

WRITTEN PUBLIC COMMENT
ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON RECONCILIATION IN PLACE NAMES
MEETING OF NOVEMBER 14, 15 & 16, 2023

- Form letter submitted on behalf of Coalition for Outdoor Renaming and Education

[note: this is text taken from identical or near-identical form letters received from several thousand individual email addresses]

Advisory Committee on Reconciliation in Place Names,

I'm writing to support recommendations from the Coalition for Outdoor Renaming and Education (CORE) before your next meeting about renaming racist and derogatory place names on public lands.

Please develop and share detailed information on implementation of the Draft Place Name Reconciliation Principles. It's crucial to have a clear roadmap and ensure transparency and community involvement throughout the process of garnering replacement name recommendations.

Please include these among your list of derogatory place names to remove from lands and geographic features: All instances of "savage," alternative spellings for "redskin" and "redman" (red man, redmans, and red skin), the word "nipper" which is a variation on the slur "nip," "wetback," rape, "Indian Head," "Jim Crow," and "Tonto."

Please also recommend the renaming of "Indian Grave," which has derogatory implications toward Native Americans. In cases where these names commemorate a Native burial site, the Tribe(s) whose burial site this name commemorates should be consulted to identify a name that either has more tribal and regional specificity or in another way more appropriately honors the burial site.

Additionally, these words should be replaced in consultation with local Black communities:

Negro: Many of these place names come from when Secretary Udall removed the N-word from the landscape and replaced many of those names with the term "Negro." Many Black communities and organizations consider this term as outdated and offensive, but some communities see these place names as empowering and honoring place-based history. Local Black organizations and individuals should be consulted to determine if selecting a replacement name is appropriate given the local context and history.

"Coon" should definitely be replaced, but instead of unilaterally changing every use of the term to "raccoon," the committee should prioritize a community-driven renaming process that specifically seeks to identify names chosen by and that honor and empower local Black communities.

Thank you,