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The geographical names of Canada web site

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THE *GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES OF CANADA* WEB SITE

The *Geographical Names of Canada* Web site, managed by the Secretariat of the Geographical Names Board of Canada (GNBC) has been in existence since August 1994. Although there have been many changes in its content and appearance since its beginnings, it has maintained its focus on Canada's toponyms, and the GNBC, the national naming authority.

The current format of the site reflects standards known as Common Look and Feel (CLF), which make use of standard layouts and elements, such as menu bars and buttons, to clearly identify official Government of Canada Web sites and to facilitate navigation and improve accessibility. On request, material can be provided in alternate formats for those using adaptive technologies. Teletype access is available for the hearing impaired. All material on the site is available in both of Canada's official languages, English and French.

The site provides information on geographical names to the widest possible audience, and serves as a resource for Canadians and others. Those visiting the Web site represent a broad spectrum of users, from the public and private sectors, academia, and the general public. The site is used by those seeking information on a variety of topics, including:

- the correct spelling of names
- the location of places or features
- toponyms associated with a place or event
- history of Canada's naming authority
- contact information for members of the GNBC and the Secretariat
- naming policy and procedures
- history of names in Canada, and
- links to related Web sites in Canada and around the world

One of the most popular features on the Web site is the name query, which allows users to search for an official or formerly official name anywhere in Canada. It is possible to do a simple search for all of Canada, or to narrow the search using various parameters, such as province or territory or feature type, if needed. The name search is popular with a broad spectrum of users, from the public and private sector and the general public. We have received feedback indicating that many people use the search weekly, or even daily, in their work or studies.

The *Geographical Names of Canada* Web site also contains a number of other valuable resources. There is information on the origin of various names in Canada, including those of the provinces and territories and their capital cities. A list of publications available from the GNBC Secretariat includes several which can be downloaded without cost in Portable Document Format (.pdf). Information for translators, such as a list of names which are official in both English and French and abbreviations of names of provinces and territories in both official languages, is also available on the site.

Plans for the future of the Web site include adding more information on the origin and history of names, and adding educational material such as quizzes, puzzles and learning activity modules.

Sometime in 2007, it is anticipated that the site will be merged with the Web site for the Canadian Geographical Names Service (CGNS) and the existing name query tool will be replaced with the CGNS search utility known as the Geographical Name Search Service (GNSS). The GNSS incorporates newer technology and increased functionality, and also adds enhanced mapping capability. In addition, *Canoma*, a geographical names magazine of the GNBC, formerly a printed paper publication, will become an online publication, with future issues available exclusively online.

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