

HB

299

The Alaska Historical Commission

Since 1993 the Alaska Historical Commission has served as the geographic names board for the State of Alaska. Its powers, duties, and authority in the naming of geographic features in Alaska are defined in Alaska Statute 41.35.350. The commission has been directed to:

- determine the correct and most appropriate names of geographic features in the state and their spelling;
- pass upon and give names to geographic features in the state for which no single generally acceptable name has been in use;
- cooperate with the local subdivisions of government and, with their approval, change the names of geographic features to eliminate duplication of names in the state;
- serve as the state representative of the U.S. Board on Geographic Names and cooperate with that board so that there is no conflict between state and federal designations of geographic features in the state.

In addition, the statute directs the Alaska Historical Commission to consider using Alaska Native place names for geographic features in the state that have not been named.



Guidelines

The Alaska Historical Commission has established guidelines which it uses along with the policies of the U.S. Board on Geographic Names.

§ Local Usage

- The name has been used for years by the community
- The name is supported by local residents and there is published evidence of verbal or written usage

§ Descriptive Names

- The name is relevant to and descriptive of the feature
- The name is not in use elsewhere in the region

§ Commemorative Names

- The individual has been deceased for at least five years
- The person made a noteworthy contribution to Alaska
- The individual had a direct, long term association with the feature
- The name is supported by residents of nearby communities

§ Historical Names

- The authenticity of the name can be established
- The name is clearly associated with the area

§ Alaska Native Names

- The name is in common local usage
- The name is linguistically appropriate to the area in which it is to be applied
- The name is pronounceable without considerable difficulty
- The land owner, if on Native land, supports the proposed name in writing

§ Name Changes

- The current official name is derogatory to any radical, ethnic, gender, or religious group

- The current official name is duplicative and causing confusion
- Evidence of extensive local support by authorities and residents is provided

§ Other

- There is an overriding need to name a feature within a wilderness area (for purposes of safety, education, or area administration), and the land manager has been consulted and given the opportunity to comment on the proposed name
- An existing name is applied to a related feature, *i.e.* the name of a mountain is applied to an unnamed glacier that is part of it
- A spelling that includes diacritical marks includes substantial evidence of active local use, such as official records, maps, and signs, in the area where the feature is located

Application Process

Applicants are encouraged to study the guidelines before they complete an application. Supplemental information, such as letters from community leaders, area residents, and local organizations, is often helpful.

Prior to review by the Alaska Historical Commission, staff contact appropriate land managers, Native corporations and councils, and communities to obtain comments on proposed names. The Alaska Historical Commission meets three times a year.

The commission's recommendation is forwarded with the proposal to the U.S. Board on Geographic Names for review. The U.S. Board sets national policies and procedures relating to both domestic and foreign place names. It is the final word on choice, spelling, and official use of place names in the U.S.

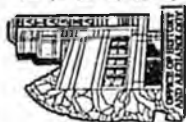
The process of naming a geographic feature takes at least a year.

Alaska's Place Names

Alaska's Native people, along with explorers and settlers from Europe and America, gave names to many Alaskan communities and geographic features. A record of these geographic names can be found in the *Dictionary of Alaska Place Names* by Donald Orth (1967) and *Alaska Place Names* by Alan Edward Schorr (1991).

Not all features in the state have been named. Naming geographic features needs to be done carefully and thoughtfully. Place names should identify significant places. Reasons to name a feature include safety, education, and area administration. It is important that a proposed name have an association with the location.

The Alaska Historical Commission, a citizen board of the State of Alaska, reviews names proposed for lakes, streams, mountains, and other physical features in the state. The commission coordinates its program with the U.S. Board on Geographic Names.



