Nova Scotia 2013 Annual Report to the
GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES BOARD OF CANADA
October 2 & 3 2013
Winnipeg, Manitoba

A. Executive Summary

Nova Scotia Geographic Names Activity

Activity	Apr 1 2012 to Mar 31/13	Apr 1 2011 to Mar 31/12
Records Added	2	1
Records Modified	32, 806	22
Records Rescinded	2	2
Request for Change	5	-
Request for Information	33	-
Recorded Client Requests	91	69

In November 2012, the Nova Scotia Geographic Names Program received support from GIS Management to adopt a new maintenance strategy for Nova Scotia Geographic Names. Nova Scotia's geographic names are now being maintained at the source, i.e., utilizing the application and infrastructure support provided by Natural Resources Canada (NRCAN). As a source provider to the Canadian Geographic Names Database (CGNDB), Nova Scotia proposes updates using the CGNDB Maintenance tool accessible online.

This change in business practice was due to a variety of internal pressures on the Program over the past 10 years. Moving forward, this change is expected to benefit the Program overall, provide cost and resource savings, streamline the information exchange process and enhance the relationship with NRCAN. This is a good example of Federal and Provincial Programs working together to share resources and reduce duplication of services.

As a result of this new maintenance approach, the Nova Scotia Geographic Names database (NSGNDB), the Nova Scotia Geographic Names Editor and the Nova Scotia Geographic Names Search tool are to be retired at end of the summer 2013. The provincial geographic names database will be archived soon after.

In January 2013, the Program and NRCAN worked together to identify the tasks for reconciling the NS names records to the CGNDB. This reconciliation effort is ongoing and is expected to continue to the end of next fiscal. Many thanks to Andre Mainville, (who has since retired from service) for his incredible support that was critical to launching this reconciliation project.

While database activity (on NSGNDB) remained pretty low leading up to the reconciliation project, in February 2013, most (99%) of the NS maintained records in the CGNDB were modified as a result of the coordinates being refined during a bulk modification. Other

types of changes occurred over the past year as well, including 2 name changes for Mi'kmaw communities (Paqtnkek-Niktuek 23 and Welnek 38). The Program also received 5 Name Change Request Applications that remain active (as of August 2013).

The Geographic Names Program continues to integrate most of its client inquiry channels into the GIS Service Centre environment. The GIS Service Centre processes external and internal inquiries from a variety of Clients for a number of Programs in the Division, such as the NS Civic Addressing Program and the NS Geographic Names Program.

The implementation of an updated website has been significantly delayed (5 years +) due to corporate adjustments in E-service delivery. A variety of Program areas in the Division are all working toward being integrated and delivered online within the GeoNOVA framework. Access to Nova Scotia Geographic Names and information about the Naming Process continues to be publicly available online at www.nsplacenames.ca .

Project efforts continued for incorporating named geographic features from the *Nova Scotia Toponymic Objects (NSTO)* into the *Nova Scotia Hydrographic Network (NSHN).* Thirty five of the Province's 45 water basins have geographic names keys applied to water features in this hydrographic database. This accomplishment was made possible via a collaborative approach to data maintenance by the Nova Scotia Topographic Mapping Program and the Nova Scotia Geographic Names Program.

B. **General Introductory Material**

i) **Resources**

The Minister of Service Nova Scotia & Municipal Relations appointed Laura Beazley, as the Geographic Names Board of Canada (GNBC) member representing Nova Scotia, in March 2013. The NS GNBC member is the signing authority for all Name Decisions.

Nancy Saunders, Director of Geographic Information Services, and former appointed member to the GNBC, retired in June 2013.

