

# Geographic Names Information System (GNIS) Data Maintenance Forms User's Guide

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## Welcome

Welcome to the Geographic Names Information System (GNIS) Data Maintenance Program. Your contribution is truly appreciated. Please do not hesitate to contact us with questions. We would be pleased to walk through the forms at any time or set up a web seminar at your convenience. The following are instructions for using the Data Maintenance forms.

## Points of Contact

System questions or problems: [gnis\\_sysadmin@usgs.gov](mailto:gnis_sysadmin@usgs.gov)

Data questions or problems: [gnis\\_manager@usgs.gov](mailto:gnis_manager@usgs.gov)

## URLs

Maintenance forms: <http://geonames.usgs.gov/pls/apex/f?p=gnis>

Maintaining user account and password: <https://geonames.usgs.gov/oiddas/>

**Note:** These URLs are altered by the system during access so the address visible in the browser window after you enter will not be the same as the above. If you add to favorites, bookmark, or copy/paste either URL directly from the browser, it will not be correct. The application will not function correctly or might not connect at all. Please ensure the URLs in all favorites, bookmarks, and links are exactly as shown above.

## Log in and Passwords

The system enforces password security policies, complexity rules, and periodic expiration. It also provides the capability for users to manage account information and passwords on line.

**Log in:** Access the URL <http://geonames.usgs.gov/pls/apex/f?p=gnis>. Enter assigned user ID and password and click Login button. The user ID is not case sensitive but the password is. For the password, make sure Caps Lock is off and that upper and lower case characters, numbers, and special characters are correct.

**Failed log in:** If login fails three times, the account will lock. Wait at least fifteen minutes and try again or contact [gnis\\_sysadmin@usgs.gov](mailto:gnis_sysadmin@usgs.gov) to unlock the account.

**New Users:** New users will be provided a temporary password. Please change the temporary password to one of your own choosing as soon as possible. See instructions below.

**Password Change and Expiration:** You may change the password at any time. See instructions below. Passwords expire automatically every ninety days. When logging on with an expired password, you will be required to enter a new password.

**Password Complexity:** Passwords must contain a minimum of eight characters including at least one upper case letter, one lower case letter, one number, and one special character.

**To Change password and edit account profile:**

1. Access the URL <https://geonames.usgs.gov/oiddas/>.
2. Log in with User ID and temporary or current password.
3. Click My Profile tab at top right.
4. Edit profile as desired.
5. Click Change My Password tab.
6. Enter old password, new password, confirm new password.
7. You may set the password reset hint, but it is not required.

## General Guidelines

- **Field Help:** Roll cursor over field titles. If underline appears, click for field information.
- **Forms buttons:** Use forms tabs, buttons, and links to navigate wherever possible.
  - Avoid browser back and forward arrows unless necessary.
- **Re-sort Lists:** Click underlined column headings to re-sort a list by that column.
  - Click again to switch between ascending and descending sort order.
- **Required entry:** Fields with \* are required fields. Data must be entered.
- **Date Fields:** Dates can be manually entered or selected from the calendar function. Date range can be selected by choosing Before, After, or Between.
  - Click on the calendar icon to select date.
  - Manual entry format is dd-mmm-yyyy, example: 01-jan-2000. Other formats may not work.
  - Dates earlier than 1920 are not in the calendar and must be entered manually.
- **Case Sensitive:** A text data field is case sensitive if it matters that upper and lower case letters are properly applied. Example: The White House. If the field is not case sensitive, words may be entered in all upper case (THE WHITE HOUSE), all lower case (the white house), or mixed case (The White House); it does not matter and the same results will be returned in any case. It is usually easier to enter all lower case. Most data entry fields, like the Feature Name field, are not case sensitive. (The login password is case sensitive.)
- **Logout:** Close browser window. Session and log in information are cleared.
  - If browser tab only is closed and window is still open, the session and log in information are retained. If you re-activate the URL, it will not be necessary to re-enter ID and password.
- **Error Messages:** Forms are good but not perfect (yet). You may encounter Oracle error messages.
  - Use browser back arrow and try again.

- Report error messages to [gnis\\_sysadmin@ugsg.gov](mailto:gnis_sysadmin@ugsg.gov) with as much detail as possible. Screen shots of message are helpful.
- **Stuck?** Close browser window, open new window, log back in, query your feature.
  - Clears session information.
  - Unsaved data are lost, but saved data are recovered.
- **System questions or problems:** Contact [gnis\\_sysadmin@ugsg.gov](mailto:gnis_sysadmin@ugsg.gov)
- **Data Questions or problems:** Contact [gnis\\_manager@usgs.gov](mailto:gnis_manager@usgs.gov)

## Query Tab, Feature Check Out

Check out existing feature from the production database for editing with one or more of the following parameters.

**Note:** If the feature record has been checked out by another user for editing (Edit status), you may view it but not edit it. This query will return the edited version of a feature in Edit status, not the current public, unedited, version. To view the current version, use the public query form.

- **Feature ID:** Enter or copy/paste exact number.
  - Fastest query for single feature. Ignores all other fields.
  - This field must be blank for other queries to work.
- **Name:** Enter key word or words or leading letters of word. (Not case sensitive.)
  - Assumes Boolean “and” search.
  - Word order does not matter. Words need not be in the proper order in the name.
  - Does not search imbedded letters or ends of words.
- **State/County:** Select State; County list appears. Select county (not required).
  - Select from either the code pick list or the name pick list.
  - Typing a letter in the name list moves the list to the next value beginning with that letter.
  - State list includes U.S. territories and associated areas.
- **Feature Code:** Select Primary Feature Code; Secondary Code list appears; select Secondary Code. Or leave primary code blank and select directly from Secondary Code list.
  - Typing a letter moves the list to the next value beginning with that letter.
- **Class:** Select from list.
  - Typing a letter moves the list to the next value beginning with that letter.
  - (If Feature Code is selected, Class will be provided automatically and cannot be selected.)
- **Cell (Map) Name:** Query for features on a specified cell (map). The cell name is almost always the same as the corresponding map name. Occasionally a cell name is changed and is not revised as a map name until the map is reprinted or revised, if at all.
  - Enter Cell Name. (Not case sensitive.)
  - Click “Check Cell State.” List of States containing cells with that name appears. (The same cell name may be used in more than one State.)
  - Click down arrow. Select the desired cell state. (The Cell State is the primary State for the cell.)
  - **Note:** If the cell crosses a State boundary, the cell State (the primary state for the cell) might be different than the feature State (the State containing the feature). If you wish to query all features in a cell, do not select a feature State from the State list. If a feature State is selected,

the results will include features in the cell and in the selected State, but not in the adjacent State(s) covered by the cell.

- **Decision:** Query for features with Board on Geographic Names decisions. Enter any combination of the following.
  - Select Decision Authority. Values are:
    - Board Decision: A formal decision by the U.S. Board on Geographic Names.
    - Congress: The decision is official by authority of an act or law of Congress.
    - Executive: The decision is official by authority of a Presidential Executive Order.
  - Select Decision Type. Values are:
    - Official: A decision to recognize the sole official name and its location for Federal usage.
    - Not Official: A decision to declare a name not official – a name approved by a State that may be on State maps, but has no Federal recognition as official and shall not be used in Federal products. Not a variant. (Approximately 20 such records exist.)
    - Vacated: A decision to remove official status of a name previously recognized as official. May be a variant. Seldom exercised.
  - Enter single Decision Date or enter date range by selecting Before, After, or Between.
    - Date(s) may be manually entered or selected from calendar(s).
    - Manual entry format is dd-mmm-yyyy. Example: 01-jan-2000.
    - Dates earlier than 1920 are not in the calendar and must be entered manually.
- **Date Entered:** Query for date the feature was entered into the database.
  - Enter single date or enter date range by selecting Before, After, or Between.
    - Date(s) may be manually entered or selected from calendar(s).
    - Manual entry format is dd-mmm-yyyy. Example: 01-jan-2000.
    - Dates earlier than 1920 are not in the calendar and must be entered manually.
- **Federal Codes:** Query for features with Census Code, Census Class Code, GSA Code, or OPM Code.
  - Enter single Code value or enter code range by selecting Greater Than, Less than, or Between.
  - **Note:** Not all combinations are allowed. You may query either:
    - Census Code and/or Class Code, or
    - OPM Code, or
    - GSA Code.
    - You may not query combinations of Census and OPM and GSA codes.
- Click **Reset** (before executing the query) to return to blank form.
- Click **Query**. The query executes and returns the results list.
- **Hints:** Some query combinations are faster than others. Limit your results set to 100s or less. Larger queries will work (1000s of records) but may be slow and a long list is difficult to review.
  - **20 Second suggestion:** If it runs longer than twenty seconds, kill it and try another.
- Click **Query tab** at top to return to the query form from any other page.