The Alaska Historical Commission
The Office of History and Archaeology
Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation
Alaska Department of Natural Resources
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ALASKA'S GEOGRAPHIC NAMES PROGRAM

A responsibility of the
ALASKA
HISTORICAL COMMISSION



24 AS 45.98;

25 (13) determine the correct and most appropriate names of the lakes,
26 streams, places, and other geographic features in the state and their spelling;

27 (14) pass upon and give names to lakes, streams, places, and other
28 geographic features in the state for which no single generally acceptable name has
29 been in use;

30 (15) cooperate with local subdivisions of government and, with their
31 approval, change the names of lakes, streams, places, and other geographic features to
01 eliminate duplication of names in the state;

02 (16) prepare and publish an official state dictionary of geographic
03 names and publish it for sale, either as a complete whole or in parts when ready; and

04 (17) serve as the state representatives of the United States Board on
05 Geographic Names and cooperate with that board; where the official state and
06 federal names of a lake, stream, place, or other geographic feature differ, the
07 commission shall propose to the board that the board change the federal name to
08 match the state name [SO THAT THERE IS NO CONFLICT BETWEEN THE
09 STATE AND FEDERAL DESIGNATIONS OF GEOGRAPHIC FEATURES IN
10 THE STATE].

11 * Sec. 2. AS 41.35.350(b) is amended to read: *approve proposed* are in local use, are descriptive, or

12 (b) In carrying out its duties to name geographic features under this section,
13 the commission shall select names that have a direct connection with Alaska or
14 Alaska's peoples. The commission shall review requests for changes to existing
15 official names of geographic features to identify the names that do not have a
16 direct connection with Alaska or Alaska's peoples, review alternative names that
17 have been used for the places, and ^{approve} ~~select~~ the places with names that have a
18 direct connection with Alaska or Alaska's peoples. The commission shall consider
19 using Alaska Native place names for geographic features in the state [THAT HAVE
20 NOT PREVIOUSLY BEEN NAMED], using Native language writing systems
21 accepted by the Alaska Native Language Center of the University of Alaska at
22 Fairbanks. For purposes of this subsection, a name that has a direct connection
23 with Alaska or Alaska's peoples

24 (1) commemorates a person who was present in and had a
25 significant role in the area of the feature being named;

26 (2) has been used in the region of the geographic feature or by
27 local Alaska Natives;

28 (3) is particularly descriptive of the geographic feature; or

29 (4) describes a significant event that happened in the vicinity of the
30 geographic feature.

31 * Sec. 3. AS 41.35.350(c) is amended to read:

01 (c) When the commission gives a name to a lake, stream, place, or other
02 geographic feature in the state, the name is the official name of the geographic feature
03 and shall be used in all maps, records, documents, and other publications issued by the
04 state or its departments and political subdivisions. The commission shall establish a
05 policy regarding the use of English translations of non-English words and
06 whether translations, where included, should be considered a part of the official
07 name. When the official name under this section differs from the official federal
08 name, both official names shall be used, with the federal name in parentheses.

are in local use, are descriptive or

Better wording for section:

The commission shall establish policies for changing official names of geographic features that give priority to names in local use, descriptive names, and names with a direct connection to Alaska or Alaska's peoples.

Bill Text



BILL ID: HB 299

00 CS FOR HOUSE BILL NO. 299(RES)
01 "An Act providing for the naming and renaming of Alaska geographic features."
02 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:
03 * Section 1. AS 41.35.350(a) is amended to read:
04 (a) The duties of the commission are to
05 (1) survey, evaluate, and catalog Alaska prehistory and history
06 materials now in print;
07 (2) ascertain and register what Alaska prehistory and history work is
08 now in progress;
09 (3) identify the existing gaps in the coverage of Alaska's past in
10 presently available published works and establish priorities for bridging them;
11 (4) prepare a thematic study of Alaska's history for historic
12 preservation;
13 (5) identify the sources of Alaska's history;
14 (6) coordinate the production and publication of works that will
15 adequately present all aspects of Alaska's past;
01 (7) cooperate with the federal government in programs relating to
02 history and archaeology;
03 (8) develop criteria for the evaluation of state monuments and historic
04 sites and all real and personal property that may be considered to be of historic,
05 prehistoric, or archeological significance as would justify their acquisition and
06 ownership by the state;
07 (9) cooperate with the department in formulating and administering a
08 statewide historic sites survey under 16 U.S.C. 470-470n (P.L. 89-665, National
09 Historic Preservation Act of 1966);
10 (10) review those surveys and historic preservation plans that may be
11 required, and approve properties for nomination to the National Register as provided
12 for in 16 U.S.C. 470-470n (P.L. 89-665, National Historic Preservation Act of 1966);
13 (11) provide necessary assistance to the governor and the legislature
14 for achieving balanced and coordinated state policies and programs for the
15 preservation of the state's historic, prehistoric, and archeological resources;
16 (12) consult with local historical district commissions regarding the
17 establishment of historical districts under AS 29.55.010 - 29.55.020 and the approval
18 of project alterations under AS 45.98.040; recommend, if appropriate, the formulation
19 of additional criteria for the designation of historical districts under AS 29.55.020(b);
20 approve plans for and evaluate the suitability of specific structures for purposes of
21 loan eligibility and continuance under the historical district revolving loan fund
22 (AS 45.98); and consult with the Department of Community and Economic
23 Development relative to the adoption of regulations for historical district loans under