The Nova Scotia Geographic Names Program is currently staffed by 1.5 FTEs:

Geographic Names Technical Administrator (1.0 FTE) - Debbra Wilkinson
Geographic Names Program Administrator/GNBC Member (0.5 FTE) – Laura Beazley

The Data Architect role which was available to the Program until 2009 and was vacant for many years was replaced by a Data Manager role (John Power). This role will be available to assist the Program in handling the monthly data transfer from NRCAN, as well as in assisting to make data accessible to internal and external users via a number of dissemination channels.

ii) Organizational Structure

The Nova Scotia Geographic Names Program delivery is the responsibility of Service Nova Scotia & Municipal Relations, Geographic Information Services section.

The former division, Information Management Services (IMS), was restructured last year and now Geographic Information Services (GIS) is now a part of Strategy and Corporate Services (SCS) division.

iii) Points of Contact

The Nova Scotia Geographic Names Technical Administrator is Debbra Wilkinson, 902.667.6298 or wilkinda@gov.ns.ca. She is the main point of contact for operational inquiries such as Naming Process and research (Requests for Information), maintenance of NS records in CGNDB and conducting research/enhancement projects related to geographic names.

Nova Scotia Geographic Names Program Administrator is Laura Beazley, 902.667.6282 or beazlelm@gov.ns.ca. She is also the GNBC Member for Nova Scotia.   Contact Laura for Program business inquiries.

All public and partner inquiries/requests to the Program/Operations may be funneled through the provincial GIS Service Centre geoinfo@gov.ns.ca where it will get tracked and redirected to the Geographic Names Program staff for processing.

C. Activities which can be associated with the GNBC goals

1. Collection of geographical names and their applications

No field work had been undertaken in the past year. However, more and more information can be found online and various sites are routinely used when conducting Research. Requests for Information from Clients continues to be the largest type of request that the Program receives. The NS Archives, Google Maps and the David Rumsey Map Collection all provide great resources into the past & present for researching geographic names.

2. Automation of toponymic databases and availability of data

i)   In 2006, the *NS Toponymic Objects (NSTO)* database was created and all bays, coves, inland hydrographic features, mountains, wetland and near shore underwater features were delineated for the province. In total, 19,233 named features were created.

This past year, the Nova Scotia Hydrographic Network (NSHN) Upgrade with NSTO Phase 5 project was successfully completed in the ongoing effort to apply geographic names (CGNDB Key) to delineated named inland /shoreline water features or features that touch the coast within the *Nova Scotia Hydrographic Network (NSHN)* for 35 out of 45 water basins. Quality control was also performed on the Phase 5 (10 basins). These toponymic delineations will be provided to NRCAN as part of the commitment to

provide delineations for names (as outlined in the NRCAN Letter of Agreement with NS signed in 2009). The 25 basins in NSHN were provided to NRCAN in Fall of 2012. The remainder of these delineations (20 basins) will be provided at the end of Phase 6 which is anticipated to finish in the Fall of 2013.

These enhancement projects aim to add value to the NSHN through the addition of names information. The named features were created within the 1:10,000 NSHN database and may be linked to the CGNDB using the CGNDB key. The NSTO contains the remaining named features (e.g., mountains, shoals, channels) and this database will need some massaging to remove the named hydrographic features that are now in the NSHN. Discussions are occurring as to where these named features will be stored in the long term. It is likely that the Nova Scotia Topographic Database may accommodate them in the future.

ii)   Nova Scotia Geographic Names were available to the general public via the Nova Scotia Geographic Names Search tool until July 2013 at www.nsplacenames.ca . This website now has a link to the NRCAN CGNDB Search tool as well as a link to Geobase for easy data download access. The website is expected to be replaced by a new website at an unknown date TBD.

iii) The *GeoNOVA Data Download Service* offers public users access to an official names used by various other map applications, including the *Nova Scotia Civic Address Viewer/Editor* and the *Nova Scotia Data Locator*. The service will offer similar products as what is available on the Geobase.ca site.

iv)   Nova Scotia is a partner in the national GeoBase initiative and continues to offer the Nova Scotia Topographic Database (NSTDB) and the Nova Scotia Geographic Names via www.geobase.ca.

