DRAFT Recommendations from the Geographic Features Subcommittee
Advisory Committee on Reconciliation in Place Names
for June 10-11, 2024, Rapid City, SD Meeting

Recommendation 1

For nearly 10 years, Tribal leaders have sought to change the name of the sacred geographic feature in Wyoming known as "Devils Tower" to the Indigenous name "Bear Lodge." More than 20 Tribes with close association to the site find the name "Devils Tower" to be offensive and support this renaming proposal.

The Secretary of the Interior has the authority, pursuant to 43 U.S.C. §364b, to rename a geographic feature if the U.S. Board on Geographic Names "does not act within a reasonable time." Given that the proposal (1) was submitted nearly 10 years ago, but has not been acted upon, and (2) is supported by 20 sovereign Nations, it is time for the Secretary to take action to rename both the geographic feature and the associated unincorporated populated place to Bear Lodge. In addition, we recommend that the Department engage with the local community to develop an alternate name for the associated unincorporated populated place if Bear Lodge is not supported. Further, we recommend that the Secretary identify resources to help support local businesses with costs associated with any resulting name change.

The Subcommittee also recommends that the Secretary submit a request to the President, acting under his authority under the Antiquities Act of 1906, to change the name of the national monument to Bear Lodge National Monument. This builds off of the draft recommendation coming from the Federal Land Unit Names Subcommittee presented during the November 2023 public meeting.

Recommendation 2

The Subcommittee recommends that the following geographic feature names be moved forward to the Secretary of the Interior as potentially derogatory and that require engagement and input from appropriate Tribal, State, and local governments, affected Federal agencies and departments, and local communities to make a determination on whether a replacement name is needed. See attached list.