

NEWS RELEASE

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Devils Tower To Make Presentation

Devils Tower National Monument has been invited to attend the Western States Geographic Names Conference in Salt Lake City, Utah, in early September. The title of the presentation is, "Revisiting the Name Devils Tower." Monument superintendent Deb Liggett stresses, "The presentation is educational only and will include current research. There is no proposal at this time to change the name of the national monument or change the name of the geologic feature." The US Board of Geographic Names (USBGN) is the agency responsible for standardizing geographic name usage.

The name Devils Tower is not the aboriginal name and is considered offensive by American Indians. Several tribes have brought this issue forward to the National Park Service. The name Devils Tower was applied to the tower in 1875 by Col. Richard Dodge and has appeared on maps since the early part of this century. A name proposal may be made in the future, but the National Park Service knows of no imminent proposal.

The butte now called Devils Tower is still known by many names among indigenous people in their native language. The Sioux called the tower Mato Tipila. American names for the tower (translated into English) include: Bear's Lodge, Grizzly Bear's Lodge, Bear's Tipi, Bear's Lair, Bear Lodge, Bear Lodge Butte, Tree Rock and Grey Horn Butte. Some of these names are labeled on maps through the 1800's.

There are precedents elsewhere that support a future dual name proposal. In Alaska, where Denali is the native name for the mountain the park has become Denali National Park and Preserve but the geographic feature retains the name Mt. McKinley. Legislation would be required to change the name of the national monument and name changes to geographic features must be approved by the USBGN. Neither process can occur without a formal public input process.