

# Staff Report

**TO:** Board of Directors

**FROM:** Jennifer Hanson, General Manager

**DATE:** January 24, 2024

**SUBJECT: Naming of Unnamed Lake “Hoot Owl Lake”**

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## ***ADMINISTRATION***

### **RECOMMENDATION:**

Approve naming of an unnamed lake owned by the District in Nevada County located just north of Island Lake “Hoot Owl Lake”.

### **BACKGROUND:**

The District was recently contacted by the United States Geological Survey (USGS) regarding a resident’s request to name a currently unnamed lake “Hoot Owl Lake” in honor of the Great Horned Owl. The lake in question is 3.1 acres in size and was previously thought to be part of Island Lake. Recent imagery has been used by USGS to show that the lake is distinct from Island Lake and is in fact a separate lake altogether.

The original request was submitted by a resident of Nevada County who grew up hiking and camping in the Grouse Ridge Hiking area where the lake is located. The resident indicated that it is common to see Great Horned Owls in the area and that one can often hear the owls hooting at night.

If the name recommended for the lake is supported by the Board of Directors, a letter of support for the name will be sent to the California Advisory Committee on Geographic Names (CACGN).

Staff reviewed the proposal and has found there are no conflicts associated with the proposed name. The lake in question is no longer part of the District’s water supply portfolio, and as such, the proposed name does not cause any operational or regulatory concerns. As such, staff recommends the Board approve the proposed name of “Hoot Owl Lake”. Attached to this staff report is the naming

packet provided by USGS and a letter detailing the resident's reason for the proposed name.

**BUDGETARY IMPACT:**

None.

Attachment (2)

- USGS Naming Packet
- Resident Justification For Name

## Hoot Owl Lake

### Proposal Information

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Proposed name	<b>Hoot Owl Lake</b>
Proposal type	new name for unnamed feature
Proponent	Marla Sumrell, Smartsville, CA
Date proposed	9/23/2023
BGN case number	6141
Quarterly Review List	453

### Feature Details

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Primary coordinates	39.40296, -120.61833
Feature class	lake
Feature size	3.1 acres
Feature description	Located on an inholding within Tahoe National Forest, NE of Island Lake
Name history	Named for Great Horned Owls (“hoot owls”) frequently heard at the lake
USGS primary topo map	English Mountain 1:24,000
State(s)	California
County(s)	Nevada County
PLSS	San Bernardino Meridian
Land ownership	Private / Tahoe NF inholding

### BGN decisions

- None

### Other Names

- Unpublished names: None found
- Published names: Island Lake – in part (USGS 1955, 1983)

### Case Summary

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This proposal is to apply the new name Hoot Owl Lake to a 3.1-acre lake located on a private inholding within the boundaries of Tahoe National Forest in Nevada County.

USGS topographic maps published between 1955 and 1986 showed the lake to be part of the larger Island Lake; however, since the 2000 edition, and according to more recent imagery, it is a separate body of water. The National Hydrography Dataset and the California Department of Transportation GIS dataset (2018) show the lake as distinct from Island Lake but continue to label it Island Lake.

The proponent, a resident of Smartsville, states “There is a campsite [at the lake] where we have stayed many times and the Great Horned Owl are prevalent here and you can hear them at night. Another name used for these owls is the Hoot Owl.”