3. Program and Policy Developments

i)   The Program has adopted a new maintenance approach and began to propose records directly in the CGNDB Maintenance tool in the Spring of 2013.

ii)   Efforts to track all requests to the Program via an Interim Incident Tracking System continued over the past year. Hundreds of Geographic Names "tickets" were created in the past couple years. Most requests are now funneled through the GEOINFO email channel. As of August 2013, the Service Wise incident management system is being implemented for most GIS clients. One that system is operational, Geographic Names inquiries will be processed through that system with the ultimate goal of better serving clients in all Program areas that use that system.

iii) The NS Geographic Names Program has been working with the Annapolis Valley First Nation, Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada(AANDC)and the Confederacy of Mainland Mi'kmaq (CMM) in changing the name of the *Cambridge 32* reserve to *Annapolis Valley First Nation,* which is also the name of the Band Corporate. All stakeholders engaged

early on in the naming process and attempting to follow the Principles and Procedures for Geographical Naming (Appendix 6) guidelines is a celebrated milestone for the Program.

iv) Documentation for the *Nova Scotia Naming Process,* which includes a more formalized *Geographic Name Change Request Application and Review Process,* was migrated to the new Business Process Documentation framework that GIS has implemented as part of an overall corporate strategy for *Business Continuity Planning* (BCP). These business process documents aim to provide the division and our Clients with a clearer understanding of the Naming Process and the roles & responsibilities of the Applicant and the Province. These documents will eventually be made available online. They are available now by request. Naming Process Flow Diagrams are supplied as part of a standard information package to any Clients interested in the Naming Process.

v) In March 2013, the Program was authorized to begin planning the GNBC/CCOG 2014 Annual Meetings *together* as a joint initiative with the GNBC & CCOG. The goal is to have both meetings occur at the same time, same venue (Lord Nelson Hotel has been secured), different rooms. This will no doubt offer some opportunities for synergy between the two groups and offer cost savings overall.   Translation Services for both meetings will be arranged and funded by NRCAN.

4.   Methodology, tools and training

i) The tool suite that was in use by the Program for database maintenance and public online access is being retired at the end of summer 2013. Affected tools include NS Geographic Names Editor and the NS Geographic Names online public search tool. The actual database (NSGNDB) will be archived shortly thereafter. In June 2013, a transition plan was developed in consultation with Management and internal users. As of July 2013, the transition has been initiated. Other affected services will be adjusted during this transition period as well. The Program is working with the Application Advisory Group and the GIS-IT Group to ensure a successful transition occurs.

ii) The Program now uses the CGNDB Maintenance tool to maintain Nova Scotia's records in the CGNDB. The CGNDB User Documentation is used by Program staff authorized to propose records to the CGNDB.

5.   Dissemination of toponymic information

i) Nova Scotia Geographic Names (official) can be accessed at www.nsplacenames.ca. This site is planned to be replaced with a new site incorporated into the GeoNOVA website framework. This website improvement project has been in the works for several years and an implementation date has yet to be determined by E-Services, another division in SNSMR. In the interim, small changes are implemented on www.nsplacenames.ca from time to time.

ii) The website had up until recently pointed to a search application that retrieved information directly from the NSGNDB, but this link was removed at the end of July 2013. The public search application will be retired at the end of the summer 2013. The site now promotes searching for Nova Scotia's geographic names via a link to NRCAN's CGNDB Geographical

Name Search tool. A Data Access button was also placed on nsplacenames.ca in July 2013 which links users to the geographical names download area on geobase.ca.

iii) The Program handles in the order of *7-10* recorded name inquiries/requests per month. The table below displays a breakdown of currently tracked requests:

By Client Type	Recorded Incidents 2012/13	Recorded Incidents 2011/12
Federal	30%	23%
Public/Private	30%	45%
Provincial	8%	5%
Municipal	7%	5%
SNSMR(Internal)	22%	22%
First Nations	2%	-
Education	1%	-

