

Staff Report

RENAMING OF SQUAW CREEK

January 28, 2020

BACKGROUND:

In response to an Ames resident who initiated a request to change the name of Squaw Creek, the United States Board of Geographic Names (BGN) contacted the Ames City Council requesting feedback.

On November 26, 2019, the City Council expressed a desire to support a name change from Squaw Creek with the understanding that it not be renamed Story Creek. Rather, there appears to be support for an alternative with Native American (NA) heritage "roots". In addition, The City Council directed the Mayor to work with Story County Board of Supervisors to recommend some names for Squaw Creek, and return to the Council with options from which to select.

While the Mayor and Supervisor Murken were in discussions regarding this issue, Dr. Reg Stewart emailed the Mayor to recommend that he contact Dr. Sebastian Braun, an ISU faculty member who is an expert in Native American history. As a result, Dr. Braun provided the attached information suggesting two names - loway or Sauk, both Native American tribes that lived in this geographic area. He ultimately "recommended" Sauk for reasons indicated in his email.

At the same time, Supervisor Murken reached out to the Hamilton County Board of Supervisors to determine their position on this issue. She found from her conversations that the Hamilton County Board of Supervisors and several townships trustee boards (presumably through which Squaw Creek flows) do not support changing the name of Squaw Creek. Furthermore, a number of their local residents have voiced objections to renaming the creek. Apparently, the Hamilton County Board of Supervisors have not received any communications supporting the name change. Supervisor Murken was informed that the Hamilton County Board of Supervisors will not take an official position regarding the name change. (See attached email from BGN which references and includes email from Hamilton County.)

The Story County Board of Supervisors voted earlier this month to recommend changing the name of Squaw Creek to either their first choice of loway Creek or to their second choice, Sauk Creek. The Board of Geographic Names responded by explaining that they will only accept their first name choice, loway Creek. (See email relative to this communication.)

OPTIONS:

Option 1 - No name change - leave as Squaw Creek

Option 2 - Change name to Story Creek (resident recommended name)

Option 3 - Suggest a different name (loway, Sauk, or ?)

Option 4 - Defer making any recommendation at this time.

STAFF COMMENTS:

The Board of Geographic Names is now looking to the City of Ames for feedback. It is important to note that the City Council does not have to agree with the recommendation of the Story County Board of Supervisors. In addition, the City is only making a recommendation which will be considered along with other feedback before the Board of Geographic Names makes the final decision regarding a name change.

Assuming the City Council remains in support of changing the name of Squaw Creek, it seems appropriate to follow Dr. Braun's guidance to change the name to Sauk Creek based on his expertise and well-reasoned recommendation.



U.S. BOARD ON GEOGRAPHIC NAMES

GEOGRAPHIC NAME PROPOSAL RECOMMENDATION

Proposed Geographic Name Story Creek

This is to notify the U.S. Board on Geographic Names that the:

Story County Board of Supervisors
(Name of government entity, organization, or individual)

recommend that the U. S. Board on Geographic Names:

- Approve the Proposed Name**
- Reject the Proposed Name**
- Take Action as Specified Below**
- Render a Decision Without Our Recommendation**

Comments (the following factors contributed to this recommendation; attach supporting documentation if appropriate):

Recommend and Rename Creek.
1st Option: Ioway
2nd Option: Sauk

Linda Murken
(Name)

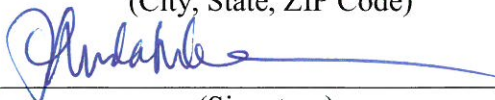
Story County Board of Supervisors, Chair
(Title)

900 Sixth Street Nevada, Ia. 50201
(Address)

515-382-7202
(Telephone)

Nevada, Ia. 50201
(City, State, ZIP Code)

lmurken@storycountyiowa.gov
(E-mail)


(Signature)


1/7/2020
(Date)

Return to: U.S. Board on Geographic Names
U.S. Geological Survey
523 National Center
Reston VA 20192-0523
Telephone: (703) 648-4552
Fax: (703) 648-4549
E-mail: BGNEXEC@usgs.gov

From: "O'Donnell, Matthew (Contractor) J" <mjodonnell@contractor.usgs.gov>

Date: Wednesday, January 08, 2020 09:29AM

Subject: Re: Renaming Squaw Creek in Central Iowa

History:  This message has been replied to.

Dear Ms. Murken,

Happy New Year! And thank you for sending the Supervisors' recommendation about the proposal to change the name of Squaw Creek to Story Creek. Were both of these names (Ioway Creek and Sauk Creek) agreed to by the other jurisdictions or is this only the recommendation of the Story County Supervisors?

The BGN will only accept one proposed name for a feature from any single interested party. If acceptable to the Supervisors, we will take the first option of **Ioway Creek** only. We are about to post our quarterly review list this week and I'd like to include your counter proposal for **Ioway Creek** on it so the review process can keep moving. Could you conform by tomorrow or Friday if **Ioway Creek** is the preferred proposed name from Story County and if that name is agreed to by the City of Ames, Hamilton County, and Boone County?

Sincerely,

Matt O'Donnell

Matt O'Donnell | Xcellent Technology Solutions, Inc.
Contractor in support of U.S. Board on Geographic Names | Domestic Names Committee
Phone: 703-648-4553
Email: mjodonnell@contractor.usgs.gov
Room 2B101

From: Linda S. Murken <LMurken@storycountyiowa.gov>

Sent: Friday, December 13, 2019 7:48 AM

To: O'Donnell, Matthew (Contractor) J <mjodonnell@contractor.usgs.gov>

Cc: Lauris A. Olson <LOlson@storycountyiowa.gov>; Lisa K. Heddens <LHeddens@storycountyiowa.gov>; John Haila <jhaila@city.ames.ia.us>; Tom Hackett <thackettafd@gmail.com>

Subject: [EXTERNAL] Renaming Squaw Creek in Central Iowa

Hello, Matthew,

The Story County (Iowa) board of supervisors is continuing to receive input from residents and tribal communities regarding the proposed renaming. We are also attempting to coordinate with the city of Ames, Boone and Hamilton Counties, and Franklin Township. Due to the upcoming holidays and other matters, we have had to postpone making a final determination on our recommendation until January 7, 2020. We hope you will still be able to accept our recommendation then.

Thank you for all the information and assistance you have given us.

Linda

Linda Murken

Chair, Story County Supervisors

515/382-7202

From: "O'Donnell, Matthew (Contractor) J" <mjodonnell@contractor.usgs.gov>

Date: Tuesday, January 21, 2020 09:58AM

Subject: Fw: [EXTERNAL] SQUAW CREEK RESPONSE FROM HAMILTON COUNTY

Dear Ms. Murken and Mr. Haila,

Forwarded here is the response from Hamilton County Supervisor Rick Young. There is no support for changing the name of Squaw Creek to Story Creek. It is unclear if there would be any support for changing the name at all.

I'm waiting to see if there are any other counter proposals before reaching back out to the county governments (including Boone County, which has not responded at all). The BGN tries to avoid situations where there is local disagreement, but that does happen sometimes. But BGN members dislike being forced to make a decision where both options would go against strong local opinion. Is there a way that you could include Hamilton County and Boone County in your discussions or work to find an option that everyone might accept?

I'll continue to keep you informed about any other developments about the proposed name change.

Sincerely,

Matt O'Donnell

Matt O'Donnell | Xcellent Technology Solutions, Inc.
Contractor in support of U.S. Board on Geographic Names | Domestic Names Committee
Phone: 703-648-4553
Email: mjodonnell@contractor.usgs.gov
Room 2B101

From: Rick Young <youngrick1@yahoo.com>
Sent: Monday, January 13, 2020 11:49 AM
To: O'Donnell, Matthew (Contractor) J <mjodonnell@contractor.usgs.gov>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] SQUAW CREEK RESPONSE FROM HAMILTON COUNTY

Hi Matt,
Here is where we are.

As Hamilton County Supervisor serving the Squaw Creek watershed I have sought and received the following input.

All of the following have voiced opinion **against** the name change.

- Rick Young, Hamilton County Supervisor District 3
- *Hamilton Township Trustees in the Squaw Creek watershed
- Steven Carlson
- Deb Bockwoldt
- Mark Bockwoldt

- Duane Hendrickson Clerk
 - * Clear Lake Township Trustees in the Squaw Creek watershed
 - Marvin Ness
 - Richard Heeren
 - Carlton Ness
 - Staci Olthoff Clerk
 - * Marion Township Trustees in the Squaw Creek watershed
 - Terrienne Larson
 - Erik Wibholm
 - Brad Westrum
 - Larry Runyan Clerk
 - * Webster Township Trustees in the Squaw Creek watershed
 - Jenny Roe
 - Davis Eide
 - Carrie Eide
 - Dawn Kesler Clerk
 - * The following Hamilton County residents are also **against** the name change.
 - Leland Carlson
 - Dan Sonksen
 - John Heeren
 - Jay Heeren
 - Lynn Arnold
 - Lee Carlson
 - Marylin Carlson
 - Lance Hammen
 - Paul Olson
 - Junior Ubben
- * I received **no** correspondence in favor of **changing** the name
- * Hamilton County Supervisors will not issue a statement on behalf of the Board.

RICK YOUNG
District 3
Hamilton County Supervisor

515-460-0952

From: "Braun, Sebastian F [WLC]" <sfbraun@iastate.edu>

Date: Tuesday, December 03, 2019 07:52AM

Subject: Re: Connection

History: [➔](#) This message has been forwarded.

Dear Mayor Haila,

Thank you for this background on the issue.
I can just give you some thoughts from my perspective.

Central Iowa was indeed home to the Ioway or Iowa tribe from their origins as a known nation to about 1800. After that, the Sauk and the Meskwaki came to occupy this land. The Ioway, once a very strong nation, had suffered from epidemics and wars, and the Sauk and Meskwaki pushed them to the southwest, into northwestern Missouri. They then sold central Iowa to the United States in the treaty of 1842. Those, then, are the three tribes most appropriate to lend a name to anything in central Iowa. Before the Ioway became their own nation, they were part of a prehistoric culture in this area usually called the Oneota - the Ioway, the Oto, the Missouri, the Omaha, and the Winnebago or HoChunk all are thought to have descended from these Oneota people (although we do not know what they called themselves, if anything).

Your question on honoring and respectful is a very good one, and unfortunately a very complex question - I used to work at the University of North Dakota for eleven years, and dealt with their nickname (the Fighting Sioux), which the university, the state, and the city all insisted was meant to honor the Dakota/Lakota, and many Native people insisted was an insult. In those conflicts, nobody wins, because honoring and showing respect depends on all involved feeling that way. In my experience, it is a function not so much of the intent of the name givers, but a function of continued relations. I think the current name, Squaw Creek, is a good example. The term has become to be seen as an insult only over the past forty or fifty years; I am sure it was not meant as such when the creek was named, and most people using the name do not mean it as an insult, yet for some now, that is what it signifies... I think any name can be honoring and respectful, but more important than the name is the inclusion and continued good relations between people. I think the city of Ames, especially with the university, has good opportunities for that, and perhaps the renaming is one event that can start such relations with the tribes.

If I followed Linda Murken's participation in the City Council meeting, she did contact the THPOs (Tribal Historic Preservation Officers), and those are the people who should be consulted. I have good relations with Lance Foster of the Ioway Tribne of Kansas and Nebraska and with Johnathan Buffalo of the Meskwaki Nation, and there are others - at some point, I think they should be included, but as you saw, I do not necessarily think that it is fruitful avenue to find a name. I think more that once a name is found, they should be consulted and given the opportunity to speak to that name. I can also run something by them informally to get some input, if you wish, before the different councils involved make a decision.

As for names - I think you are right, Inage would be mispronounced very quickly (and simply the spelling is already an issue), and most people would not know what it means - if people do not know what a name means, it is not honoring the people it is meant to honor. The Ioway already have a river named after them (and a state), although most people do not realize that this is so. The Meskwaki are on most

people's mind because of the Settlement. Also, I think sometimes by choosing between the two more prominent names, one is always seen as put aside.

Honestly, also taking into account the current name, I would propose to rename Squaw Creek into Sauk Creek. It would avoid any competition between Iowa and Meskwaki, it would honor a nation that lived here but is often forgotten, and it is close enough to the old name in sound. There is Sac City and Sac County, but those are spelled differently, so that confusion would be avoided.

Whatever name is chosen, I hope that the city, the county, and the university can take the opportunity to turn an eventual renaming event into an opportunity to bolster good relations with the tribes (especially the different Ioway, Sauk, and Meskwaki tribes) - there used to be a village in what is today Moore Memorial Park / Northridge if I am not mistaken, and while I would need to have a refresher on affiliation, because of its closeness to the creek this could be something of an angle to invite people here, to educate the public, and so on.

I hope all of this makes sense and perhaps helps. Renaming is always a difficult decision, because whatever name is chosen, there will be people who disagree.

If you have more or other questions, or you would like to discuss in person, please do not hesitate to call on me.

Sincerely,
Sebastian

Dr. Sebastian Braun
Director, American Indian Studies
Iowa State University
(515) 294-9021

"Somos distintos. Somos iguales." - Celtas Cortos

From: John Haila <jhaila@city.ames.ia.us>
Sent: Monday, December 2, 2019 5:21 PM
To: Braun, Sebastian F [WLC] <sfbraun@iastate.edu>
Cc: Stewart, Reginald C [VPDI] <rstewart@iastate.edu>; Linda S. Murken <LMurken@storycountyowa.gov>
Subject: Re: Connection

Dr. Braun,

Thank you for your willingness to be of assistance.

Not sure if you are aware of the back story on this name change. This has been initiated by a private local individual, via the federal government (USGS) who in turn has asked local entities to weigh in on changing the name of Squaw Creek. The individual/USGS suggested Story Creek after the man who Story County is named after.

Our City Council (as well as the Story County Board of Supervisors) supports renaming Squaw Creek, and prefer that a suggested name honor Native Americans that lived here previously (they do not support remaining it Story Creek). We have heard that the Ioway Native American tribe lived in the Ames/Story County/Hamilton County/Boone County area, so one option might be Ioway Creek.

Another is to use a Native American name for woman - we have learned from a tribal representative that Hinage (ee-NAH-jay, means woman in Ioway tribe's language) might be used. Our only concern is it being mispronounced, thus dishonoring the new name.

Other renaming options include:

Meskwaki
Little Deer

So we would respectfully ask the following:

1. Would any of the above be appropriate, honoring and respectful?
2. Do you have any other name suggestions that we might consider, including local tribes who lived in this vicinity?
3. Are there any tribal representatives we should contact and ask for their input? Linda Murken, Chair of the Story County Board of Supervisors, sent out emails to 60 tribe contacts she was given and heard back from about 20 of them. All supported renaming the Creek, but there were limited name suggestions to use, or they deferred to others.

I am tasked by Council with working with Supervisor Murken and returning to council with 2-4 name options to consider. These in turn will be forwarded to USGS with an ordered priority and defer to them to select the final name.

Please feel free to call me if you would prefer to discuss this by phone. I can be reached at 515-290-5436.

With appreciation,

John A. Haila
Mayor



515.239.5105 *main*

jhaila@city.ames.ia.us | City Hall, 515 Clark Avenue | Ames, IA 50010

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From: "Braun, Sebastian F [WLC]" <sfbraun@iastate.edu>
To: "Stewart, Reginald C [VPDI]" <stewart@iastate.edu>, "John Haila" <jhaila@city.ames.ia.us>
Date: 12/01/2019 04:04 PM
Subject: Re: Connection

Dear Mayor Haila,

I wanted to thank Dr. Stewart for the introduction, and just say that if you need any input from me, please do not hesitate to ask.

I have deliberately stayed out of the public discussion on Squaw Creek, but if you or the Council would like to have any information on histories or cultures, feel free to contact me. I can always make time.

Sincerely,

Sebastian

Dr. Sebastian Braun
Director, American Indian Studies
Iowa State University
(515) 294-9021

"Somos distintos. Somos iguales." - Celtas Cortos

From: Stewart, Reginald C [VPDI] <rstewart@iastate.edu>
Sent: Wednesday, November 27, 2019 6:19 PM
To: John Haila <jhaila@city.ames.ia.us>; Braun, Sebastian F [WLC] <sfbraun@iastate.edu>
Cc: Stewart, Reginald C [VPDI] <rstewart@iastate.edu>
Subject: Connection

Mayor Haila, allow me to introduce you to my colleague Dr. Sebastian Braun. He has been a valuable resource to me on a number of occasions and holds expertise related to American Indian history and socio-cultural experiences.

Given the Council's discussion on the renaming of Squaw Creek, I believe we are fortunate to have a local scholar who can lend expert opinion.

Let me know if I can be of further assistance, otherwise I will step out and let the two of you facilitate a conversation.

Respectfully,

Reg

Sent from Dr. Stewart's iPhone

Attachments:

ATT00001.gif