

Geographic Names of Ontario Language Principles and Procedures

February 09, 2021

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Definitions

For the purposes of this document:

"Board" or "OGNB" means the Ontario Geographic Names Board, created under the OGNB Act (R.S.O. 1990, C.O.16).

"Equivalent French Name" or "EFN" means a translation of an Official Name into the French language to meet the requirements of the French Language Services Act.

"Generic" or "Generic element" is part of the name for a topographic feature that describes its physical characteristics and is <u>not</u> the proper or specific element of the name. Examples include, lake, river, creek, steam, mountain, hill, valley, island, etc... In a toponym such as *Lake Ontario*, *Lake* is the generic element and Ontario is the specific element.

"Geographic feature", or topographic feature is a portion of the surface of Earth that has recognizable identity.

"Geographic name" is a name or toponym for a topographic feature on the surface of the earth. The term "geographic name(s)" may encompass the name(s) of unincorporated place(s). Official geographic names are published on government maps and documents. Use of unofficial geographic names is not actively monitored.

Indigenous Language" refers broadly to languages used by the Indigenous peoples of Ontario (First Nations, Métis and Inuit). All Indigenous languages are classified as one language category in this document. When known, specific language names are identified, e.g. Ojibway, Cree, etc. The term Indigenous Language is used when the specific language origin of an Indigenous geographic name is not known or is referring to all names of Indigenous origin.

"Minister" means the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry.

"Multiple Name" means an Official Name approved by the Minister in two or more languages for the same feature to be used according to the principles and procedures outlined within this policy. The United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names (Geneva 1967) provides for the use of such names in multiple language areas. Names well established in the English, French and Indigenous linguistic traditions may be considered for adoption as part of a Multiple Name.

"Official Name" means a geographic name or names that have been approved by the Minister for one or more features, upon recommendation of the Board and designated for publication via the Ontario Geographic Names website or alternate electronic documentation. Multiple Names are Official Names. EFN's are translations of Official Names.

"Place Name" means a toponym for a populated location such as a town, village, hamlet, etc. Names of incorporated municipalities are determined by the municipality in accordance with legislation under the Municipal Act of Ontario. Names of unincorporated places within those municipalities fall under the jurisdiction of the OGNB.

"Specific" or Specific element" is part of the name for a topographic feature that distinguishes it from others of the same feature class. It is not the generic element of the name. In a name such as *Lake Ontario*, *Lake* is the generic element and *Ontario* is the specific element.

"Toponym" is a geographic or place name.

"Toponymy" is the study of geographic and place names (toponyms), their origins, meanings, use and classification.

Purpose

The primary purpose of this document is to function as a reference for members of the Ontario Geographic Names Board (OGNB) in making naming decisions and recommending names for geographic features to the Minister. It will inform provincial government translators regarding the use of official names in provincial government publications and the Ministry of Transportation Ontario (MTO), as well as municipalities, regarding the use of official names on road signs.

The secondary purpose of this document is to guide and inform cartographers, map makers and map publishers, both within and outside the Ontario Public Service (OPS) regarding the use of official names on maps.

Introduction

Ontario geographic names such as the names of lakes, mountains, islands, rivers etc. are profoundly linked to the languages that brought them to life and sustain their evolution. As such, they have deep cultural roots in the speech communities of the province. There are currently some 60,000 official geographic names of diverse language origin, Indigenous languages, French and English being the most prominent. These names continue to be a vibrant and robust reflection of Ontario's geography, history and culture.

Examples:

Rice Lake (English language tradition)

Lac Seul (French language tradition)

Miskwaa Ziibi (Indigenous language tradition)

The Ontario Geographic Names Board (OGNB) was established in 1968 though enactment of the Ontario Geographic Names Board Act (R.S.O. 1990, C.O.16). It is the sole statutory authority in Ontario with the responsibility for recommending to the Minister the names of geographic features, including their extents for official use on Ontario government documents, publications and maps.