Alaska Historical Society



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AHS 2002-1: Urging the Alaska State Senate to not pass HB 299, "An Act providing for the naming and renaming of Alaska geographic features"

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, the Alaska Historical Society is a statewide organization that works closely with and supports the work of the agencies, boards and commissions created by the State of Alaska to carry out the essential work to preserve, protect and interpret Alaska's rich heritage, and

WHEREAS, the Alaska Historical Commission is a citizen's board of the State of Alaska that advises the Governor and the Alaska State Legislature on matters of concern regarding Alaska's history, and on which the Alaska Historical Society has two representatives, and

WHEREAS, House Bill 299 to name and rename Alaska geographic features has been proposed in the 22nd Alaska Legislature and passed by the House of Representatives, and

WHEREAS, the Board of Directors of the Alaska Historical Society discussed HB 299 at its May 1, 2002 meeting and expressed concerns about having two sets of maps (federal and state), the lack of evidence of support for the legislation from constituents who would be impacted by the legislation including search and rescue personnel and visitor organizations, the lack of a public process included in the bill before names are changed, and the failure to provide any funding to carry out what is mandated by the legislation,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Alaska Historical Society opposes HB 299 in its present form and urges members of the Alaska State Senate to not vote for it.

Copies of this resolution shall be sent to all members of the Alaska State Senate.

Candy Waugaman 5/3/02

Candy Waugaman, President Date

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Candy Waugaman, Fairbanks
Geoffrey Bleakley, Copper Center
Michael Burwell, Anchorage
Mike Dunning, Ketchikan
Karl Gurcke, Skagway
Steve Haycox, Anchorage
Bob King, Juneau
Gretchen Lake, Fairbanks

Dec Longenbaugh, Juneau
Mike Martz, Bethel
Dorothy Moore, Valdez
Phyllis Movius, Fairbanks
Kay Shelton, Juneau
Barbara Smith, Anchorage
Vicki Wisenbaugh, Tenakee Springs

STATE OF ALASKA

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

DIVISION OF PARKS AND OUTDOOR RECREATION ALASKA HISTORICAL COMMISSION

TONY KNOWLES, GOVERNOR

550 W. 7TH AVENUE, SUITE 1310
ANCHORAGE, ALASKA 99501-3565
PHONE: (907) 269-8721
FAX: (907) 269-8908

April 5, 2002

Re: 3050-2

Representative Fred Dyson
Alaska House of Representatives
State Capitol Building
Juneau, Alaska 99801-1182

Dear Representative Dyson:

Thank you for meeting with the members of the Alaska Historical Commission in February and discussing with them HB 299 and HCR 32. Later in the day commission members continued their discussion of the bill and asked me to write you.

Commission members appreciate your interest in Alaska's place names. They do not, however, view your proposed legislation favorably. They said a process is in place to appeal decisions of the U.S. Board on Geographic Names that differ from those made by the Alaska Historical Commission. They said they have adopted guidelines that encourage the use of names that recognize Alaskans. Names for someone with little association with Alaska do not meet the commission's guidelines or the U.S. Board's policies and procedures. They do not believe state statute is the correct place for such detail.

The idea of including the translation of a Native name for a place troubled several commission members. They said people have always had to learn how to pronounce place names, citing Valdez as an example. They expect many Alaska Natives would object to using a translated phrase instead of the known and recognized Native word for a place. Commission members also said that recognizing phrases as official names would create difficulties for map makers and unnecessarily clutter maps.

Commission members expressed concern over having two sets of maps, one with state names and the other with federal names. First, this would be an expense to the State of Alaska. It would necessitate creation of new maps and a cross-index. It would be unpopular with, and a source of confusion for, visitor businesses, travelers, search and rescue personnel, transportation companies, and scientists and researchers.

