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FILES AND GAZETTEERS

TOWARDS CATEGORIES OF FFEATURE TYPES FOR THE CONCISE
GAZETTEER OF CANADA

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

TOWARDS CATEGORIES OF FEATURE TYPES FOR
THE CONCISE GAZETTEER OF CANADA

In working on the production of a concise national gazetteer in paper copy, considerable time has been spent and many questions have arisen about the appropriate groupings of feature types to create a series of categories of optimum use to the gazetteer user.

Feature codes on the Canadian Geographical Names Data Base

The Canadian Geographical Names Data Base classifies the 500 000 Canadian name records of the Canadian Permanent Committee on Geographical Names into some 1400 feature types - ranging from city to hamlet, stream, glacier, meadow, ravine, wharf, etc.

In general terms, these feature types are grouped into 10 categories and 25 sub-categories:

(1)	Populated places	Incorporated communities
		Unincorporated rural communities
		Unincorporated urban communities
(2)	Administrative areas	Municipal
		Geographic
		Parks, reserves, etc.
(3)	Water features	Flowing freshwater
		Features on flowing water
		Standing water surrounded by land
		Water sources
		Standing water connected to two or more bodies of water
		Tidal water features
		Shoreline water features
(4)	Terrain features	Elevated shoreline features
		Low-lying shoreline features
		Underwater features
		Terrain surrounded by water
		Elevated
		Depressed
		Flat
(5)	Ice and snow features	
(6)	Features associated with vegetation	Forested areas
		Open areas with low vegetation
(7)	Underground features	
(8)	Volcanic features	
(9)	Artificial features	Resource related
		Transportation related
		Others
(10)	Unclassified features	

These groupings provide quick overviews of the major feature types in Canada and help facilitate production of various listings, particularly for mapping purposes. However, in the current production of a *Concise Gazetteer of Canada*, the ten major categories noted above did not appear to provide sufficient information. Certainly the sub-categories on the CGNDB did provide a starting point, but a revised structure was deemed necessary to give more useful information to the users of the projected paper copy reference book.

International standards (?) and the Canadian choice

On studying existing national gazetteers, we found there to be no generally accepted or standardized approach to the representation of feature types from one country to another. Some national gazetteers use as few as 7 categories, others have as many as 60 or more types of features identified, and most fall somewhere in between. From a Canadian standpoint, it was thought that greater emphasis should be given to creating a distinction among types of populated places than is often attempted in national gazetteers. In Canada, incorporation of populated places follows different rules and uses different terminology in each province or territory. This variety is making the creation of multiple categories for populated places quite a challenge.

Further review of Canadian terminology and types of features, has now led us to a draft list which includes just under 40 categories of feature types for the forthcoming national gazetteer. The list will be refined and finalized during the next few months.

The Concise Gazetteer of Canada will be in a bilingual format, and, to fit the limited column space available, codes of up to four letters will be used in English and French to indicate the feature categories. As far as possible, the codes have been selected to minimize users' constant need to use a look-up table. Please note, categories shown with an asterisk (*) are still under review.

Category (E)	Category (F)	Code (E)	Code (F)
Province	Province	PROV	PROV
Territory	Territoire	TERR	TERR
* Municipality - QC (1)	Municipalité - QC (1)	QMU1	QMU1
* Municipality - QC (2)	Municipalité - QC (2)	QMU2	QMU2
* City	Ville	CITY	VIL1
* Town	Ville	TOWN	VIL2
* Village	Village	VILG	VILG
* Hamlet	Hameau	HAM	HAM
* Misc. municipal / district area	Autre zone municipale / de district	MUN	MUN
Unincorporated area	Lieu non incorporé	UNP	LN1
Indian Reserve	Réserve indienne	IR	RI
Geographical area	Zone géographique	GEOG	GÉOG

