

22 July 2002

Original: English

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Eighth United Nations Conference on the  
Standardization of Geographical Names  
Berlin, 27 August-5 September 2002  
Item 14 of the provisional agenda\*

TERMINOLOGY IN THE STANDARDIZATION OF GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES

Some toponymic terminology used in Canada

(Submitted by Canada)\*\*

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\*E/CONF.94/1

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# SOME TOPONYMIC TERMINOLOGY USED IN CANADA

## Paper submitted by Canada

In 1998, the Canadian Permanent Committee on Geographical Names approved several categories (and their associated definitions) of toponymic terminology. The categories are: official toponyms, official toponyms in designated contexts (with three subsets: pan-Canadian toponyms, equivalent toponyms, and alternate toponyms), and unofficial toponyms (with two subsets: alternate toponyms (Yukon) and French-text equivalents (Ontario)). Examples of each type of name and where it is to be used are provided as are definitions of each type of name.

At its 1998 annual meeting in Regina, Saskatchewan, the Canadian Permanent Committee on Geographical Names approved several categories (and their associated definitions) of toponymic terminology.<sup>1</sup>

The categories are: official toponyms, official toponyms in designated contexts, and unofficial toponyms.

### I. Official toponyms

Official toponyms are toponyms authorized for general use by federal, provincial, or territorial names authorities, and that are accepted by the Geographical Names Board of Canada (or its predecessors). Such names are usually populated places or geographical features in Canada.

For most places or features there is one official toponym, but some dual (or multiple) toponyms are official in a number of cases, particularly for reasons of language. For a list of dual toponyms, see the publication *Canada's geographical names approved in English and French*, which is available from the Secretariat of the Geographical Names Board of Canada (GNBC).

### II. Official toponyms in designated contexts

Toponyms which are official in designated contexts are toponyms authorized by federal, provincial, or territorial names authorities, and accepted by the GNBC for specified use.

There are three subsets: pan-Canadian toponyms, equivalent toponyms, and alternate toponyms.

Canadians. These names are intended for use in the designated context of federal maps, charts, and other federal documents. These toponyms were designated by the Secretary of State (now Public Works and Government Services Canada) directive of 14 March 1994 for use on all federal maps and documents.

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<sup>1</sup> Now the Geographical Names Board of Canada or GNBC for short.

- **pan-Canadian toponyms**

Pan-Canadian names are official dual toponyms<sup>2</sup> listed in the Treasury Board of Canada's Circular No. 1983-56 and are features of pan-Canadian significance, i.e., significant to all

Pan-Canadian names have been accepted by the GNBC for use in designated context . but some have not been recognized as official by provincial or territorial names authorities. Examples of this are: Rocky Mountains and Montagnes Rocheuses; and Lake of the Woods and Lac des Bois.

The list of pan-Canadian names can be found in the publication *Principles and procedures for geographical naming*, 2001, and on the Geographical Names web site at <[http://geonames.nrcan.gc.ca/english/pan\\_can.html](http://geonames.nrcan.gc.ca/english/pan_can.html)>.

- **Equivalent toponyms (Manitoba)**

Equivalent names in Manitoba are toponyms designated as official in the context of well-known use in French Language Services Areas of the province of Manitoba. They are authorized for use on bilingual maps, signs, and other official documents affecting these areas. In the case of separate English and French documents, etc., the toponym appropriate to the language of the document should be used.

The Equivalent Names were established by Manitoba on 6 November 1989. There have had several additions to the original list since then. Currently there are 17 hydrographic toponyms and four road names.

These names will appear on federal government maps and documents.

<b>Official Name</b>	<b>Equivalent</b>
Assiniboine River	Rivière Assiniboine
Dawson Trail	Chemin Dawson
Lord Selkirk Highway	Route Lord Selkirk
Rivière aux Marais	Marais River
Plum River	Rivières aux Prunes

<sup>2</sup> Dual toponyms here refers to that fact that pan-Canadian names have both an English and a French form, e.g., Lake Ontario and Lac Ontario. There are other types of dual toponyms.

- **Alternate toponyms (Ontario)**

Alternate names in Ontario are toponyms recorded, processed, and given ministerial approval for geographical features or populated places which already have official names in languages or usages other than that of the alternate forms.

Ontario Alternate names will not appear on federal government maps or documents.

The alternate name is not necessarily a translation of a name used in one of Canada’s two official languages. It could be something completely different from the official name.

Currently there are 194 alternate toponyms; eight are for populated places.

Official Name	Alternate
<b>Places</b>	
Caledonia Springs	Les Sources
Great Desert	Grand-Déséri
<b>Features</b>	
Borden Lake	Lac Borden
Canard River	Rivière aux Canards
Giants Tomb Island	Île Travers
Ramsey Lake	Lac Ramsey

### III. Unofficial toponyms category

Unofficial names are formerly approved toponyms, variants in local usage (including language or spelling differences), toponyms either under investigation or in the approval process, obsolete or translated forms of toponyms, etc.

There are two subsets of unofficial names: alternate toponyms in the Yukon Territory and French-text equivalents in Ontario. French text equivalents are discussed in more detail in Dr. André Lapierre’s paper

Toponyms in the unofficial names will not appear on federal government maps or documents.

Official Name	Formerly Approved Name
Ottawa	Bytown
Frobisher Bay	Iaaluit
Official Name	Variants
Regina	Pile of Bones, Pile O'Bones
Toronto	Hogtown, Queen City, etc.
Îles de la Madeleine	Magdalen Islands, Îles Magdalen

- **Alternate toponyms (Yukon Territory)**

Alternate names in Yukon Territory are unofficial toponyms, primarily in Aboriginal languages, for features with official names in one of Canada's two official languages. No Yukon Alternate names have been found for place names.

The use of Yukon Alternate toponyms has not been clearly determined yet. Yukon Alternate names will not appear on federal maps or documents.

Examples of Yukon Alternate names	
Official Name	Yukon Alternate
Swim Lakes	Desdele Mené'
Olgie Lake	D{13} Néstl{11}n Lake *

\* {11} represents a character with a macron over the "o" and {13} represents a character with a macron over the "u".

- **French-text Equivalent toponyms (Ontario)**

French-text Equivalent names in Ontario are unofficial toponyms, not based on local usage, but have been created to address the French-language forms of official toponyms. They are intended for use in Ontario's French-language texts.

Such names will not appear on federal government maps or documents.

The two-volume *Bilingual Glossary of Ontario's Geographic Names* was published in 1995. Since then, most Ontario decision lists have indicated the French-text Equivalent for each name.

Official Name	French-text Equivalent
Cullen Island	île Cullen
Handleman (Geographic Township)	Handleman (Canton géographique)
Martin Reef	récif Martin
Neilson Bay	baie Neilson
Outer Harbour East Headland	cap Est du havre Outer

### Where to get the publications mentioned in this document

*Principles and procedures for geographical naming, 2001*, (with pan-Canadian names) and *Canada's geographical names approved in English and French* (with pan-Canadian names, dual names, Manitoba Equivalent names, etc.) may be obtained from by writing to the:

Geographical Names Section  
 Natural Resources Canada  
 Room 634, 615 Booth Street  
 Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0E9 Canada

Or you can go to the following pages on Geographical Names web site, for:

- pan-Canadian names - <http://geonames.nrcan.gc.ca/english/pan-can.html>
- dual names (excluding pan-Canadian names) - <http://geonames.nrcan.gc.ca/english/dual-names.html#both>
- *Principles and procedures for geographical naming, 2001* – downloadable in pdf format - <http://geonames.nrcan.gc.ca/english/publications.html>

### References

Lapierre, André (July 1999): “La dichotomie forme parallèle / forme équivalente en Ontario”, *Canoma* 25 (1).

Lapierre, André (2002): “The Alternate form / Equivalent form dichotomy in the Province of Ontario, Canada”; paper presented under 8<sup>th</sup> Conference agenda item 9 (c).

“Manitoba: Equivalent Names in French Language Service Areas / Manitoba : noms équivalents dans les zones desservant les collectivités francophones”, *Canoma* 20 (1), July 1994.

### Endnote

This paper has been revised from the original version appearing in *Canoma*, Vol. 24, No. 2, 1998, prepared by Jocelyne Revie.