

Newfoundland and Labrador Geographical Names Board

Department of Fisheries and Land Resources
Government of Newfoundland and Labrador

2017-2020 Activity Plan



Table of Contents

Message from the Chair	2
1.0 Overview	3
1.1 Mandate and Lines of Business	4
2.0 Primary Clients	4
3.0 Vision	5
4.0 Values	5
5.0 Objectives	6

Message from the Chair

In compliance with the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador's commitment to transparency and accountability, and on behalf of the Newfoundland and Labrador Geographical Names Board, I am pleased to present the Activity Plan for April 1, 2017-March 31, 2020. As the Chair, and on behalf of the entire Board, I accept accountability for the preparation of this plan and the achievement of its objectives.

This activity plan meets the requirements of the *Transparency and Accountability Act* for a Category 3 entity and spans a three-year period. The strategic directions of Government related to the Department of Fisheries and Land Resources have been considered in the preparation of this plan.

The Newfoundland and Labrador Geographical Names Board (NLGNB) is an advisory body appointed by the Minister of the Department of Fisheries and Land Resources (FLR) in accordance with the *Geographical Names Board Act* (the Act). The Board falls under the direction of the Enforcement and Resource Services Branch and its work is supported by an Administrative Officer, who also serves as provincial secretary.

Over the next three years the NLGNB will promote field research in areas that have been inadequately surveyed. The provincial geographical names database now has about 32,600 official entries. These names are managed and made available to citizens on request.

Other initiatives undertaken in recent years and continuing into the future include a much greater emphasis on recording and approving traditional Indigenous place names, the naming of Forest Access roads in the more remote and wilderness areas (necessary for safety and legal reasons) and the encouragement of commemorative naming related to significant persons and events in the province's history, particularly distinguished veterans of the Great War (World War I). The Board will embark on an initiative, in partnership with the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, to introduce the study of geographical names into the school curriculum. The main goals are to encourage public awareness of the importance of geographical names both in our daily lives and in preserving our cultural heritage, and invite active participation of students and their families in the provincial names program.



W.G. Handcock
Professor Emeritus in Geography
Chair

1.0 Overview

The NLGNB had its beginnings in the Newfoundland Nomenclature Board founded in 1904 under the Post and Telegraph Act. This body consisted of prominent intellectuals and educators and concerned itself mainly with requests to change names of communities as proposed by postal authorities, members of the House of Assembly on behalf of their constituents, and, very frequently, members of the clergy. The post office tried to avoid having communities with the same name, but many petitions for renaming or name changes were made because the existing place names were thought derogatory or offensive in some way. Following Confederation, an amendment to the Act in 1951 appointed the Curator of the Museum and Deputy Minister of Public Works ex-officio members with the Curator as chair. In 1959, the Nomenclature Board was placed under the Department of Provincial Affairs with the Deputy Minister serving as chair. In 1961, the Board included Premier J.R. Smallwood, the Attorney General, and the ministers of highways and health. Other members in the 1960s were: university professors Dr. E.R. Seary, Dr. G.M. Story and Dr. Leslie Harris; newspaper columnists and writers A.B. Perlin and Michael Harrington; St. John's city clerk E.B. Foran; and business man F.M. O'Leary, all of them noted for a keen interest in Newfoundland and Labrador cultural heritage and history.

The present NLGNB operates under the *Geographical Names Board Act*, originally proclaimed in 1975 but amended in 1991, 10 years before Newfoundland and Labrador became the official name of the Province. In 1975 the Board became more involved in the naming of all cultural and natural features in the province, not just settled places. Supervised systematic field names surveys were conducted by Memorial University geography students during the 1980s and early 1990s covering the eastern half of Newfoundland and the Sandwich Bay area of Labrador. In recent years, field surveys by volunteer local residents and other researchers have extended coverage to the south coast, central, west coast and Great Northern Peninsula regions of Newfoundland and into the northern, central, western and southern regions of Labrador. These directed surveys added over 15,000 previously unrecorded but locally-used names to the provincial database.

The NLGNB is the main authority for recommending the proper status of, and all changes related to names of places and geographical features in the Province to the Minister of Fisheries and Land Resources.

The NLGNB consists of the provincial secretary, a permanent staff member with the title Administrative Officer assigned by the Department, and five other members appointed by the Minister. Members are appointed for a term of three years. The NLGNB operates under the Department of Fisheries and Land Resources budget.

With the exception of the Chair, who receives an honorarium, NLGNB members are not given any remuneration. All meetings are held in St. John's. All members' terms will expire December 31, 2018.

Name	Role	Term	Residence
Dr. Gordon Handcock	Chair	2015-10-19 to 2018-12-31	Salvage & Mount Pearl
Gary N. Smith	Vice-Chair	2015-10-19 to 2018-12-31	Bishop's Cove
Randy Hawkins	Secretary	2015-10-19 to 2018-12-31	St. John's
Cheryl Brown-McLean	Member	2015-10-19 to 2018-12-31	St. John's
Franca Smith	Member	2015-10-19 to 2018-12-31	Happy Valley-Goose Bay
Vacant			

1.1 Mandate and Lines of Business

The main responsibility of the NLGNB is to administer the *Geographical Names Board Act*.

