- Other tasks?
  - displays, talks, workshops
  - promotion in media, conferences

… impact of decisions

- Board looked to for independent unbiased judgement
- Decisions may affect highway signs, laws, maps, etc.
- Decisions are important to future generations
- Integrity and effectiveness of board at stake
  - Slow and sure!
- ….. avoid political interference

Variations – composition, mandate

- Number of members:
  - usually 6-18 ..... 44 in Madagascar (1973)
- Types of members:
  - national / regional / municipal governments
  - cultural and language groups
  - non-government experts (e.g. universities, scientific academies, publishers, historical societies)
- Mandate:
  - natural features; populated places; municipal units – towns, etc.; streets; buildings; ephemeral features
  - features in parks, on indigenous lands; marine features
  - exonyms
- Meetings:

Legislation: names, language

- Many national authorities established through legislation
  - Act of Parliament (1998) South Africa (SAGNC)
  - Board Act: New Zealand (NZGB,1946, 2008)
  - Decree: Israel (1951); Madagascar (KPMA, 1973)
  - Cabinet document: Malaysia (NCGN, 2002)
- Some countries have legislation regarding names
  - Ireland: Official Languages Act, 2003
  - New Zealand: since 1998 Māori place names for maps
  - Norway: since 1990 Norwegian, Saami & Finnish names
  - Estonia: since 1996 .. include language & spelling rules

More about a board …

- Secretariat support / tasks
  - really essential
- Policies and principles
- Who makes the final decision
  - Board or Minister of Department?
- Public consultations?
- … other questions …

Policies and principles - 1

- Develop according to country's needs
  - current and long-standing local usage
  - univocity / multilingual areas
  - duplication in small area?
  - spelling rules; variations for dialects?
  - derogatory and pejorative names
  - generic terminology

Policies and principles - 2

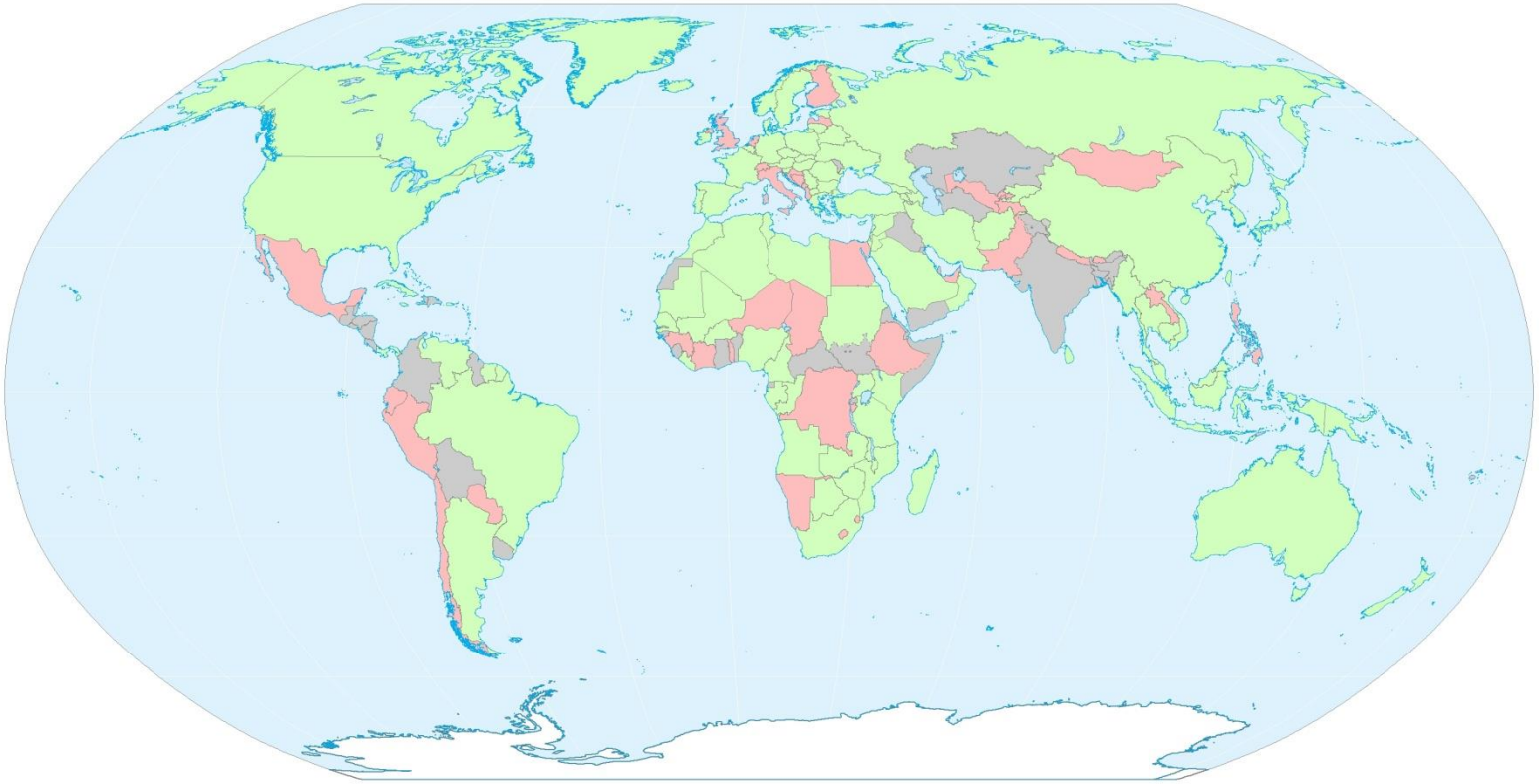
- generic terms for part of the whole
- statutory names
- commercial names
- personal names and commemoration
- preferred types of names where no local use
- use of council resolutions
- areas of restricted naming
- changing names

