

# Newfoundland and Labrador Geographical Names Board

Department of Environment and Conservation  
Government of Newfoundland and Labrador

2011-12 Annual Activity Report



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## 1. MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

A noteworthy highlight for the year was the appointment of a new Newfoundland and Labrador Geographical Names Board (NLGNB). Members from the previous NLGNB include the Chair, Dr. W. Gordon Handcock; Vice-Chair, Mr. Gary Smith, Manager, Sailing Directions Publications, Department of Fisheries and Oceans and Secretary, Mr. Randy Hawkins, Administrative Officer, Surveys and Mapping Division, Department of Environment and Conservation. New members are: Ms. Cheryl Brown-McLean, Manager of Accountability, Policy and Strategic Planning, Department of Municipal Affairs; Ms. Franca Smith, Senior Analyst, Executive Council-Labrador Affairs Office, Happy Valley-Goose Bay; and Ms. Rita Andersen, Interpreter/Translator, Nunatsiavut Government (Inuit Regional Government), Nain. As well as carrying out regular responsibilities, the mixture of former and new members provides the NLGNB with the expertise and experience to expand and improve the Geographical Names program of our Province particularly those aspects relating to Labrador and Aboriginal toponymy (place names).

Following NLGNB appointments, effective from June 28, 2011, two (2) meetings were held, one on September 10-11, 2011, the other December 1-2, 2011. Part of the first meeting was devoted to orienting new members to the mandate and operation of the NLGNB and contemporary ongoing activities. The second meeting was highlighted by a presentation by Dr. Hans Rollman on the influence of Moravian missionaries in establishing toponymy in northern Labrador. The NLGNB reviewed and recommended the adoption of 104 new geographical names and, at the request of the Sunnyside Heritage Association, recommended the restoration of the name *Truce Sound* to the inner part of Sunnyside Harbour (formerly Bay Bulls Arm). The latter action helps commemorate the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of a historic and well-documented meeting here in November 1612 between Governor John Guy and some of his colonists from the first English colony in Canada at Cupids, Conception Bay, and the Aboriginal Beothuk. In his journal Guy had called the location *Truce Sound*.

Items of ongoing business included: the uploading of provincial names to the federal dataset, corrections and improvements to extant names in the data base especially those related to adjustments to positional coordinates, revisions to coordinates of undersea features; collection, delineation and verification of geometries for coastline features for which a student was employed in the summer 2011.

Whenever opportunities arise, the NLGNB continues to encourage the collection and submission of new names, and the recommendation of needed changes to existing toponymy on a voluntary basis by individuals, groups and other institutions of the general public with an interest in the naming process. These voluntary activities are carefully supervised by the Secretary to ensure that data from these sources meet the NLGNB's established principles and guidelines. Applications for new names or changes to place names are then brought forward for approval.

The NLGNB can also anticipate much more involvement and participation in Aboriginal toponymy involving both the Innu Nation and the Nunatsiavut Government, and with other Aboriginal/First Nations groups. Chief Misel Joe of Miawpukek Mi'kamawey Mawi'omi - Conne River Mi'kmaq Tribal Nation has indicated interest in raising various issues on Mi'kmaq

toponymy and has been accordingly invited and agreed to attend a meeting of the NLGNB in September 2012.

As always I feel obligated to commend and thank our Secretary, Mr. Randy Hawkins, for his hard work, devotion to duty and thoroughness in preparing for meetings and carrying out other duties on behalf of the NLGNB. Largely through his efforts, the work of the NLGNB has made remarkable progress and has an exciting future.

As Chair, I can attest that the NLGNB is accountable for the results reported in this document.



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W.G. Handcock  
Professor Emeritus in Geography  
Chair

## 2. BOARD OVERVIEW

### 2a. Mandate and Lines of Business

The Newfoundland and Labrador Geographical Names Board (NLGNB) is appointed by the Minister of the Department of Environment and Conservation for a three (3) year term. The administration of the NLGNB falls under the Director of Surveys and Mapping, Lands Branch, Department of Environment and Conservation. The work of the NLGNB is supported by an Administrative Officer, who is an employee within the Surveys and Mapping Division.

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

The Act empowers the NLGNB 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 Canadian Permanent Committee on Geographical Names (now known as the Geographical Names Board of Canada) 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 Canadian Permanent Committee on Geographical Names;
- 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.”

## 2b. Representation

All meetings are held in St. John's. With the exception of the Chair, all members of the NLGNB are public servants.

| Name                          | Role       | Residence              |
|-------------------------------|------------|------------------------|
| Dr. Gordon Handcock           | Chair      | Salvage                |
| Mr. Gary N. Smith             | Vice-Chair | St. John's             |
| Mr. Randy Hawkins             | Secretary  | St. John's             |
| Ms. Margarita Andersen (Rita) | Member     | Nain                   |
| Ms. Franca Smith              | Member     | Happy Valley-Goose Bay |
| Ms. Cheryl Brown-McLean       | Member     | St. John's             |

## 2c. Vision

The vision of the Department of Environment and Conservation is a clean, sustainable environment and healthy, resilient ecosystems in perpetuity for the social, physical, cultural, biological and economic well-being of the Province. The *Geographical Names Board Act* promotes the cultural aspect of this vision.

