



MEMORANDUM

TO: Clackamas County Board of County Commissioners (BCC)
FROM: Gary Schmidt, County Administrator
RE: Oregon Geographic Names Board Proposal to Name Spirit Creek
DATE: January 9, 2024

REQUEST: Staff are seeking Board direction on a proposal to name a currently unnamed creek in Lake Oswego that is currently under consideration by the Oregon Geographic Names Board.

BACKGROUND: Through a public proposal process, geographic features throughout the United States are officially named by the United States Board on Geographic Names, based on recommendations from state-level geographic naming boards. The Oregon Geographic Names Board is currently considering a proposal, submitted by the Lake Oswego United Church of Christ, to name a creek approximately 1,000 feet in length that flows from Knaus Road to its confluence with Nettle Creek along County Club Road in Lake Oswego. Approximately 1/3 of the creek is engineered to run through a culvert under the Church's parking lot and along Knaus Road to its terminus at Nettle Creek (which ultimately flows to Tryon Creek). What research has been done indicates there is no known name for the creek in the historical record.

No opposition to the proposal has been raised by any stakeholders or relevant parties, but most parties appear to have taken a "no comment" position on the proposal. Support is limited to those property owners directly affected by the creek and the Tryon Creek Watershed Council. Federally recognized Tribes in the area have either not responded to a request for comment, or in the case of the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde, indicated they have no comment on the proposal at this time. At the present time, The City of Lake Oswego has not offered any comment on the proposal.

Staff recommend that the Board offer no comment on the proposal.

Attachments:

Letter from the Oregon Geographic Names Board requesting comment
Board on Geographic Names Domestic Names Committee Proposal



OREGON GEOGRAPHIC NAMES BOARD
Oregon Historical Society
1200 SW Park Avenue
Portland, Oregon 97205

December 28, 2023

To: Clackamas County Board of Commissioners
Re: Proposal to name a creek in Lake Oswego
From: Oregon Geographic Names Board

The Oregon Geographic Names Board (OGNB) is circulating for your review this proposal to name a geographic feature that may be of interest. OGNB is tasked with gathering input on geographic name proposals from tribes, landowners, and counties as it makes its recommendation to the US Board on Geographic Names for a final decision.

The attached proposal is to name an unnamed creek in Clackamas County. This proposal to name a creek Spirit Creek includes the location, type of feature, description, map, context and other pertinent information about the proposed name. Your input on this matter will help the OGNB deliberate as it determines how to proceed with this proposal.

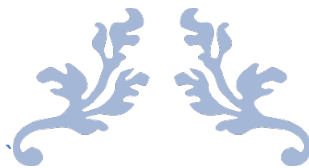
The OGNB would appreciate your written response to this letter indicating whether you support the proposed name; oppose the proposed name; or have no opinion. We allow 60 days for a response. Additional comments are welcome.

Your response can be made either by e-mail or postal mail. Please direct your response or questions you may have to ognb@ohs.org or to the postal address in the heading of this letter.

Thank you for your assistance and time spent on this matter.

Respectfully,

Bruce Fisher, President, Oregon Geographic Names Board



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. Email this form and supporting documentation to: BGNESEC@usgs.gov

i. Save PDF as 'ST_GeographicName' for example 'CO_BearCreek'

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

Please note that anything submitted by mail will be delayed.

Naming Basics

Proposed Name:

Spirit Creek

Is this to change an existing name?

Y N

Is this name in current local use?

Y N

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

What is the Feature Class?

Stream

GNIS Name:

Feature ID:

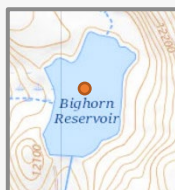
Location Basics



Where is the feature?

Latitude: (38.94741)

Longitude: (-77.36839)



General Location:

State:

County:

City/Town/

Township/

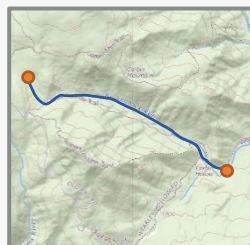
Borough:

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

Mouth/Confluence

Latitude: (38.94741)

Longitude: (-77.36839)



Source/Headwater

Latitude: (38.94741)

Longitude: (-77.36839)

Public Land Survey System:

Section(s), Township, Range, Meridian

Feature Description

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

Small creek running primarily through the property of Lake Oswego United Church of Christ, arising around Knaus Road and ending where it joins Nettle Creek near the intersection of Knaus Road and Country Club Road - total length about 1,000 feet, flows southward.