… one name, or more?

Early names authorities

- Historically many lists of place names accompanying maps (e.g. explorers)
- Mainly lack of names authorities until late 1800s
  - USA .. USBGN 1890 ... Executive Order of Benjamin Harrison ... decisions binding for Federal Government
    - Now domestic and foreign names under the USBGN
  - Canada .. Board 1897 ... Order of Privy Council ...
    - Originally federal, by 1960s all provinces had responsibility
- Denmark 1910; NZ and Ireland 1946

Geographical Names Authorities (July 2016)



With National Names Authority
No National Names Authority
Status Unknown

0 1000 2000 3000 4000 5000 km

The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptence by the United Nations.

**Dotted line represents approximately the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir agreed upon by India and Pakistan. The final status of Jammu and Kashmir has not yet been agreed upon by Parties.*

***Final boundary between the Republic of Sudan and Republic of South Sudan has not yet been determined.*

Map No.4554 United Nations
April 2016

Department of Field Support
Geospatial Information Section (formerly Cartographic Section)

Why are some boards ineffective?

- No one reason! Some suggestions:
  - Do not have
    - commitment of management, particularly in the lead department (resources)
    - Secretariat as focal point
    - interest/commitment of board members
    - good advisors on subjects of concern
    - clear direction/mandate
    - consultation with local community and provision of feedback
    - decisions available and used by government

In concluding ...

- To have a suite of standardized names a country needs a geographical names authority
  - Why is there no one type of geographical names authority suitable for every country?
  - Why is a Secretariat important to an authority?
- Management must be aware of the advantages of an appropriate authority
  - How can a names authority be effective?
- *References*: UNGEGN website
  - National Names Authorities – documents
  - UNGEGN Bulletin # 51

Political pressure to change a name

- Mount Logan, Yukon (Canada)
  - The highest mountain in Canada
  - William Edmond Logan – Founder of the Geological Survey of Canada, 1842
- Prime Minister wished to change the name
  - Commemorate a former Prime Minister, Pierre Elliott Trudeau (deceased)
  - Yukon/National Parks
  - Population strongly opposed

Political pressures to change a name

- Castle Mountain, Alberta (Canada)
  - 1858, appears like a rocky castle
  - 1946, the Prime Minister gave instructions to rename it after General Eisenhower
  - 1979, after constant pressure from the public: Castle Mountain with Eisenhower Peak

Castle Mountain

Mount Eisenhower

Eisenhower Peak

Geographical Names

Core Activities

Outreach to international community

Dissemination

Policies, procedures, guidelines, standards

Tools, Training

National Toponymic Services
Board … Database

Field recording & investigation delineation