The vision of the NLGNB is to record and preserve the oral and written geographical names for functional use and as an important part of our cultural heritage. These names are made official for use in all government correspondence and documents, published literature, research reports, newspapers and magazines, road signs, public buildings and maps and charts throughout the Province.

## 2d. Mission

By March 31, 2017, the NLGNB will have made recommendations to the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador in relation to any new geographical names.

Performance Measure:           Made recommendations to Government.

| Indicators   | Accomplishments   |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Processed naming recommendations from the general public and other stakeholders.</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The NLGNB reviewed and recommended for ministerial approval a total of 104 new names.</li></ul> |

### 3. SHARED COMMITMENTS

As previously indicated, the success of the Newfoundland and Labrador Geographical Names Program in 2011-12 was largely due to cooperative working partnerships between provincial and federal government agencies. The following partners played an active role in operational procedures this year:

- The Earth Sciences Sector of Natural Resources Canada and the GNBC Secretariat, in providing direct access to the federal database.
- The provincial Department of Education, relating to the proposal to incorporate the study of toponymy into the existing high school curriculum.
- The Department of Fisheries and Oceans, with respect to names of coastal and underwater features and fishing grounds around Newfoundland and Labrador.
- Queen Elizabeth II Map Library, Memorial University of Newfoundland, in connection with historic names.

Additionally, the success of the NLGNB's program is also due to the cooperation and assistance of the local residents within our Province.

### 4. HIGHLIGHTS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The new NLGNB was appointed on June 28, 2011. Two NLGNB meetings were held in the 2011-12 report period.

Among the names reviewed in the 2011-12 fiscal year, 104 geographical names were recommended. These now await approval. Seven (7) of these 104 names are located inside the boundaries of Gros Morne National Park, and were recommended by the NLGNB and have been referred to Parks Canada, and the Minister of Environment and Conservation.

The proposal to have toponymy (geographical names) included as a unit of study in NL Studies 2205 (a high school historical/cultural course) was advanced by being reviewed by both the Department of Environment & Conservation and the Department of Education. Discussions were also held with the Western School District to identify a school and a NL Studies 2205 teacher to undertake a pilot project.

While not within the NLGNB's jurisdiction, the NLGNB note that there was one community name change in 2011-12. Under the authority of the *Municipalities Act, 1999*:

- Local Service District of Petit Forte changed to Local Service District of Petite Forte.

The NLGNB also responded to inquiries and requests for geographical name information from government departments and agencies as well as the general public.

## 5. OUTCOMES

The NLGNB will be reporting on the same objectives and indicators each year as indicated in the 2011-14 Activity Plan. Where an indicator has not been fully met, an explanation is provided.

The following objectives identify the priorities of the NLGNB for fiscal years 2011-12, 2012-13, and 2013-14. The objectives include performance measures and indicators to facilitate the evaluation of the NLGNB's success. While the NLGNB will carry out the same objectives for each year of the plan, the indicators may be adjusted each year, as necessary.

This section provides the results of work performed over the past year on the objectives as outlined in the NLGNB's 2011-14 Activity Plan. Each objective pertains to an issue of key importance to the NLGNB.

### Issue 1: Data Integrity and Management

With the advent of better mapping and computer technologies, standards for data management are continually changing. The NLGNB strives to ensure that the provincial dataset is up to date with the current standards.

**Objective 1:** By March 31, 2012 the NLGNB will have focused on the improvement of our provincial geographical names dataset to ensure that it meets with existing Canadian national standards.

Performance Measure: Improvement of the provincial geographical names dataset.

| Indicators   | Accomplishments   |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Geographical names collected and entered in dataset.</li></ul>       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>330 provincial geographical names were added to the federal dataset. These will be discussed at future meetings.</li></ul>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Revisions made to current names in dataset.</li></ul>                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>1,442 existing database records were edited and uploaded to the federal dataset.</li><li>This total includes positional coordinate and attribute updates.</li></ul> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Revisions made to feature coordinates to improve accuracy.</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The coordinates for 148 undersea features were corrected based upon the most recent hydrographic charts and the Sailing Directions Publications.</li></ul>          |

### Issue 2: Digital Delineation

Digital delineation is a new and precise method of mapping the geometry of a given geographical feature or place name. These standards are developed on a national level. Many of the geographical features in the Province are based on point locations. While many water



features have already been identified as part of the national hydrology layer, there are many other features of the Province that still need to be delineated.

**Objective 2:** By March 31, 2012 the NLGNB will have implemented a digital delineation process in accordance with nationally recognized guidelines.

