

DOMESTIC NAME CHANGE PROPOSAL
CORRECT THE NAME OF A NATIONAL MONUMENT:
BEAR LODGE NATIONAL MONUMENT (Currently “DEVILS TOWER”)

SACRED, THEN AND NOW

WHEREAS: Almost every faith tradition around the world honors at least one specific mountain as a holy, sacred place where their leaders and people have historically gone to communicate or commune with God; and

WHEREAS: The religious freedom is an inherent right for all people, fundamental to the democratic structure of the United States, guaranteed by the **First Amendment of the United States Constitution** and affirmed under the **American Indian Religious Freedom Act** of 1978¹,” and

WHEREAS: The United States ratified the 2007 **United Nations “Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples”**² which includes the rights to practice and revitalize indigenous customs, spiritual and religious traditions, as well as the rights to maintain, protect and have access in privacy to their religious and cultural sites; and

WHEREAS the United States Board on Geographic Names³ states that “geographic names derived from the language of Native Americans are an important and integral part of the cultural history of the United States and commits to consult with federally recognized tribes having a historic or cultural affiliation with the geographic location of the feature;” and

WHEREAS: Centuries before the creation of the United States of America, indigenous people have revered the mountains commonly referred to as the Black Hills as sacred, including several rock features located in present-day parks in South Dakota and Wyoming; and

WHEREAS: Indigenous communities claim their origin in the Black Hills and “archeological evidence has revealed inhabitation of some tribes in this area at least as far back as 1000 A.D.”⁴; and

WHEREAS: These Black Hills sacred sites are intricately intertwined with traditional spirituality and culture as demonstrated by ongoing personal rituals (prayer offerings, sweat lodge ceremonies, vision quests), group ceremonies many of which are held in June, and sacred narratives including the origins of People, the origin of ceremonies, sacred objects, hero legends); and

WHEREAS: The monument meets the **Executive Order in 1996**⁵ sacred site criteria that ensures federal protection of its physical integrity because it is a “specific, discrete, narrowly delineated location on Federal land that is identified by an Indian tribe, or Indian individual determined to be an appropriately authoritative representative of an Indian religion, as sacred by virtue of its established religious significance to, or ceremonial use by, an Indian religion; provided that the tribe or appropriately authoritative representative of an Indian religion has informed the agency of the existence of such a site;” and

WHEREAS: This site is eligible for inclusion to the National Register of Historic Places as a traditional cultural property and is eligible to be recognized as a United Nations (UNESCO)⁶ World Heritage Site because of its historical, cultural and natural significance;

¹ American Indian Religious Freedom Act (AIRFA) Public Law No. 95-341, 92 Stat. 469 (Aug. 11, 1978)

www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/STATUTE-92/pdf/STATUTE-92-Pg469.pdf

² United Nations www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/DRIPS_en.pdf (Article 10, 11)

³ USGS Principals, Policies and Procedures: Domestic Geographic Name (Policy X):

http://geonames.usgs.gov/docs/pro_pol_pro.pdf

⁴ Bear Lodge Multiple Use vs Babbitt www.justice.gov/osg/briefs/1999/0responses/99-1045.resp.pdf

⁵ Executive Order 13007 by President Bill Clinton (1996) www.achp.gov/EO13007.html

⁶ United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization <http://en.unesco.org/>
<http://whc.unesco.org/en/criteria/>

HISTORICAL NAME

WHEREAS: The National Park Service website⁷ states that “Over twenty tribes have a cultural affiliation with Devils Tower. Many tribes have stories about how the Tower was created. Most of the stories talk about a bear using its claws to score the Tower’s sides,” leading to use of the word ‘bear’ in their respective dialect or tribal languages⁸ (i.e. House of the Bear, Bear Lodge, Bear Tipi, Bear Peak); and

WHEREAS: Early white explorers, commissioned cartographers, and United States military leaders consistently employed the name “Bear Lodge” when referring to the site because of its widespread written and oral use of this name by indigenous people as well as by the incoming federal military, pioneers, miners, and settlers; and

WHEREAS: The labels “Bear Lodge” and “Mato Tipila” are the written inscriptions on the earliest photos⁹ of this rock feature and the label on the earliest non-indigenous maps¹⁰ drawn and published by the U.S. Army or commissioned for the United States Geological Service¹¹; and

WHEREAS: The “Bear Lodge Mountain Range,” remains the officially recognized name for the mountains located immediately east of this geological feature; and

WHEREAS: Many well-established regional businesses include the words “Bear” or “Bear Lodge,” in their name or have logos and signage that include a bear, including the commercial rock climbers who aligned under the name of “Bear Lodge Multiple Use Association,” and

WHEREAS: The name for the original path that became a paved road leading directly to this rock feature since the 1800’s has been interchangeably identified as “Bear Lodge Road/Tower Road,” and this dual name is used in all web-based mapping systems to currently assist way-finding to the Monument; and

MONUMENT NAME: OFFENSIVE MISTAKE

WHEREAS: **The Antiquities Act of 1906**¹² authorizes the President of the United States through executive order to proclaim "historic landmarks, historic and prehistoric structures, and other objects of historic or scientific interest" as national monuments, in order to preserve public land without waiting for legislation to pass Congress; and

WHEREAS: On September 24, 1906 President Theodore Roosevelt used his new authority to protect an igneous rock tower in Wyoming as the first national monument, formally designating the site through executive order¹³ as “Devil’s Tower National Monument;” and

⁷ www.nps.gov/deto/historyculture/stories.htm

⁸ Mato Tipila in Lakota (pronounced *Mathó Thípila*) literally means “Bear Tipi” or “Bear House” or “Bear Lodge”

⁹ Library of Congress (1887) John Grabill photo <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/collection/grabill/item/99613924/> with the words “Bear Lodge (Mato Teepee) of the Indians” inscribed by Grabill on the photograph.

¹⁰ USGS Geographic Names Information System GNIS ID #1609083, Crook County WY (DMS: 443525N, 1044255W) (DEC: 44.5905640, -104.7151550) www.geonames.usgs.gov

¹¹ MAPS Sources include: Hayden 1869 (US War Department Harvey Expedition); 1872 Delacy; 1873 Gray; 1873 Jones; 1873 Lloyd; 1874 Asher & Adams (US Geological Survey and USGS National Atlas); 1874 Ludlow (US Army 7th Cavalry Reconnaissance under Custer); 1877 Black Hill Map; 1878 Grey; 1879 Jenney (Black Hills Map).

¹² (Pub.L. 59–209, 34 Stat. 225, 16 U.S.C. § 431–433), Passed by the US Congress and signed into law by Theodore Roosevelt on June 8, 1906. http://cr.nps.gov/local-law/FHPL_AntiAct.pdf

¹³ Devils Tower National Monument Proclamation and map (13b), September 24, 1906.

WHEREAS: **Executive Order in 2006**¹⁴ acknowledges that former monument designations and laws were “passed without consideration of the effect on traditional American Indian religions...resulting in an abridgment of the religious freedoms”¹⁵ that are afforded to all American citizens under the law; and

WHEREAS: The National Park Service currently acknowledges through its park website¹⁶ that the “Devils Tower” name was based on a faulty translation published in a single well-circulated source in 1875 and the error was then exacerbated through a clerical error. “It is believed that the Tower got its name when Colonel Dodge's translator misinterpreted the name to mean ‘Bad God's Tower,’ later shortened to Devil’s Tower¹⁷ ... When the proclamation establishing Devils Tower was published, the apostrophe was unintentionally dropped from Devil’s—and this clerical error was never officially corrected;” and

WHEREAS: Indigenous people have for over a century repeatedly stated that the 1906 “Devils Tower” name is not the correct translation of the rock’s name and that the Devils Tower name is offensive because it equates cultural and faith traditions practiced at this site to “devil worship,” in essence equating indigenous people to “devils;” and

WHEREAS: The Devils Tower name is perceived by indigenous elders, leaders and individual tribal members as highly offensive, insulting, disparaging, disrespectful, derogatory, and repugnant and because this name serves as a constant irritant that causes displeasure, anger, and ongoing resentment in their community; and

WHEREAS: Indigenous people have continued to use their traditional names or the English term “Bear Lodge” when referring to the geological feature in their original traditional language rather than the official government name; and

WHEREAS: The Board of Geographic names “has a firm policy¹⁸ prohibiting the inclusion of a word in an official geographic name considered by the Board to be derogatory to any racial, ethnic, gender, or religious group,” and this policy has led to the approval of new proper names for other sites that were known to be considered “highly offensive and derogatory”; and

WHEREAS: When requested by any individual or agency, the Board of Geographic Names is authorized to formally change the proper name of a place, feature, or area in the United States when the case involves 1) a name originally authorized on the basis of incorrect information, 2) a name that is derogatory; 3) bringing Federal official usage into agreement with well-established historical usage; and

WHEREAS: The monument meets the Federal criteria¹⁹ as a “sacred site” and is therefore subject to protection policies for preserving the physical integrity of this sacred site including the removal of the offensive, derogatory signage; and

¹⁴ Executive Order 13007 by President Bill Clinton (1996) www.achp.gov/EO13007.html

¹⁵ American Indian Religious Freedom Act (AIRFA) Public Law No. 95-341, 92 Stat. 469 (Aug. 11, 1978) www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/STATUTE-92/pdf/STATUTE-92-Pg469.pdf

¹⁶ www.nps.gov/deto/historyculture/sacredsites.htm

¹⁷ National Park Website. Lieutenant Colonel Richard Irving Dodge’s “Black Hills Journals” (1879).

¹⁸ USGS Principals, Policies and Procedures: Domestic Geographic Name (Policy V: Derogatory Names) http://geonames.usgs.gov/docs/pro_pol_pro.pdf

¹⁹ Executive Order 13007 by President Bill Clinton (1996) www.achp.gov/EO13007.html

PRECEDENT AND AFFECT OF CHANGE

WHEREAS: Nine of the eighteen national monuments established by President Theodore Roosevelt²⁰ have either been abolished or no longer retain their original monument designation, and almost half of the current national parks have undergone a significant change in their name, agency or boundaries,²¹ showing historical precedent for enacting change to reflect the nation's values, and priorities; and

WHEREAS: Even with these sweeping alterations to historic names and designations of geographic features, parks and National Monuments, there is not a single documented case where visitation to the area decreased after those changes, nor proof that those changes caused economic hardship to the local community or to its regional businesses; and

WHEREAS: This proposed corrective name change would not alter or remove Wyoming's designation of being the home to the United States' first National Monument; and

WHEREAS: The upcoming 2016 centennial of the United States National Park Service and the 110th anniversary of this monument provides a timely opportunity to draw attention to all nationally preserved and managed treasures and specifically to the first National Monument; and

WHEREAS: The monument has been visited by over four hundred thousand guests annually,²² demonstrating the broad national appeal of this site that is located on federal lands; and

WHEREAS: This proposal continues to garner extensive public support as demonstrated by the bi-partisan, interfaith petition that includes Wyoming residents and signatories from across the nation, as well as letters of support from human rights organizations, religious leaders, state and tribal authorities and indigenous elders that will be presented during the consultation process;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

Recognizing that the 1906 United States' action to establish a national monument at an existing sacred site and to name it the "Devils Tower National Monument," is patently offensive, and recognizing that this name was based on a faulty translation, I hereby call upon the United States, through whatever legal process is required, to immediately acknowledge the historical identity of the sacred rock tower as "Bear Lodge" and to refer to the park site as "Bear Lodge National Monument"

Further, I request that the official name change and marketing theme be completed immediately to begin preparations for the centennial year of the National Park Service and the 110th anniversary celebration of the monument in September 2016.

²⁰ Current Names: Petrified Forest NP; Cinder Cone (gone); Chaco Culture NHP; Lassen Volcanic NP; Grand Canyon NP; Pinnacles NP; Lewis and Clark NHP; Tumacacori NHP; Wheeler (gone); Olympic National Park

²¹ National Monuments & the Antiquities Act, Carol Hardy Vincent (2010) www.fas.org/sgp/crs/misc/R41330.pdf (Sier de Monts National Monument established 1916, changed its name to Lafayette National Park in 1919 and then changed its name again to Acadia National Park in 1929).

²² National Park Service Visitor Use Statistics <https://irma.nps.gov/Stats/Reports/Park>