By Incident Type	Recorded Incidents 2012/13	Recorded Incidents 2011/12
Complaint	-	5%
Data Issue	30%	13%
Data Question	17%	3%
Feedback	2%	3%
Software Incident	1%	5%
Process Issue	-	15%
Request for Change	6%	8%
Request for Information	36%	43%
Service Request	8%	5%

iv) A project was completed in the previous fiscal to organize and catalogue the existing hard copy files, maps and information to create easy access to the various collections in the *Nova Scotia Geographic Names Archive*. The information in these largely NTS-based filing systems dated from early 1940s to about 2010. This effort aims to preserve, protect and facilitate easier access to the historical records that the Program has inherited over many decades. The long term goal is to make this information accessible online. The next project identified to help make this information more accessible would involve digitizing and indexing these records. This project has been put on hold until the Reconciliation effort is completed.

v) The GIS Service Centre has been servicing the Nova Scotia Geographic Names Program for over two years now, handling general inquiries and Requests for Information from the general public, private sector, academia and all levels of government. The GIS Service Centre acts as the single point of contact for the Program for most external & internal Clients.   The role of the GIS Service Centre to provide initial Tier 1 support to the Program which includes initial Client service and also a mechanism for tracking of requests/inquiries.

iii) The Program is finalizing the details of a monthly data transfer with NRCAN as of August 2013. The data transfer is intended to supply NS with the *CGNDB-NS* in various formats and

structures depending on the intended use and audience. Internal users at GIS, the general public, map users, GeoNOVA Data Download Service and the Corporate Geospatial Infrastructure (CGI) are all audiences that have varying dissemination requirements. The idea is to have "map users" have one view (official names only) of the information and the "research audience" have another view available (all names). The Origin Narrative while not being disseminated at a national level for a variety of reasons will be available in the tabular products to be disseminated by NS.

6. **Outreach and liaison with the international community**

There is nothing to report in this area.

7. **Other activities**

The Program has been working with the Confederacy of Mainland Mi'kmaq (CMM) on a number of initiatives, including a component of the production of a *First Nations Signage Toolkit*. CMM was tasked with completing an inventory of existing signage on the highways and secondary Roads. Letters were sent to the 13 Mi'kmaw communities, to discuss guide Signage on the 100 series highways as a step towards Community Branding and providing visibility for First Nations Communities. The Program helped CMM develop the section of the Toolkit which described the Geographic Naming Process for 3 different First Nations contexts. (names of place/features entirely on a Reserve, names of place/features partially on a Reserve and the for the Reserve name itself).

Another initiative which the Program has become involved in is the exploration of the practical use of the Francis–Smith orthography in the CGNDB. This orthography was adopted as the official Mi'kmaw language by the Tripartite Forum in 2002. As part of this exploration, it was discovered that the Aboriginal Font currently in place and in global public circulation (as part of the Unicode character standard), would need to be updated to include a proper representation of the *schwa* character, as the current font does not contain a proper representation. The Program has discovered what is required and who needs to be engaged in order to move the font development forward and has made that information available to the CMM for their further consideration and also to the creator of the Francis-Smith (Dr. Bernard Francis) orthography for his authoritative input.

The goal would be to have a *schwa* in the Aboriginal Font represented as the adopted orthography had prescribed. With an authoritative request to move forward, the creator of the Aboriginal Font (Chris Harvey) would make an official proposal to the Unicode standard committee, update the Font and then make it available for mass consumption. Once that is in place, and the font is available to anyone, any words containing the schwa character would be properly displayed. The *Mi'kmaw Pjila'si Mi'kma'ki: Mi'kmaw Place Names Digital Atlas and Website* project would also benefit from this proper representation, as well as any other databases that may eventually incorporate those names (e.g., CGNDB) should any of them become official in the future or should any name be proposed to the CGNDB that has that *schwa* character in it. There has been some very preliminary discussion with the project sponsors & team regarding the possibility of including Mi'kmaw place names into the CGNDB.