Once they become official, geographic names are uploaded to the provincial toponymic database maintained by the OGNB Secretariat within the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry. This database is legislated as the official repository of geographic names in Ontario. Any problem concerning geographic names shall be brought to the attention of the Board through the OGNB Secretariat.

The names of incorporated municipalities within Ontario are under the authority of the Municipal Act, which is the responsibility of the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing. The Names of unincorporated entities (places) within Ontario are considered official and are entered into the provincial toponymic database of Ontario as determined by the Board.

Historical Perspective: Linguistic Treatment of Geographic Names in Ontario

The current policy for bilingualism in toponymy *Linguistic Treatment of Geographic Names in Ontario: Principles and Procedures* was initiated by the Ministry of Natural Resources and the OGNB in the late 1980s as these bodies were becoming compliant with the requirements of the French Language Services Act (R.S.O. 1990, C. F32). This process included several steps:

April 1988: A pilot survey on geographic name usage in Eastern Ontario was undertaken and published under the title *The Franco-Ontarian Names Project (Eastern Ontario).* The study presented evidence that many English official names were not being used by the French-speaking population in the survey area. Alternate forms in French were found to be in local and common usage. For example, a lake could be known as Dog Lake in English, and as lac Chat in French.

November 1988: An *Interministerial Task Force on Bilingualism in Toponymy* was convened and produced a set of *Guiding Principles and Recommendations* for the implementation of bilingual toponymy and established a *Working Group on Statutory Translations* to oversee the translation into French of some 57,000 geographic names in the Ontario Geographic Names Database.

August 1989: *The Franco-Ontarian Geographical Names Project* presented the results of a province-wide survey of linguistic usage in the French-speaking community as seen through place-name nomenclature. The study confirmed the Eastern Ontario pattern of Alternate forms was present in other French-speaking areas of the province and made recommendations for the immediate adoption of 214 such names.

February 1992: In response to issues raising from the translations provided by the *Working Group on Statutory Translations* a revision of the *Guiding Principles and Recommendations* was undertaken. **The Linguistic Assessment of Geographic Name Translations** study led to the idea of publishing a **Bilingual Glossary of Ontario's Geographic Names** that would include Official Names and their corresponding French Text Equivalents and/or Alternate Names.

January 1994: A revision of the work done by various groups involved in the compliance efforts of the Ministry of Natural Resources with regard to the French Language Services Act was carried out by the *Interministerial Task Force on Bilingualism in Cartography and Signage*. The group updated the 1988 *Guiding Principles and Recommendations* under the title *Linguistic Treatment of French Geographic Names in Ontario: Principles and Procedures.*

November 1995: Publication of the *Bilingual Glossary of Ontario's Geographic Names / Lexique bilingue des noms géographiques de l'Ontario.* This 931-page, two-volume document provided an authoritative and standardized French rendition of Ontario's 57,000 geographic names for use in prose-text documents by translators, government administrators and other individuals who required correct French translations of official geographic names.

December 1995: Publication of *Methodology: How to Create a French-Text Equivalent*. This document details the rules that supported the translation of geographic names in the abovementioned Glossary. Interestingly, it notes the discrepancies between the translation rules used at the Federal level and those that were applied to the specific context of geographic naming in Ontario. September 2013: An update of the *Linguistic Treatment of French Geographic Names in Ontario: Principles and Procedures* under a new and slightly different title *Geographic Names of Ontario: Language Principles and Procedures* began at this time. The revised document is a broader policy that includes considerations on the needs of Indigenous communities as well as Database Information for the first time.

Applicable Laws, Directives and Policies

Ontario Geographic Names Board Act (R.S.O. 1990, C.O.16)

The Ontario Geographic Names Board was established in 1968 though enactment of the Ontario Geographic Names Board Act (R.S.O. 1990, C.O.16). It is the sole statutory authority in Ontario vested with the responsibility of recording, processing and recommending for adoption by the Minister the names of geographic features and unincorporated places, including the extents of some for official use.