The Act empowers the Board with the following duties:

- gather, collate and record information respecting names of places and geographical features in the province;
- consult with and advise government departments and agencies, municipalities and other bodies or persons concerned with the selection of place names or the renaming of places and features regarding the suitability and spelling of the names;
- consider and make recommendations respecting a proposed change in the name of a place or geographical feature already in use that may be considered or be represented to be inappropriate to the place or geographical feature to which it is applied;
- collaborate with the Geographical Names Board of Canada (formerly the Canadian Permanent Committee on Geographical Names) respecting the selection of new geographical names, the elimination of alternative or duplicated names, the correct or preferred spelling of established names and other matters that may be of concern to the NLGNB or the Geographical Names Board of Canada;
- hold public meetings or invite submissions to NLGNB meetings where dispute arises or may arise with respect to the naming or renaming of a place or geographical feature; and
- recommend to the Minister for approval the names of places or geographical features.

Section 9 of the Act states “Notwithstanding sections 5 to 8, this *Act* shall be read and applied in conjunction with the *Labrador Inuit Land Claims Agreement Act* and, where a provision of this *Act* is inconsistent or conflicts with a provision, term or condition of the *Labrador Inuit Land Claims Agreement Act*, the provision, term or condition of the *Labrador Inuit Land Claims Agreement Act* shall have precedence over the provision of this *Act*.”

2.0 Primary Clients

The NLGNB's primary clients are members of the general public, government departments and agencies, municipalities and other bodies or persons concerned with the use of official names as well as the selection of place names or the renaming of places and features for

official status. A key partner is the Geographical Names Board of Canada, which maintains a database of all official geographical names in Canada.

Other government partners and agencies include:

- Parks Canada with respect to geographical names in Terra Nova National Park, Gros Morne National Park and L'Anse aux Meadows National Historic Site;
- The Regimental Advisory Committee of the Royal Newfoundland Museum in respect to commemorative names of Newfoundland Regiment veterans from World War I;
- The federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans with regard to names of coastal and underwater features and fishing grounds;
- The provincial Department of Transportation and Works in respect to names of geographical features along the Labrador Highway;
- The provincial Department of Municipal Affairs and Environment involving names of incorporated towns and local service districts;
- The provincial Department of Tourism, Culture, Industry and Innovation concerning names used on tourist maps;
- The provincial Department of Fisheries and Land Resources in the collection of names of Forest Access Roads;
- The provincial Department of Education and Early Childhood Development in promoting public awareness of the provincial geographical names program in schools;
- The Executive Council, Intergovernmental and Indigenous Affairs Secretariat and Office of Labrador Affairs in the naming of geographical features in the Land Claim areas;
- The Nunatsiavut Government with respect to geographical naming proposals inside the Labrador Inuit Lands or the Labrador Inuit Settlement Areas;
- The Innu Nation pertaining to names of geographical features in the Innu Land Claims area and;
- Other Indigenous groups.

3.0 Vision

The preservation of geographical names for functional and heritage purposes.

4.0 Values

The core values explain the character of the organization we promote. The values ensure our core values are visible throughout the organization.

Value	
Collaboration	Each individual will strive to engage with citizens and government agencies to achieve our desired goals.
Professionalism	Each individual will demonstrate integrity in carrying out the duties of the NLGNB.
Innovation	Each individual will encourage innovative strategies in acquiring, presenting and maintaining data related to place names of the province.
Communication	Each individual will strive to share information about the NLGNB, its purpose, functions and value with stakeholders.

5.0 Objectives

The following objectives identify the priorities of the NLGNB for fiscal years 2017-18, 2018-19, and 2019-20. The objectives include performance measures and indicators to facilitate the evaluation of the NLGNB's success. As the focus of the Board remains the same for the entire plan, the Board will report on the same objective and indicators in all three years.

Issue 1: Preservation of Geographical Names

The preservation and maintenance of geographical names are given a very high priority by the NLGNB. Cultural differences are recorded and preserved through the geographical naming process. In some areas of the province it is important to recognize more than one official name for the same feature. A dual (or multi-naming) policy facilitates the recording of several official names. This is particularly vital in recognizing Indigenous names.

Objective 1: By March 31, 2018 the NLGNB will have continued the name collection process of places and geographical features throughout the province.

Indicators:

- Made contact with the general public through telephone, postal service, or email.
- Collected names.
- Responded to requests for names from citizens.

Issue 2: Promote Public Awareness of Geographical Names Process

The geographical names program in the province of Newfoundland and Labrador is not widely known or well understood. There is a definite need to improve understanding and awareness of our names program among different levels of government as well as the general public. The public can engage in this process in a variety of ways.

Objective 2: By March 31, 2018 the NLGNB will have developed geographical names public awareness strategies throughout government agencies and the general public.

Indicators:

- Collaborated with other provincial/federal/municipal government agencies as well as members of the general public in order to create a greater awareness of the geographical names process;
- Drafted educational documents to explain the purpose, value, and importance of geographical names in our culture;
- Disseminated information regarding the purpose, value, and importance of geographical names in our culture.

Issue 3: Engage Schools in the Geographical Naming Process (GNP)

Our school system is an excellent venue to exhibit the importance and relevance of our rich cultural history. Engagement in this process will provide an opportunity for students to discover the role of the NLGNB (and other naming authorities) in approving accurate geographical names for use on maps, and other official publications and public signs, and to understand how the students themselves (and other members of their families) can participate in the program by submitting geographical names (in local oral use but unrecorded) or suggesting changes to existing names (thought to be inaccurate) for consideration and possible approval by the NLGNB.

Objective 3: By March 31, 2018 the NLGNB will have continued to work toward the development of a GNP lesson plan for the school system.

Indicators:

- Continued to Collaborate with the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development on the best practises to implement the geographical names process in the school system; and
- Developed “best practices” document(s) for the collection and recording geographical names.