

**Reiss, David**

---

**From:** Judy Gaalswyk <judygsd@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, May 01, 2015 12:49 AM  
**To:** Reiss, David  
**Subject:** SD Board on Geographic Names

Dear Sir,

I attended part of the hearing held yesterday in Rapid City but did not speak because I did not know what name Native People were interested in. I did and do believe that it is very important to change the name from Harney Peak since the Black Hills and The Mountain are sacred to the Lakota and other tribal groups.

While "Black Elk Peak" is preferable to Harney, I knew that Indian people did not usually name places after individuals but rather described incidents or things that occurred in a location. I learned yesterday that the people originally referred to The Mountain as "Hin Han Kaga" (making of owls) I believe there have been other Lakota names suggested and I hope that these would be considered. I think it is important for non- Native people to learn to pronounce an occasional Lakota term and hopefully appreciate some of the history of this beautiful and sacred area .

Thank you for your important work.

Judy Gaalswyk, Rapid City

Dear Chairperson June, Jay, and members of the SD Board on Geographic Names:

I read with interest the news coverage of recent hearings regarding proposed name change for the Black Hills landmark currently called "Harney Peak."

All of the proposals represent very recent history in the life of this granite outcropping. I learned in a geology class this winter that the peak represents the most ancient rock in all of South Dakota—a "deep intrusive" in geologic terms.

For far better information, I refer you to Dr. Alvis Lisenbee, a very knowledgeable geologist at South Dakota School of Mines and Technology. He can help you work up a description of the peak that will truly do justice to its rightful significance to the Black Hills and all of South Dakota.

For the sake of discussion, I propose it be called "Precambrian Peak"—it was thrust into its current location by forces of great magnitude 2.5 billion years ago, according to my class notes. By comparison, other well-known landmarks such as Bear Butte and Devils Towers were "only" formed 58 million years ago. The Badlands came into existence 34 million years ago.

Please consult with Dr. Lisenbee before you further consider this idea. All I know is that the peak in question has great geologic significance in the area.

Thank you for giving consideration to this option, and for your service to the great state of South Dakota.

Sincerely,

Karon L. Schaack

## Reiss, David

---

**From:** Sylvia Lambert <smldancer@hotmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, May 01, 2015 8:26 AM  
**To:** Reiss, David; lakotawayhealingcenter@gmail.com  
**Subject:** Renaming Harney Peak

Re: Harney Peak name change

Though Black Elk had his vision and spiritual experiences at Harney Peak, he indicated that Opahata'l, "Center of All", is essentially wherever one finds oneself, and should be considered reverently and respectfully.

In Lakota culture, mountains are not named after people, but rather after natural events or natural formations. The site to be renamed has the common traditional name Paha Hinhan Kaga, meaning "owl making place" (Lakota word order: place, owl, to make).

For this reason, I would like to recommend, and have Lakota People and other interested folks consider and discuss, naming the place "Hinhan Kaga", a shortened version of the traditional name. If that is too hard to say or remember, perhaps "Owl Place", or "Great Owl Place", or since a nest is necessary for making owls, perhaps "Owl Nest Peak".

Being familiar with Eagle Nest Butte, "Paha Wanbli Wahohpi" which is near here, helps me and others understand Lakota naming traditions.

Sylvia Lambert

P.O. Box 78  
Interior, SD 57750  
605-433-5420

## Reiss, David

---

**From:** du CLOSEL Jean-Baptiste <jbduclosel@hotmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, May 01, 2015 10:08 AM  
**To:** Reiss, David  
**Cc:** bravehearttiospaye@gmail.com  
**Subject:** FW: Renaming Harney Peak

with the relevant address; sorry.

---

**From:** [jbduclosel@hotmail.com](mailto:jbduclosel@hotmail.com)  
**To:** [david.reisse@state.sd.us](mailto:david.reisse@state.sd.us)  
**CC:** [bravehearttiospaye@gmail.com](mailto:bravehearttiospaye@gmail.com)  
**Subject:** Renaming Harney Peak  
**Date:** Fri, 1 May 2015 15:01:24 +0000

Sir,

As a French, I've always been concerned by the interaction between Euro-Americans and Natives. It's now a well-known fact that we, Euro-Americans, have very often based our conquest - to include North-America - on biases and broken treaties; that has generated a lot of frustration in the Native heart.

Thank you for positively considering the request brought by the Lakota Oglalas with regard to renaming Harney Peak with Black Elk's name, a man who is known throughout the world - thanks to written testimonies of his high spirituality (a relationship that our world definitely needs nowadays), which I've read when being a boy-scout.

Sorry for my poor English; I just hope it will not be misunderstood!

Best regards,

Jean-Baptiste du Closel

France.

**Reiss, David**

---

**From:** Emerson Bull Chief <Emerson.BullChief@crow-nsn.gov>  
**Sent:** Friday, May 01, 2015 10:25 AM  
**To:** Reiss, David  
**Subject:** Harney Peak Name Change  
**Attachments:** Harney Peak Comment.jpg; Hearney Rename Doc.docx

David,

It was good to meet you this past Wednesday. I am submitting the office response from the Crow Tribe concerning the proposed name change and also submitting a supporting document. You also have our map as part of our submission. Thank you.