French Language Services Act (R.S.O. 1990, C. F32)

The French language is an historic and honoured language in Ontario and recognized by the Constitution as an official language in Canada. In Ontario, the French language is recognized as an official language in the courts and in education and may be used in the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. To recognize the contribution of the cultural heritage of the French speaking population and to preserve it for future generations, the French Language Services Act designated 26 French Language Service Areas in which bilingual services must be provided.

Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada Final Report

The final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada was released in 2015. The Government of Ontario has committed to a renewed relationship with First Nations, Inuit and Métis in Ontario and is focused on reconciliation with Indigenous peoples. The government has made it a priority to act on the Commission's Calls to Action by working in partnership with First Nation, Inuit and Métis peoples. Presently, Call to Action 14(i) indicates that Indigenous languages are fundamental to Canadian culture and society and there is an urgency to preserve them.

The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) includes specific recognition of the right to revitalize and transmit Indigenous languages. Article 13.1 recognizes that "Indigenous peoples have the right to revitalize, use, develop and transmit to future generations their histories, languages, oral traditions, philosophies, writing systems and literatures, and to designate and retain their own names for communities, places and persons.".¹

Indigenous people's local knowledge of and historical relationship to the land is recognized and respected by the OGNB. The Board will continue to reach out to Indigenous people in Ontario through improved efforts to engage directly with First Nation communities about name proposals in their traditional territories.

¹ Page 153, Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future: Summary of the Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada

GNBC Policies and Procedures

As a constituent member of the Geographical Names Board of Canada (GNBC), the national coordinating body working to preserve the toponymic heritage of Canada, Ontario subscribes to the principles and procedures of the GNBC, ensuring that the naming process respects established practices such as local usage, and making certain that when geographic names are included in official publications these established principles are consistently applied.

Linguistic Traditions in Ontario

English Names

The vast majority of Ontario's official geographic names belong to the English linguistic tradition, as English has been the dominant language of the province since its inception and used to name its geographic landscape for over 200 years.

In recommending English Names to the Minister, the Board shall ensure that the rules governing English orthography and punctuation are brought to the attention of all interested parties.

French Names

For many years, French has been and continues to be used to create geographic names in Ontario. In fact, French was the first European language to be used to describe the landscape of Ontario in the 17th century and is still widely spoken today by many Franco-Ontarians. The French Language Services Act designates 26 areas of the province where French is spoken and for which provincial government services must be provided in the French language.

In recommending French Names to the Minister, the Board shall ensure that the rules governing French orthography and punctuation are brought to the attention of all interested parties

Indigenous Language Names in Ontario

Long before European explorers reached the "New World," the geographic features of what was to become Ontario were named in Indigenous languages. In the spirit of the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (2015), consideration for approval is given to well-established Indigenous geographic names in common or local usage by the Indigenous-speaking population.

In recommending Indigenous Names to the Minister, the Board shall ensure that the rules governing Indigenous orthography and punctuation are brought to the attention of all interested parties. Where no standard orthography exists, the Board shall seek a local Band Council Resolution as to the orthography of each geographic name to be approved.

Names Originating from Other Languages

At this time, names of language origins other than English, French or Indigenous origin will be treated the same as English names, as outlined in this policy.

Types of Geographic Names in Ontario

1. Official Names

An official geographic name in Ontario can consist of one or more names for one geographic feature. 99% of official names in Ontario are comprised of one name, in one language.

Examples:

- Rice Lake (English linguistic tradition)
- Lac Seul (French linguistic tradition)
- Miskwaa Ziibi (Indigenous linguistic tradition)

Multiple Names for one feature may be made official only when there is evidence that two or more names are in use locally at the time of approval. There are currently less than 1% of official names comprised of two different names, each usually from a different language origin or tradition. Presently, there are no official geographic names in Ontario that are approved in three or more languages. The order of the names for the feature is determined by the Board at the time of approval.

