

Board Members

June D. Hansen (Chairperson) –
Representing the Department of
Transportation

Jay D. Vogt (Vice Chairperson) –
Representing the State Historical
Society

Eileen Bertsch – Representing the
Department of Tourism

Secretary Steve Emery – Representing
the Department of Tribal Relations

Joe Nadenieck – Representing the
Department of Environment & Natural
Resources



Photo: South Dakota
Department of Tourism

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SOUTH DAKOTA



Board on
Geographic
Names

Process for Naming
Geographic Features

Authority of the SDBGN

The board shall investigate any proposed names, solicit public input, and make a recommendation to the United States Board on Geographic Names as to whether the board supports a new or replacement name. The board may establish procedures and standards to recommend, evaluate, and select geographic place names by rules promulgated pursuant to chapter 1-26. The rules shall be compatible with the standards of the United States Board on Geographic Names as contained in its manual, Principles, Policies and Procedures: Domestic Names, Reston, Virginia, 1997. (http://geonames.usgs.gov/docs/pro_pol_pro.pdf).

Source: SDCL 1-19C-2.1.

Board Process

After a name has been proposed for an unnamed feature or to rename a feature, the board notifies interested parties and the public of the request and conducts a 45-day public comment period.

Following the comment period the board typically meets in a community near the feature to get local input. The board reviews in order the public input and then votes on a name for the feature.

In order to give the public additional time to comment, the board again notifies interested parties and the public of the proposed name and conducts another 30-day comment period.

Following that time period, the board will consider any additional comments and vote on the final recommendation to send to the U.S. Board on Geographic Names. The U.S. board has the ultimate authority to name or rename a geographic feature.

Tips for Proposing a Name

Complete the form found on the board's website (www.sdbgn.sd.gov).

Submit supporting documentation showing why the name is appropriate for the feature such as newspaper articles, excerpts from publications or other historical documents.

Solicit letters of local support from governmental entities (city councils, county commissions, township boards, etc.) to include with submission.

Contact interested parties, such as local historical societies, service groups and longtime residents, to ask for letters to be sent to the SDBGN.

Reminders

A proposed name should not duplicate another name in the state or nearby in an adjoining state.

If a personal name is proposed, it must be in the public interest to honor the person or family for historical or commemorative reasons.

If a personal name is proposed, the person or persons must be deceased for at least five years and should include the surname.