

Salamander Creek

Proposal Information

Proposed name	Salamander Creek
Proposal type	new name for unnamed feature
Current official name	n/a
GNIS ID	n/a
Proponent	Robert Gutierrez; Bayside, CA
Date proposed	12/12/22
Submitter	same
Date submitted	same
BGN case number	5932
Quarterly Review List	450

Feature Details

Primary coordinates	40.931489, -124.081118
Secondary coordinates	40.919459, -124.064596
Feature class	stream
Feature size	1.25 miles long
Feature description	heads west of Essex Gulch, flows northwest into Mill Creek southeast of McKinleyville
Name history	named for the coastal giant salamander (<i>Dicamptodon tenebrosus</i>) found in the area
USGS primary topo map	Arcata North 1:24,000
State(s)	California
County(s)	Humboldt County
Local jurisdiction(s)	n/a
PLSS	Secs 4&9, T6N, R1E, Humboldt Meridian
Land ownership	private

BGN decisions

- None

Other Names

- Unpublished names: None found
- Published names: None found

Case Summary

The new name Salamander Creek is proposed for an unnamed 1.25-mile-long tributary of Mill Creek near McKinleyville in Humboldt County.

The proponent owns property through which the stream flows, and states that he wishes to “pay homage to the Pacific Coastal Giant Salamander . . . [which are] native to the region [and] are often found in the cool clear waters of the creek.”

In researching the proposal, it was discovered that in the fall of 2022, California Water Boards sent the proponent two Notices of Violation for “recent tree and stump clearing and grading, without permits, and in a manner that threatens water quality,” including deterioration of amphibian habitat along the stream. The first

notice noted that a large mound on the property “was recently constructed reportedly to build a largescale mound feature in the shape of a salamander.”

When asked to address the issue, the proponent clarified that he assumed he was in compliance with the State’s new (effective January 1, 2023) fire suppression regulations, which require that superfluous flammable material and debris be removed from around homes. He believed that clearing the property would be an appropriate way to address that need. With regard to the use of the disposed material, he referred to:

The individual spiritual significance of the Salamander effigy mound and other land art features at Salamander Ranch.

[We are] descendants of people indigenous to North America, [whose] culture has emphasized harmony with nature, endurance of suffering, respect, and non-interference toward others. During the Summer of 2022, [we] experienced a spiritual moment during deep meditative prayer at the site of the Salamander effigy mound. During this religious experience, a Salamander Spirit Guide came to [the proponent] and presented a vision of a mound rising from the Earth in the shape of a Salamander, emerging from the creek. The Salamander is a native species to the parcel.

The Spirit Guide presented a vision that this [mound] would one day be a place where spiritual rituals such as prayer circles, rites of passage such as celebrations of birth, funeral ceremonies, celebrations of harvest and unions of holy matrimony and other spiritual ceremonies would take place there.

The proponent proceeded to create the effigy mound, adding:

On several occurrences during site visits, investigators from county, state, and federal agencies have openly verbally mocked, belittled, and openly disregarded any religious and spiritual significance when explaining to investigators the creation of the Salamander effigy mound.

The First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States outlines clear protections to freedom of religion. We hold a deep reverence for this land and have to this date complied with full transparency and communication all deadlines for the development, implementation, and completion of all plans related to the stabilization and remediation of the land.

He indicated he is hoping to develop the site into a park, with a sculpture garden and walking paths. He stated that there was no commercial enterprise related to “Salamander Ranch.”

The Klamath River Advocate with the Environmental Protection Information Center (EPIC), which “works to protect and restore ancient forests, watersheds, coastal estuaries, and native species in Northern California,” submitted a letter of support, “provided that any tribes with ancestral ties to the land are consulted and are not in opposition.”

Stakeholder Input

Local government	Humboldt County
State Names Authority	California
Federal Agency	n/a
Federally Recognized Tribes	All federally recognized Tribes contacted under Policy X
Other	Environmental Protection Information Center Support

Domestic Geographic Name Proposal Form

The U.S. Board on Geographic Names (BGN) is responsible for standardizing the names of geographic features within the 50 States and in other areas under the sovereignty of the United States. The BGN retains the legal authority to promulgate all official names and locations of natural features (e.g. mountains, rivers, valleys), as well as canals, channels, reservoirs, and other select feature types.

This form is to propose a new name or name, spelling, or application change for a geographic feature for Federal use. A proponent should carefully review the proposal prior to submission to ensure that it is consistent with the [BGN policies](#). Please note all fields with a red outline are required prior to submitting this form.

The proponent should also be aware that the entire proposal—including personal identifying information and any associated correspondence—is in the public domain and may be made publicly available at any time.

Submit Proposal:

Contact Us:
[BGNEXEC@usgs.gov](#)

1. Email this form and supporting documentation to: BGNEXEC@usgs.gov

i. Save PDF as 'ST_GeographicName' for example 'CO_BearCreek'

ii. Email Subject: ST_GeographicName

OR

2. Send by mail to:
U.S. BGN Executive Secretary, Domestic Names
12201 Sunrise Valley Drive, MS-523
Reston, VA 20192

Please note that anything submitted by mail will delayed.

Naming Basics

Proposed Name:

Salamander Creek

Is this name in current local use?

X

Y

N

What is the Feature Class?

Is this to change an existing name?

Y

X

N

If yes, please provide the official name and Feature ID as it appears in [the Geographic Names Information System \(GNIS\)](#).

GNIS Name:

Feature ID:

Location Basics

Where is the feature?

Latitude:
40.922075 (38.94741)

Longitude:
-124.066740 (-77.36839)

For Linear Features (e.g. stream or valley):

Mouth/Confluence

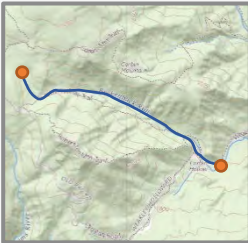
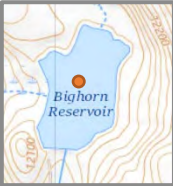
Latitude:
 (38.94741)

Longitude:
 (-77.36839)

Source/Headwater

Latitude:
 (38.94741)

Longitude:
 (-77.36839)



General Location:

State:

County:

City/Town/
Township/
Borough:

Public Land Survey System:
Section(s), Township, Range, Meridian

Feature Description

Physical shape, length, width, etc. (Maps can be submitted separately by email)

Name Details

Name information:

Please provide relevant information about the proposed name, such as origin, meaning, how long it has been in current use, as well as current or historical significance. Also include why you believe the feature requires a name or name change and why the proposed name is appropriate. Describe any documents that you will be submitting (separately by email) to support your proposal.

Please provide a list of supporting documentation, including any web links:
Examples: Published sources showing the proposed name or letters of support (local government, historical society, etc.).

Is the name [commemorative](#)? Does the name honor or refer to a person or persons? ☐ Y ☒ N

Please note that the BGN will only accept proposals for names that are intended to honor a person or persons deceased at least five years. The BGN will disapprove names that could be construed to honor living persons. The person being honored should have had either (1) some direct or long-term association with the feature, or (2) have made a significant contribution to the area, community, or State in which it is located; or (3) have outstanding national or international recognition. The BGN discourages the use of an individual’s full name except to avoid ambiguity.

If yes, please provide the following:

Honoree’s Date of Birth:

Honoree’s Date of Death:

Short biography and significance or association with the geographic feature: *(list any additional honorees here)*

Is the feature in a Wilderness Area or Wilderness Study Area? ☐ Y ☒ N ☐ Unknown

If yes, please provide your justification for making an exception to [the Wilderness Policy](#):

Please note that the BGN will not approve new names for unnamed features within wilderness areas or wilderness study areas, unless an overriding need can be demonstrated by the proponent.

Additional Information +

Is there any local opposition or conflict with the proposed name? ☐ Y ☒ N

If yes, please explain and describe any opposition:

Additional notes:

Proponent Information

Please provide one form of contact (email preferred):

 Proponent's Name:

Agency or Organization, if applicable:

 Email:

 Mailing Address:

 Phone:

 Are you completing this form for someone else? ☐ Y ☐ N

If yes, please fill out the following:

Completed by:
Full Name:
Email:
Mailing Address:
Phone: