

# Domestic Geographic Name Report

1 Use this form to recommend a feature name or to suggest a name change.

2. For features on Federal lands, coordinate requests with the agency (U.S. Forest Service, National Park Service, Bureau of Land Management, etc.) For the administrative area in which the land is located.

3. On the reverse side of this form give information on the local usage and authority for recommended name.

4. For more information about the Geographic Names Information System or the National Gazetteer Program, contact the U.S. Board on Geographic Names at 703-648-4544.

5. Return this form to:

Executive Secretary for Domestic  
Geographic Names  
U.S. Geological Survey  
523 National Center  
Reston, VA 22092

## Action Requested

Proposed New Name: \_\_\_\_\_ **Recommended Name:** Frank Creek  
Application Change: \_\_\_\_\_ **State:** Alaska  
Name Change: x **County or Equivalent:** \_\_\_\_\_  
Other: \_\_\_\_\_ **Administrative Area:** Lake and Peninsula Borough

## Specific Area Covered:

Latitude: 56 ° 22 ' 44 " N Longitude: 158 ° 36 ' 51 " W  
Latitude: 56 ° 22 ' 46 " N.S. Longitude: 158 ° 30 ' 13 " W.S  
Center: \_\_\_\_\_ Heading End \_\_\_\_\_  
Section(s) 12-8 Township(s) 44S Range(s) 59W Meridian Seward Elevation SeaLev

**Type of Feature** (stream, mountain, populated place, etc.): Stream

**Is the Feature identified (including other names), in the Geographic Names Information System (GNIS)?**

Yes x No \_\_\_\_\_ Unknown \_\_\_\_\_ If Yes, how is it listed? Dago Frank Creek

**Description of feature (physical shape, length, width, direction of flow, etc.):**

Stream, 4.8 mi. long; on private land within the Alaska Peninsula National Wildlife Refuge, heads 6.6 mi. NNW of Chignik Island, flows E to enter Chignik Bay 3 mi. N.W. of Rabbit Point

**Maps and other sources using recommended name (including scale and date).**

USGS Chignik B-2 1:63,360

**Other name (variants)**

Dago Frank's Creek

**Maps and other sources using other name or application (including scale and date).**

NPS 2007; Trans-Alaska Pipeline Liability Fund, 1992

**Name information such as origin, meaning of the recommended name, historical significance, biographic data (if commemorative), nature of usage or application, or any other pertinent information:**

This proposal is to change the name of Dago Frank Creek, a 4.8-mile-long stream in Lake and Peninsula Borough that flows into Chignik Bay, to Frank Creek. The stream flows through private land within the Alaska Peninsula National Wildlife Refuge. The proponent states that the current name includes “a racial slur.” The GNIS record was added from the Dictionary of Alaska Place Names (Orth, 1967), which stated that the name was “derived from the nickname ‘of a local Italian,’ reported in 1923 by R[ufus] H[enry] Sargent, USGS.” The name was used in USGS Bulletins in 1929 and 1959. Alaska State documents have used the name to the present. The original 1923 report by Sargent, referenced by Orth, could not be found. A 1929 USGS Bulletin, which included work by Sargent, first reported the name Dago Frank Creek; it also appeared on an accompanying map. The name was recorded as Dago Frank’s Creek in a 2007 National Park Service (NPS) report titled “Aniakchak National Monument and Preserve: Traditional Use and User Groups Study” and in a 1992 memorandum on claims from the Exxon Valdez oil spill by the Trans-Alaska Pipeline Liability Fund. The origin of the name has not been determined, although it may be related to other features near the community of Chignik Lagoon, about five and a half miles to the southwest. The aforementioned NPS report referred to a “Dago Point . . . east of CWF [Columbia Wards Fisheries] cannery”; this name is not listed in GNIS. An Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation oil spill report (undated) also referred to a cannery in the area, describing it as “S.W. of Dago Point”; also, “Parallel (Dago) creek is to the north of the cannery” (Parallel Creek is recorded in GNIS but does not include any variant names).

A Coast and Geodetic Survey (C&GS) marker named “BEACON” was described in 1924 as “a tripod on the inshore end of the fish trap Dago of the Alaska Packers Association, on the west shore of Chignik Lagoon.” A Minerals Management Service report from 1986 titled “A Sociocultural Description of Small Communities in the Kodiak/Shumagin Region” stated that “nearly all the fishermen were foreigners and were placed in two classes: the ‘north countrymen’ or ‘white crew’ and the ‘dagoes’ who were Italians and Greeks.” The same report described the community of Chignik Lagoon, which formed around the cannery, and noted that local resident Emma Grunert (1922-2014) had married “Frank Sangoriti” (also spelled Sanguinetti). Frank’s father, also named Frank (1874-c.1923), died at Chignik Lagoon. Although this evidence is circumstantial, it is possible that the name “Dago Frank” referred to the elder Frank Sanguinetti. (There is some evidence that residents were given nicknames based on their nationalities; a C&GS marker named “RED” was described in 1924 as being located at the corner of a house “owned by Mauritz Petersen, also known as Danish Pete, a trapper.”) GNIS lists one other feature in Alaska with “Dago” in its name: Dago Creek, located 90 miles to the northeast and also within Lake and Peninsula Borough; this name reportedly dates to 1900 and is also listed in Orth [ibid.]. GNIS lists 18 other natural features, primarily in the western U.S., with “Dago” in their names. Seven additional features include the word in their variant names but are now named “Italian”; three of these were BGN decisions in 1967 and 1970.