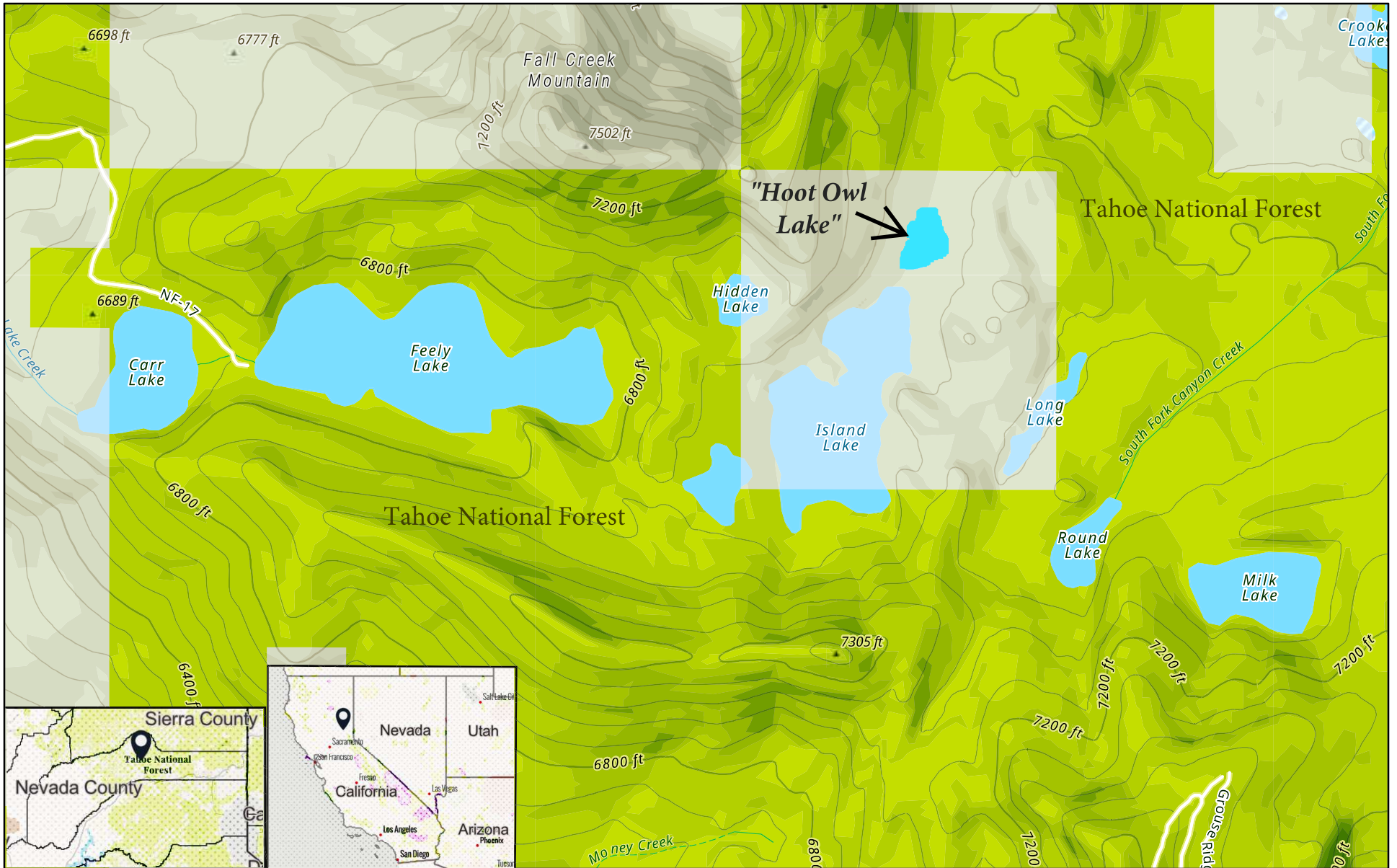
GNIS lists two features in California with “Hoot Owl” in their names: Hoot Owl Creek (Sonoma County) and Hoot Owl Flats (Los Angeles County). Horned Owl Gulch is located in Shasta County. There are an additional 27 features in the State named “Owl,” one of which, Owl Creek, is in Nevada County, 29 miles west of the lake in question.

### **Stakeholder Input**

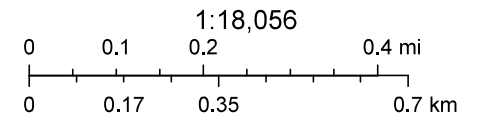
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Local government	Nevada County
State Names Authority	California Advisory Committee on Geographic Names
Federal Agency	U.S. Forest Service
Federally Recognized Tribes	All federally recognized Tribes contacted under Policy X

# Hoot Owl Lake (proposed) | Nevada, CA



11/15/2023





Sources: Esri, HERE, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, © OpenStreetMap contributors, CNES/Airbus DS, InterMap, NASA/METI, NASA/NGS and the

