

**GUIDELINES FOR NAMING OR RENAMING  
INDIAN RESERVES AND GEOGRAPHICAL FEATURES OR PLACES  
ON OR PARTIALLY ON INDIAN RESERVES**

**Approved by the Geographical Names Board of Canada  
18 October 2002 – Revised October 2010**

***Preamble:** This document deals with the procedures for naming or renaming Indian Reserves and for the geographical features or places within or partially within Indian Reserves.*

*To clarify the role of the First Nation Band Council, the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs, and the Geographical Names Board of Canada (GNBC), the Aboriginal Communication /Working Group of the GNBC has identified new guidelines to streamline the naming process. It is understood that the name(s) affected by these guidelines may be confirmed through a Geographical Names Board of Canada decision list or as required by the naming authority.*

*It is important to note that this document does not address any other types of lands where Aboriginal peoples may reside or that they may use. See the definition of Indian Reserve and other types of Aboriginal lands in the glossary at the end of this document.*

## **I Names of Indian Reserves**

1. The First Nation Council should contact the appropriate regional office of the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs (DIAND) and the provincial/territorial naming authority notifying both parties of the intent to change the name of an Indian Reserve or to establish the name of a new reserve. The provincial/territorial naming authority will supply the First Nation Council with an information package developed in conjunction with the Geographical Names Board of Canada (GNBC).
2. The naming authority reviews and advises on the proposal from a toponymic perspective (location, meaning, spelling, and origin of the name) and works, if requested, with the First Nation Council to complete the naming process.
3. The name is adopted by a Band Council Resolution (BCR) followed by the preparation of an Order in Council or a Ministerial Order required to officially effect a name change for the Indian Reserve. The original BCR and Order in Council are forwarded to DIAND's Indian Land Registry, according to existing procedures.
4. The new name will be added to the Indian Land Registry and made available in such a form as to provide the new name, effective date, and boundaries for entry into the national names data base as well as to the appropriate provincial/territorial naming authority."

## **II Names of Geographical Features and Places located entirely within Indian Reserves**

*The following guidelines are concerned solely with names for geographical features or places that are entirely within the limits of an Indian Reserve. The Department of Indian and Northern Affairs will hand over the authority for approving such names to the Aboriginal community residing on or using the reserve. The intent is to streamline the naming process.*

1. The First Nation Council contacts the appropriate provincial/territorial naming authority notifying them of their intention to name (or rename) geographical features or places on their Indian Reserve.
2. The naming authority reviews and advises on the proposal ensuring that the proposal conforms to existing policies and procedures. If required, works with the First Nation Council to complete the naming process.
3. The proposal is adopted by a Band Council Resolution (BCR) and must be forwarded to the appropriate provincial or territorial naming authority for entry into provincial/territorial and national names data bases. Where required, the BCR should be submitted to the provincial/territorial Minister and submitted for entry into provincial/territorial and national names data bases.

### **III Names of Geographical Features and Places located partially on Indian Reserves**

*A naming proposal for a geographical feature or place on or crossing the boundary of an Indian Reserve may be received from any number of sources, including community councils, First Nations Councils, local trappers, anglers, fishers, and other residents. An information package, developed in conjunction with the Geographical Names Board of Canada (GNBC) will be provided for the proponent's use and reference.*

1. The First Nation Council, if it is not the originator of the proposal, will be notified by the proponent of the proposal.
2. The originator of a proposal must provide evidence of correspondence with affected First Nations groups to the provincial, territorial, or federal authorities.
3. Equal input from the First Nation Council and the province/territory/federal jurisdiction will be necessary and shall be integrated with the proposal documentation.
4. The Council and the authority (or authorities) on the other side of the boundary (whether federal, provincial, or territorial) must agree to the proposal or renaming proposal.
5. Once there is agreement, the name(s) shall be adopted according to existing procedures in the province/territory for entry into provincial/territorial and national names data bases for wider distribution. Where required, the name(s) should be submitted to the provincial/territorial Minister and submitted for entry into provincial/territorial and national names data bases for wider distribution.

**Effective date: 31 October 2002**

## Glossary of terms

### Aboriginal Lands

Lands that:

- are reserved lands within the meaning of the *Indian Act*;
- are land claim settlement lands over which Aboriginal governments may exercise jurisdiction;
- are Métis Settlement areas, as defined in section 1(p) of the Métis Settlements Act, S.A. 1990, c. M-14.3, and
- any other lands that may be provided by the provinces and which are subject to similar regimes;
- are held by, or on behalf of, an Aboriginal group under conditions where they would constitute "lands reserved for the Indians" under section 91(24) of the Constitution Act, 1867;
- any other land by agreement of the Aboriginal group, Canada and, where affected, the relevant province or territory.

### Indian Reserve

Defined in Section 2 of the *Indian Act* as a tract of land, the legal title to which is vested in Her Majesty, that has been set apart for the use and benefit of a band.