## Query Tab, Uncommitted New/Edited Features

This form queries and returns feature records that have been checked out for editing (Edit status) and new features that have been entered (New status) but not committed. Features in Edit and New status may be edited as many times as desired before being committed, but only by the user who initiated the action or by designated data specialists. Other users may view but not edit these features.

**Note:** You also may query a feature in Edit status using the Check Out form above. (The Check Out form will not return new, uncommitted records.) The Check Out form will

return the edited version of a feature in Edit status, not the current public, unedited, version. To view the current version, use the public query form.

- **Edit or New:** Check the respective box to select only uncommitted edits or only uncommitted new records. Leave both boxes unchecked (or check both) to select both categories.
- **Feature ID:** Enter or copy/paste exact number.
  - Fastest query for single feature. Ignores all other fields.
  - This field must be clear for other queries to work.
- **User ID:** Select user ID. Returns only records checked out or entered by the selected user. Leave blank for all users.
- **State:** Select State. Returns only uncommitted records with the selected State as the primary feature State. Leave blank for all States.
- **Submit Date:** Query for date the feature was submitted to or edited in the forms.
  - Enter single date or enter date range by selecting Before, After, or Between.
    - Date(s) may be manually entered or selected from calendar(s).
    - Manual entry format is dd-mmm-yyyy. Example: 01-jan-2000.
    - Dates earlier than 1920 are not in the calendar and must be entered manually.
- Click **Reset** (before executing the query) to return to blank form.
- Click **Query**. The query executes and returns the results list.
- Click **Query tab** at top to return to the query form from any other page.

## Query Results

Displays a list of the features meeting the query parameters with their primary attribute values.

- **Re-sort:** Click column head to re-sort list by that column.
  - Click again to switch between ascending and descending sort order.
- **Feature Status:** values are:
  - (blank) = No status. Ready for check out. Click the name to check out.
  - **Edited** = This feature has been edited. If you edited the feature, you may edit it again until the record is reviewed, validated and committed by the data specialist. If someone else edited the feature, you may view it only, not edit it.
  - **New** = This is a newly entered feature. If you entered the feature, you may edit it as many times as necessary until the record is reviewed, validated and committed by the data specialist. If someone else entered the feature, you may view it only, not edit it.
  - **Reviewed** = This feature has been edited and reviewed by data specialists and is ready to commit to the production database. No additional edits may be made.
- **Conflated (Confl?) Status, Yes/No:** A gazetteer record is conflated when it has been merged with a vector record and shares attributes with it.
  - **Conflated Yes:** The feature is represented spatially by a point or points, lines, or polygons as appropriate. Changes submitted through these forms will be reflected in all associated gazetteer and vector products and services in *The National Map*.
    - For features represented by **lines or polygons:** Feature Code (FCode) and Feature Class on the Detail tab are set through vector processes and are viewable but not editable in these forms. Counties/States and Coordinates are derived automatically through spatial processes and are viewable but not editable in these forms. Other attributes are editable.
    - For features represented by **points** (primarily structures): All attributes are editable in these forms for conflated features.

- **Conflated No:** The feature is represented by the traditional GNIS points. Changes submitted through these forms will be reflected in gazetteer products and services only and not in vector layers and services. All attributes are editable in these forms.
- **New Features:** Newly entered features are not conflated by definition and must be fully entered for all required attributes.
- **Ongoing Conflation:** Unconflated features will be conflated eventually through separate processes, but the timing depends on the type of feature, resources, and priorities.
- **Check out:** Click a feature name to check out the record and edit it in detail pages.
- Click **Results** tab at top to return to this list from detail pages.
  - If you click the Enter New tab, the query results will be lost. Click the Query tab to reenter the query.

## All Tabs

See second tab bar at top for the feature detail pages. Click on the tab to go to that page. Each page contains the following:

- **Feature Data (upper left):** Feature ID, Feature Name, Record Status. Record status values are:
  - **Status** (no value) = This feature is available to be edited (if you checked it out).
  - **Status Edited** = This feature has been edited. If you edited the feature, you may edit it repeatedly as needed until the feature is reviewed, validated and committed by the data specialist. If someone else edited the feature, you may view it only, not edit it. The edit status is set the first time a save action is executed from any of the detail pages.
  - **Status New** = This is a newly entered feature. If you entered the feature, you may edit it repeatedly as needed until the feature is reviewed, validated and committed by the data specialist. If someone else entered the feature, you may view it only, not edit it. The new status is set the first time a save action is executed from the Enter New page.
  - **Conflated Yes:** This gazetteer record has been merged with a vector record. Changes entered through these forms will be reflected in all associated gazetteer and vector products and services in *The National Map*.
    - For features represented by lines or polygons: Feature Code (FCode) and Feature Class on the Detail tab are set through vector processes and are viewable but not editable in these forms. Counties/States and Coordinates are derived automatically through spatial processes and are viewable but not editable in these forms. Other attributes are editable.
    - For features represented by points (primarily structures): All attributes are editable in these forms for conflated features.
  - **Conflated No:** This gazetteer record has not been merged with a vector record. Changes entered through these will be reflected in gazetteer products and services only and not in vector products and services. All attributes are editable in these forms. Newly entered features are not conflated by definition.
- **Page Status (lower left):** The status of each detail page. Values are:
  - **Edited** = One or more fields on that page have been edited or entered.
  - **New** = One or more fields on that page have been entered for a new feature.
  - **Reviewed** = The page has been reviewed by data specialist and is ready to commit. No further edits are allowed.
  - Click on the page link to go directly to that page.
- **Page Data:** See [Detail Tab](#), [Name Tab](#), [Decisions Tab](#), [Counties/States Tab](#), [Coordinates Tab](#), [Designations Tab](#), [Report Tab](#), [Enter New Tab](#).

## Detail tab

Click the Detail tab.

## Edit Detail

Enter or edit data as follows:

- **\*Feature Code (FCode):** Select Primary Feature Code from list; Secondary Code list appears; select Secondary Code.
  - If no secondary codes apply, select “None of these.” (Not available in all categories.)
  - All features are assigned to one and only one Feature Code (primary plus secondary).
- **\*Feature Class:** This field is not selectable. When Feature Code is selected, Class is provided automatically.
- **Building Name, Address, City, State, Zip Code:** If the feature is a building and if the building name and address are provided in the data source, enter them here. The building name may be different from the official feature name. If only the address is provided, enter it without the building name.
- **History:** Name origin, physical, and/or cultural history of a feature. Free text field. Click ABC icon for spell checker.
- **Description:** Any information of interest. Amplifying or clarifying information, or unusual characteristics about the feature. Free text field. Click ABC icon for spell checker.
- **Remarks (not data):** Questions and information concerning the data exchanged with Geographic Names Office during data submission and review. Enter date and your name followed by remarks. Geographic Names Office will review and respond as needed. Additional remarks and responses may be entered multiple times as needed. Remarks are not data and will be deleted when the record is committed to production. Example: “George Smith, 01/01/2000: I believe the feature name should be changed to xxxxxx, but it has a Board decision. Request explanation or instructions.”
- Click **Reset** to clear the form of changes since last save.
- Click **Save**. For checked out records, the first save changes Feature and Page status to Edited.
- **Rollback:** For checked out records only, reverses all changes and reverts to current production values. Scroll to bottom; click Production Data triangle; view original entries; Click **Rollback**. Page status reverts to no status.

\*Required Field

### History Examples

The following are examples of history entries:

#### Chronological history

- Established in 1894
- Destroyed by fire in 1954

#### Name origin

- “Aconye” is derived from the Apache word “Akonye”, meaning “people of the canyon”.
- Named after Chuar Butte (Chuaroom Peak according to John Wesley Powell). The feature was named for a young Indian chief, 'Chuar' of the Kaibab band who was also called 'Frank' by the settlers.
- Named for the Comanche Indian Tribe that raided early settlements in the area.