# Hoot Owl Lake | imagery


source: Google Earth

**Legend**

-  39.40296, -120.61833
-  Dispersed Camping

 39.40296, -120.61833

Hidden  
Lake

 Dispersed Camping

Island Lake

Long Lake

  
N 6

 1000 ft

# 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:**

1. Download and email this form and supporting documentation to:

[BGNESEC@usgs.gov](mailto:BGNESEC@usgs.gov)

OR 2. Send by mail to:

U.S. BGN Executive Secretary, Domestic Names  
12201 Sunrise Valley Drive, MS-523  
Reston, VA 20192

**Contact Us:**

[BGNESEC@usgs.gov](mailto:BGNESEC@usgs.gov)

- i. Save PDF using this format:  
'State\_GeographicNameProposed'
- ii. Email Subject: *ST\_GeographicName*

*Please note that anything submitted by mail will be delayed.*

## Naming Basics

Proposed Name:  
Hoot Owl Lake

Is this to change an existing name?  Y  N

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

Is this name in current local use?  Y  N

What is the Feature Type?

Lake

GNIS Name:

GNIS ID:

## Location Basics

Where is the feature?

Latitude: 43.64000 (38.94741)

Longitude: 7.05000 (-77.36839)



General Location:

State: California

County: Nevada

City/Town/Township/Borough: Tahoe National Forest near Emigrant Gap, CA

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

Mouth/Confluence

Latitude:  (38.94741)

Longitude:  (-77.36839)



Public Land Survey System:

Section(s), Township, Range, Meridian

Source/Headwater

Latitude: 43.64000 (38.94741)

Longitude: 7.05000 (-77.36839)

Grouse Ridge trail at the northern tip of Island Lake but not connected.

## Feature Description

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

This is a small lake at the northern tip of Island Lake on the Grouse Ridge Trail. It is not attached to Island Lake and is not named on the TOPO map. I have attached a map for your convenience.

## 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.*

This lake has been here for a very long time and there is a dam at the north end of it. There is a campsite where we have stayed many times and the Great Horned Owls are prevalent here and you can hear them at night. Another name used for these owls is the Hoot Owl. There is no name for this lake on the topo map and think this would be an appropriate name for it. I will be attaching a topo map that shows the area.

**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.).*

Topo map - English Mountain Quadrangle, CA 7.5



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.*

Is the name you are proposing intended to honor Native Americans, their language, or culture?  Y  N

If yes, to ensure that the proposed name is appropriate, the BGN strongly advises proponents to work with Tribal Leaders, Tribal Historic Preservation Officers, and/or Native American linguists or other expert(s) associated with the Tribe to determine the acceptability of the proposed name and application. Please review [the BGN's Cultural Sensitivity for Native American Names guidance](#).

Proponents should also seek letters of endorsement from the governments (e.g., Tribal Councils) of any affected Tribes. Please indicate below, or in documentation submitted separately (with this proposal or any time after the proposal is submitted), any efforts to solicit Tribal input.

## 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, including any Tribal input details


## Proponent Information

Please provide one form of contact (email preferred):

 Proponent's Name: Marla Sumrell

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:



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

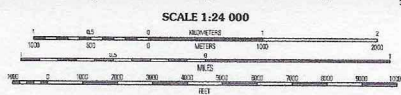
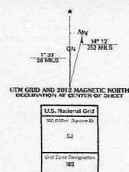


ENGLISH MOUNTAIN QUADRANGLE  
CALIFORNIA  
7.5-MINUTE SERIES



Produced by the United States Geological Survey  
North American Datum of 1983 (NAD83)  
World Geodetic System of 1984 (WGS84). Projection and  
1:100,000 scale. Universal Transverse Mercator, Zone 10S  
10 000-foot ticks: California Coordinate System of 1983  
(Zone 10)

Imagery: ..... NAD, July 2010 - August 2010  
Roads: ..... ©2006-2011, TomTom  
Roads within US Forest Service Lands: ..... FT/Type Data  
with limited Forest Service updates, ©2009  
Name: ..... USGS, 2011  
Hydrography: ..... National Hydrography Dataset, 2010  
Contour: ..... National Elevation Dataset, 1999  
Boundaries: ..... Census, BVC, BCC, USGS, 1972 - 2010