Conservation area	Zone de préservation	PARK	PARC
Military area	Réserve militaire	MIL	MIL
River	Cours d'eau	RIV	CDE
River feature	Entité fluviale	RIVF	EFLV
Falls	Chute	FALL	CHUT
Rapids	Rapide	RAP	RAP
Lake	Lac	LAKE	LAC
Spring	Source	SPRG	SRCE
Channel	Chenal	CHAN	CHEN
Bay	Baie	BAY	BAIE
Sea	Mer	SEA	MER
Sea feature	Entité maritime	SEAF	EMAR
Undersea feature	Entité sous-marine	SEAU	SMER
Shoal	Haut-fond	SHL	H-FD
Cape	Cap	CAPE	CAP
Beach	Plage	BCH	PLAG
Island	Île	ISL	ÎLE
Cliff	Escarpement	CLF	ESC
Mountain	Mont	MTN	MNT
Valley	Vallée	VALL	VAL
Plain	Plaine	PLN	PLNE
Cave	Caverne	CAVE	CAV
Glacier	Glacier	GLAC	GLAC
Forest	Forêt	FOR	FOR
Low vegetation	Végétation basse	VEGL	VÉGB
Miscellaneous	Divers	MISC	DIV

Details of the categories selected

A glossary of terms will be provided, along with some examples of the types of features included in each category. A draft version of the text follows; as in the above listing, please note that the categories with an asterisk (*) are currently under review:

- **Province** - a first level administrative division of Canada

- **Territory** - a first level administrative division of Canada

- *** Municipality - Quebec (1)** - incorporated unit as defined by the Government of Quebec

(including *municipalité, cité, ville, municipalité de canton, municipalité de cantons-unis, municipalité de paroisse, municipalité de village, territoire non organisé, municipalité de village cri, municipalité de village naskapi, municipalité de village nordique*)

- *** Municipality - Quebec (2)** - incorporated unit (usually containing a number of smaller incorporated units), as defined by the Government of Quebec
  (including *communauté urbaine, municipalité régionale de comté, région administrative*)

- *** City** - populated place with legally defined boundaries, as incorporated under a provincial or territorial municipal act

- *** Town** - populated place with legally defined boundaries, as incorporated under a provincial or territorial municipal act
  (including *town, separated town*)

- *** Village** - populated place with legally defined boundaries, as incorporated under a provincial or territorial municipal act
  (including *village, summer village, resort village, northern village*)

- *** Hamlet** - populated place with legally defined boundaries, as incorporated under a provincial or territorial municipal act
  (including *hamlet, organized hamlet, northern hamlet*)

- *** Miscellaneous municipal/district area** - various populated places with legally defined boundaries, as incorporated under a provincial or territorial municipal act
  (including *metropolitan municipality, community, borough, resort municipality, northern settlement, municipality, urban community, charter community, local government district, municipal district, township municipality, district municipality, regional municipality, rural municipality, regional district, county, improvement district, county municipality, restructured county, Indian government district, municipal county*)

- **Unincorporated area** - various urban or rural communities, or named locations, most of which have no defined limits
  (including *hamlet, village, police village, rural village, settlement, compact rural community, resort, locality, lieu-dit, railway point, station, landing, community, dispersed rural community, hameau, northern community, unincorporated village district, vacated or seasonal settlement, station de chemin de fer, établissement amérindien, village, settlement corporation, local service district, urban community, neighbourhood, suburban community, secteur*)

- **Indian Reserve** - tract of land set apart for the use and benefit of a particular Indian band / First Nation

- **Geographical area** - land (cadastral) division with legally defined boundaries
  (including *county, parish, geographic township, geographic district, district, royalty, settlement, territoire, geographic county*)

- **Conservation area** - legally defined land or water area set aside because of its particular natural or cultural significance

(including *provincial marine part, national marine conservation area, national historic site, lieu historique national, national park, international park, parc international, parc national, national park reserve, réserve de parc national, voie navigable*)

- **Military area** - base or station established for operations of the armed forces in Canada

- **River** - flowing watercourse, ranging in size from a small rivulet to a major river
  (including *river, brook, creek, pup, fleuve, millstream, ruisseau, rigolet, branch, burn,* etc.)

- **River feature** - feature on a flowing watercourse
  (including *bend, oxbow, snye, pool, bogan, elbow, padou, turn, slough, courbe, méandre, pool, trou, embouchure,* etc.)

- **Falls** - sharp descent of water
  (including *falls, waterfall, sault, chutes,* etc.)

- **Rapids** - fast-flowing section of a watercourse
  (including *rapids, whirlpool, rip, rapides, rattle, riffle, remous,* etc.)

- **Lake** - inland body of standing water
  (including *lake, pond, lagoon, barachois, flowage, hole, loch, mal bay, lac, lagune, étang, steady, tarn,* etc.)

- **Spring** - natural flow of water issuing from the ground
  (including *spring, hotspring, source,* etc.)

- **Channel** - narrow stretch of water connecting two other bodies of water
  (including *channel, chenal, gut, straits, passage, narrows, pass, run, goulet, opening, guzzle, détroit, passe,* etc.)

- **Bay** - water area in the indentation of a shoreline
  (including *bay, baie, fiord, fjord, harbour, cove, anse, inlet, estuary, haven, sound, havre, bassin, bras, golfe, gulf, backside, mouillage, anchorage, creek, arm,* etc.)

- **Sea** - large area of salt water
  (including *sea, mer, ocean, océan,* etc.)

- **Sea feature** - area of sea, exhibiting some particular characteristic
  (including *rip, tidal flow, tidal rips,* etc.)

- **Undersea feature** - feature of the seafloor
  (including *bank, slope, channel, canyon, dôme, chenal, ridge, plate-forme, basin, bassin,* etc.)

- **Shoal** - elevation of the seafloor, lake bottom, or river bed, over which the water is shallow, and which may be exposed at low water
  (including *shoal, haut-fond, bank, reef, ledge, ground, patch, sunker, brisants, récif, bantam, spot, chuckle,* etc.)

- **Cape** - prominent projection of land extending into a body of water
  (including *cape, cap, head, peninsula, point, foreland, spit, péninsule, langue de terre, pointe, promontory,* etc.)

- **Beach** - gently sloping shore area
  (including *beach, plage, grève, bar, flats, estran, battures, flèche, strand,* etc.)

- **Island** - land area surrounded by water or marsh
  (including *island, île, archipelago, islet, thrum, îlot, brandies, cap, isle, îlot,* etc.)

- **Cliff** - steep rock face
  (including *cliff, falaise, wall, escarpment, corniche, coteau,* etc.)

- **Mountain** - mass of land rising prominently above the surrounding terrain
  (including *mountain, mont, mount, montagne, range, peak, hill, summit, highland, colline, dome, spire, tower, crête, chaîne, pic,* etc.)

- **Valley** - depression in the land, possibly elongated or containing a water feature
  (including *valley, vallée, ravine, coulee, coulée, hollow, glen, gully, gorge, gap, basin, saddle, cirque, vale, crevasse, canyon, hole, notch, défilé, vallon,* etc.)

- **Plain** - area of flat or gently rolling terrain
  (including *plain, plaine, terrasse, lowland, plateau, upland, terrace,* etc.)

- **Cave** - underground chamber
  (including *cave, caverne, grotte,* etc.)

- **Glacier** - mass of permanent snow and ice
  (including *glacier, icefield, ice cap, névé, snowfield, ice sheet,* etc.)

- **Forest** - expanse of tree-covered terrain
  (including *forest, forêt, woods, grove, bluff, bosquet, bois, bush,* etc.)

- **Low vegetation** - area of grassland or other low vegetation cover
  (including *meadow, pré, prairie, marsh, swamp, bog, fen, marais, tourbière, muskeg, platin, champ, bottom, slough, marécage,* etc.)

- **Miscellaneous** - features not covered in other categories; often of a constructed nature
  (including *portage, bridge, lock, wharf, tunnel, piste, pont-tunnel,* etc.)

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The categories will be completed during the next few months. They will then be incorporated into the paper copy gazetteer and will also be used in the gazetteer available on the Canadian geographical names World Wide Web site. We shall then consider the terms and codes as a standardized Canadian reference classification that can be used in an ongoing way and applied in a variety of contexts.