Enter whatever information you have in whatever form seems best to convey that information to the public.

### **Description Examples**

The following are examples of description entries:

#### Location of feature relative to other features

- Define distances in metric units with English units in parentheses.
- Located 6.4 km (4 mi) north of ... and 16.9km (10 mi) east of ....

#### Informational

- Inundated by Lake Mead
- Destroyed by fire
- Abandoned

#### Notes concerning data and data compilation, usually incomplete records

- Incomplete record
- Source not determined, located outside project area
- Secondary point(s) not completed

Enter whatever information you have in whatever form seems best to convey that information to the public.

### **Add/Edit Federal Codes**

Click the Detail tab. Scroll down. Enter or edit data as follows:

- **Census Code:** Enter five-digit Census Code (Formerly the FIPS55 Place Code), numbers only with leading zeros as necessary to fill all five digits. [Definition](#)
  - Enter only the core five digits; do not include State code. Some sources concatenate state codes with the Census code for seven digits. When necessary, the system concatenates the codes for products and services.
- **Census Class Code:** Select Class Code from list. The definition for selected code displays. [Definition](#)
- **GSA Code:** Enter the four-digit GSA Code, numbers only with leading zeros as necessary to fill all four digits. [Definition](#)
  - Enter only the core four digits. Some sources concatenate state and county codes with the GSA code. Do not include state and/or county codes. When necessary, the system concatenates the codes for products and services.
- **OPM Code:** Enter the four-digit OPM Code, numbers only with leading zeros as necessary to fill all four digits. [Definition](#)
  - Enter only the core four digits. Some sources concatenate state and county codes with the OPM code. Do not include state and/or county codes. When necessary, the system concatenates the codes for products and services.
- **Partner:** Select partner from the list as instructed by the source.
- **Partner Code:** Enter partner code as instructed by the source.
- Click **Reset** to clear changes since last save. If no save has been done for checked out record, Reset button reverts to original data values.
- Click **Save**. For checked out records, the first save changes Feature and Page status to Edited.
- **Rollback:** For checked out records only, reverses all changes and reverts to current production values. Click Production Data triangle; view original entries; Click Rollback button. Page status reverts to no status.

## Names tab

Click the Names tab. This page contains the following fields:

- **Name** = Official name of the feature. [Definition](#)
- **Variants(s)** = Names other than the official name. [Definition](#)
- **Record Status**. Values are:
  - **New** = New name record.
  - **Edited** = Edited name record.

### Enter New Official Name or Add Variant

- Click **Enter New**. The Enter New Official Name page displays.  
or,
- Click **Add**. The Add Variant page appears.
- **\*Enter exact name**. See [Names Rules](#) for details.
  - Ensure correct word order, spelling, capitalization, diacritic marks, special characters, generics, articles.
  - Hint: copy/paste diacritic marks and special characters from the character map (Windows Start, Programs, Accessories, Systems Tools, Character Map. Versions may differ.) The character map font does not matter; Times New Roman or Courier New display marks well.
- **Enter New Official Name only**: For **Historic Features** (the feature no longer exists), type the word “(historic)” in parentheses after the name in the Name field. [Definition](#)  
Example: “George Washington School (historic)”.  
(Does not apply to and should be deleted from variants. )
  - Also assign designation of Historic. See [Designations tab](#).
- **\*Select New Reference**. See [Select Reference](#) for instructions.
  - If desired reference not listed, see [Search/Convert Old Reference](#) or [View References:Add/Edit Reference](#) (authorized personnel only).
- **Add Variant only**: Check **In Part** if the variant represents a feature that is historically just a part of the feature represented by the official name and not the whole. See [Names Rules](#) for details.
- Click **Enter** or **Add** to save. Display returns to Names page with changes.
  - New name or variant displays with status = New.
  - Former official name becomes a variant with status = Edited.
  - Page status changes to Edited (if first edit).
- Click **Reset** to clear changes entered before Enter or Add. Display reverts to blank form.
- Click **Cancel**. Display returns to previous page with no changes.

\*Required Field

### Edit Name or Variant

- Click **Edit** icon next to the name to be edited. The Edit Name/Variant page displays.
  - **\*Select New Reference**. See [Select Reference](#) for instructions.
- or,
- If old reference displays see [Search/Convert Old Reference](#)
- or,

- If desired reference not listed, see [View References:Add/Edit Reference](#) (authorized personnel only).
- **Edit Variant Only:** Check **In Part** if the variant represents a feature that is historically just a part of the feature represented by the official name and not the whole. See [Names Rules](#) for details.
- Click **Save**. Display returns to Names page with changes.
  - Page status changes to Edited (if first edit).
- Click **Reset** to clear changes entered before Save. Display reverts to blank form.
- Click **Cancel**. Display returns to previous page with no changes.

\*Required Field

## Change Variant to Official

- Click **Edit** next to the variant to be become official. The Edit Name/Variant page displays.
- Click **Change to Official Name** to make the variant the official name.
  - Former official name becomes a variant with status = Edited.
- Click **Cancel**. Display returns to previous page with no changes.

## Delete Variant

- Click **Edit** next to the variant to be deleted. The Edit Name/Variant page displays.
- Click **Delete** to delete variant. Display returns to Names page with name deleted.
- Click **Cancel**. Display returns to previous page with no changes.

## Select Reference

Make the following selections only in the order presented, as each one is dependent on the previous selections.

- \*Select **Reference (US or state alpha code)** from pick list (default US).
  - List includes only those states that have references.
- \*Select **Reference Type** from pick list (Possible values: Dataset, Text, Map, Website, Interview).
  - List includes only those types available for the selected reference. If the desired type does not appear, see [View References:Add/Edit Reference](#).
- \*Select **Originator** from pick list.
  - List includes only those originators available for the selected reference and type. If the desired originator does not appear, see [View References:Add/Edit Reference](#).
- If Type = Dataset:
  - \*Select **Title** from pick list.
  - \*Select **Publication Date** from pick list.
  - Select **Source URL** from pick list. (May be blank)
  - Select **Edition** from pick list. (May be blank)
- If Type = Text:
  - \*Select **Title** from pick list.
  - \*Select **Publication Date** from pick list.
  - Select **Edition** from pick list. (May be blank)
  - **Notes** will display for information upon selection of previous fields. (May be blank)
- If Type = Map:
  - \*Select **Series Name** from pick list.

- \*Select **Publication Date** from pick list.
- Select **Series Issue** from pick list. (May be blank)
- **Notes** will display for information upon selection of previous fields. (May be blank)
- If Type = Website:
  - \*Select **Source URL** from pick list.
  - \*Select **Publication Date** from pick list.
  - **Notes** will display for information upon selection of previous fields. (May be blank)
- If Type = Interview:
  - \*Select **Interview Date** from pick list.
  - **Notes** will display for information upon selection of previous fields. (May be blank)
- See [View References](#) to display all references and (authorized personnel only) to add or edit References.
- If the desired reference is not selectable, see and [Search:Convert Old References](#)
- Click **Enter** or **Add** to save. Display returns to Names page with changes.
  - New name or variant displays with status = New.
  - Enter New Official Name only: Former official name becomes a variant with status = Edited.
  - Page status changes to Edited (if first edit).
- Click **Reset** to clear changes entered before Enter or Add. Display reverts to blank form.
- Click **Cancel**. Display returns to previous page with no changes.

\*Required Field

## View References

From Enter New, Add Variant, or Edit Name/Variant page,

- Click **View References**.
  - For authorized users, add/edit buttons will be visible.
- Select desired values from each field in the order presented; a list of requested references displays.

## Add/Edit Reference (Authorized Personnel Only)

Authorized personnel may enter new references and edit existing ones. **Note:** If you return to the Enter New, Add Variant, or Edit Name/Variant page, the page must be refreshed to acquire the new reference values.