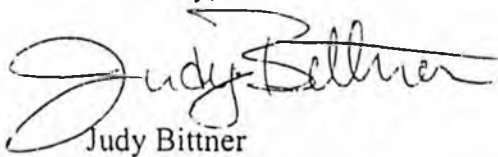
Representative Fred Dyson
April 5, 2002
Page 2

Admittedly, the program for reviewing existing names is limited to changing derogatory names and correcting those called to the commission's attention as erroneous, such as 'correctly applying Deshka River. A proposal to change a name simply because it is not for an Alaskan or an Alaskan name has little chance of success with the state or federal name boards. Funds for someone to do the research and build the community consensus needed to change a name are not available. No one has come forward with a name that would be recognized and used by people to replace Prudhoe Bay, for example.

Members of the Alaska Historical Commission would like to work with you. They hope you will seek opportunities to encourage and fund the place name research programs of the Alaska Native Language Center, non-profit organizations such as Sealaska Heritage Foundation, or provide funds to the Alaska Historical Commission to contract for such studies. They also encourage you to submit applications for place names you strongly believe need to be corrected or changed.

Thank you again for taking the time to meet with the members of the Alaska Historical Commission. If you wish to discuss the members' concerns, please call me at 907-269-8715.

Sincerely,



Judy Bittner
State Historic Preservation Officer

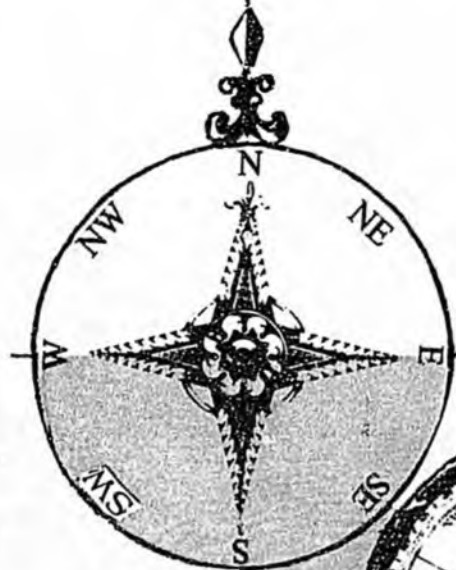
Alaska Historical Commission
Lieutenant Governor Fran Ulmer, Chair

Beverly Beeton, Anchorage
Judith E. Bittner, State Historic Preservation Officer
John P. Cook, Fairbanks
Emily DeForest, Kenai

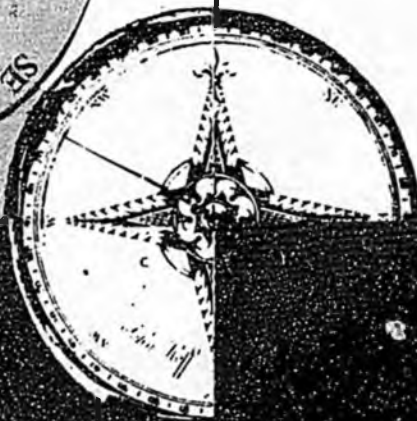
Terry Hyer, Anchorage
Shirley Kendall, Anchorage
Mary C. Mangusso, Fairbanks
Tom Taylor, Anchorage

AT The Print Shop
SSTA 2001-02
HB 299

PRINCIPLES,
POLICIES, AND
PROCEDURES:
Domestic Geographic Names



U.S. Board on Geographic Names



1997



Alaska State Legislature

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REPRESENTATIVE FRED DYSON

MEMORANDUM

April 30, 2002

To: Senator Gene Therriault, Chair
Senate State Affairs Committee

From: Fred Dyson
State Representative

RE: Request for consideration of HB 299 with HJR 32

HB 299 authorizes the Office of History & Archaeology to rename geographic locations that are appropriately Alaskan.

HJR 32 requests the US Department of Interior to cooperate with AK renaming efforts.

I respectfully request that you schedule HB 299 with HJR 32 at your convenience.

Thank you!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Fred Dyson", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

- E-mail -
Representative_Fred_Dyson
@Legis.state.ak.us

- Internet -
<http://www.akrepublicans.org>



Alaska State Legislature

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REPRESENTATIVE FRED DYSON

HB 299/ HJR 32 Sponsor Statement

Relating to Alaskan Names for Alaska Places

Updated: March 26, 2002

Contact: Representative Dyson's office at (907) 465-2199

The names of Alaska's geographical features come from a variety of sources, many of which have no connection or relevance to Alaska or its peoples.

HB 299 will allow the State Place Names Commission to begin to substitute relevant Alaskan names that are local Alaskan Native names, honor a local citizen, honor a famous Alaskan, uniquely describe an identifying feature, or describe a local event.

A companion resolution, HJR 32, encourages the US Geological Bureau to follow the lead of the State Agency in renaming the features on Federal maps and documents.

"Many of Alaska's geographical names were given by European explorers to honor a benefactor or curry favor with some powerful politician or ruler. Some of these people never saw Alaska or made any contribution to it. Most of the European explorers had no concept of recognizing the contributions and names used by Alaska's Native people who had been here for at least 10,000 years. Some of the American, Asian, Canadian, and European settlers who later came to Alaska made profound contributions to Alaska. It is far more fitting that our geographical place names should honor its people instead of the Alma Mater of some rich tourist on a quasi-scientific expedition. HB 299 encourages the Alaska Naming Commission to do the research and suggest more appropriate ALASKAN names.

Alaskans tend to give rivers, bays, glaciers, mountains and lakes far more descriptive names than did the Europeans. "Purgatory Creek" and "Murder Lake", are descriptive of conditions and events. "Looks like a Neck" is far more apropos than "Bainbridge Passage". "Place of the Last Great Battle" is much more colorful than "Green Lake".

Under the Alaska Native Lands Claim Act, Section H, a group under the US Department of the Interior, has done extensive work researching Native place names. The Native Language School at the University of Alaska in Fairbanks also has a large amount of similar information.

HB 299 will begin a public process that will hopefully result in more appropriate Alaska place names and the honoring of the native and non-native people who actually lived here or made a contribution to Alaska. We have too long a history of people from somewhere else coming here and taking our furs, gold, timber, fish, and oil and going back south. At least, with this legislation, we have a chance to take back some of our geographical names.

- E-mail -
Representative_Fred_Dyson
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<http://www.akRepublicans.org>

FISCAL NOTE

STATE OF ALASKA
2002 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Fiscal Note Number: 1
 Bill Version: HJR 32
 (H) Publish Date: 3/27/02

Revision Date/Time (Note if correction): _____ Dept. Affected: _____
 Title Federal Place Names BRU _____
 Sponsor Representative Dyson Component _____
 Requester _____ Component No. _____

Expenditures/Revenues (Thousands of Dollars)

Note: Amounts do not include inflation unless otherwise noted below.

OPERATING EXPENDITURES	FY 2003	FY 2004	FY 2005	FY 2006	FY 2007	FY 2008
Personal Services						
Travel						
Contractual						
Supplies						
Equipment						
Land & Structures						
Grants & Claims						
Miscellaneous						
TOTAL OPERATING	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

CAPITAL EXPENDITURES						
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CHANGE IN REVENUES ()						
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FUND SOURCE (Thousands of Dollars)

1002 Federal Receipts						
1003 GF Match						
1004 GF						
1005 GF/Program Receipts						
1037 GF/Mental Health						
Other (Specify Type--Do not abbreviate)						
TOTAL	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

Estimate of any current year (FY2002) cost: 0.0
 Check this box (X) if funding for this bill is included in the Governor's FY 2003 budget proposal:

POSITIONS

Full-time						
Part-time						
Temporary						

ANALYSIS: (Attach a separate page if necessary)

Prepared by: Bill Lawrence staff Phone _____
 Division: House Community and Regional Affairs Committee Date/Time 3/26/02 5:59 PM
 Approved by: Representative Carl Morgan Date 3/26/02
 Agency: Co-chair, House Community and Regional Affairs

Alaska Historical Commission
Office of History & Archaeology
Alaska Division of Parks & Outdoor Recreation
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ALASKA HISTORICAL COMMISSION GUIDELINES FOR GEOGRAPHIC NAME PROPOSALS

Local usage

Local usage is the single, best reason to name a geographic feature. Local usage refers to a feature name that has evolved over a period of years, is called that name by the community or area as a whole, and is supported by local petitions, diaries, oral histories, and documents or other publications. A feature named by the applicant is not considered local usage, even when the applicant has called the feature by that name for a number of years.