CONTOUR INTERVAL 40 FEET  
NORTH AMERICAN VERTICAL DATUM OF 1988

This map was produced to conform with the  
National Geospatial Program US Topo Product Standard, 2011.  
A metadata file associated with this product is draft version 0.6.1

QUADRANGLE LOCATIONS

Sierra City	Haystack Valley	Salt Lake
Conover	English Meadows	Washburn Park
Blue Canyon	Clear Creek	Old Springs

ROAD CLASSIFICATION

Interstate Route	State Route
US Route	Local Road
Tram	4000
Unimproved Road	US Route
Primary Road	Passage Route
	High Diversion Route

Check with local Forest Service unit  
for current travel conditions and restrictions.

ENGLISH MOUNTAIN, CA  
2012

To the Board of the Nevada County Irrigation District;

My name is Marla Sumrell and I moved to Nevada County with my family in 1958. I grew up hiking and backpacking in the Grouse Ridge hiking area. This past summer when I was backpacking with a friend, we noticed that a pond that we always pass on the way to Island Lake had a sign (which we had never noticed before) with a name on it. If I am remembering correctly, it was something like, "Delaney Pond." That sparked a discussion regarding how to name a lake. We have base camped at the end of Island Lake many times and we did this time as well. I had thought that this small water area was attached to Island Lake but after careful investigation realized that it was not attached. As we settled in for the night listening to the evening sounds and the Great Horned Owls, I thought that this lake should be named "Hoot Owl Lake."

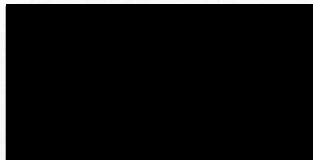
The Celtic culture has seen this bird as a symbol of truth, wisdom, and knowledge and they were believed to be guardians of truth and honor and would not tolerate deception. Also, it is said that the Native American tribes, Maidu and Washoe, that once lived in this area, considered these owls to be symbols of being able to delve into our own unconscious and look at fears and desires that might motivate us. All these beliefs are things that can teach values and ethics to our young people. Every year I am happy when I see adults backpacking here with their children and young adults that come up to this area to inhale the gravity of the nature and incredible amount of knowledge that can be taken in from spending time in the Grouse Ridge hiking area. This becomes a much-needed therapeutic activity for our youth in today's society which can become so very fast and unsocial.

The Great Horned Owl, sometimes known as the Hoot Owl, due to the sound that it makes and the Winged Tiger because of its hunting skills and fierceness. This animal is a very important part of the ecosystem and history of the Grouse Ridge area. They are abundant in the forests and should be recognized for their significance and celebrated for their ability to adapt and thrive in this beautiful area. They help to control the populations of prey animals and maintain a balance in this area surrounding Grouse Ridge. If you are lucky to spot a Great Horned Owl, you will notice the plumicorns, also referred to as tufts, that actually have nothing to do with their hearing but may help them to camouflage themselves in the forest around them. They have a five-foot wingspan and silently glide through the night as they hunt. According to Partners in Flight, there has been a 27 percent decrease in in the population of these birds in recent years in the United States and Canada. Due to the fact that this owl does not have a very well-developed sense of smell, skunks are a favorite food source of theirs which is helpful in areas where backpackers and campers frequent. These animals can fly while holding prey that is up to one- and one-half times their own body weight. These owls can also turn their heads 270 degrees in either direction which helps with their hunting ability. The Great Horned Owl is an amazing creature and people that frequent the Grouse Ridge hiking area are lucky to have a place where they can enjoy listening to them at night and possibly even spot one sometime. I ask that you please consider and approve my proposal to name this small lake just north of Island Lake,

“Hoot Owl Lake”. I have attached two maps that show its precise location which I hope will be helpful. Thank you so much for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

Marla Sumrell





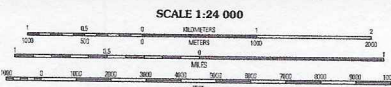
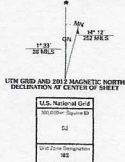
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ENGLISH MOUNTAIN QUADRANGLE  
CALIFORNIA  
7.5-MINUTE SERIES