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**Is the recommended name in local usage?** Yes  No  If Yes, approximately how many years? \_\_\_\_\_

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**Is there local opposition to, or conflict with the recommended name (as located)?**

When previously contacted in January 2021 by NOAA’s Navigation Manger for Alaska Region, the Chignik Bay Tribal Council expressed their opposition to the name change, stating that “We don’t believe the name should be changed because Dago was not meant to be a racial slur in the name of this creek, but to commemorate the country of origin [of] Frank Sanguinetti. He is a relative to many of us, and the name has never offended us. Many of the places in and around the Chignik region are named after the ancestral people who lived there. Changing the name at this point will confuse people in this region who have always identified this creek as Dago Frank Creek and changing it to Frank is taking away that identity which has always been known.” (Via correspondence with Jeanette Carlson, Secretary of the Chignik Bay Tribal Council, January 2021).

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**For proposed new name, please provide evidence that feature is unnamed:** Not Applicable.

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**Additional information:**

In response to the “Frank Creek” proposal submitted to the Alaska Historical Commission in June 2020, AHC staff sent a letter to the proposer in October 2020 requesting additional research and specific information about the origin of the name.

AHC staff also prepared and sent comment letters to the Native Village of Chignik Lagoon, Chignik Lagoon Native Corporation, and the Alaska Peninsula National Wildlife Refuge in October 2020. The Commission received no response to the letters, likely due to shutdowns caused by the Covid-19 pandemic.

In January 2021, USBGN staff forwarded comments that the Navigation Manager for the Alaska Region of NOAA received from the Chignik Bay Tribal Council and the Alaska Marine Pilots. Chignik Bay Tribal Council did not support the proposed change, citing that “Dago” was not meant to be a racial slur, and Frank Sanguinetti, a commercial fisherman of Italian heritage. The Tribe explained that the community considered Frank an important individual. They argued that not only was his nickname representative of his cultural heritage but also his historical connection to Chignik. They also noted that many places in and around Chignik are named after the ancestral people who lived there, and changing the name now could lead to confusion. The second comment letter from the Alaska Marine Pilots supported the proposed change.

In February 2022, AHC staff sent a second letter to the proposer, with no response. In July 2023, staff sent the proposer a third and final letter requesting additional information. AHC staff has received no response to date.

To consider the views of Tribes, user groups, and local residents—whether in approval of the name change or against it—the Alaska Historical Commission will review the proposal at its meeting on November 16, 2023.

**Organizations for Consultation:**

- Native Village of Chignik Lagoon, P.O. Box 9, Chignik Lagoon, AK 99565
- USFWS/AK Peninsula National Wildlife Refuge, P.O. Box 277, 4 Bear Road, King Salmon, AK 99613  
C/O USFWS Alaska Region Regional Historic Preservation Officer (RHPO) Jeremy Karchut
- Chignik Lagoon Native Corporation, P.O. Box 169, Chignik Lagoon, AK 99565
- Chignik Bay Tribal Council
- Lake and Peninsula Borough
- Mountaineering Club of Alaska
- Bristol Bay Native Association
- Bristol Bay Native Corporation
- NOAA Alaska Regional Office
- D. Roy Mitchell, with the Alaska Native Language Preservation Advisory Council

| Copy submitted by: Name (first, M.I., last)                              | Title                         | Phone (day)   | Date          |
|--|-------------------------------|---|---------------|
| Company or Agency  |                               | Address (city, State, and Zip)                                      |               |
| Copy Prepared by (if other than above)                                   | Title                         | Phone (day)   | Date          |
| Judith E. Bittner  | SHPO                          | (907) 269-8700  |               |
| Company or Agency  |                               | Address (city, State, and Zip)                                      |               |
| Alaska Department of Natural Resources/Office of History and Archaeology |                               | 550 West 7 <sup>th</sup> Ave., Suite 1310, Anchorage, AK 99501-3565 |               |
| Authority for Recommended Name:  | Mailing Address and Telephone | Occupation  | Years in Area |



# Proposed Geographic Name: Frank Creek

