

# 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: Skanaxhéen Creek  
Application Change: \_\_\_\_\_ State: Alaska  
Name Change: x County or Equivalent: \_\_\_\_\_  
Other: \_\_\_\_\_ Administrative Area: Prince of Wales-Hyder Census Area

## Specific Area Covered:

Latitude: 56 ° 48 ' 15 " N Longitude: 134 ° 13 ' 31 " W  
Latitude: \_\_\_\_\_ ° \_\_\_\_\_ ' \_\_\_\_\_ " NS Longitude: \_\_\_\_\_ ° \_\_\_\_\_ ' \_\_\_\_\_ " WS  
Center: \_\_\_\_\_ x Heading End \_\_\_\_\_  
Section(s) \_\_\_\_\_ Township(s) 58S Range(s) 71E Meridian Copper River Elevation S.L.  
13, 22, 23, 24, 27, 28

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

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

Yes No \_\_\_\_\_ Unknown \_\_\_\_\_ If Yes, how is it listed? Saginaw Creek

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

The stream is 4.9 mi. long, heads 8.5 mi. W of Kadake Bay, flows N the NE to enter Skanax Bay 6 mi. WNW of Gil Harbor.

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

Skanaxhéen (Haa Léelk'w Hás Aaní Saax'ú,  
Our Grandparents Names on the Land, 2012)

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

West Fork of Saginaw

USGS 1:63360 – 1948, 1997, 2017

Creek, West Fork

AMS 1951, 1964

Saginaw Creek, West Fork

NOAA 1976-2014

Saginaw

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:

The proponent reports that the name Skanaxhéen Creek is the traditional Tlingit name for the stream. In

Tlingit, “héen” means stream or river. He adds “Skanáx translates to ‘noisy beach’ and the original people who lived there were called Skanáx .eidí.” The meaning comes from a Tlingit story about Raven, which is recorded in the 1909 Tlingit Myths and Texts: “Coming to a large bay, Raven talked to it in order to make it into [make it just like the] Nass [River]. . . but, when the tide was out great numbers of clams on the flats made so much noise shooting up at him that his voice was drowned, and he could not succeed. He tried to put all kinds of berries there but in vain. After many attempts, he gave it up and went away saying, ‘I tried to make you into Nass, but you would not let me.’ So you can be called Skana’x [Skanáx].” A 2019 paper titled “Raven’s Work in Tlingit Ethno-geography” contains the following statement: “[Raven’s] human descendants still. . . collect intertidal resources at Skanáx (Noisy

Beach, in Saginaw Bay, where Raven found the squirting bivalves cacophonous. . . .”

The current name references the USS Saginaw, which in February 1869 shelled and destroyed several Kake villages and campsites. No direct deaths from the shelling were recorded (although oral Kake history records the death of one elderly woman who stayed in the village on the bay), but the loss of food and shelter led to many deaths during that winter. Survivors were forced to join other communities, and many settled in the area of present-day Kake. The proposal states that the name Saginaw Creek “is seen as similarly offensive in nature” to the former name Saginaw Bay and quotes the 2012 book Haa L’élk’w Hás Aani Saax’ú: Our grandparents’ names on the land: “This horrific incident (a reprisal for the murder of a white man) invests the English name for the bay with distinctly negative connotations for Kake Tlingits, and some would like to see it officially changed back to its original Tlingit name.” The accented syllable differs between the proposed name Skanaxhéen Creek and Skanáx Bay due to

Tlingit pronunciation rules. The 2018 Sneaky Sounds: A Non-Threatening Introduction to Tlingit Sounds and Spelling published by Sealaska Heritage describes “stolen stress” or “stolen tone” in Tlingit compound words: “For many speakers of Tlingit, in a compound noun formed by a sequence of two nouns with long, high vowels, the tone is ‘stolen’ from the first word.” The stressed “á” in “Skanáx” representing the long, high “a” sound is dropped due to the stressed “é” in “héen” representing the long, high “e” sound.

The name Saginaw Creek has been labeled on USGS topographic maps since 1948 and on Coast Survey nautical charts since 1976. The aforementioned 2012 volume records the name as Skanaxhéen with a translation of “Skanáx Creek.”

