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REPORTS OF THE DIVISIONS

REPORT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA/CANADA DIVISION

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Submitted by Roger L. Payne (USA) and Helen Kerfoot (Canada).

## REPORT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA/CANADA DIVISION

Roger L. Payne (USA) and Helen Kerfoot (Canada)

Since the meeting of UNGEGN in June 1994, representatives of the USA/Canada Division have met informally on a number of occasions in conjunction with national or state/provincial or academic geographical names meetings in both countries.

Divisional cooperation exists on a number of levels, and addresses various common toponymic issues. Some examples follow.

- Discussion at both national and state/provincial levels of any name changes or new names being adopted for features that cross the international boundary. This procedure follows closely the bilateral agreement signed between the national naming authorities in 1988. Although cultural differences between the two countries may give rise to differences in local usage and preferred names, avenues are pursued to standardize one name, if this is appropriate.
- Participation of individuals in major geographical names business meetings of the other country, at which a wide variety of issues is raised. The annual meetings of the US Western States and of the Canadian Permanent Committee on Geographical Names have proved ideal venues for this learning and exchange experience.
- Exchange of documentation and ideas, relating to policies, data base development, dissemination of digital data, etc. This includes published and manuscript materials addressing a variety of geographical naming issues.
- Various approaches to the use of diacritics in names have been shared, as the USBGN was reviewing its policy on this subject, with regard to names in European, Native American, Polynesian, and Micronesian languages.
- Discussion on the collection, recording, application and use of toponyms used by Native Americans and Canada's First Nations. The USBGN has developed policies to deal with the collection of aboriginal names; Canada, on the other hand, has worked on field collection guidelines and on an annotated bibliography.
- Collaboration at the state/provincial, as well as the national levels is encouraged for the resolution of more local and specific issues. This has been particularly relevant to adjoining US states and Canadian provinces dealing with names of common features.
- Advice has been sought by Canada on US information for writing toponyms of places and features located outside the land area of the Division, in particular those which have recently undergone change.

In 1990, the USBGN celebrated 100 years of names standardization by the country's national names authority. In 1997, Canada will also be marking the centennial of its national names authority. It is certainly anticipated that cooperation within the Division in toponymy and standardization process will extend through the next 100 years.