

United Nations Group of Experts on
Geographical Names

Ninth Session

New York, 17-27 February 1981

Agenda Item No. 8(a)

TERMS AND DEFINITIONS OF NEW UNDERSEA FEATURES

(Submitted by the United States of America)

As a result of mapping and charting activities on the United States continental shelf, agencies are encountering new kinds of features for which names are required.

To provide a standardized system of dealing with the features, the Advisory Committee on Undersea Features (ACUF) of the US Board on Geographic Names undertook research on the concerned maps and charts to identify and classify the features. The features were found to be similar in shape to those found in deeper water, but their distinctly smaller size and their distributional pattern justified the development of new terms and corresponding definitions. Compared with "major" undersea features, which are measured in terms of perhaps hundreds or even thousands of meters in two or three dimensions, "minor" features may be measured in terms of only tens of meters.

Initially, ACUF identified some 15 kinds of features, but subsequently reduced the number to nine. These features were given provisional terms and definitions by the committee. Then they were circulated to a number of oceanographers, bathymetrists, and other scientists and technicians involved with undersea work whose comments were requested. The final committee selection was made, taking into consideration the comments provided by experts in the field, and the Board approved them early in 1981. Attachment 1 shows the terms and definitions of minor undersea features.

Also shown on Attachment 1 is a term and definition for Shelf Valley, a new "major" feature found on the United States continental shelf.

Nations involved with work on continental shelves may find a requirement to provide names for the features identified on the Attachment. Obviously, except for Shelf Valley, the new features would be portrayed only on large or medium scale maps and charts.

The United States recommends that the Group of Experts consider adopting the new terms and definitions as international standards for use by nations engaged in mapping continental shelf areas.

TERMS AND DEFINITIONS FOR MINOR UNDERSEA FEATURES

<u>TERM</u>	<u>DEFINITION</u>
BENCH	A narrow, flat area on a slope
FLAT	A small, level or nearly level area
FORK	A branch of a canyon or valley
FURROW	A closed, linear, narrow, shallow depression
GULLY	A small, valley-like feature
LEDGE	A narrow, usually horizontal, shelf-like ridge or projection of rock
MOUND	A low, isolated, rounded hill
RAMP	A gentle slope connecting areas of different elevations
RAVINE	A small, canyon-like feature

TERM AND DEFINITION FOR A NEW MAJOR UNDERSEA FEATURE

SHELF VALLEY	A valley on the shelf, generally the shoreward extension of a canyon
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Attachment 1

Terms and Definitions of New Undersea Features
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