- Click **Add Reference**
- or,
- Click **Edit** next to reference to be edited
- \*Add Reference only: Select **Reference (US or state alpha code)**.
  - (This field not editable in Edit Reference.)
- \*Add Reference only: Select **Reference Type**.
  - (This field not editable in Edit Reference.)
- \*Add Reference only: Select or enter **Source Originator**: The name of the agency, organization, or individual producing the reference.
  - Click list icon at right of field, search for and select from existing sources or,
  - Enter new source **only** if originator does not already exist in list. Note that the originator can be used for multiple references.
  - (This field not editable in Edit Reference.)
- If Type = Dataset:

- \*Select or edit **Title**.
- \*Enter or edit **Publication Date**.
- \*Enter or edit **Source URL**.
- Enter or edit **Edition**. (optional)
- If Type = Text:
  - \*Select or edit **Title**.
  - \*Enter or edit **Publication Date**.
  - Enter or edit **Edition**. (optional)
  - Enter or edit **Notes**. Details not applicable in the above fields. (optional)
- If Type = Map:
  - \*Select or edit **Series Name**.
  - \*Enter or edit **Publication Date**.
  - Enter or edit **Series Issue**. (optional)
  - Enter or edit **Notes**. Details not applicable in the above fields. (optional)
- If Type = Website:
  - \*Enter or edit **Source URL**.
  - \*Enter or edit **Publication Date**.
  - Enter or edit **Notes**. Details not applicable in the above fields. (optional)
- If Type = Interview:
  - \* Enter or Edit **Interview Date**.
  - Enter or edit **Notes**. Details not applicable in the above fields. (optional)
- Click **Reset** to clear changes entered. Display reverts to original values.
- Click **Cancel**. Display returns to previous page with no changes.
- Click **Save**. Display returns to previous page with changes.
  - New or edited reference is available for selection. See [Select Reference](#).
- **Note:** If you return to the Enter New, Add Variant, or Edit Name/Variant page, the page must be refreshed to acquire the new reference values.

\*Required Field

## Search Old References

From Enter New, Add Variant, or Edit Name/Variant page,

- Click **Search Old References**.
- Select desired values from each field in the order presented; a list of requested references displays, or
- Enter key words in any order in the Citation field and click **Search Citation**; a list of requested references displays.
  - When a single reference is selected, the **Go to Convert** button displays. See Convert Old Reference below.

These data are for information only and are not editable.

- If desired reference not listed, see [View References:Add/Edit Reference](#)

## Convert Old Reference

Old references must be converted to new references. Copy/paste/edit from old citation and reference detail. Be as precise and specific as possible using existing similar values as examples. The converted reference will be available for selection in the Enter New, Add Variant, or Edit Name/Variant pages. **Note:** If you return to the Enter New, Add

Variant, or Edit Name/Variant page, the page must be refreshed to acquire the converted reference values.

From Search Old Feature References page, or

From Edit Name/Variant page where old reference displays:

- Click **Convert** or **Go To Convert**. The Convert Feature Reference page displays.
- \* Select **Reference** (US or state alpha code). Defaults to selected value from previous page or to US.
- \* Select **Reference Type**. Defaults to selected value from previous page.
- \*Select or enter **Source Originator**: The name of the agency, organization, or individual that produced the reference. Defaults to selected value from previous page.
  - Click list icon at right of field, search for and select from existing sources or,
  - Enter new source **only** if originator does not already exist in list. Note that the originator can be used for multiple references.
- If Type = Dataset:
  - \*Select from pick list or enter **Title**.
    - Click list icon at right of field, search for and select from existing titles or,
    - Enter new title **only** if title does not already exist in list.
  - \*Enter **Publication Date** from information in old reference citation or detail or from other source.
  - \*Enter **Source URL** from information in old reference citation or detail or from other source.
  - Enter **Edition** from information in old reference citation or detail or from other source. (optional)
- If Type = Text:
  - \*Select from pick list or enter **Title**.
    - Click list icon at right of field, search for and select from existing titles or,
    - Enter new title **only** if title does not already exist in list.
  - \*Enter **Publication Date** from information in old reference citation or detail or from other source.
  - Enter **Edition** from information in old reference citation or detail or from other source.
  - Enter **Notes**. Details not applicable in the above fields. (optional)
- If Type = Map:
  - \*Select from pick list or enter **Series Name**.
    - Click list icon at right of field, search for and select from existing series names or,
    - Enter new series name **only** if series name does not already exist in list.
  - \*Enter **Publication Date** from information in old reference citation or detail or from other source.
  - \*Enter **Series Issue** from information in old reference citation or detail or from other source.
  - Enter **Notes**. Details not applicable in the above fields. (optional)
- If Type = Website:
  - \*Enter **Source URL** from information in old reference citation or detail or from other source.
  - \*Enter **Publication Date** from information in old reference citation or detail or from other source.
  - Enter or edit **Notes**. Details not applicable in the above fields. (optional)
- If Type = Interview:
  - \* Enter **Interview Date** from information in old reference citation or detail or from other source.

- Enter or edit **Notes**. Details not applicable in the above fields. (optional)
- Click **Convert** to save. Display returns to Names page. New reference is selectable.
- Click **Reset** to clear changes entered before Convert. Display reverts to original values.
- Click **Cancel**. Display returns to previous page with no changes.
- **Note:** If you return to the Enter New, Add Variant, or Edit Name/Variant page, the page must be refreshed to acquire the converted reference values.

\*Required Field

## Rollback (Reverse) Names Changes

A rollback reverts to current production values. All saved changes are lost.

### Rollback New Official Name

When a new official name is entered, the original official name is saved as a variant. To roll back a new official name, click on the edit icon next to the variant that is the original name.

- Click **Edit** next old official name (now a variant). Edit Name/Variant page displays.
- Click **Rollback** at left. The display returns to the Names page with original official name.
  - Page and name status returns to (no value) if there are no other edits.

### Rollback New Variant

If a new variant has been added and then needs to be deleted:

- Click **Edit** next variant. Edit Name/Variant page displays.
- Click **Delete**. The display returns to the Names page with variant deleted.
  - Page and name status returns to (no value) if there are no other edits.

(Note: There is no rollback button in this case, because the Delete button serves the same purpose.)

### Rollback New Reference

To rollback a newly selected reference to the original reference:

- Click **Edit** next name or variant. Edit Name/Variant page displays.
- Click small triangle at left to view original values.
- Click **Rollback**. The display returns to the Names page with original reference values.
  - Page and name status returns to (no value) if there are no other edits.

## Decisions Tab

Click the Decisions tab. This page displays the U.S. Board on Geographic Names (BGN) decision(s). Add and delete functions are available for authorized personnel only.

- **Name** = Feature name to which the decision applies.
- **Authority** = Authority by which decision was made. Values are:
  - Board Decision: A formal decision by the U.S. Board on Geographic Names.
  - Congress: The decision is official by authority of an act or law of Congress.

- Executive: The decision is official by authority of a Presidential Executive Order.
- **Type** = Type of decision.
  - Official: A decision to recognize the sole official name and its location for Federal usage.
  - Not Official: A decision to declare a name not official – a name approved by a State that may be on State maps, but has no Federal recognition as official and shall not be used in Federal products. Not a variant. (Only 20 records exist.)
  - Vacated: A decision to remove official status of a name previously recognized as official without specifying a replacement. May be a variant. Seldom exercised. (Distinct from Not Official.)
- **Date** = Date of decision.

### Add Decision (Authorized Personnel Only)

- Click **Add**. The Add Decision page appears.
- Select **Name** to which the decision applies.
- Select or enter **Date** of decision.
  - Date(s) may be manually entered or selected from calendar.
  - Manual entry format is dd-mmm-yyyy. Example: 01-jan-2000.
  - Dates earlier than 1920 are not in the calendar and must be entered manually.
- Select **Authority** = Authority by which decision was made. Values are:
  - Board Decision: A formal decision by the U.S. Board on Geographic Names.
  - Congress: The decision is official by authority of an act or law of Congress.
  - Executive: The decision is official by authority of a Presidential Executive Order.
- Select **Type** = Type of decision.
  - Official: A decision to recognize the sole official name and its location for Federal usage.
  - Not Official: A decision to declare a name not official – a name approved by a State that may be on State maps, but has no Federal recognition as official and shall not be used in Federal products. Not a variant. (Only approximately 20 records exist.)
  - Vacated: A decision to remove official status of a name previously recognized as official without specifying a replacement. May be a variant. Seldom exercised.
- Click **Add**. Display returns to previous page with changes.
- Click **Cancel**. Display returns to previous page with no changes.

### Delete Decision (Authorized Personnel Only)

- Click next to decision to be deleted. The Delete Decision page appears.
- Click **Delete**. Display returns to previous page with changes.
- Click **Cancel**. Display returns to previous page with no changes.