See attached map from Lake Oswego GIS system (LO Map) - <http://gis.ci.oswego.or.us/pub/>

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 creek currently has no name and is only represented on our local map as Stream 348 (see the attached map, which shows Asset ID = DST00348 and no name). As far as we can tell, no one has ever used a specific name for it. We have discussed this with the three property owners where the creek runs on their property. None have used a name for this creek, and all are supportive of this naming.

In selecting the name Spirit Creek, we intend to honor a variety of spirits. We intend to honor the spirits of the indigenous inhabitants who undoubtedly knew this creek and perhaps had a name for it. We intend to honor the spirit of the creek itself, which has been engineered and diverted in a variety of ways but continues to flow gently through a small wooded patch. And because it flows primarily through the property of a church, we intend also to honor the Creator spirit who brought all of this into being.

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.).

See attached map from Lake Oswego GIS system (LO Map) - <http://gis.ci.oswego.or.us/pub/>

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.

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:


The stream forms the boundary between two other properties and passes through one other property before entering the property of Lake Oswego United Church of Christ (LOUCC). The Council of LOUCC fully endorses this proposal. The three other property owners have been contacted, along with the Tryon Creek Watershed Council (in whose watershed this creek lies) and the City of Lake Oswego. There is no opposition to the name.


Proponent Information


Please provide one form of contact (email preferred):


 Proponent's Name: Carl Wamser

Agency or Organization, if applicable:
Lake Oswego United Church of Christ - Green Team

 Email: wamserc@pdx.edu (preferred)

 Mailing Address: 1111 Country Club Road
Lake Oswego, OR 97034

 Phone: (503) 504-4296

 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:

+ - Hand Refresh X ↶ **F** **S** **L** **D** **T** **M** **H** **R**
 Zoom In Zoom Out Pan Initial View Clear Previous Extent Find Selection Layers Drill Down Tools Markup Help Parcel Report

