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MEETING OF THE WORKING GROUP ON TOPONYMIC DATA
FILES AND GAZETTEERS

CONCISE GAZETTEER OF CANADA

Submitted by Helen Kerfoot, Canadian Permanent Committee on
Geographical Names Secretariat, Canada.

CONCISE GAZETTEER OF CANADA

Resolution 4(E) of the First United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names (1967) recommended that each names authority produce gazetteers of all its standardized geographical names.

Canada's national names authority started a gazetteer series in 1952 and since then the Canadian Permanent Committee on Geographical Names (CPCGN) has published several editions of separate volumes for the two territories and nine of the ten provinces. They have all been produced by what is now Natural Resources Canada under the umbrella title of the *Gazetteer of Canada Series*. The Government of Quebec has disseminated the toponyms of Quebec through the *Répertoire toponymique du Québec*. Names of undersea features off the coast of Canada have been listed in the *Gazetteer of Undersea Feature Names*, published by the Canadian Hydrographic Service for the CPCGN, in 1983 and 1987.

Although the publication of a single volume paper copy gazetteer has been discussed over the last decade, it is only in 1996 that its actual production has been initiated. Over the past few years, the efficacy of continuing with plans for a paper copy volume has been questioned. This happened for a variety of reasons, not least of which were the increase in the use of digital data, introduction of cost recovery structures in government, changes in organizations, questioning of roles and responsibilities of different levels of government, and so on. However, consultation with users of toponymic data clarified that reference books are still needed in this computer age, and that libraries, cartographic establishments, map collections, university departments, government offices, etc., still need recourse to paper copy, as well as to digital, data. The results of a user survey we undertook in 1993, to ascertain support for such a gazetteer and to obtain information on content and presentation, are included in WP No. 30, presented to UNGEGN in June 1994.

During the re-evaluation of the CPCGN Strategic Plan in late 1993, the CPCGN members agreed that although the committee must address the demands for digital data and on-line access to toponymic data, it must also respect the traditional ways of providing names information to the public. Production of a one-volume national gazetteer was included in the revised Plan. At this time, it is anticipated that the *Concise Gazetteer of Canada* will be produced in time for the 1997 centennial of the establishment of a national naming authority in Canada.

The early tasks and progress of the working group set up to plan the content of the *Concise Gazetteer of Canada* was reported in WP No. 62, at the UNGEGN meeting in November 1991. At that time, the methodology established for names selection was described. It combined the use of both objective and subjective criteria to build up a collection of names, considered to be the most useful for general reference purposes, to users inside or outside Canada.

The digital Canadian Geographical Names Data Base (CGNDB) is the source of names for the gazetteers in the *Gazetteer of Canada Series*, and is also the starting point for development of the new national volume. The CGNDB now contains some 500 000 records, of which about 320 000 are entries for currently official names, as approved by the Canadian Permanent Committee on Geographical Names, through the provincial and territorial jurisdictions. According to present plans, the count of entries to be extracted from the CGNDB and included in the *Concise Gazetteer of Canada* is in the order of 50 000 (rather larger than the very earliest estimated total of 32 000!).

Gazetteer entries

The following breakdown will give a general idea of the types of entries to be included. (The counts are all approximate.)

Based on Objective criteria, include systematically the names of:

• Incorporated places / administrative areas	~5 000
• Indian Reserves / First Nations Lands	~2 300
• Federal parks, historic sites, international parks World Heritage Sites	~200
• Geographic areas	~2 800
• "Pan-Canadian" features (English and French names)	~160
• All physical features shown on 1:2M base maps of Natural Resources Canada	~8 200
• Any other physical features listed in the <i>Canada Year Book</i> , or included as US-Canada transboundary names in the <i>United States Concise National Gazetteer</i> , 1990	~40
• Unincorporated populated places (including ~1000 urban communities)	~22 300
Sub-total	~41 000

Based on Subjective criteria, include the names of:

• Additional terrain features from 1:1M scale	~500
• Additional physical features (hydrographic and terrain) based on 1:500 000 maps of southern Canada in the <i>Canada Gazetteer Atlas</i> (1980)	~7000
• Undersea features, mostly selected from 1:1M sheets	~400
• Additional glaciers, ice caps, passes and waterfalls	~80
• Particular places/features selected by individual CPCGN members	~800
• Selected cross-references (some previously official names changed over the past 10 years)	~600
Sub-total	~9 380
Total entries	~50 380

Fields of data

The following fields of data will be included, and were supported as the most essential by the user survey.

Name	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • alphabetized by the specific • previously approved names cross-referenced to current names • particular font style for certain types of name (e.g. pan-Canadian)
Entity (feature type)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identification based on ~40 general categories, indicated in English and French by codes of up to four characters
Province/ Territory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • two-letter code for province or territory

- Location • first level administrative or geographic unit, or cadastral reference (at the pleasure of each province or territory)
- Map reference • National Topographic System (NTS) 1:50 000 map associated with the coordinates provided; in some cases a 1:250 000-scale map or a Canadian Hydrographic Service chart may be used instead
- Coordinates • Latitude and longitude in degrees and minutes

Other fields, such as altitude, population and name history, were requested by some individuals surveyed, but were not considered by them as essential components of a geographical names gazetteer.

Introductory material

In order to make the volume as useful as possible (but at the same time keeping down the size of the publication and the time to be spent in its preparation), responses to the user survey were reviewed. The following items meet users' expectations and are presently planned for inclusion in the bilingual prefatory section.

- Table of contents
- Contact address(es) re gazetteer
- Foreword ... including notes on national and international standards
- Preface ... including notes about the CPCGN
 - Note on history of the national names authority (?)
- CPCGN members' list, with contact addresses
- General information about availability of Canadian geographical names data ... digital data sets, Internet, map indexes, etc.
- Principles and procedures for naming
- Selection criteria for names in the gazetteer ... including use of any special fonts
- How to use the gazetteer
 - Explanation of the data in each column
 - Glossary explaining the feature type codes and categories being used
 - Explanation of other codes and abbreviations
- Short list of toponymic references for Canada (?)

Also a small-scale general map of Canada will be inserted at the back of the gazetteer.

Format

Considering the responses to the user survey and associated production and printing costs, the following format was established:

- 8.5" x 11" format
- soft cover
- perfect binding
- "portrait" orientation of pages
- approximately 75 entries per page
- ~700 pages in the volume

Distribution of the gazetteer

The *Concise Gazetteer of Canada* will be available from the Canada Communication Group, Ottawa, Canada K1A 0S9, and will be announced in the regularly distributed list of new federal government publications. The estimated cost will be below CAN\$60.