Performance Measure: Implementation of digital delineation process.

| Indicators  | Accomplishments  |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Features delineated digitally and entered into a geometry database.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work commenced on the digital delineation of coastline features. A summer student, employed for ten weeks, delineated 4,363 features. These digital delineations were verified and imported into the federal geometry database in October 2011.</li> <li>• The delineations were created in accordance with nationally recognized standards.</li> <li>• The verified delineations will become available for public use and reference within the upcoming year.</li> </ul> |

**Issue 3: Commemoration Naming Program**

A commemorative naming program is currently being developed. This is very timely because, on a number of recent occasions, the NLGNB has been requested to assist in celebrating significant historical events by recommending approval of appropriate names for associated geographical features.

**Objective 3:** By March 31, 2012 the NLGNB will have worked towards a strategy for a provincial Commemorative Naming Program.

Performance Measure: Work progressed on strategy.

| Indicators   | Accomplishments  |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research conducted on existing programs in Canada.</li> </ul>         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Upon review it was identified that this research was already completed prior to the creation of the 2011-2014 Activity Plan. Upon reflection this indicator should not have been included in that plan. There is nothing further to report on this indicator.</li> </ul>              |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Names proposed to provincial and/or federal jurisdictions.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• During this year the NLGNB recommended a commemorative naming application from the Sunnyside Heritage Association to name <i>Truce Sound</i> as the site of a historic meeting between English colonists and the Beothuk in 1612. This recommendation is pending approval.</li> </ul> |

#### **Issue 4: Communications**

The NLGNB has gained a higher profile due to increased use of the internet and an increased number of inquires from the public about the Province's place names.

Objective 4: By March 31, 2012 the NLGNB will have engaged in activities to increase the visibility and profile of the NLGNB.

Performance Measure: Engaged in activities to increase visibility and profile.

| <b>Indicators</b>   | <b>Accomplishments</b>  |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Add new links to the existing departmental website which highlight the geographical naming process.</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The NLGNB would like to have a link created to three documents on the departmental website. There have been corrections identified which need to be made to the documents before they are submitted to the department for review and prior to being posted on the departmental website.</li></ul> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Contact volunteer, local residents who are knowledgeable about the toponymy of the Province.</li></ul>        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The NLGNB contacted the Town Council of Change Islands for additional information on 15 feature names in their area. The feedback was helpful in making the final decisions.</li></ul>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Number of speaking engagements by the NLGNB.</li></ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Dr. Hans Rollmann, Professor of Religious Studies at Memorial University gave a presentation on the Moravian Influences on Inuit Toponymy in Northern Labrador.</li></ul>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Articles published.</li></ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• There were no articles published in the period of this report as no issues of specific interest arose.</li></ul>  |

#### **Issue 5: Involve Schools in the Geographical Naming Process**

Our school system is an excellent venue to exhibit the importance and relevance of our rich cultural history. Youth can play an active role in the collection of the geographical names that have become part of their family's history. By encouraging such active participation in the name collection process youth can play an active role in the preservation of their own cultural history.

Objective 5: By March 31, 2012 the NLGNB will have worked on a strategy for the introduction of the geographical features into selected schools within the Province.

Performance Measure: Work commenced on strategy.

| Indicators  | Accomplishments  |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contact the Department of Education to determine the best curriculum choice to introduce geographical names.</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The geographical names school project proposal has been reviewed by the Department of Education. They determined that the high school social studies course NL Studies 2205 would be the best curriculum choice to introduce geographical names.</li> </ul> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engage in consultation and involvement with the Department of Education with respect to the implementation of this process in selected schools within the Province.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>On-going consultation with the Department of Education throughout every phase of the school project proposal.</li> </ul>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Draft a proposal to implement the geographical names process in the school system.</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The proposal has been drafted and forwarded to the Program Development Division of the Department of Education for their review.</li> </ul>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contact the necessary school boards to get permission to introduce the geographical names project into the curriculum.</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pending. The project is still being evaluated at the inter-department level.</li> </ul>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Choose a school to implement the program as a pilot project.</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No school selected in this reporting period. The project is still being evaluated at the inter-departmental level. The project has not yet received final approval to proceed.</li> </ul>   |

## 6. FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

| <b>Statement of Expenditures</b>                                    |                                   |                                       |
|---|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <b>NLGNB Expenditures</b>   | <b>Total 2011-12 Expenditures</b> | <b>Projected 2012-13 Expenditures</b> |
| Professional Services<br>(Chair)                                    | \$2010.00                         | \$3,015.00                            |
| Travel Expenses   | \$220.57                          | \$750.00                              |
| Meeting Expenses  | \$433.98                          | \$1,000.00                            |
| <b>Totals</b>   | <b>\$2664.55</b>                  | <b>\$4,765.00</b>                     |
| The above stated Expenditures and Projection are certified correct. |                                   |                                       |