Examples:

- Georgian Bay / Baie Georgienne (English / French)
- Sheshepaeseewee Sahkaheekahn / Barton Lake (Indigenous / English)

Currently, there are no Official Multiple Indigenous and French geographic names for the same feature in Ontario.

2. Equivalent French Names (EFN's)

The French Language Services Act requires that every Official Name in Ontario have a French version for provincial government publications and legislation. Where an Official Name in French does not exist for a given feature, the OGNB determines an Equivalent French Name (EFN) for the benefit of the translation community and for specific purposes outlined in this policy.

EFN's form part of the decision package approved by the Minister. They are considered an approved form of the Official Name but are not supported by local usage. Typically, an EFN is a translation of the English generic element of the Official Name. EFN's are only to be used in French publications and maps.

The provincial toponymic record therefore includes three types of French names

1. French Official Names

Official Name: Lac Seul

EFN: Not required

2. French Names that are part of an Official Multiple Name

Official Name: Georgian Bay / Baie Georgienne

EFN: Not required, since Baie Georgienne makes up part of the Official Name

3. Equivalent French Names

(where no such French Official Names exist, and the official name is English).

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Official Name: Rice Lake

EFN: lac Rice

EFN's and Indigenous Language Official Names

In the case of Indigenous names that include an English generic element, the English generic is translated to French.

Example

- Official Name: Winisk River
- EFN: Rivière Winisk

For Indigenous names that include the generic element in the Indigenous language, there is no translation of the generic element.

Example

Miskwaa Ziibi (Indigenous Official Name – Generic is part of the Indigenous Name, therefore EFN is not required)

For Official Multiple Names, an EFN is determined by translating an English generic element if present.

Example

Official name: Pahkayyahkahmahshek / Zeller Lake EFN: Pahkayyahkahmahshek / Lac Zeller

Geographic Names Ontario Spatial Database

Once they become official, geographic names are uploaded to the provincial toponymic database maintained by the OGNB Secretariat, Mapping and Information Resources Branch, Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry. This database is, under the OGNB Act, the repository of official geographic names in Ontario. Any problem concerning geographic names stored in the database should be brought to the attention of the Board through the OGNB Secretariat at GeographicNames@ontario.ca.

It should be noted that the Geographic Names Ontario toponymic database is being updated to accommodate changes being made to the Canadian Geographical Names Database that occurred in the 2018/19 fiscal year. These changes may affect how Official Multiple Names are recorded within the database and displayed on map products.

Geographic Names in Textual Documents

English Textual Documents

Only Official Names and the English portion of an Official English/French Multiple Name may be used in Government textual documents in English. Both portions of an Official Indigenous/English Multiple Name shall be used.

Examples of how to display geographic names in an English document:

- Rice Lake (English Official Name)
- Miskwaa Ziibi (Indigenous Official Name)
- Lac Seul (French Official Name)
- Georgian Bay (English portion of Official Multiple Name "Georgian Bay / Baie Georgienne")
- Pahkayyahkahmahshek / Zeller Lake (Indigenous / English Multiple Name)

See Appendices

French Textual documents

Only Official Names in French, or the French portion of Official Multiple Names, and Equivalent French Names shall be used in Government textual documents prepared for the Franco-Ontarian population.

- Examples of how to display geographic names in a French document:
- Lac Seul (French Official Name)
- Baie Georgienne (French portion of Official Multiple Name)
- Lac Rice (EFN for English Official Name)
- Miskwaa Ziibi (Indigenous Official Name)
- Rivière Winisk (EFN for Indigenous Name with English generic Winisk River)

When the portions of an Official Multiple Name involve an Indigenous language and English, both the Indigenous portion of the name and the corresponding Equivalent French Name for the English portion of the Multiple Name shall be used.

Example of how to display an Indigenous/English multiple name in a French document:

- Pahkayyahkahmahshek / Lac Zeller (Indigenous / Equivalent French Name)
- for
- Pahkayyahkahmahshek / Zeller Lake (Indigenous / English Official Multiple Name)

See Appendices

Textual Documents in Indigenous Languages

Only Official Names and the Indigenous portion of an Official Multiple Name that includes an Indigenous name, may be used in government textual documents in Indigenous Languages. The English portion will be shown for Official Multiple Names with English and French portions.

Examples of how to display geographic names in Indigenous language documents:

- Miskwaa Ziibi (Indigenous Official Name)
- Rice Lake (English Official Name)
- Lac Seul (French Official Name)
- Georgian Bay (English portion of Official Multiple Name)
- Pahkayyahkahmahshek (Indigenous portion of Official Multiple Name)

See Appendices

Names on Road Signs

In the 26 designated areas of the French Language Services Act, only Official Names approved by the Board may be used on G. I-3 (Hamlets) and G. I-6 (Rivers or Lakes) highway signs. Equivalent French Names are not to be used.

Examples

- Sarsfield (Hamlet Official Name)
- Rideau River / Rivière Rideau (Énglish / French Official Multiple Name)

Geographic Names on Maps

How official geographic names are displayed on maps depends on the language of the map product and on the language tradition of the geographic name. In addition, the scale and purpose of the map (for example, a special purpose emergency services map) will also determine how geographic names are displayed on maps. Depending upon the scale and purpose of the map, there may not be sufficient space to display all official names in the area covered by the map product.

Official Names on English Maps

Display the Official Name, whether the name is of English, French, or Indigenous origin.

All portions of Official Multiple Names should be displayed separated by a slash in specified language display order that will be determined by the Board at the time of approval.

Examples of how to display geographic names on English maps:

- Rice Lake (English Official Name)
- Miskwaa Ziibi (Indigenous Official Name)
- Lac Seul (French Official Name)
- Georgian Bay / Baie Georgienne (English / French Multiple Name)
- Pahkayyahkahmahshek / Zeller Lake (Indigenous/English Multiple Name)

See Appendices

Official Names on French Maps

Only Official Names in French, or the French portion of Official Multiple Names, and Equivalent French Names shall be used in government maps prepared for the Franco-Ontarian population.

- Examples of how to display geographic names on French maps:
- Lac Seul (French Official Name)
- Miskwaa Žiibi (Indigenous Official Name)
- Baie Georgienne (French portion of Official Multiple Name)
- Lac Rice (Equivalent French Name for English Official Name Rice Lake)
- Rivière Winisk (EFN for Indigenous Name with English generic Winisk River)

When the portions of an Official Multiple Name involve an Indigenous language and English, both the Indigenous portion of the name and the corresponding Equivalent French Name for the English portion of the Official Multiple Name shall be used.

Example of how to display an Indigenous/English multiple name on a French map:

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• Pahkayyahkahmahshek / Lac Zeller (Indigenous / Equivalent French Name) for Pahkayyahkahmahshek / Zeller Lake (Indigenous / English Multiple Name)

See Appendices

English/French Bilingual Maps

When a bilingual map is produced using English and French title blocks and map surrounds, only Official Names, including Official Multiple Names, will be used, scale permitting. Equivalent French Names are not to be used. Please contact the OGNB Secretariat about bilingual maps in other language combinations.

Examples of how to display geographic names on an English/French bilingual map:

- Rice Lake (English Official Name)
- Miskwaa Ziibi (Indigenous Official Name)
- Lac Seul (French Official Name)
- Georgian Bay / Baie Georgienne (English / French Multiple Name)
- Pahkayyahkahmahshek / Zeller Lake (Indigenous/English Multiple Name)

See Appendices

Official Names on Indigenous Maps

Display the Official Name, whether the name is of English, French, or Indigenous origin.

All portions of Official Multiple Names should be displayed separated by a slash in specified language display order that will be determined by the Board at the time of approval.

Examples of how to display geographic names on Indigenous language maps:

- Rice Lake (English Official Name)
- Miskwaa Ziibi (Indigenous Official Name)
- Lac Seul (French Official Name)
- Georgian Bay / Baie Georgienne (English / French Multiple Name)
- Pahkayyahkahmahshek / Zeller Lake (Indigenous/English Multiple Name)

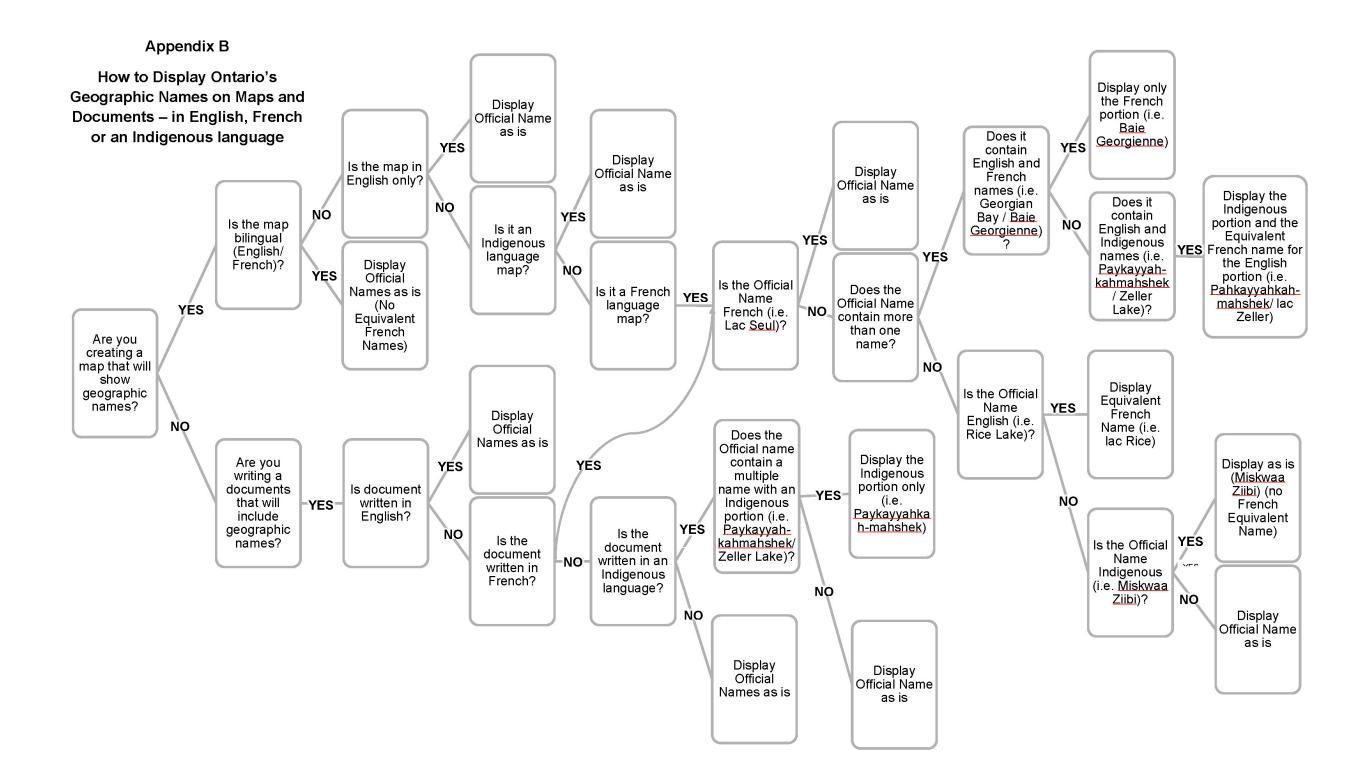
See Appendices

Revision

This policy shall be reviewed as required in order to ensure that it continues to meet the needs of the Indigenous, French and English-speaking populations of Ontario.