STREAM

Description

ASSET ID = DST00348

NAME =

Details

Upper Asset ID
DOT00312

Downstream Asset ID
DOT01434

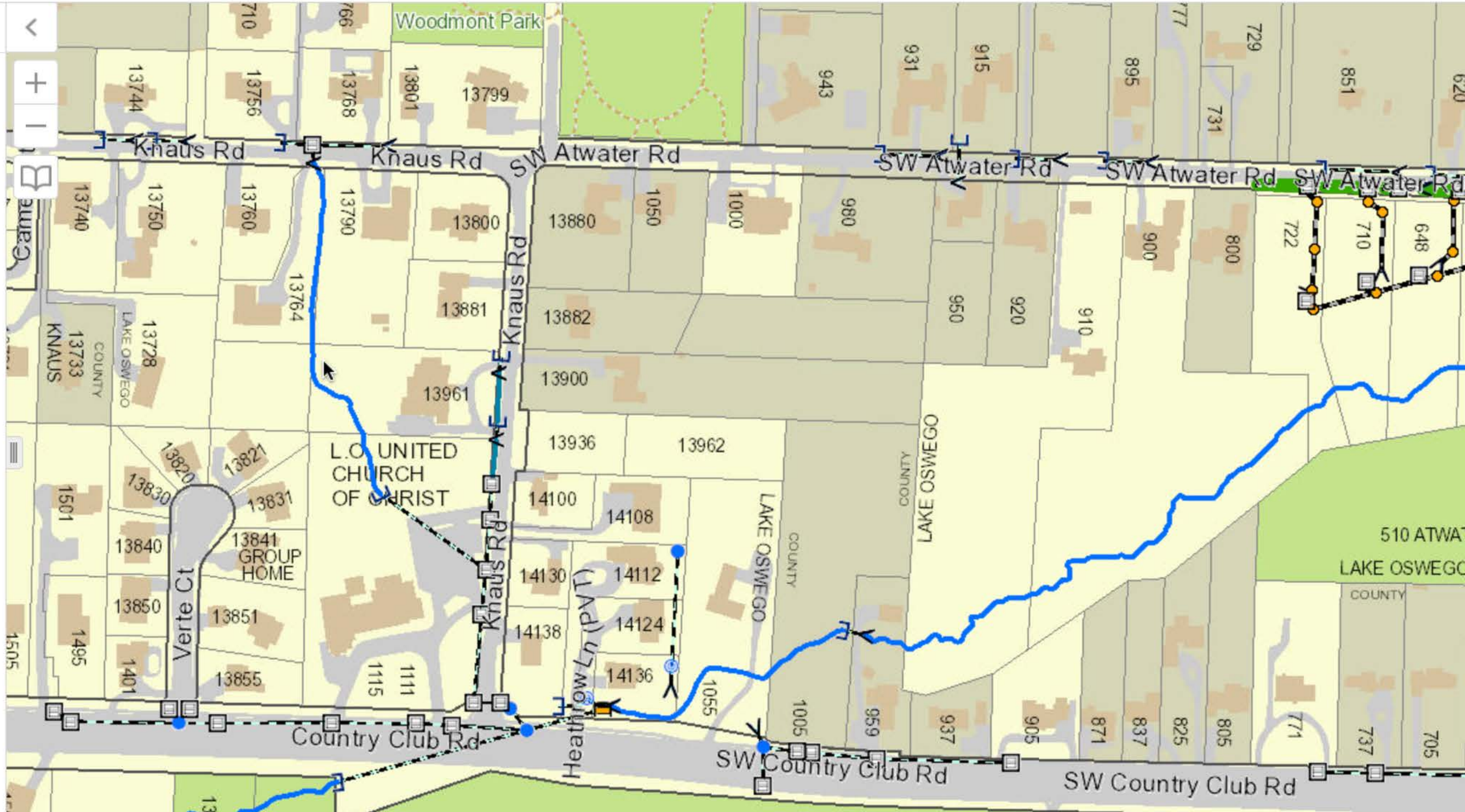
Unit ID 1
E04D-002D

Unit ID 2
E04D-007D

Watershed
Willamette River

Basin
Tc basin

Subbasin
0410



Proposal Information

Proposed name: Spirit Creek
Proposal type: new name for unnamed feature
Current official name: N/A
GNIS ID: N/A
Proponent: Carl Wamser, Lake Oswego United Church of Christ
Date proposed: 8/14/2023
BGN case number: 6117
Quarterly Review List #: 453

Feature Details

Primary coordinates: 45.423176, -122.68883
Secondary coordinates: 45.425692, -122.690374
Feature class: stream
Feature size: 1,030 ft. long
Feature description: heads S of Englewood, flows S into an unnamed tributary of Tryon Creek
Name history: The name refers to spirits, including those of indigenous inhabitants and the creek itself.
USGS primary topo map: Lake Oswego 1:24,000
State(s): Oregon
County(s): Clackamas County
Local jurisdiction(s): City of Lake Oswego
PLSS: Sec. 4, T2S, R1E, Willamette Meridian
Land ownership: Private [partly by proponent / Lake Oswego United Church of Christ]

BGN decisions

Decisions: None
Other Names: None
Unpublished names: None found
Published names: None found

Case Summary:

This proposal is to apply the new name Spirit Creek to an unnamed 0.2-mile-long stream in the City of Lake Oswego in Clackamas County. The stream flows into an unnamed tributary of Tryon Creek that is known locally as "Nettle Creek." It is not recorded in the National Hydrography Dataset nor shown on USGS maps. The stream flows primarily through the property of Lake Oswego United Church of Christ (LOUCC). The proponent, who represents LOUCC, states:

"We intend to honor a variety of spirits, [including] the spirits of the indigenous inhabitants who undoubtedly knew this creek and perhaps had a name for it. We intend to honor the spirit of the creek itself, which has been engineered and diverted in a variety of ways but continues to flow gently through a small, wooded patch. And because it flows primarily through the property of a church, we intend also to honor the Creator spirit who brought all of this into being."

The owners of the three properties along the stream endorse the name.

When asked to address the BGN's Cultural Sensitivity for Native American Names guidance, the proponent wrote:

I have had informal discussions with [a couple that runs] the Eloheh Indigenous Center for Earth Justice in Yamhill, Oregon. [LOUCC] has had an ongoing relationship with the Center. They have spoken at our church. I have also attempted to contact the Chachalu Museum and Cultural Center in Grande Ronde, Oregon, but I have not had any response.

GNIS lists six features in Oregon with “Spirit” in their names. The closest, Spirit Mountain, is 50 miles southwest of the stream in question. Since 2010, the BGN has approved four names nationwide that include the word “Spirit.”

Stakeholder Input

Local government: City of Lake Oswego

County government: Clackamas County

State Names Authority: Oregon GNB

Federally Recognized Tribes: All federally recognized Tribes contacted under Policy X

*Update: Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde submitted by email to Jennifer Runyon that they have ‘no comment’ on the proposal.

Other: Lake Oswego United Church of Christ: Support

Property owners surrounding the stream: Support

Tryon Creek Watershed Council offers Letter of Support

Chachalu Museum and Cultural Center

Dear Jennifer,

Thank you for your outreach. Our office has no comment on the name changes proposed in the Tribe's Ceded Lands and Ancestral Homelands in western Oregon and southwestern Washington. Please note that our comments are based on information available at the time of review; we reserve the right to provide additional comment.

hayu-masi (many thanks),
Cheryl



Cheryl K. Pouley

Cultural Protection Coordinator

Historic Preservation Office | Cultural Resources Department

The Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde Community of Oregon

9615 Grand Ronde Road, Grand Ronde, OR 97347

Phone: (503) 879-1667

Please submit consultation requests to: THPO@grandronde.org



TRYON CREEK WATERSHED COUNCIL

Staff and Board of Directors

Alexis Barton
Coordinator

Megan Hill
Chair

Rebecca Crosby
Vice Chair

Danielle Goodrich
Secretary

Kristie Focht
Treasurer

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Technology Director*

Dustin Day
Director

Sylvia Barclay
*Director, Lewis & Clark Coll.
student representative*

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*Director, Lewis & Clark Coll.
student representative*

Jill Gaddis
Director

Jennifer Jones
Director

Glen Leverich
Director

Stuart Myers
Director

Terri Preeg Riggsby
Director

Colleen Mitchell
City of Portland, ex-officio

Sonja Johnson
*City of Lake Oswego,
ex-officio*

Daniel Quigley
*Oregon State Parks,
ex-officio*

Lynn Barlow
*West Multnomah Soil &
Water Conservation
District, ex-officio*

United States Board on Geographic Names;
Oregon Geographic Names Board

December 4, 2023

Re: Lake Oswego United Church of Christ - Feature Name Proposal

The Tryon Creek Watershed Council writes this letter in support of the Lake Oswego United Church of Christ's efforts to give a name to the unnamed tributary to Nettle Creek that runs through their property. The Tryon Creek Watershed Council (TCWC) is a 501c3 non-profit organization working to protect, restore, and enhance the Tryon Creek watershed, including through habitat projects that support the already healthy urban habitat that Tryon Creek provides to migrating fish such as coastal cutthroat trout and Coho salmon.

Since 2008, TCWC has worked with the LOUCC and their Green Team on various projects that also serve to meet this goal. TCWC first partnered with LOUCC in their work to implement stormwater improvements on site, and recently to remove landscaping plastic from underneath their lawn to provide life back to the soil.

Most directly connected to their proposal here, we have worked with LOUCC to implement riparian restoration along the stretch of the creek that they propose to name Spirit Creek. We have leveraged grant funds from State and City governments in order to mobilize both professional contract crews and community volunteers to remove invasive species on site, and plant native plants along the creek. This work is ongoing, and is now spreading throughout reaches of the property more upland from the creek corridor itself.

We find Spirit Creek to be a suitably heartfelt name that reflects the LOUCC's commitment to the environment as a whole, and specifically in this slice of the watershed which they continue to actively steward. We support their application, are happy to answer further questions, and encourage you to accept their proposal.

Thank you for your time,

Alexis Barton, Coordinator

alexis@tryoncreek.org | tryoncreek.org | Cell: 530 902 7528