
From: Kat Russe [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, June 12, 2024 6:59 PM
To: NPS Reconciliation in Place Names Committee <reconciliation_committee@nps.gov>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Thank You

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Dear Advisory Committee on Reconciliation in Place Names,

I am writing to express my appreciation for the work that you are doing. As is already evident to the committee, language is a powerful expression. Through language we not only are able to connect and transfer information to one another, but we also build meaning about ourselves and the world around us. It becomes a way of knowing, a way of being.

In my work, I engage with questions about the importance of language in our ways of knowing ourselves and knowing our communities. Simple shifts in language can make incredible differences because they offer us new understandings and perspectives.

What is the knowledge that we pass down to future generations? To consciously continue to refer to land by names that arose out of intentions to undermine and destroy peoples and cultures, we pass along these histories. More so, we continue a legacy of what these histories desired to do: to both convey a message of who is “allowed” to be present on land, while simultaneously destroying another culture’s way of connecting to the land and knowing self and community. In addition, perhaps more innocuously, we continue a way of connecting to others that is rooted in ignorance and/or denial of the importance of honoring multiple ways of knowing.

Thank you to the committee for understanding and addressing this. You are helping to change future generations' ability to connect with themselves, others, and the land.

The land was present far before us. To reconcile these place names is reclaiming the identity of the land, and in doing so, ourselves.

Sincerely,

Katherine Russell, PsyD