Appendix A – Language Policy Summary Table

LANGUAGE	GOVERNMENT TEXTUAL DOCUMENT	GOVERNMENT MAPS	NOTES
English	Official Names English Only Portion of Official Multiple Names Indigenous and English Portion of Official Multiple Names	Official Names including all Portions of Official Multiple Names	Written publications do not require all portions of Official Multiple Names. Keep all portions of Official Multiple Names for Maps.
French	Official Names in French French Only Portion of Official Multiple Names EFNs Indigenous and EFN for Indigenous and English Official Multiple Names	Official Names in French French Only Portion of Official Multiple Names EFNs Indigenous and EFN for Indigenous and English Official Multiple Names	Unique because of the French Language Services Act and the fact that Web-based documents and maps can now reach anyone in Ontario. All Ontario Government online content must be available in French (as well as English).
Indigenous	Official Names Indigenous Portion of Official Multiple Names	Official Names including all Portions of Official Multiple Names	Written publications do not require all portions of Official Multiple Names. Keep all portions of Official Multiple Names for Maps.
Bilingual – English and French	Not Applicable	Official Names including all Portions of Official Multiple Names No EFNs	Publications and prose text applications are written in either English or French therefore a bilingual document is not required. Keep all portions of Official Multiple Names for Maps - no need for EFNs when it is a Bilingual Map product.



Appendix B

How to Display Ontario's Geographic Names on Maps and Documents – in English, French or an Indigenous language

- 1.0 Are you creating a map that will show geographic names?
 - 1.1 If yes, continue to step 2.0
 - 1.2 If no, continue to step 9.0
- 2.0 Is the map bilingual (English/French)?
 - 2.1 If yes, then display Official Names as is (No Equivalent French Names)
 - 2.2 If no, continue to step 3.0
- 3.0 Is the map in English only?
 - 3.1 If yes, then display Official Names as is
 - 3.2 If no, continue to step 4.0
- 4.0 Is it an Indigenous language map?
 - 4.1 If yes, then display Official Names as is
 - 4.2 If no, then continue to step 5.0
- 5.0 Is it a French language map and is the Official Name French (i.e. Lac Seul)?
 - 5.1 If yes then display Official Names as is
 - 5.2 If no, continue to step 6.0
- 6.0 Does the Official Name contain more than one name?
 - 6.1 If yes continue to step 7.0
 - 6.2 If no continue to step 8.0
- 7.0 Does it contain English and French names (i.e. Georgian Bay / Baie Georgienne)?
 - 7.1 If yes then display only the French portion (i.e. Baie Georgienne)
 - 7.2 If no, does it contain English and Indigenous names (i.e. Paykayyah-kahmahshek / Zeller Lake)?
 - 7.2.1 If yes, then display the Indigenous portion and the Equivalent French name for the English portion (i.e. Pahkayyahkah-mahshek/ lac Zeller)
- 8.0 Is the Official Name English (i.e. Rice Lake)?
 - 8.1 If yes display Equivalent French Name (i.e. lac Rice)
 - 8.2 If no, Is the Official Name Indigenous (i.e. Miskwaa Ziibi)?
 - 8.2.1 If yes, then display as is (Miskwaa Ziibi) (no French Equivalent Name)
 - 8.2.2 If no, then display Official Name as is

- English?
 - 9.1 If yes, then display Official Names as is 9.2 If no, continue to step 10.0
- 10.0 Is the document written in French?
 - 10.1 If yes, continue to step 5.0
 - 10.2 If no, continue to step 11.0
- 11.0 Is the document written in an Indigenous language? 11.1 If yes, continue to step 12.0
 - 11.2 If no, then display Official Names as is
- kahmahshek/ Zeller Lake)
 - 12.1 If yes, then display the Indigenous portion only (i.e. Paykayyahkah-mahshek)
 - 12.2 If no, then display Official Name as is

9.0 Are you writing a document that will include official geographic names, and is the document written in

12.0 Does the Official name contain a multiple name with an Indigenous portion? (i.e. Paykayyah-