

Partnerships for Success

Government partnerships with positive outcomes for Indigenous people, businesses and communities

Group of Lakes Renamed to Honour Indigenous Women

Ministry of Parks, Culture and Sport – Heritage Branch

In 2018, a grouping of small lakes near the Town of Unity was renamed to respectfully honour Indigenous culture and history in our province. Replacing the previous, derogatory, name of Killsquaw Lake, the new name given by area Elders is kikiskitotawânawak iskêwak Lakes, which in Cree means We Honour the Women. The name change request was submitted by Kellie Wuttunee from the Red Pheasant First Nation (Mikisiwacik).

The Saskatchewan Geographic Names Program is responsible for the official naming of geographic features in Saskatchewan. There are approximately 13,000 official geographic names in Saskatchewan for populated places, geographic features, parks and First Nations Reserves in the province. These names include nearly 4,000 which commemorate members of the armed forces, police, first responders and others killed in the service of province or nation and were recognized through a sub-program called the Geo-Memorial Commemorative Naming Program.

The nominations are reviewed by the Saskatchewan Heritage Foundation. The Foundation is governed by a board of directors appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council and is established to provide grants to individuals and organizations to preserve heritage resources and to advise government on heritage matters, including the naming of geographic features.

“To properly respect and honour Indigenous women, we should no longer have denigrating place names in Saskatchewan or Canada,” Wuttunee said. “With actions like this, we are reminding each other and telling the world that we can learn from our mistakes and move forward together.”

A priority for the Geographic Names Program is to continue encouraging future partnerships with Indigenous communities, organizations and individuals to engage in the geographic naming process and to record and, where appropriate, approve government adoption of traditional Indigenous names for geographic features.

For more information, please visit the [Geographic Names Program](#) page.

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Eligibility of this Initiative

Anyone can submit a nomination to the Saskatchewan Geographic Names Program to name or rename a geographic feature.

The [Saskatchewan Heritage Foundation](#) reviews nominations and makes recommendations on approval to the Minister of Parks, Culture and Sport.

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The **Geographic Names Program** is responsible for the **official naming** of all **geographic features** in the province.



12,836

official names of **populated places, geographic features, parks** and **reserves** in Saskatchewan.



Grouping of lakes near Unity, Saskatchewan have been renamed to **Kikiskitotawânak Iskêwak Lakes**, Cree for **“We Honour the Women.”**



4,000

named under the **GeoMemorial Commemorative Naming Program.**



To **properly respect** and **honour Indigenous women**, we should **no longer have denigrating place names** in Saskatchewan or Canada.

- Kellie Wuttunee
Red Pheasant First Nation



1,100

names for **geographic features** believed to have their **origins in an Indigenous name or language.**