An U.S. Forest Service (USFS) document published in 2007 and updated in 2012 titled “Saginaw Creek Watershed Restoration Plan” used the name Saginaw Creek in addition to West Fork of Saginaw Creek, West Fork Saginaw Creek, and West Fork Saginaw for the upper portion of the stream (the names “South Fork of Saginaw Creek,” “South Fork Saginaw Creek,” and “South Fork Saginaw” were used for an unnamed tributary of Saginaw Creek). The 2007 USFS “Kuiu Timber Sale Area Final Environmental Impact Statement” also used Saginaw Creek in addition to West Fork of Saginaw Creek, West Fork Saginaw Creek (instead of “South Fork”, this document used the names “East Fork of Saginaw Creek” and “East Fork Saginaw Creek” for the unnamed tributary. More recent USFS documents and notices in the Petersburg Pilot referred to the “South Fork Saginaw Creek Restoration Project.” The BGN staff asked the USFS to clarify usage of these names. Tongass National Forest hydrologists who authored the 2007 document reported “From a working perspective, myself and others have found it convenient to refer to the various stream reaches as the West Fork, South Fork, and downstream of the junction of these two, the Mainstem.” The Regional USFS geographic names coordinator wrote “While it’s possible that the USFS may reference the south fork of the stream in future documents, if this happens it would be rare. I do not think this would be an issue if there is no official name for the south fork, these streams are very small/short in a remote and relatively inaccessible location so the need/demand for detailed names is low” and is recommending that the BGN only address the proposed name change from Saginaw Creek to Skanaxhéen Creek..

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Is the recommended name in local usage? Yes   x   No        If Yes, approximately how many years?   >100  

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

No

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**For proposed new name, please provide evidence that feature is unnamed:**

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**Additional information:**

This proposal is to change the name of Saginaw Creek, a 4.9-mile tributary of Skanáx Bay in the Prince of Wales-Hyder Census Area, to Skanaxhéén Creek. The proposal was submitted by the Organized Village of Kake following the BGN's 2019 approval of a proposal to change the name of Saginaw Bay to Skanáx Bay. (Note: in both names, the x is written with a bar below the letter.)

Requests for responses to the proposal were sent to the following:

Jacob Hofman  
U.S. Forest Service  
709 W. 98<sup>th</sup> St. Rm 519D  
Juneau, Alaska 99801  
[jhofman@fs.fed.us](mailto:jhofman@fs.fed.us)

Matt Forney  
NOAA, Office of Coast Survey  
222 W. 7<sup>th</sup> Ave. #23  
Anchorage, Alaska 99513  
[amyholman@noaa.gov](mailto:amyholman@noaa.gov)

Sealaska Corporation  
1 Sealaska Plaza  
Juneau, Alaska 99801  
[chuck.smythe@sealaska.com](mailto:chuck.smythe@sealaska.com)

Kake Tribal Corporation  
P.O. Box 263  
Kake, Alaska 99830  
[Info@kaketribalcorp.com](mailto:Info@kaketribalcorp.com)

Central Council Tlingit-Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska  
9097 Glacier Highway  
Juneau, Alaska 99801  
[rpeterson@ccthita-nsn.gov](mailto:rpeterson@ccthita-nsn.gov)

Dawn Jackson  
Organized Village of Kake  
P.O. Box 316  
Kake, Alaska 99830-0163

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Copy submitted by: Name (first, M.I., last)	Title	Phone (day)	Date
Russell James		907-785-6471	
Company or Agency	Address (city, State, and Zip)		
Organized Village of Kake	P.O. Box 316, Kake, AK 99830		
Copy Prepared by (if other than above)	Title	Phone (day)	Date
Judith E. Bittner	SHPO	(907) 269-8721	04/22/20
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
Organized Village of Kake	P.O. Box 316, Kake, AK 99830		

SOUTHEAST ALASKA

CANADA

Juneau

Map Area

Sitka

Kake

Petersburg

Keetchikan

Gulf of Alaska

# Saginaw Creek Location Map

*Kuiu Island, Southeast Alaska*

FREDERICK SOUND

KUPREANOF

ISLAND

Kake

FH40

8398

6040

8000

45008

Skanax Bay

6402

Proposed Skanaxhéen Creek

Saginaw Creek

KUIU

ISLAND

Other Roads

Forest Service Open Roads

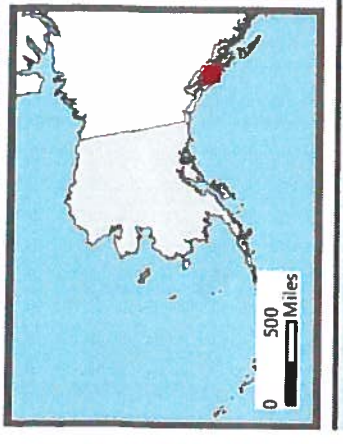
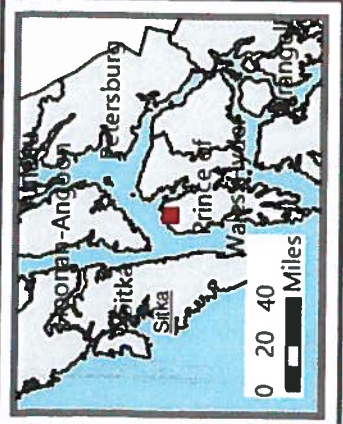
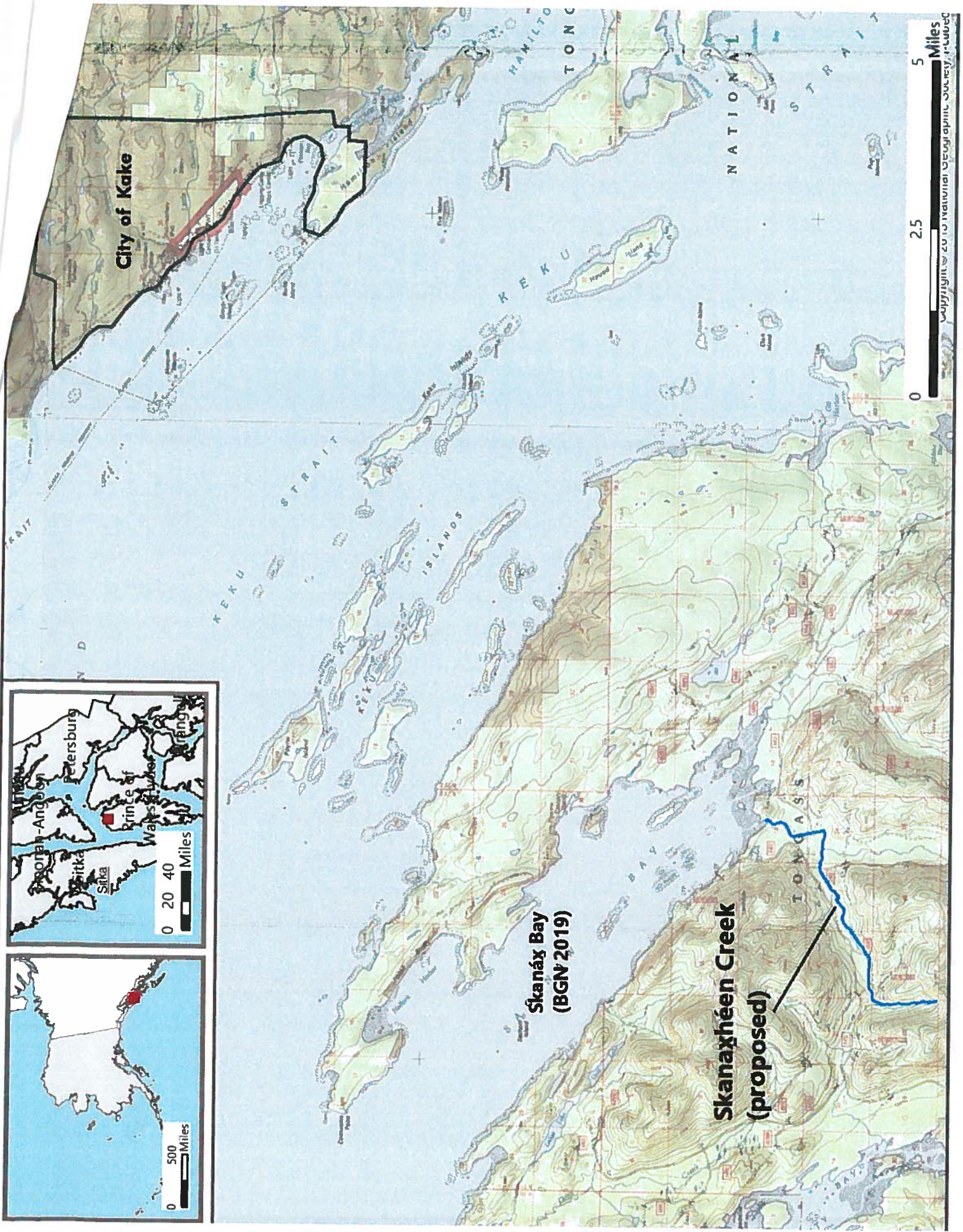
Other Ownership

Tongass National Forest

0 2.5 5 Miles

0 2.5 5 10 Km





**Skanax Bay  
(BGN 2019)**

**Skanaxheen Creek  
(proposed)**