Produced by the United States Geological Survey  
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Roads within US Forest Service Lands: ©2006-2011 TomTom  
Roads with United Forest Service update: 2009  
©2005, 2011  
Hydrography: National Hydrography Dataset, 2010  
Contours: National Elevation Dataset, 1999  
Boundaries: Census, BNA, B.C. 15626, 1972 - 2010



CONTOUR INTERVAL 40 FEET  
NORTH AMERICAN DATUM OF 1983

This map was produced to conform with the  
National Geospatial Program US Topo Product Standard, 2011.  
A metadata file associated with this product is draft version 0.6.1



GEORAPHICAL LOCATION

Sierra City	Hopland	Salt Lake
Graceland	English Meadows	Walker Park
Blue Canyon	Clear Creek	Snake Springs

ROAD CLASSIFICATION	
Interstate Route	State Route
US Route	Local Road
Ramp	4WD
Interstate Route	US Route
US Primary Route	FS Passenger Route
	FS High Clearance Route

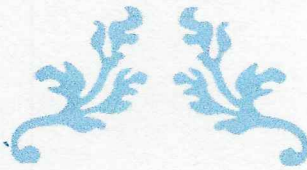
Check with local Forest Service web for current travel conditions and restrictions.

ENGLISH MOUNTAIN, CA  
2012

ADMINING 7.5 QUADRANGLES



Imagery ©2024 CNES / Airbus, Maxar Technologies, U.S. Geological Survey, USDA/FPAC/GEO, Map data ©2024 200 ft



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# THE BOARD ON GEOGRAPHIC NAMES DOMESTIC NAMES COMMITTEE PROPOSAL FORM

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This document is for those interested in proposing:

1. **A new name for a currently unnamed geographic feature, or**
2. **A change to an existing name, spelling, or where a name is applied.**

By submitting this form, the proponent acknowledges the BGN Policies and agrees to work with BGN staff regarding their proposal.



VERSION 2.0.2  
BOARD ON GEOGRAPHIC NAMES DOMESTIC NAMES COMMITTEE



# Domestic Geographic Name Proposal Form

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- i. Save PDF using this format:  
'State\_GeographicNameProposed'
- 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

**Contact Us:**

[BGNESEC@usgs.gov](mailto:BGNESEC@usgs.gov)

*Please note that anything submitted by mail will be delayed.*

## Naming Basics

Proposed Name:

Hoot Owl Lake

Is this to change an existing name?  Y  N

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

Is this name in current local use?  Y  N

What is the Feature Type?

Lake

GNIS Name:

GNIS ID:

## Location Basics

Where is the feature?

Latitude: 43.64000 (38.94741)

Longitude: 7.05000 (-77.36839)



**General Location:**

State: California

County: Nevada

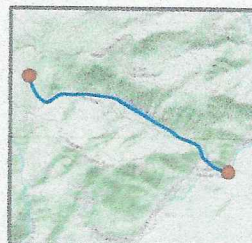
City/Town/  
Township/  
Borough: Tahoe National Forest  
near Emigrant Gap, CA

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

Mouth/Confluence

Latitude: (38.94741)

Longitude: (-77.36839)



**Public Land Survey System:**

Section(s), Township, Range, Meridian

Source/Headwater

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Grouse Ridge trail at the northern tip of Island Lake but not connected.

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This is a small lake at the northern tip of Island Lake on the Grouse Ridge Trail. It is not attached to Island Lake and is not named on the TOPO map. I have attached a map for your convenience.

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### 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.).*

Topo map - English Mountain Quadrangle, CA 7.5

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.*

Is the name you are proposing intended to honor Native Americans, their language, or culture?  Y  N

*If yes, to ensure that the proposed name is appropriate, the BGN strongly advises proponents to work with Tribal Leaders, Tribal Historic Preservation Officers, and/or Native American linguists or other expert(s) associated with the Tribe to determine the acceptability of the proposed name and application. Please review [the BGN's Cultural Sensitivity for Native American Names guidance](#).*

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## 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, including any Tribal input details

## Proponent Information

*Please provide one form of contact (email preferred):*

 Proponent's Name: Marla Sumrell

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: