



PO Box 201800 Helena, MT 59620 (406) 444-3115

April 3, 2013

Mr. Lou Yost
Acting Executive Secretary
Domestic Names Committee
United States Board on Geographic Names
523 National Center
Reston, VA 20192-0523

Dear Mr. Yost,

As Montana's State Names Authority, I recommend that the Domestic Names Committee approve the proposal from Review List 408 to name a rock formation in Lincoln County, Montana as "Bad Medicine Spires".

The Montana State Library released a public request for comments regarding this proposal in February of 2012. The local newspaper and a local TV station published articles about it. The proponent published a survey about names for the feature in the Western News in Libby, Montana on March 28, 2012.

This name was very controversial among the people that responded to the request for comments. Twenty-three other names for the feature were proposed or identified as being in use by the fifty-seven respondents. Please see the attached page for the complete list of names. The most commonly preferred name was "Bad Medicine," favored by twenty-one of the respondents, nineteen of whom are opposed to adding the generic term "Spires". Additionally, I found a discussion on Facebook about the name where three other people who use the name "Bad Medicine" were opposed to adding "Spires". Eighteen respondents preferred "Bad Medicine Spires" and three others found it acceptable but not preferred. Sixteen respondents preferred other names and did not indicate support or opposition to "Bad Medicine Spires".

The Lincoln County Commissioners indicated that they are not opposed to the proposal. The Forest Service's district ranger, responding to the original "Castle Cliffs" proposal for this feature, indicated that "Bad Medicine" or "Bad Medicine Spires" was preferable, and seemed to indicate that this was also the opinion her office received from the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes (CSKT). I have attempted over the past 13 months to get an opinion from CSKT officials but did not receive any clear response. The responses I received seemed to indicate that they are not

opposed to the name “Bad Medicine” in general, but did not indicate whether “Bad Medicine Spires” was acceptable for this feature.

I recommend that the DNC approve the proposal because there are many names in use for the feature and these names should be recorded in the national geographic names database. Accepting this proposal is the most expedient way of accomplishing this.

While there is no requirement that a name must contain a generic part, most names of geographic features that lack a generic imply the existence of an object. There is nothing in “Bad Medicine” to indicate that the name applies to a particular feature. Some of the respondents indicated that “Bad Medicine” refers to a region rather than to the cliffs. It would be reasonable for a person unfamiliar with the area who sees “Bad Medicine” on a map to assume that the label refers to an area rather than to a specific thing.

The correspondence we received as a result of our public notice, the County Commissioners’ response, and the text of the local newspaper articles are available at http://msl.mt.gov/geonames/comments/40801_Bad_Medicine_Spires.zip.

Sincerely Yours,

Gerald J Daumiller
Montana State Library

Complete list of suggested names for the cliffs/spires/rock formation above Bad Medicine Campground.

Names reported to be currently in use

Bad Medicine
Bad Medicine Mountain
Bad Medicine Rocks
The Break-off
Broke-Off Mountain
The Brokeoff
Castle Cliffs
Castle Rock
Castle Rocks
The Castles
The Cliffs
The Cliffs at Bad Medicine
The Craggs
Fallen Mountain
Mount Vernon Hoodoos
The Pinnacles
The Sentinels
The Three Braves

New suggestions

Bad Medicine Sentinels
Bad Medicine Spires
Bad Medicine Spirit Dancers
Bad Medicine Squashed Squaw
Broke Dick Spires
Indian Medicine Spires