Emerson Bull Chief  
Crow Tribal Historic Preservation Officer

Sent from Windows Mail

To propose a new name for the feature, please complete the section below:

Recommended Name: Blackfoot Peak

Reason/Justification for Name:

At dawn on September 27, 1851, Blackfoot rounded mesa and revealed his Sacred Item, a white swan. He pointed the bill and faced it toward the rising sun. He offered the pipe in prayer and his prayer he described the mountain of

the Apalooke, "where my four ~~sons~~ were to see Paws set to the Apalooke. I want that one Apalooke to have a place to come back home to. He described the following locations: the confluence of the mission and yellowstone rivers, the highest peak in the Black Hills, the wind mountain, and the headwaters of the Yellowstone River. The Treaty of 1851 clearly states the Apalooke claim for the highest peak in the Black Hills. Many takes were in offense and none objected to ~~the~~ Blackfoot's claim. This is the reason the Crow Nation suggest the origin/meaning of Name: name of Blackfoot as the name of Hairy Peak.

The origin of the name comes from the leader of the Mountain Crow the defined the territory of the Apalooke in the 1851 treaty.

Please attach any supporting documentation such as resolutions from governing boards or organizations, newspaper articles, petitions or historical references.

Submitted by:

Name: Emerson Bull Chief

Title (if representing organization or public entity): Crow Tribal Historic Preservation Officer

Organization or Public Entity (if applicable):

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 157 Crow Agency MT. 59022

Telephone: 406 6790402

Email Address: emerson.bullchief@crow-nsn.gov

If the recommended name is adopted by the SDBGN, additional information may be needed to support the recommendation to the U.S. Board on Geographic Names

Comments should be submitted no later than May 1, 2015. Submit comments to:

SD Board on Geographic Names

Dept of Tribal Relations

302 East Dakota

Pierre, SD 57501

Email: David.Reiss@state.sd.us

FAX: 605-773-6592

Or access Public Comment Form: <http://www.sdbgn.sd.gov/>

The ancestral homeland of the Apsáalooke is a wooded area with vast bodies of water. If one can imagine where there is a wooded area with vast bodies of water it would be the Ohio River Valley near the Great Lakes region.

As far back as I can remember, the oral history that has been handed down over generations and centuries, was that we were all one mankind. As human beings we wanted to settle our disputes by fighting and having warfare. First Maker said, "You must prove to me that you are men before you can fight each other." He placed a person in the water under a cliff with a weapon and asked the men jump off the cliff if they were man enough. Many began their attempt but changed their minds when they saw the man with the weapon. One individual walked up to the edge of the cliff and without hesitation dove off into the water. The brave individual that jumped off the cliff lie dead in the water with a shaft of the weapon protruding out of his collar bone and blood oozing from his nostrils. First Maker said, "This is a man, eeklak bachee, he is on my side, biilukak. I will only make a few, kooshtakatbaawiik. From this day forward try to wipe him out, baapiihaaksee haaweewiakissalah. From that moment in time we became that Biiluke of "On Our Side," the ally of the First Maker.

As Biiluke, "On Our Side," we dwelled in a wooded area with vast bodies of water, balee hua bilichkee isaatkaasuum kookukaawuok. We lived off the water, hunted small game and water fowl, dug up roots and bulbs, picked berries and nuts, and trapped the smaller fur-bearing animals for additional food and clothing. We came west searching and hunting for larger game (bison). When we reached the Big River (Missouri River), we became Awashe, "Earthen Lodges" or better known as Hidatsa. We retained our survival skills but became farmers and tillers of the soil. One day two brothers were sent out on a fasting quest to seek their livelihoods. The younger brother, Red Scout, was given the squash seeds to plant and cultivate for his sustenance. The older brother, No Intestines, was instructed to seek a certain tobacco plant that was to be found in a mountainous region.

That was the cause of the great exodus from our mother tribe, the Earthen Lodges. No Intestines, his relatives, clan members and friends broke off onto the plains in search of the certain tobacco plant. History reports that we traveled the greater western portion of the North American Continent. We dwelled in four distinct geographical areas from Canada to Mexico. We first came to a place near present day Glacier National Park where the winters were too severe and too cold and long so we traveled toward the setting sun. We came to a region where there were many lakes with salt along the shore. It rained too often and the insects were too dense so we traveled toward the rising sun. We came to a place called Arrow Head River, present day Canadian River. The summers were too long, hot, and dusty so we traveled north again to Chief Mountain. Again the winters were too severe, frigid, and long so we traveled south. We came to the Rocky Mountain Region and there along the eastern slopes of the Big Horn Mountains, under Cloud's Peak, known to the Apsáalooke as "Where Raven Owner Was Badgered," the Sacred Tobacco plant was found.

No Intestines had passed away during our travels which took over a century. His son Good Growth, Alapaaliiitchish, fasted on Cloud's Peak and saw the Sacred Tobacco plant glistening in the moonlight. Good Growth adopted his own son to initiate the Sacred Tobacco

Society Adoption Ceremony which is still practiced today. The first Sacred Tobacco seed planting was at the Seven Hills, a row of hills along Soap Creek in Montana.

The Sacred Tobacco Society Adoption Ceremony is a replication of our travels throughout the greater western portion of the North American Continent. The Adoption ceremony commences with a procession from a lodge representing our mother tribe, the Earthen Lodges or Hidatsa, to the Sacred Tobacco adoption lodge with four stops in between. The stops represent the four geographic areas where we dwelled before we found the Sacred Tobacco. There is a song sung at the on-set of the procession and sung four times. At the end of each song one step is taken forward and at the conclusion of the song the procession starts with the spouse of the adoption lodge keeper leading the procession with a Sacred Tobacco bundle strapped to her back. This song is as old as the Apsáalooke Nation and it is still sung today. The most prestigious sacred sites of the Apsáalooke are Where Raven Owner Was Badgered and the Seven Hills area. The Seven Hills area is still accessible but Where Raven Owners Was Badgered is heavily populated and is not accessible. Of course there are other prestigious sacred sites in the territorial homeland of the Apsáalooke. The Big Camp aka Medicine Wheel, the origin of a revenge ritual which kept our enemies at bay and caused us to defeat them, is being disturbed, destroyed, and desecrated by other indigenous nations, who know nothing about it. Grizzly Bear Lodge aka Devil's Tower is another prestigious sacred site being disturbed, destroyed, and desecrated. There is an Apsáalooke in that Large Boulder and her seven siblings went into the sky to be the place where they extend the pipe when it is offered in prayer. It is reported that the seven siblings come every once in a while to check on their sister. If ever there is some detection of a presence they are the siblings checking on their sister.

We have historical and sacred sites throughout the greater western portion of the North American Continent from Canada to Mexico but we did not leave a paper trail, rather a song trail. During our travels, mothers who lost their children would often mutilate themselves and seclude themselves in isolation for nights at a time. Spirit patrons would bestow lullabies for them to sing and raise their children to be healthy and mature. There are lullabies about Arrow Head River, Chief Mountain, and Where the Red-Headed Wolf roamed and others too numerous to mention. We have historical and sacred sites throughout northern and southern plains. We even have human remains of our ancestors in these various places that we frequented but we do not claim them because we have consecrated them back to our creator. When we lay a loved one to rest for the final time that is the last time we touch them. When they are not breathing there are no longer a part of us, they are beings without bodies and they are treacherous and can cause harm to you. They can affect your mind and emotions and can even make your face droop and your saliva drool. Whatever we put on them or place with them no one can claim, because we have consecrated them and their belongings back to the creator. To disturb them is sacrilegious.

We do not claim this vast area of the northern and southern plains east of the Mississippi River that we traveled. We only claim an area described by our great leader and statesmen, Blackfoot. At dawn on September 27, 1851, Blackfoot burned incense and revealed his sacred item, a white swan. He painted the bill blue and faced it toward the rising sun. He offered the pipe in prayer and in his prayer he described the homeland of the Apsáalooke, "Where my four base tepee poles

set is the homeland of the Apsáalooke. It is mine. Even if there is just one Apsáalooke left, I want that one Apsáalooke to have a place to come back home to. At the confluence of the Elk River set a base tepee pole. At the highest point in the Big Saddle in the mountain set another base tepee pole. At the Rain Hills set another base tepee pole. Along the ridge to the headwaters of the Big River set the fourth base tepee pole. If anyone interferes with what I have done, I want something to happen to them. If they are persistent, I want them to be gone. I want them to die.” At the treaty at Horse Creek later that day he reiterated his prayer but he said leave the last part out, the part causing harm and death. We only claim the area described by Blackfoot along with the territory frequented by the River Crow. Sore Belly, the principle leader of the River Crow walked away from the Friendship Treaty in 1825 never to associate with the white society, because one of the subordinate officers pointed a pistol at the temple on one of his entourage. He was killed fourteen years later by a Blackfoot warrior with a gunshot wound through the stomach. The River Crow frequented the area north of Elk River (Yellowstone River) to the White Water (Milk River), an area encompassing about one hundred nine million acres. We only claim this are going back to 3000 B.C. because that is the time we acquired the teepee. Within this vast area there are many historical and sacred sites that have been disturbed, destroyed and desecrated by other indigenous nations that know nothing about them.

The Apsáalooke Nation has never been defeated not even by the United States government. We were never displaced. We were brought here to this land of abundance around the Big Horn Mountains, our sacred mountain, by the Sacred Tobacco Plant and we have been here since. We acquired the teepee after we settled in this area. Yellow Leggings brought back the teepee from the animal world. The teepee has spiritual significance and the teepee rings that are scatted throughout the land are campsites. Campsites are sacred because that is where life is to begin and it is where life is to end. There is nothing that is perpetual on this earth except a campsite, which is forever and it will last as long as the Earth.

When the “being with four legs,” (horse) was brought to this continent, shortly after that a war party went after the animal. It all started when an individual fasted at the site where the Sacred Tobacco Plant was found; the individual was instructed to go after the “being with four legs.” The war party didn’t return for ten years. When they did return, all the wives of the war party were remarried except one who believed in her husband and waited for him. The horse changed the name of a band of the Apsáalooke to Kicked in the Belly band. There was an archeological dig performed at the Big Camp Site aka Medicine Wheel, that was dated to the mid-sixteenth century. The archeologist who reported it said it is probably the Apsáalooke or the Shoshone but the Shoshone never came around until the seventeenth century. Burnt Face, the originator of that fasting site, had gathered about forty or fifty mustangs before he fasted there before he went down off the mountain with his young wife.

We can go on and on with this history but if archeological data is used appropriately, many of the indigenous nations who claim this area would find themselves in other geographical areas before they were displaced. We have an inventory of the historical and sacred sites in Montana, Wyoming, North and South Dakota but not in Nebraska. Criteria should be established indigenous nations should be able to identify their ancestral homelands before they were

displaced, they should know the name and the story along with the names of places they claim affiliation with. If they are not able to produce names and stories, they should not be consulted. Special interest groups should not be consulted because they are not authorized representatives of their nations. Native consultant firms should have documentation or certification from the respective nations if they want to be considered bona-fide experts.

## Reiss, David

---

**From:** Eric Rodriguez <wayqemunay@hotmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, May 01, 2015 10:46 AM  
**To:** Reiss, David  
**Subject:** Harney Peak name change

Dear Mr. David Reiss,

I have heard a lot about changing the name of Harney Peak. I have heard that the territory did not always belong to the Sioux. I have heard the same thing about Israeli territory did not always belong only to the Jewish people. I have heard negative comments like the above and I respect people's different opinions or points of view.

I am Eric Francisco Rodriguez, born in Peru, came to the USA when I was 19 yrs old, became a United States citizen in 1997. I am 49 yrs old now and I have lived in this country longer than where I was born. I just not became a citizen here, I became a grown man here. I became who I am now. I love this land, I love my country, I love my people, the American People. Sure we are all different in a sense and believes, but still we have more than differences in common. America stands for something in our world of today. America always stood for Truth, Good, and Beauty; specially during times of difficulty.

From a point of view somewhere in the universe, Harney Peak is just a mountain within mountains in some pretty planet. Why is the name matters?

I think that it matters because of what it represents to the last people that called it a sacred mountain, kind of like Mount Sinai.

We must change the name to something that will elevate the hearts and minds to the highest good. The only way to do so is to use a name which is not connected with destruction, deaths, nor battles; but a name that holds a Holy ideal. The name Black Elk holds that ideal, because it belongs to someone who had close connections with God. People that don't know would get acquainted with that name, and learn much more than just who he was, including the reasons why the name was changed and the good heart of who did it.

Respectfully yours,

Eric F Rodriguez

**Reiss, David**

---

**From:** leslie england <lesliengland@hotmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, May 01, 2015 10:49 AM  
**To:** Reiss, David  
**Subject:** Harney Peak rename

**Dear Mr. Reiss:**

**Please consider the follow-up comment since meeting you at the 4.29.15 hearing in Rapid City.**

**I note no-one may yet have mentioned Harney has other geographic features in the country named for him. His exploits in California and Florida, perhaps elsewhere, left landmarks, lakes, ect. in his name.**

**I was very impressed with your board's conduct of the hearing, and it's obvious intensely emotional impact on many testifying. Today's New York Times contains an article on one of the last persons to testify in Rapid City at the hearing.**

**Good luck to the board in this worthy effort.**

**Leslie England, Rapid City**



## PUBLIC COMMENT FORM

The South Dakota Board on Geographic Names (SDBGN) is a state commission created in 2009 by SDCL Chapter 1-19C to recommend revision of offensive names for geographic places. The SDBGN has adopted a Public Involvement Process which seeks public comment on the existing historic name and offering recommendations and justification for the new name as well as names for unnamed geographic features. The SDBGN follows the United States Board on Geographic Names' principles, policies, and procedures. For further information visit: <http://geonames.usgs.gov/domestic/policies.htm>.

**Current Name:** Harney Peak

**Proposed Name(s):** Black Elk Peak

**Location/Identification:** Pennington County: Located in the Black Hills National Forest

The above feature is currently named Harney Peak and the SDBGN is soliciting public input on the current name and the proposed new name for the geographic feature. One name has been proposed. Please complete the section if supportive of the current name or the proposed new name.

**Support naming the Feature:** Black Elk Peak \_\_\_\_\_ Harney Peak   X  

**Reason/Justification of support to name the feature Harney Peak or Black Elk Peak:**

Don't change the name of Harney Peak.

Harney Peak is the highest natural point in South Dakota and the Black Hills. It lies in the Black Elk Wilderness area, in southern Pennington County, in the Black Hills National Forest. It is the highest peak east of the Rockies.

To change the name because Black Elk had a "supposed" vision quest is not a good reason. There already is a Black Elk Wilderness area. We don't know if Black Elk was a good person or not. This may not be a positive name.

"We cannot change history. If we change history, each and every one of us loses. We must honor each and every factor of history if we are going to remain the great country that we are."

We lose history of the area by changing names. We had a Harney National Forest, a Harney Ranger District they were named after Harney Peak, not General Harney.

**Please attach any supporting documentation such as resolutions from governing boards or organizations; newspaper articles; petitions or historical references.**

## Reiss, David

---

**From:** Suzanne Iudicello <suzanneiudicello49@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, May 01, 2015 1:06 PM  
**To:** Reiss, David  
**Subject:** Re-name Harney Peak Comment

Dear Mr. Reiss,

I am writing to concur in the public comments of Edward C. Valandra of Mission, to urge the board to adopt the Lakota name of this mountain: Hinhan Kaga Paha.

It has been my privilege to act as facilitator for several USDA Forest Service Tribal Consultations over the years, including a series of consultations about sacred sites in the Black Hills. During these discussions, which were part of a national scoping on sacred sites, knowledgeable historians, elders, and spiritual leaders spoke clearly about the importance of this mountain and other sites. It has a name. It has always had a name. The Oyate know that name, and now we do, too.

For all the reasons Mr. Valandra cites in his compelling testimony, I urge the board to restore the name of this site. To do otherwise would be akin to Egypt deciding to rename Mount Sinai "Nasser Peak."

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. This submission is my personal opinion, not on behalf of any organization.

Sincerely,

Suzanne Iudicello Martley  
2718 W. St. Patrick St.  
Rapid City, SD 57702

**Reiss, David**

---

**From:** Niece / Denise <desidsm@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, May 01, 2015 4:02 PM  
**To:** Reiss, David  
**Subject:** Letter in FAVOR of renaming Harney Peak

April 10, 2015

South Dakota Board of Graphic Names  
Department of Tribal Relations  
302 East Dakota  
Pierre, SD 57501

Dear Members of the Board,

This is in regard to the issue of renaming Harney Peak. I'm glad it is under your consideration. I write in favor of name change.

History holds images of us as does a mirror. It is powerful. These images can shape impressions and the self-worth of individuals, an entire people, as well as a nation, with implications far beyond.

Without malice and with due respect to General William S. Harney's fine qualities, I think as I expect do you, extraordinary and far-reaching symbolism is best taken into consideration when conferring a landmark's name.

In this case Black Elk and the vision he received atop Harney Peak has relevance beyond First Nations' people and the beautiful area. The vision calls upon us to understand that the center of the universe is within us all. Furthermore, it calls upon us to love one another, to love all people, all living things, and the very Earth upon which we live.

This vision holds vital and timely significance nationally and worldwide.

So it is with love, respect, and gratitude to General Harney and his relatives for holding this sacred site for so many years that I lovingly reiterate my request to please change its name.

In advance, thank you for your kind consideration.

Most Sincerely,

Denise DeSilva-Mills  
1811 – 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE  
St. Cloud, MN 56304

May 1, 2015

SD Board of Geographic Names  
302 E. Dakota  
Pierre, SD 57501

RE: Harney Peak

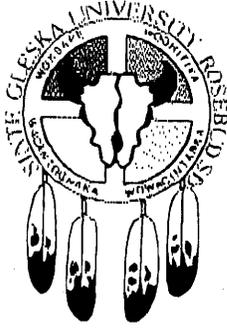
I am in full support of the proposal to change the name of Harney Peak. I am so impressed by testimony submitted by Dr. Edward Valandra. His submission is a historically and culturally accurate account that can be referenced to by all.

One point I would like to add is that of historical/generational trauma. Most are familiar with this term as trauma being passed down to generation after generation in the form of post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and that it is documented that the majority of Native people are affected by it. Results are manifested in physical illnesses (diabetes, alcoholism, cancer) and the social ills (suicides, violence) we see today.

Many Natives make the pilgrimage to the sacred site (Harney Peak) each spring for their 'Return of the Thunders' ceremony. I believe I can safely say that each of us are affected by the name 'Harney' time after time as we approach the mountain, as it triggers the generational trauma deep within us.

It is time to heal the wounds of the past. It is time to make every effort toward reconciliation. Changing the name of Harney Peak would be a great step toward that.

Laurette Pourier  
Oglala Sioux Tribal Member  
4500 Reservoir Road  
Rapid City, SD 57703



SGU Administrative Office  
Mission, South Dakota. 57555  
Tele: (605) 856-8123  
Fax: (605) 856-4194

FAX COVER

Date: 5-1-15 To: Dept. of Tribal Relations  
Fax: 773-6592 Telephone: 773-3415  
From: Representative Bordeaux No# of pages: 3

Urgent  For Review  Please Reply  Other

Comments: Here is some testimony for  
the Board of Geographic Names.

Confidential Warning: The information contained in this facsimile message is privileged and confidential information intended only for the individual or entity named above. If you have received this communication in error, please immediately notify us by telephone and return the original message to us at the above address.

Reliability Disclaimer: The records have been sent by facsimile transmission at the request of, for the convenience of and under the sole responsibility of the recipient.

If you do not receive all of the pages, please telephone us immediately at the telephone number provided.

Dept. of Tribal Relations  
302 East Dakota  
Pierre, SD 57501

May 1, 2015

Dear Members of the South Dakota Board on Geographic Names,

I write today concerning the recent efforts to change the official name of Harney Peak. While we would be satisfied with any number of alternatives, we would like to formally suggest the mountain be renamed Hihan Kaga, as it has long been known by Lakota, Dakota, Nakota people. First and foremost - no matter what the mountain is renamed - it is of the utmost importance that General William S. Harney's name no longer be inscribed on the Black Hills landscape. His actions, both on and off the battlefield, are not merely offensive to many Native and non-Native people in the Black Hills and South Dakota. They are deplorable under any standard of human decency and he is a man that shouldn't be honored with his name on a mountain in any state, especially here in our beloved Black Hills, where so many of the Lakota still reside and call our home and place of origin.

While living in St. Louis as a young man, Harney beat a slave child named Hannah to death with a piece of rawhide. He was tried and - given the sad state of race relations and the lack of empathy for the enslaved victim of a decorated army veteran - was ultimately acquitted. Harney then resumed his military career and furthered his reputation as a fierce Indian fighter. Over the years, Harney fought against the Seminoles in Florida and Sauk and Meskwaki warriors in Illinois during Black Hawk's War. He also served in the Mexican-American War in 1847. But it was his exploits at Blue Water Creek in Nebraska that earned Harney the name "Mad Bear" by Lakotas.

The wrath of Harney and those under his command stands out even in the broader context of the so-called "Indian Wars" of the nineteenth century. For many, his 1855 actions stand in their ruthlessness alongside the atrocities committed at Sand Creek, Colorado in 1865 and Wounded Knee, South Dakota in 1890.

In 1854, the first confrontation with the Lakota and the United States occurred when Lieutenant John L. Grattan and twenty-nine American soldiers were dispatched to arrest a Lakota accused of killing a Mormon's cow that came stumbling through the people's camp. My great, great, great grandfather James Bordeaux was witness to this event and was asked to interpret for Grattan but he refused to do it and warned them not to go making trouble over this cow. They had to use an interpreter who was half drunk and began insulting the Lakota and badgering them to fight calling them women. Chief Conquering Bear repeatedly offered several horses to pay the settler who had lost the cow but was gunned down by Grattan and his men. As Grattan and his men attempted to retreat, the warriors pursued and killed them all. Following the Grattan incident, the Army sent six hundred soldiers under Harney's command to arrest the Lakota leaders deemed responsible for Grattan's death.

On the morning of September 2, 1855, Harney's forces caught up with the Lakota band led by Chief Little Thunder, who were camped along the Blue Water Creek. Harney and his men attacked the camp who had displayed a white flag to show they were there in peace. They killed eighty Lakota, over half of whom were women and children. My own children's grandmother, the mother-in-law of Iron Shell was shot and left for dead during this massacre. It is a sad story I read from a manuscript from Susan Bordeaux Bettelyoun in a book entitled *With My Own Eyes*, where she retells what happened that terrible day when Harney terrorized our people and especially our women and children. The soldiers hunted their victims down on horseback, then took seventy survivors captive. One of Harney's soldiers later described the gruesome scene, where "wounded women and children crying and moaning, horribly mangled by bullets," lay sprawled across the ground. After Blue Water Creek, Harney continued serving the Army in the Civil War in an administrative capacity.

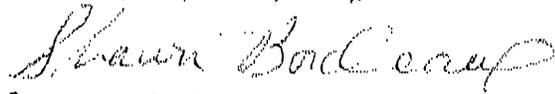
The evidence is clear. Even in the broader context of his time, Harney was an unnecessarily violent and dishonorable man. His proclivity for violence on and off the battlefield trumps any argument that South Dakota's highest mountain should continue to be dedicated to him. As to the renaming of Harney Peak, I suggest that the mountain should be called *Hinhan Kaga*, as it was for centuries prior to Harney's arrival. This would follow the precedent set by the Alaskan board of Geographic Names when Mt. McKinley -- the highest mountain in the United States -- was returned to its indigenous place name, Denali, in 1975. Likewise, it would follow the historic renaming of Shannon County to Oglala Lakota County, a name which best reflects the citizens who reside within its boundaries.

Lakotas have both a spiritual connection to the Black Hills and 1868 Treaty rights to the mountain in question. Therefore, we have the strongest legal, cultural, and historic claims to Harney Peak. Other Native groups share spiritual and historical claims to the Black Hills. Supreme Court Justice Harvey Blackman called the breaking of the 1868 Treaty a "ripe and rank case of dishonorable dealing" unmatched in American history.

Finally, although the proposed "Black Elk Peak" would be a suitable replacement, it is not our first choice given that Lakotas do not have a tradition of naming geographic features after people. This thoughtful and respectful nod to a venerated Lakota spiritual leader is of kind intent, but I do not feel that it accurately comports with the cultural customs of the Lakota community nor do I suspect that Black Elk would want it named after him. It was *Hinhan Kaga* when he went there and it will always be that name to the Lakota people. Please include a Lakota spelling when instituting this name and translate it in English as "Owl Nest" or "Making of Owls" if at all possible.

Thank you for consideration of our thoughts and input and I hope you will consider this letter representative of the many constituents I have in my district as well as throughout the country. Many people are excited about this change and I thank the Board for taking this action upon its own before it was requested. I had planned on bringing legislation next session on this issue. Please make these considerations as you deliberate on the renaming of a prominent place that has for too long maligned the integrity of our great state.

Pilamaya pelo ( Thank you all),



Representative Shawn Bordeaux  
District 26A, Todd & Mellette Counties

## Hansen, June

---

**From:** Carol Robertson <Carol.Robertson@FSST.org>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, May 05, 2015 8:26 AM  
**To:** Hansen, June  
**Subject:** Harney Peak

June, sorry I cannot make your meeting tonight at RRC. My great grand daughter's school program is tonight at 6 pm. I would like to submit "Teton Peak" for the new naming of Harney Peak. Thanks. Sorry I will miss seeing you.

Carol G. Robertson-EDRC  
FSST Economic Development Department  
P.O. Box 283  
Flandreau, SD 57028  
Email: [Carol.Robertson@fsst.org](mailto:Carol.Robertson@fsst.org)  
Office: (605) 997-3891/Fax: (605) 997-3878  
Website: [www.santeesioux.com](http://www.santeesioux.com)

**Petrik, Sarah**

---

**From:** Reiss, David  
**Sent:** Wednesday, May 06, 2015 10:53 AM  
**To:** Petrik, Sarah  
**Subject:** Fwd: Renaming Harney Peak

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** Sherry Sweetnam <[ssweetnam@lakedalelink.net](mailto:ssweetnam@lakedalelink.net)>  
**Date:** May 5, 2015 at 5:55:55 PM CDT  
**To:** <[David.Reiss@state.sd.us](mailto:David.Reiss@state.sd.us)>  
**Subject:** **Renaming Harney Peak**

Dear David,

I've noticed the articles in the Rapid City Journal in regards to the racism demonstrated toward the Lakota students at a basketball game.

I also learned about the proposal to change the name of Harney Peak to Black Elk Peak. This is because Black Elk Peak is one of the most Lakota revered people for the Lakota people. By renaming the peak, I believe it would encourage more respect toward the Lakotas. And it would help change the negative attitudes and racism between our two cultures. And also, hopefully, it would create more dialogue.

So, please help stop the racism and do all you can to change the Peak to Black Elk Peak.  
Sincerely,

R. Bankes

R. Bankes  
11587 Kimball Avenue NW  
Annandale, MN 55302

Sherry Sweetnam  
11587 Kimball Avenue NW  
Annandale, MN 55302  
320-274-2654  
[ssweetnam@lakedalelink.net](mailto:ssweetnam@lakedalelink.net)

**Petrik, Sarah**

---

**From:** Reiss, David  
**Sent:** Wednesday, May 06, 2015 10:54 AM  
**To:** Petrik, Sarah  
**Subject:** Fwd: Proposed changing name of Harney Peak

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** lonis lois <[lowendt@gwtc.net](mailto:lowendt@gwtc.net)>  
**Date:** May 5, 2015 at 8:58:36 AM CDT  
**To:** Reiss David <[David.Reiss@state.sd.us](mailto:David.Reiss@state.sd.us)>  
**Subject:** **Proposed changing name of Harney Peak**

**To Mr. David Reis and the Committee for Geographical Names of South Dakota.**

I have previously submitted a letter regarding my position on the proposed name change for Harney Peak via email, and have read most of the posted reply's and comments both pro and con about this name change. We prefer it remain known as Harney Peak. This possible change seems to have struck a note which could be summed up as; a bit confrontational, and a step or two back from the late Gov. George Mickelson's "call for reconciliation" proposal.

With your permission, I have a few other thoughts that I do not believe have been brought forward at this time.

~~~~~

I would like the board and all contributors to contemplate this probability: It has been mentioned that there are very few geographical places in our state specifically named for Native Americans; Actually there are several, however, we must consider that the Sioux scored the biggest coup of all when they were honored to the maximum by the original naming of "Dakota" Territory. From "Resolutions" presented by the Territorial Legislature, the two new states kept the name "Dakota" in their official title. Captivatingly, chosen over the name "Pembina" for what is now North Dakota, "Lincoln" for the Black Hills area, and "Southern Dakota," for the remainder of what is now South Dakota. The Native American heritage of the Sioux is preserved to the utmost everyday in our two states. Since many other tribes had roamed the Dakota prairies long before the Sioux, it is imperative that those tribes be given consideration *in the implementation of new important landmarks.*

If we are to apply the same criteria (killing of innocent humans, now called “collateral damage”) for naming geographical places, which certain folks are applying to Gen. Wm. Harney, there is a probability that there should be no Sully County, no Sully Buttes, Sully Lake, no Ft. Sully, etc. all named for Gen. Alfred Sully, likewise, there should be no Stanley Co. (Gen. David Stanley), no Miner County, (Nelson Miner, who led the Dakota Cavalry on the Sully expedition of 1863, '64, and '65), Brule County (Indian atrocities), Custer County, city of Custer, (Gen. Custer), Meade County, Ft. Meade,(Gen. Meade), Hansen County(John Hansen), Grant County, (U.S.Grant), no Todd County (James Blair Smith Todd, ArmProy Capt. at Ft. Randall and Dakota Territories first delegate to US Congress), no Sibley lakes, creeks, towns,(Gen. Henry Sibley), no Eisenhower Highway. I have no intention of being contentious or negative toward our Native American citizens. Apparently, there was little call for “political correctness” during the past 160 yrs, and to now begin a provocative process of renaming remarkable places in South Dakota, sets a very bad precedent for the overall recorded history of our state.

We, who are involved in this crusade have either read, studied or been told about Lt. Grattan and his quest to do his duty by recovering a Mormon settlers cow, the annihilation that followed, and the later encounter at Ash Hollow. However, we cannot judge military encounters of the 1850's by employing the mindset and availability of today's instant communications. Reality was that the United States Government ordered Gen. Harney, a career officer, to leave Ft. Leavenworth for Nebraska Territory, with instructions to protect the railroad workers and the settlers headed toward Oregon or the gold fields from the virtual daily attacks by roving bands of Natives. These bands, representing several different tribes were understandably irritated by the intrusion of the white settlers and the iron horse into their hunting grounds and waters. Gen. Harney and other commanders were given orders to more or less, “seek and destroy” as many of these roving bands as possible who were, anonymously responsible for the deaths and unspeakable mutilations of unfortunate settlers. That is the reality of the times and the frustrations experienced by the military in finding and engaging the Indian bands, who flauntingly, utilized their advantages of mobility and knowledge of the terrain to regularly outmaneuver the soldiers. To individually indict Gen. Harney for “doing his duty,” we are inferring that all military commanders are guilty of being criminal or barbaric when they, in all actuality, just are “following orders.” Thusly, no Commanding officers would be worthy of any great honors whether they be red or white. Having personally served in the Signal Corps of the U.S. Army, I fully understand the “chain of command” and, its importance to the discipline and implementation of military tactics, which was as true in 1855, as it is in today's military.

In closing I would like to add that: since this request has surfaced, and so many have taken part, it behooves me as to why there is such interest, when problems of; low graduation rates, high unemployment, foster care, child adoptions, alcohol and drug addiction, poverty or increased taxes arise, barely an eyebrow is raised in recognition by the general population.

Thank you for considering this commentary. Lonis Wendt

## Petrik, Sarah

---

**From:** Reiss, David  
**Sent:** Wednesday, May 06, 2015 10:55 AM  
**To:** Petrik, Sarah  
**Subject:** Fwd: Commentary on Harney Peak name change.

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** lonis lois <[lowendt@gwtc.net](mailto:lowendt@gwtc.net)>  
**Date:** May 4, 2015 at 10:32:36 AM CDT  
**To:** Jay <[Jay.Vogt@state.sd.us](mailto:Jay.Vogt@state.sd.us)>  
**Subject: Commentary on Harney Peak name change.**

Good Morning Jay:

Just a short note: How are things lining out for the Harney name change meeting at Pierre. Was thinking about coming and adding my "two cents" worth to the mix. If you already have a large contingent of speakers, we may just come to listen. If more voices are needed we could be available.

*Our schedule has us attending a meeting with the Deadwood "Days of 76" committee tomorrow near Hot Springs, concerning the retrace of the Sidney/Deadwood Trail, but we should be home in time to prepare for this Pierre meeting. Would appreciate a reply.*  
Lonis Wendt

## Petrik, Sarah

---

**From:** Reiss, David  
**Sent:** Wednesday, May 06, 2015 10:55 AM  
**To:** Petrik, Sarah  
**Subject:** Fwd: Vote for Harney Peak name change

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** Jocelyn Baker <[osprey@midco.net](mailto:osprey@midco.net)>  
**Date:** May 3, 2015 at 8:06:52 AM CDT  
**To:** <[David.Reiss@state.sd.us](mailto:David.Reiss@state.sd.us)>  
**Subject:** **Vote for Harney Peak name change**

My vote is for the name Black Elk Peak. Jocelyn Baker, Rapid City

## Petrik, Sarah

---

**From:** Reiss, David  
**Sent:** Wednesday, May 06, 2015 10:57 AM  
**To:** Petrik, Sarah  
**Subject:** Fwd: Harney Peak Name Change Proposal

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** Sandra Rodgers <[rsandra122@gmail.com](mailto:rsandra122@gmail.com)>  
**Date:** May 2, 2015 at 1:59:16 AM CDT  
**To:** <[David.Reiss@state.sd.us](mailto:David.Reiss@state.sd.us)>  
**Cc:** Sandra Rodgers <[rsandra122@gmail.com](mailto:rsandra122@gmail.com)>  
**Subject:** Harney Peak Name Change Proposal

Dear Mr. Reiss,

I was in attendance at your public comment hearing, in Custer, SD, this week ; The SD Board on Geographic Names (SDBGN) , with Basil Braveheart's request for the name change of Harney Peak to Black Elk Peak.

After listening to the testimonies, I wish to state, that the name that really resonated with me, was " Harmony Peak". I do not know if that was an official request or not. But, should your board decide to submit to your superiors that the name be changed, I hope you will seriously consider " Harmony Peak " Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

Sandra I. Rodgers  
545 N. River Street  
Apt. 412  
Hot Springs, SD 57747  
805-890-1261

## Petrik, Sarah

---

**From:** Reiss, David  
**Sent:** Wednesday, May 06, 2015 10:57 AM  
**To:** Petrik, Sarah  
**Subject:** Fwd: Harney Peak Name Change  
**Attachments:** Harney Peak.docx; ATT00001.htm

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** L POURIER <[lapou2@msn.com](mailto:lapou2@msn.com)>  
**Date:** May 1, 2015 at 4:33:48 PM CDT  
**To:** "[david.reiss@state.sd.us](mailto:david.reiss@state.sd.us)" <[david.reiss@state.sd.us](mailto:david.reiss@state.sd.us)>  
**Subject:** Harney Peak Name Change

Please accept the attached letter as an official document supporting the name change of Harney Peak.

Sincere Thanks,

*Laurette Pourier*

*In every community, there is work to be done. In every nation, there are wounds to heal.*

*In every heart, there is the power to do it.*

*~ Marianne Williamson*

May 1, 2015

SD Board of Geographic Names  
302 E. Dakota  
Pierre, SD 57501

RE: Harney Peak

I am in full support of the proposal to change the name of Harney Peak. I am so impressed by testimony submitted by Dr. Edward Valandra. His submission is a historically and culturally accurate account that can be referenced to by all.

One point I would like to add is that of historical/generational trauma. Most are familiar with this term as trauma being passed down to generation after generation in the form of post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and that it is documented that the majority of Native people are affected by it. Results are manifested in physical illnesses (diabetes, alcoholism, cancer) and the social ills (suicides, violence) we see today.

Many Natives make the pilgrimage to the sacred site (Harney Peak) each spring for their 'Return of the Thunders' ceremony. I believe I can safely say that each of us are affected by the name 'Harney' time after time as we approach the mountain, as it triggers the generational trauma deep within us.

It is time to heal the wounds of the past. It is time to make every effort toward reconciliation. Changing the name of Harney Peak would be a great step toward that.

Laurette Pourier  
Oglala Sioux Tribal Member  
4500 Reservoir Road  
Rapid City, SD 57703