## Counties/States Tab

Click the Counties/States tab. This page contains the following fields:

- **County** or counties containing the feature or part of the feature. [Definition](#)
- **Seq** = Sequence of multiple counties for features in more than one county. See [County Sequence Rules](#).
  - State and county numeric codes are displayed before each name.
  - The **Primary County and State** always contain the primary point (see [Coordinates Tab](#)) and are always sequence number 1.
  - **Secondary Counties** are other counties containing the feature.
- **Status** of record. Values are:
  - **New** = New county record.
  - **Edited** = Edited county record.

## Add or Edit County/State

- Click **Add**. The Add County/State page displays.
- Or,
- Click **Edit** next to the name to be edited. The Edit County/State page displays.
  - \*Enter or change **sequence number**. See [County Sequence Rules](#).
  - \*Select **Country**. Default is the United States. The list of States for that Country appears. [Definition](#)
    - Canada and Mexico are listed to account for features crossing the U.S. boarder.
  - \*Select **State** or State equivalent. The list of counties for that State appears. [Definition](#)
    - Select from either the code pick list or the name pick list.
    - Lists include current and former U.S. territories and associated areas. The Federated States of Micronesia, Marshall Islands, and Republic of Palau are treated as states for data purposes but officially are independent nations.
  - \*Select **County** or county equivalent. [Definition](#)
    - Select from either the code pick list or the name pick list.
    - Lists include U.S. territories and associated areas.
    - (County equivalents are not included for Canada and Mexico.)
  - Click **Add** or **Save**. Display returns to previous page with changes.
    - The new or edited county inserts at the recorded sequence with status = New or Edited.
    - Higher numbers resequence to +1.
    - Any number > the highest number defaults to the highest number +1.
    - Page status changes to Edited (If first edit).
  - Click **Reset** to clear changes entered before Add or Save. Display reverts to original values.
  - Click **Cancel**. Display returns to previous page with no changes.

\*Required Field

## Delete County/State

- Click **Edit** next to the county to be deleted. The Edit County/State page displays.
- Click **Delete**. Display returns to Counties/States page.
  - The deleted county displays in Deleted Counties/States section.
  - Exception: If record status = New (added but not committed), the county disappears from list.
- Click **Cancel**. Display returns to previous page with no changes.

## Rollback (Reverse) County Changes

A rollback reverts to current production values. All saved changes are lost.

### Rollback Edited Counties (Record status = Edited)

- Click small triangle at left to view production values.
- Click **Rollback**. The display reverts to production values.
  - Page and county status return to (no value).

### Rollback Deleted County

Retains other edits.

- Click **Back** next to the deleted county to be rolled back. The Rollback Deleted County/State? page appears.
- Click **Rollback**. Display returns to Counties/States page with restored county.
  - Page and county status returns to (no value) if no other edits.
- Click **Cancel**. Display returns to previous page with no changes.

## Coordinates Tab

All coordinates are NAD83.

Click the Coordinates tab. This page contains the following fields:

- **Latitude and Longitude** of points in or on the feature. [Definition](#)
- **Seq** = Sequence of multiple points for features in more than one USGS standard topographic map (cell). See [Coordinates Sequence Rules](#).
  - The **Primary Point** is always sequence number 1 and determines the primary county and State.
  - **Secondary Points** are points in or on the feature and in maps (cells) other than the one containing the primary point, one per map.
- **Cell** = The name of the standard USGS cell (Map) containing the point.
- **Elevation** = the elevation from the [National Elevation Dataset](#) (NED) for the primary point only. [Definition](#)
- **Status** of record. Values are:
  - **New** = New point record.
  - **Edited** = Edited point record.
- Click **View Decimal Degrees** or **View Deg/Min/Sec** (degrees/minutes/seconds) to change the display.
  - Add and Edit forms use the selected format.

## Add or Edit Coordinates

All coordinates are NAD83.

- Click **Add**. The Add Coordinates page displays.

Or,

- Click **Edit** next to the coordinates to be edited. The Edit Coordinates page displays.

- \*Enter or change **sequence number**. See [Coordinates Sequence Rules](#). [Definition](#)
- \*Enter or edit **Latitude**.
  - DMS format: DDMMSS(N or S), e.g., 382908N.

- DEC format: nn.nnnnnnn (7 decimal places), e.g., 38.4827865.  
(no sign) = north, minus sign = south.  
If 7 decimal places are not available from source data, enter what is available. Zeros are assumed for the remainder.
- **\*Enter or edit Longitude.**
  - DMS format: DDDMMSS(E or W), e.g., 0780358W.
  - DEC format: nnn.nnnnnnn (7 decimal places), e.g., -078.0661354  
(no sign) = east, minus sign = west.  
If 7 decimal places not available from source data, enter what is available. Zeros are assumed for the remainder.
- **\*Check Verify Cell Name.** List appears with the names of cells containing the coordinates. Standard cells are 7.5' x 7.5' except Alaska where they are 15' x 15'.  
[Definition](#)
  - If list contains more than one cell name, select correct one. List appears with States containing that cell.
  - If list contains more than one State name, select correct State.
  - If no cell name is correct, revise coordinates and verify again.
  - If the list contains no cells, the coordinates are outside the cell grid. This is possible if the point is off shore of U.S., in the Pacific, or in Canada or Mexico, but is very rare. Check coordinates and verify again.
- Check **Get Elevation** (Primary point, sequence 1 only). Elevation value is returned from NED. [Definition](#)
  - Occasionally the NED will not return a valid value due to issues with the data or with the service. If that happens, try again a few times, or try later, and/or modify the coordinates slightly. If no response is received, save without the elevation. Procedures are run periodically to resolve unrecorded elevations.
- Click **Add** or **Save**. Display returns to previous page with changes.
  - The new or edited coordinates insert at the recorded sequence with status = New or Edited.
  - Higher numbers resequence to +1.
  - Any number > the highest number defaults to the highest +1.
  - Page status changes to Edited (If first edit).
- Click **Reset** to clear changes entered before Add or Save. Display reverts to original values.
- Click **Cancel**. Display returns to previous page with no changes.

\*Required Field

## Delete Coordinates

- Click **Edit** next to the coordinates to be deleted. The Edit page displays.
- Click **Delete**. Display returns to Coordinates page.
  - The deleted coordinates display in Deleted Coordinates section.
  - Exception: If record status = New (added but not committed), the coordinates disappear from list.
- Click **Cancel**. Display returns to previous page with no changes.

## Rollback (Reverse) Coordinates Changes

A rollback reverts to current production values. All saved changes are lost.

### Rollback Edited Coordinates (Record status = Edited)

- Click small triangle at left to view production values.

- Click **Rollback**. The display reverts to production values.
  - Page and coordinates status return to (no value).

### Rollback Deleted Coordinates

Retains other edits.

- Click **Back** next to the deleted coordinates to be rolled back. The Rollback Deleted Coordinates? page appears.
- Click **Rollback**. Display returns to Coordinates page with restored values.
  - Page status returns to (no value) if no other edits.
- Click **Cancel**. Display returns to previous page with no changes.

## Designations Tab

Designations are attribute values that may be associated with (assigned to) a feature. A feature may have more than one designation and a designation may be assigned to more than one feature. This page contains the following fields:

- **Designation** = The title of designation
- **Status** of record. Values are:
  - (No value): The designation is currently assigned to the feature.
  - **New**: The designation has been newly assigned, but not validated and committed.
  - **Detached** = Detached or unassigned designation. The designation has been declared no longer applicable.
- **Note**: If designation = **Historic**, type the word “(historic)” in parentheses after the name in the Name field.  
Example: George Washington School (historic). See [Names tab](#). [Definition](#)

### Assign Designation

- Click **Assign**. The Assign Designation page appears.
- Select **Designation** from list.
- Click **Assign**. Display returns to previous page with changes.
  - Record status = New.
- Click **Cancel**. Display returns to previous page with no changes.

### Detach (Unassign) Designation

- Click **Detach**. The Detach/Reattach page appears.
- Click **Detach**. Display returns to previous page with changes.
  - Record status = Detached.
  - Exception: If record status = New, the record disappears from list.
- Click **Cancel**. Display returns to previous page with no changes.

### Rollback (Reattach) Designation

- Click **Detach**. The Detach/Reattach page appears.
- Click **Reattach**. Display returns to previous page with changes.
  - Record status reverts to (no value).
- Click **Cancel**. Display returns to previous page with no changes.