The Alaska Historical Commission will consider if:

- the proposal includes published evidence of verbal or written usage, petitions signed by local residents, and resolutions or letters of support from government entities and community groups

Descriptive names (includes features named by applicant)

The Alaska Historical Commission will consider if:

- the name is relevant and descriptive of the feature
- the name is not in use elsewhere in the region
- the name is in good taste and not frivolous

Commemorative names (please read the following page)

The Alaska Historical Commission will consider if:

- the individual has been deceased for five (5) years and evidence of this is provided
- the individual made a significant contribution to Alaska
- the individual had a direct, long term association with the feature
- evidence of local support by authorities and residents is provided

Historical names

The Alaska Historical Commission will consider if:

- the authenticity of the name can be established
- the name is clearly associated with the area

Native American names

The Alaska Historical Commission will consider if:

- the name is in common local use and that use is documented
- the name is pronounceable without considerable difficulty
- the name is linguistically appropriate to the area in which it is to be applied
- the land owner, if on Native land, supports the proposed name in writing

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Name changes

The Alaska Historical Commission will consider if:

- the current official name is derogatory to any racial, ethnic, gender, or religious group
- the current official name is duplicative and causing confusion
- evidence of extensive local support by authorities and residents is provided

Other

The Alaska Historical Commission will consider if:

- there is an overriding need to name a feature within a wilderness area (for purposes of safety, education, or area administration), and the land manager has been consulted and given the opportunity to comment on the proposed name
- an existing name is applied to a related feature, *i.e.* the name of a mountain is applied to an unnamed glacier that is part of it
- a spelling that includes diacritical marks includes substantial evidence of active local use, such as official records, maps, and signs, in the area where the feature is located

All proposals must be accompanied by relevant U.S. Geological Survey 1:63,360 or 1:25,000 scale topographical maps. The feature to be named must be marked on the map. The applicant must clearly express reasons why the feature needs to be named. Photographs and other identifying aids are useful, but not required. Evidence of local support, in the form of letters, petitions, and newspaper articles and letters to the editor, showing public awareness and endorsement of the proposed name is encouraged.

COMMEMORATIVE NAMES

A commemorative name of a geographic feature is to honor and recognize an individual who has made an outstanding or noteworthy contribution to an area or the state, or is a national or international figure. A commemorative place name is not intended to memorialize a family member or friend.

Proposals containing a given name (first or last) or nickname of an individual are considered commemorative. The full name of a person as part of a geographic name normally is not approved unless surname use alone would be ambiguous.

The person must have been deceased *for at least five (5) years* before the Alaska Historical Commission will consider the proposal. An obituary and biography of the individual must be part of the proposal.

The person should have a *direct association* with the feature, or have made a *significant contribution* to the area in which it is located.

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Direct association. The individual should have been physically present at, or in the vicinity of, the feature for several years; or engaged in some activity that affected the feature; or spent a great deal of time at or in the vicinity of the feature. A person's death on or at a feature, such as a mountaineering accident or plane crash, or the mere ownership of land or the feature, does not normally meet this criterion. Similarly, recreational use of or visits to a feature does not normally meet this criterion.

Significant contribution. The contribution that the individual has made must be notable, of consequence, and have had a noticeable impact on the community, region or state. A significant contribution is an extraordinary effort, achievement, or impact. It may come from the individual's work, professional or civic activities, and can be in the social, political, economic, scientific, or cultural areas. The significant contribution should have benefitted Alaskans beyond the individual's immediate circle of family and friends. Generally, these individuals will have been recognized through a letter of thanks from the Governor, certificates of appreciation from an agency or group, awards, newspaper articles featuring the contribution made, dedication of local man-made features (park, street, garden, building), inclusion in *Who's Who*, etc. The individual might be a historical figure.

Features can be named for persons who made a significant contribution nationally or internationally, especially if the individual made advancements in the area of global peace or cooperation, made the nation or planet a better place to live, or made an exceptional and unique contribution to the nation or planet in the social, political, economic, scientific, or cultural areas. In such instances, the requirement of direct association does not need to be met.

Commemorative name proposals must include evidence of local support by authorities and residents attesting to the individual's association with the feature and significant contribution.

[1/23/98]