

PASSED

CHEROKEE COUNCIL HOUSE
CHEROKEE, NORTH CAROLINA

Date: JAN 04 2024

RESOLUTION NO.: 72 (2023)

A resolution by the Tribal Council of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians to authorize the submission of an application to the U.S. Board on Geographic Names to restore the name Kuwohi in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park.

WHEREAS, the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians is a federally recognized Indian tribe with sovereign powers of self government; and

WHEREAS, in July 2022, Tribal Council passed Resolution No. 343 (2022), which officially began the process of exploring the possibility of petitioning the federal government to restore the name Kuwohi in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park; and

WHEREAS, Kuwohi (or “the Mulberry place”) is the highest and most visible point in our area, and has special significance to us as Cherokee people, as it was visited by medicine people who prayed and sought guidance from the Creator regarding important matters facing our people, and then returned to our towns to give guidance and advice; and

WHEREAS, Kuwohi is also well documented in oral teachings of our stories; for example, the Bears used to meet in council under Kuwohi; and

WHEREAS, in 1859, the United States government changed the name of Kuwohi to Clingmans Dome; and

WHEREAS, recently, the United States government has shown a willingness to engage with tribes to correct the naming of sacred and reverent places back to their historically appropriate names, and restoring the name Kuwohi will help accomplish this; and

WHEREAS, one of the most important factors in deciding whether to approve a name restoration is local community support; and

WHEREAS, community support for the restoration of the Kuwohi name has been overwhelming, including formal support from multiple local governments, including the counties of: Buncombe, Haywood, Jackson, Macon, Swain, Graham, Clay, and Cherokee, and the towns of Asheville, Andrews, Murphy, Hayesville, Fontana Dam, Lake Santeetlah, Robbinsville, Canton, Clyde, Maggie Valley, Waynesville, Dillsboro, Sylva, Webster, the Village of Forrest Hills,

1 Franklin, Highlands, and Bryson City in western North Carolina, and the counties
2 of Knox and Campbell in eastern Tennessee; and
3

4 **WHEREAS,** the Cherokee Speaker’s Council passed a resolution granting their support for the
5 Kuwohi name restoration efforts; and
6

7 **WHEREAS,** in November 2022, Lavita Hill and Mary Crowe were given the North Carolina
8 Dogwood Award by Attorney General Josh Stein, who stated, “Lavita and Mary
9 are working to make sure that their tribe’s history is recognized and honored”;
10 and
11

12 **WHEREAS,** in April 2023, the Tennessee General Assembly passed H.J.R. 452, which reads,
13 “[W]e honor and commend Mary Crowe and Lavita Hill on their efforts to restore
14 the traditional Cherokee name of Kuwohi to Clingman’s Dome in the Great
15 Smoky Mountains National Park and wish them all the best in their future
16 endeavors”; and Governor Bill Lee thereafter signed H.J.R. 452 into Tennessee
17 law; and
18

19 **WHEREAS,** in May 2023, world famous musician Yo-Yo Ma performed a concert on Kuwohi
20 with Hill, Jarrett Wildcatt, and Bo Taylor, with the help and support of the Great
21 Smoky Mountains National Park, where Ma performed a work of music meant to
22 honor the cultural importance of Kuwohi to the Cherokee people (this concert was
23 featured on CBS News); and
24

25 **WHEREAS,** many non-profit community organizations in both North Carolina and Tennessee
26 have signaled their support for the Kuwohi name restoration efforts; and
27

28 **WHEREAS,** the efforts to restore the Kuwohi name have been widely reported both nationally
29 and locally, including supportive articles in the New York Times, USA Today,
30 National Public Radio, the Knoxville News Sentinel, the Asheville Citizen-Times,
31 Chattanooga Times Free Press, Smoky Mountain News, Smoky Mountain Times,
32 the Mountain Press, the Oak Ridger, Mountain Xpress, Blue Ridge Public Radio,
33 and the Cherokee One Feather. The efforts have also been covered on television
34 by CBS News, WBIR, WATE, WLOS, WCNC, among other media outlets; and
35

36 **WHEREAS,** with the cooperation of many EBCI tribal members, the Great Smoky Mountain
37 National Park instituted Kuwohi Days, during which the Park Service closes
38 down Clingmans Dome Road for a number of afternoons each year so school
39 children can learn about the history of Kuwohi and the Cherokee people; and
40

41 **WHEREAS,** members of the Clingman family, including Tom Clingman of Virginia, have
42 reached out to the EBCI, are enthusiastic supporters of restoring the name of
43 Kuwohi, and will support the Tribe’s efforts; and
44

1 **NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** by the Tribal Council assembled, as which a quorum
2 is present, that the moment is right to restore the name Kuwohi to the mountain
3 presently known as Clingmans Dome.
4

5 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Principal Chief is hereby authorized to submit an
6 application to the U.S. Board on Geographic Names in which the EBCI asks that
7 the name Kuwohi be officially restored to the mountain presently known as
8 Clingmans Dome.
9

10 **BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED** that all resolutions which are inconsistent with this resolution
11 are rescinded, and that this resolution shall become effective upon ratification by
12 the Principal Chief.
13

14 *Submitted by Lavita Hill and Mary Crowe.*



THE BOARD ON GEOGRAPHIC NAMES DOMESTIC NAMES COMMITTEE PROPOSAL FORM

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.



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:
BGNEXEC@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:

BGNEXEC@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:

Kuwohi

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?

Summit

GNIS Name: Clingmans Dome

GNIS ID: 1326387

Location Basics

Where is the feature?

Latitude: 35.56278 (38.94741)

Longitude: 83.49854 (-77.36839)



General Location:

State: North Carolina

County: Swain County

City/Town/

Township/ Cherokee (NC),
Borough: Gatlinburg (TN)

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: (38.94741)

Longitude: (-77.36839)

Feature Description

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

Kuwohi (Clingmans Dome) is a summit which straddles the North Carolina and Tennessee state line. The elevation is 2025 meters (6643 feet). The Summary Report for Clingmans Dome states, "Highest elevation in Tennessee, and the highest point along the Appalachian Trail at 6643 feet."

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.

Kuwohi is well documented in Cherokee history. It is the mulberry place, and the highest point in traditional Cherokee territory. Today, it is located within the Great Smoky Mountains National Park and can be viewed from the Qualla Boundary, the home of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, a federally recognized Indian Tribe.

A version of Kuwohi has been recognized by the US Government as a variant for Clingmans Dome. The summit is identified as Kuwahi in many historical sources. The EBCI Speaker's Council has given the Tribe guidance that Kuwohi is the most culturally appropriate term. The submission of Kuwohi also recognizes that policy that diacritics are not used in formal namings.

Kuwohi is a place rooted in the stories and teachings of the Cherokee people. It can be seen from our Mother Town, Kituwah, in Swain County, North Carolina, and was a place to gather fruit and for our medicine men. More recently, Kuwohi provided refuge to Cherokee people who the United States Government sought to remove in 1838.

The mountain was always known as Kuwohi until it was renamed Clingmans Dome. Clingman did not have any substantial ties to the area. Members of the Clingman family today support restoring the rightful Cherokee name, Kuwohi.

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.).

We are attaching local letters of support as detailed in the Tribal Council Resolution passed in 2024. Every local government in western North Carolina and governments in eastern Tennessee have endorsed this submission. Many local groups with an interest in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park have also supported the submission.

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:

The Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians is aware of no formal opposition to restoring the name Kuwohi. The proposed name has been formally approved by resolutions of many local governments in western North Carolina and eastern Tennessee and has support from many local organizations with an interest in the National Park. The proposed name restoration has been widely broadcast throughout local, regional and national media with no formal or sustained opposition materializing. Additionally, Tom Clingman of Virginia, of the Clingman family, supports restoring the name Kuwohi.

Additional notes, including any Tribal input details

The Tribal Council of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians formally passed a Resolution in support of studying the restoration of the name Kuwohi in July 2022. In January 2024, the Tribal Council formally gave the Principal Chief authority to submit this request. Tribal leaders have secured the support of many local governments and local associations. As detailed in our Tribal Council Resolution of support, Kuwohi is an important part of our Tribe's history. Our oral teachings highlight the importance of Kuwohi to the Cherokee people. The mountain served as a place of refuge during Cherokee removal to Oklahoma. The Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians exist today because our people used the mountainous terrain to our advantage to stay in our homeland.

Proponent Information


Please provide one form of contact (email preferred):


 Proponent's Name: Principal Chief Michell Hicks


Agency or Organization, if applicable:

Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians

 Email:

 Mailing Address: Office of the Principal Chief
Post Office Box 455
Cheorkee, NC 28719

 Phone: 828-359-7000

 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:

The attached Resolution/Ordinance No. 72 dated JANUARY 4, 2024 was:

PASSED (X)

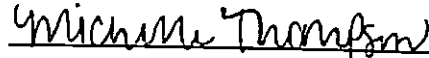
KILLED ()

and ratified in open Council on JANUARY 4, 2024 by 100 voting for the act and 0 members voting against it as follows:

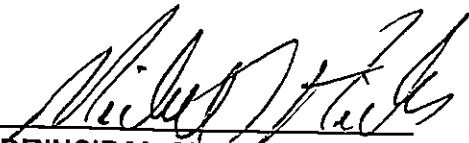
VOTE	FOR	AGAINST	ABSTAIN	ABSENT
Richard French	X			
Perry Shell	X			
Boyd Owle	X			
Bucky Brown	X			
Tom Wahnetah	X			
David Wolfe	X			
Adam Wachacha	X			
Mike Parker	X			
Bo Crowe	X			
Jim Owle	X			
Dike Sneed	X			
Michael Stamper	X			
	100	0	0	0



TRIBAL COUNCIL CHAIRMAN



ENGLISH CLERK



PRINCIPAL CHIEF

APPROVED

VETOED ()

VETO UPHELD () VETO DENIED ()

DATE: 1-22-24

I hereby certify that the foregoing act of the Council was duly:

PASSED ()

KILLED ()

and ratified in open Council after the same has been interpreted by the Official Interpreter and has been fully and freely discussed.

INTERPRETED ()

OMITTED ()