## Report Tab

Click Report tab to view a report of all feature data with status.

- To see a printable view, click View & Print all (top right).
  - Print using the browser print function.
  - Click browser back button to return to the Report tab.

## Enter New Tab

Click the Enter New tab. Enter new features here. This page contains the following fields:

- \*Feature Name [Definition](#)
- \*Feature Code
- \*Primary State and County [Definition](#)
- \*Name Reference [Definition](#)
- \*Primary Coordinates [Definition](#)
- Elevation [Definition](#)
- Source Coordinates of liner (Stream, Valley, Arroyo) feature (if known)

Other data—variant names, secondary states, secondary counties, secondary coordinates, history, description, etc.—are entered from the detail pages. See [Submit & Add Detail](#).

\* = Required Fields

## Enter Feature Name

- \*Enter exact **Name**. See [Names Rules. Definition](#)
  - Ensure correct word order, spelling, capitalization, diacritic marks, special characters, generics, articles.
  - Hint: copy/paste diacritic marks and special characters from the character map (Windows Start, Programs, Accessories, Systems Tools, Character Map. Versions may differ.) The character map font does not matter; Times New Roman or Courier New display marks well.

## Designate Historic Feature

A historic feature is one that no longer exists. A new historic feature may be entered with sufficient documentary evidence. [Definition](#)

- Type the word “(historic)” in parentheses after the name in the Name field.  
Example: George Washington School (historic)
- Click **Historic** check box. A History box appears at the bottom of the form (Same as History field in [Edit Detail tab](#)).
  - In the History field, enter additional information concerning the history of the feature (optional). See [History Examples](#).
  - The designation Historic is assigned automatically. See [Designations tab](#).

## Select Feature Code

- \*Select Primary **Feature Code (FCode)** from list; Secondary Code list appears; select Secondary Code.
  - If no secondary codes apply, select “None of these.” (Not available in all categories.)
  - All features are assigned to one and only one Feature Code.
- **Feature Class**: This field is not selectable. When Feature Code is selected, Class is provided automatically.
- If a **linear feature** is selected (Landform Feature/Arroyo, Landform Feature/Valley, Hydrographic Feature/Stream),

- Source Lat/Long fields appear. See [Enter Coordinates](#).
- If a **Park** is selected, **Administered By** appears.
  - Select an administering authority. Leave blank if unknown.

## Select State and County

- \*Select primary **State** or State equivalent. The list of counties for that State appears. Select primary **County** or county equivalent. [Definition](#)
  - Lists include U.S. territories and associated areas. The Federated States of Micronesia, Marshall Islands, and Republic of Palau are treated as states for data purposes but officially are independent nations.
  - See [County Sequence Rules](#) for more information.
- Click **No County** only if the feature is associated with a state but not with a county.
  - **Very rarely** used, primarily features between three and twelve miles off shore and in unincorporated areas of Alaska.
  - In all other cases, the county must be provided.

## Select Reference

Make the following selections only in the order presented, as each one is dependent on the previous selections.

- \*Select **Reference (US or state alpha code)** from pick list (default US).
  - List includes only those states that have references.
- \*Select **Reference Type** from pick list (Possible values: Dataset, Text, Map, Website, Interview).
  - List includes only those types available for the selected reference. If the desired type does not appear, see [View References:Add/Edit Reference](#).
- \*Select **Originator** from pick list.
  - List includes only those originators available for the selected reference and type. If the desired originator does not appear, see [View References:Add/Edit Reference](#).
- If Type = Dataset:
  - \*Select **Title** from pick list.
  - \*Select **Publication Date** from pick list.
  - Select **Source URL** from pick list. (May be blank)
  - Select **Edition** from pick list. (May be blank)
- If Type = Text:
  - \*Select **Title** from pick list.
  - \*Select **Publication Date** from pick list.
  - Select **Edition** from pick list. (May be blank)
  - **Notes** will display for information upon selection of previous fields. (May be blank)
- If Type = Map:
  - \*Select **Series Name** from pick list.
  - \*Select **Publication Date** from pick list.
  - Select **Series Issue** from pick list. (May be blank)
  - **Notes** will display for information upon selection of previous fields. (May be blank)
- If Type = Website:
  - \*Select **Source URL** from pick list.
  - \*Select **Publication Date** from pick list.
  - **Notes** will display for information upon selection of previous fields. (May be blank)

- If Type = Interview:
  - \*Select **Interview Date** from pick list.
  - **Notes** will display for information upon selection of previous fields. (May be blank)
- See [View References](#) to display all references and (authorized personnel only) to add or edit References.
- If the desired reference is not selectable, see and [Search:Convert Old References](#)

## Enter Coordinates

\*All coordinates in **NAD83**. If the feature is linear, enter both primary and source coordinates. [Definition](#)

- Click **DMS** to enter degrees, minutes, seconds (default) or,
  - Latitude DMS format: DDMMSS(N or S), e.g., 382908N.
  - Longitude DMS format: DDDMMSS(E or W), e.g., 0780358W.
- Click **DEC** to enter decimal degrees to seven places.
  - Latitude DEC format: nn.nnnnnnn (7 decimal places), e.g., 38.4827865.  
(no sign) = north, minus sign = south.  
If 7 decimal places are not available from source data, enter what is available. Zeros are assumed for the remainder.
  - Longitude DEC format: nnn.nnnnnnn (7 decimal places), e.g., -078.0661354  
(no sign) = east, minus sign = west.  
If 7 decimal places not available from source data, enter what is available. Zeros are assumed for the remainder.

See [Primary Coordinates Rules](#) and [Source Coordinates Rules](#).

## Verify Cell Name

- \*Check **Verify Cell Name**. List appears with the names of cells containing the coordinates. Standard cells are 7.5' x 7.5' except Alaska where they are 15' x 15'.
  - If list contains more than one cell name, select correct one. List appears with States containing that cell.
  - If list contains more than one State name, select correct State.
  - If no cell name is correct, revise coordinates and verify again.
  - If the list contains no cells, the coordinates are outside the cell grid. This is possible if the point is off shore of U.S., in the Pacific, or in Canada or Mexico, but is very rare. Check coordinates and verify again.

## Unknown Coordinates

Use only as a last resort if primary coordinates are unknown (usually applied to features classified as historic).

- Click **Unknown Coordinates**. Cell State and Cell lists appear.
  - Select Cell State – State containing primary point.
    - List of names for standard cells in that State appear.
  - Select cell name, if known.
- Note:** If coordinates are determined later, return to this feature and enter them.

## Get Elevation

- Check **Get Elevation**. Elevation value is returned from NED. [Definition](#)
  - Occasionally the NED will not return a valid value due to issues with the data or with the service. If that happens, try again a few times, or try later, and/or

modify the coordinates slightly. If no response is received, save without the elevation. Procedures are run periodically to resolve unrecorded elevations.

## Enter Remarks

Remarks:

- Are questions and information concerning feature data exchanged with Geographic Names Office during data submission and review.
- Remarks are NOT DATA
  - Will be deleted when the new or edited record is committed to production.
- Enter date, your name, and type remarks.
- Geographic Names Office will review and respond as needed.

Example: You believe the feature name should be changed, but it has a governing Board decision and need advice.

\*Required Fields

## Submit New Record

For a simple feature (All data can be entered on this page).

- Click **Submit**. Form clears except for key fields.
  - Key field values are retained to facilitate entry of multiple similar features.
- Enter another feature if desired and continue.
- Data specialists will review and validate the record(s) and commit them to production.

## Submit and Add Detail

Complex feature – Requires additional detail, variants, multiple counties, multiple States, designations.

- Click **Submit and Enter Detail**. Detail pages appear same as in edit mode.
- Enter Detail. See [All Tabs](#).
- Data specialists will review and validate the record(s) and commit them to production.

## Rules

### Feature ID Rules

The Feature ID:

- Is a number of up to ten digits.
  - Assigned automatically when a new feature is entered.
  - Contains no information.
- Is the single unique feature record identifier.
  - Assigned to one and only one feature.
  - Permanent.
- Is used throughout the Federal government, State, local, commercial sources for feature data.
- Is an ANSI standard.
- Is displayed in the Feature box in the upper left of each detail page.

## Names Rules

- **One** feature – **One** official name. No exceptions.
- **Defined by function** – not composition, size, or location. Example:
  - Fisher Church and Fisher School – two features in same building with identical coordinates but different functions are two different features.
- **Several names** for the same feature?
  - Determine one official name.
  - All others are variants.
- A **variant** is any name other than the official name. Examples:
  - Historical name that is no longer official.
  - Name less used than the official name but recognized locally.
  - Name incorrectly recorded on a map or in a document but in the public domain.
  - Misspelling of an official name.

**Note:** An abbreviation of the official name is NOT to be recorded as a variant.
- The following **parenthetical expressions** only are allowed following the name.
  - “(Historical)” – See [Designate Historical Feature](#).
  - “(Not Official)” – a name approved by a State that may be on State maps, but has no Federal recognition as official and shall not be used in Federal products. Not a variant. (Only 20 records exist.)
- **Natural Features, Reservoirs, Canals**
  - New name or name change usually requires Board on Geographic Names decision.
  - *Note:* Feature names with a Board decision cannot be changed. See [Decisions tab](#).
- **Abbreviations:** Spell them out.
  - Except abbreviated features specified in law.
- **Generics:** Almost all features should include a generic. Examples:
  - Mount Saint Helens
  - J C Thomas School
  - Coleville Mountain
  - Lake Mead
- **Generics Exception:** Populated Places might not include a generic term.  
Examples:
  - Chicago
  - Mount Pleasant (The word “Mount” is part of the name, not a generic in this case.)
- **Definite articles usually** are lower case if not the first word in the name.
  - Examples: with, for, the, our, ...
  - Woods, Lake of the; Hole-in-the-Wall
- **Apostrophes**
  - Use only for administrative (not natural) features.
  - Remove genitive or possessive apostrophes from names of natural features.

## County Sequence Rules

- Sequence the counties 1 through n for each county into which the feature extends or through which it passes.
- County sequence number 1 is always the **primary county** and contains the primary coordinates.
- **Point features** (features with a single set of coordinates) have only one county.
- Sequence counties for **linear features** (streams, valleys, arroyos) from mouth to source.
  - Each county is entered only once even if the feature enters, exits, and reenters the county.

- Ensure complete coverage of **areal features** in more than one county (parks, national forests, populated places, etc.).
- Sequence counties for areal features generally from the primary county outward in the most convenient sequence. There are no set rules.
- Counties other than the primary county are secondary counties.

## Coordinates Sequence Rules

- One set of coordinates per standard USGS cell (map) at a scale of 1:24,000 into which the feature extends or through which it passes.
  - Exception: Source coordinates for a linear feature may be in the same map as the primary coordinates.
- Point sequence number 1 is always the **primary point** and determines the primary State and county.
- **Point features** have a single set of coordinates.
- Sequence points for **linear features** (streams, valleys, arroyos) from mouth to source.
  - Each map (cell) is represented by only one point even if the feature enters, exits, and reenters the map.
  - Exception: Source coordinates for a linear feature may be in the same map as the primary coordinates.
  - The highest sequence number (if known) is the source of a linear feature.
- Ensure complete coverage of **areal features** in more than one map (parks, national forests, populated places, etc.).
  - Sequence points for areal features generally from the primary map outward in the most convenient sequence. There are no set rules.
- Points other than the primary point are secondary points.

## Primary Coordinates Rules

Primary coordinates:

- Are also referred to as the primary point, the feature location, or the feature application.
- Are always the first set of coordinates.
- Are always sequence number 1.
- Determine the primary State and county.
- Are located as shown in the following table:

<u>For Feature types</u>	<u>The Primary point is located at</u>
Stream, Valley, Arroyo	– The mouth
Summit, Range	– The highest point
Populated Place	– Older data might reflect the center of original settlement, major intersection. Otherwise, center or centroid.
Other Areal Features	– The center or centroid

- See [Coordinates Sequence Rules](#).

## Source Coordinates Rules

Source coordinates:

- Are for linear features only (Class = Stream, Valley, Arroyo).
- Are required (if known).
- Are based on the source of the longest straightest drain (BGN Policy).

- May be in the same map as the primary coordinates.
- Are never in same map as other secondary coordinates.
- Are always the last set of coordinates.
- Are always the highest sequence number.
- See [Coordinates Sequence Rules](#).

## Definitions

The following definitions are from the metadata file and ANSI INCITS 446-2008.

### Geographic Feature

A physical or defined entity on the landscape or seascape (except a road or highway) that requires identification, location, and attribution for the information purposes of government and the public, and having as minimum attributes a feature name and a feature location. Geographic features are characterized and differentiated solely by function, and not by size, composition, structure, extent, relationships to other features, ownership, age, history, or any other factor. These and other attributes will be associated with the feature in various datasets but do not necessarily or individually differentiate it from similar features. A school and a church operating in the same building, for example, constitute two features and are assigned separate Feature Identifiers. This definition is distinct from that of a spatial or geospatial feature, which is a graphic or digital representation of, and therefore one attribute of, the geographic feature entity.

### Feature Identifier

A permanent, unique number assigned to a geographic feature for the sole purpose of uniquely identifying that feature as a record in any information system database, dataset, file, or document and for distinguishing it from all other feature records so identified. The number is assigned sequentially (highest existing number plus one) to new records as they are created in the U.S. National Map Gazetteer and the supporting Geographic Names Information System (GNIS). The number, by design, carries no information or association to the content of the feature record and therefore is not a “code” subject to change as attribute values change. Once assigned to a feature, the number is never changed or withdrawn, and never reassigned. The Feature ID can be applied in conjunction with system-unique record identifiers and codes in any database or system, thus providing a national standard common reference identifier across multiple datasets. The Feature ID is stored in the dataset as an integer with a maximum of ten digits, but currently is up to seven digits.

### Official Feature Name

An official name applied to a geographic feature—the proper name, specific term, or expression by which a particular geographic entity is or was known in any language expressible in the Roman alphabet. The written form is approved by the U.S. Board on Geographic Names by decision or by policy delegation to an authoritative source in compliance with the Board’s Principles, Policies, and Procedures for Domestic Geographic Feature Names and with the Names Data Users Guide. These rules address display and format guidelines regarding standardized spelling, capitalization, diacritical marks, special characters, abbreviations, etc. A geographic feature has one and only one

official name for application on all federal products, electronic or printed. Names are stored in the dataset as alphanumeric text in AL32/UTF8 format.

### **Feature Variant Name**

A variant name is a current or historical name or spelling for a geographic feature other than its official name determined by an authoritative source to be useful for reference to, identification of, or location of a geographic feature, and which is supported by documentary or physical evidence or references in compliance with Board on Geographic Names Principles, Policies, and Procedures for Domestic Geographic Feature Names and with the Names Data Users Guide. A geographic feature may have any number of variant names.

### **Official Feature Location**

The single dimensionless geospatial point to which the official feature name is associated in order to ensure positive identification and unique association, also referred to as the primary point. The location is determined by the authoritative source and is approved or recognized as official by the U.S. Board on Geographic Names by decision or by policy delegation to the authoritative source. The placing of the location point is governed by policies of the Board as defined in the Names Data Users Guide, generally at or near the geographic center, but there are exceptions for certain classes of features. For example, the official feature location of flowing bodies of water (streams, rivers, creeks, etc.) or trending linear features (valleys, gulchs, gullys, hollows, etc.) is at the mouth. The point may be a visual estimate or it may be a polygonal centroid or a linear end or center point depending on the nature of the feature and the available geospatial data at the time of collection. A geographic feature may have only one official location regardless of size, extent, composition, structure, or boundaries. The location point is coincident with but in addition to and independent of geospatial representations or boundary definitions that may be associated with the feature. Linear and areal features may have secondary points as defined in the Names Data Users Guide and the U.S. National Map Gazetteer metadata. Locations are stored in the dataset as latitude and longitude in decimal degrees to seven places, North American Datum 1983 (NAD83).

### **Secondary Point**

The latitude and longitude of a point locating a linear or areal geographic feature on a map of the USGS National Base Map series (at a scale of 1:24000 or 1:25000) other than the map containing the primary point. With one exception (i.e., the point representing the source of a stream, valley or arroyo may be on the same map as the primary point) a feature is assigned one point per map on which it is located. The points are sequenced. Sequence number one is always the primary point and the remaining points are secondary points. For a linear feature with feature class equal to valley, stream, or arroyo, the points are sequenced from mouth toward the source and the highest sequence number is the source. For other linear features and for areal features, secondary points are sequenced arbitrarily. The location of a secondary point on the feature within the map is arbitrary, but depending on the nature of the feature and the available geospatial data, the points may represent spatial joins of feature and topographical map boundaries. This method of associating features with maps was conceived prior to geographic information system

technology and has been retained as a useful approximation of feature extent and a reference to printed maps. These points do not represent boundaries or geometries and should not be confused with them. Secondary points are stored in the U.S. National Map Gazetteer as latitude and longitude in decimal degrees to seven places, North American Datum 1983 (NAD83).

### **Associated Country**

The country or countries containing the geographic feature. This dataset contains features in the United States (US), the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the outlying areas (American Samoa, Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, the Virgin Islands, and United States Minor Outlying Islands), in the freely associated areas (the Federated States of Micronesia (FM), the Marshall Islands (RM) and the Republic of Palau (PS)), and in the waters of the same to the limit of the twelve mile statutory zone. Canada (CA) and Mexico (MX) are countries in the dataset for features crossing the U.S. border. The dataset also contains features in Antarctica (AY) approved for federal use by the U.S. Board on Geographic Names. For data purposes, Antarctica is treated as a country. Depending on the nature of the feature and the available geospatial data, these associations may be relational data or may reflect spatial joins on feature and country boundaries. Values are represented by country name and country alpha code.

### **Associated State**

The state or states or state equivalents containing the geographic feature. This dataset contains features in the fifty United States, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the outlying areas (American Samoa, Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, the Virgin Islands, and United States Minor Outlying Islands), in the freely associated areas (the Federated States of Micronesia, the Marshall Islands and the Republic of Palau), and in the waters of the same to the limit of the twelve mile statutory zone. Canadian and Mexican states are in the dataset for features crossing the U.S. border. Depending on the nature of the feature and the available geospatial data, these associations may be relational data or may reflect spatial joins on feature and state boundaries. Values are represented by state name, state numeric code, and state alpha code. The primary state is the state containing the official location (primary point) and is assigned sequence number one. Secondary states are those other than the primary state containing the feature and are sequenced according to guidelines of the Board on Geographic Names consistent with the primary and secondary counties containing the feature. For linear features (streams, valleys, arroyos) the sequencing is from mouth toward source.

### **Associated County**

The county or counties or county equivalents containing the geographic feature. This dataset contains features in counties or county equivalents of the fifty United States, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the outlying areas (American Samoa, Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, the Virgin Islands, and United States Minor Outlying Islands), in the freely associated areas (the Federated States of Micronesia, the Marshall Islands and the Republic of Palau), and in the waters of the same to the limit of the twelve mile statutory zone. Depending on the nature of the

feature and the available geospatial data, these associations may be relational data or may reflect spatial joins on feature and county boundaries. Values are represented by county name and county numeric code. The primary county is the county containing the primary point and is assigned sequence number one. Secondary counties are those other than the primary county containing the feature and are sequenced according to guidelines of the Board on Geographic Names. For linear features (streams, valleys, arroyos) the sequencing is from mouth toward source. For linear features (streams, valleys, arroyos) the sequencing is from mouth toward source.

## **Feature Class**

A feature class is a designation for a group of features in a broadly defined descriptive category. All features are assigned to one and only one class. They do not individually classify all kinds of cultural and natural features. Although the terms are generally consistent with dictionary definitions, they may not conform exactly and are not always intuitive. These classifications originally were developed in the late 1970's for mainframe file structure search purposes on this dataset and have no status as official or authoritative. (This definition has no relationship to the use of the term in the context of geographic information systems and data.)

## **Historical Designation**

A geographic feature designated as historical is one that once existed but has ceased to exist, is no longer discernable on the landscape or seascape, and/or no longer serves the original purpose. The definition makes no reference to age, current or past use, significance in history, public awareness, condition, appearance, degree of human habitation, or any other factor. If the feature existed when entered into the dataset but subsequently ceased to exist, the status of the feature is revised to historical. No valid feature record is ever removed from the dataset unless determined to be a duplicate of another record as a result of entry error. Features meeting this definition but not in the dataset may be submitted for consideration by any source and the public with supporting documentary evidence. Upon validation by the Geographic Names Office, such features are entered with the status of historical. Historical features are identified in the dataset by the term “(historical)” after the official name as well as by a use status flag.

## **Feature Description**

Amplifying, clarifying, or unusual characteristics of or information about a feature or the feature data; optional unstructured textual data entered when available.

## **Feature History**

A description of name origin, and physical and/or cultural history of a feature; optional unstructured textual data entered when available. Additional information from any source is welcome.

## **Feature Elevation**

The elevation in feet and meters above sea level of the feature at the official location (primary point) or depth of a feature at the lowest point below sea level (negative number). Elevation figures are not considered authoritative, have no official or legal

status, and do not represent precisely measured or surveyed values. The data are extracted from the National Elevation Dataset (<http://ned.usgs.gov/>) and may differ from elevations cited in other sources including those on USGS topographic maps and electronic derivatives. The differences may be most evident for features such as summits where local relief (rate of change of elevation) will be more prominent. The elevation figures are within tolerances for the data and sufficiently accurate for purposes of general information.

### **USGS Map Name**

The name of the standard USGS 7.5x7.5 minute quadrangle map(s) containing the representation of the feature.

### **Census Code**

Originally the "Place Code," a five-digit feature record identifier in the former Federal Information Processing Standard (FIPS) 55 dataset, but now used only for internal purposes by the Census Bureau and renamed for clarity. To be unique, the Census Code must be preceded by the two-digit state code (INCITS 38:200x, (Formerly FIPS 5-2)). The FIPS55-3 standard has been superseded by INCITS 446-2008; the data were merged with the U.S. National Map Gazetteer. The INCITS 446-2008 Feature ID superseded the Census (Place) Code as the Federal standard unique, permanent, feature identifier and will over time replace it in all federal systems. In collaboration with the Census Bureau, Census Codes are maintained in the Gazetteer and are viewable and downloadable from products and services for convenience of users.

### **Census Class Code**

Formerly the Federal Information Processing Standard (FIPS) 55-3 Class Code. The FIPS 55-3 has been withdrawn as a federal standard. The Class Code now is a nonstandard code maintained by the Census Bureau for internal purposes. It is maintained in the U.S. National Map Gazetteer through collaboration with the Census Bureau and provided through products and services for convenience of users.

### **GSA Code**

General Services Administration (GSA) location code, maintained by GSA as a place reference for administrative and personnel purposes. It is maintained in the U.S. National Map Gazetteer through collaboration with the GSA and provided in products and services for convenience of users. The code is four digits in fixed-length format with leading zeros. The code is only unique within states and therefore may be preceded by the two digit numeric state code (INCITS 38:200x, (Formerly FIPS 5-2)) to achieve uniqueness.

### **OPM Code**

Office of Personnel Management (OPM) location code. Maintained by OPM as a place reference for administrative and personnel purposes. It is maintained in the U.S. National Map Gazetteer through collaboration with the OPM and provided in products and services for convenience of users. The code is four digits in fixed-length format with leading zeros, preceded by the two digit numeric state code (INCITS 38:200x, (Formerly FIPS 5-2)) to achieve uniqueness, and followed by the three digit county numeric code

(INCITS 31:200x, (Formerly FIPS 6-4)) to define association with the county, counties, or county equivalents containing the feature.

### **Bibliographic Reference Citation**

The authoritative source reference for a feature name or variant meeting Board on Geographic Names requirements with regard to standardization and consisting of subordinate attributes as follows. Based on reference type (dataset, interview, map, text, website), the citation consists of: US or state alpha code of origin, the source originator, the title or series name or source URL, the publication date or interview date, the edition or series issue, and notes. These subordinate attribute values are concatenated in products and services as the Citation.

### **BGN Decision Date**

The date of the U.S. Board on Geographic Names decision concerning the name. A date of the last day of a month or year may indicate that the actual date in the month or year was not recorded in early data.

### **Date Created**

The date the geographic feature record was initially committed to the dataset and made available through products and services. A date of the last day of a month or year may indicate that the actual date in the month or year was not recorded in early data.

### **Date Edited**

The date one or more attributes of an existing geographic feature record were last edited. The attributes edited are not specified. Collection of this attribute began in 2005.