

APPLICATION TO **CLARIFY** THE GEOGRAPHIC NAME OF
MOUNT DAVID



Submitted By:

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INTRODUCTION

As this application is being written, there is an international effort currently in the planning stages to commemorate the accomplishments of one of the greatest land geographers in the history of the North American continent, David Thompson. Though not the first or the only great trader-explorer on the continent, David Thompson explored and mapped more of this continent than any other trader and map maker.

Just as importantly, David Thompson symbolizes inter-cultural cooperation and close and enduring family ties with cultures close to the landscape that made trade the foundation of exploration and development of the North American continent. The occasion of the bicentennials of some of Thompson's greatest exploration achievements presents the opportunity to examine the importance of trade to our history and to consider its present and potential future influence on the peoples of North America.

This is not an application to name a geographical feature or to change the name of a geographical feature, but to clarify an existing name; namely Mount David, a geographical feature that is already named in honour of David Thompson.

ORIGINAL NAMING

Mount David was named officially in 1920, above David Thompson's 1807 Campsite on the Howse River by Mr. Arthur Wheeler, of the Inter-Provincial Boundary Survey, and named the mountain specifically after David Thompson.

At the time, he was aware that a mountain not far away had already been given the name Mount Thompson. This mountain was named for a celebrated climber of the Rockies by the name of Charles S. Thompson (1869-1921). Realizing this, Mr. Wheeler utilized the first name rather than the usual practice of the surname in the naming of Mount David.

The Inter-Provincial Boundary Survey Report reads, "*The station was named Mount David with reference to David Thompson of the North West Fur Trading Company, who first traversed Howse Pass in 1807. It stands a high isolated peak directly opposite the valley of Conway Creek which gives access to Howse Creek summit.*"

WHO WAS DAVID THOMPSON

David Thompson is widely regarded as the greatest explorer of Canada, one of the world's most skilled cartographers, and was also one of the finest travel writers of his era. His own account of his years in western Canada was still incomplete when he died in 1857. Thompson landed at Churchill Factory, Hudson Bay, as a boy apprentice, in 1784. From that time until he left the west, in 1812, his account is one of eloquence and authority. He tells the story of 28 years of travel across 89,000 Kilometers (55,000 miles). His duty to his employers, the Northwest Company, was to path-find and survey, and as a result, he carried out surveys and explorations reaching to Sault Ste. Marie, to the sources of the Mississippi, to the upper Missouri, and to northeastern British Columbia, and finally to the west side of the Rocky Mountains, including the northeastern tributaries of the Columbia River, and the great river itself from its headwaters to its estuary on the Pacific Ocean.

A MAJOR RECOGNITION OF DAVID THOMPSON

A major recognition of David Thompson is being planned by the North American David Thompson Bicentennials Partnership (<http://www.davidthompson200.org/>) and in the opinion of those who support this initiative; a major recognition of David Thompson is long overdue in the areas in which he traveled and beyond. The year 2007 is the bicentennial of David Thompson's first crossing the Rocky Mountains and the anchoring of the trans-mountain fur trade. It also marks the 150th anniversary of Thompson's death and represents an opportunity to recognize the accomplishments and legacies of Thompson's long life.

The object of this initiative will be to illustrate what David Thompson, and others like him, observed and did as he stood at the confluence of geography, native and European culture and nationhood at a formative time in the history of the continent, and to use these observations as a foundation for putting into relief how this history influences us today and how we can use its lessons to live in a more sustainable way on this continent in the future.

The North American David Thompson Bicentennials will be learning and heritage tourism initiatives. The lead-time to 2007 allows organizers at all levels to make the David Thompson Bicentennial a significant regional, national and international initiative.

A REQUEST TO CLARIFY THE GEOGRAPHIC NAME

Although Mr. Wheeler, of the Inter-Provincial Boundary Survey, made an admirable attempt to recognize David Thompson's Accomplishments, specifically in the traversing of Howse Pass in 1807, the use of a first name is not a strong enough link from the geographical feature to the historical figure. This is especially true given the time that has passed and the lack of a monument or a form of literature that would be readily available to inform the traveler of the significance of the name associated with the name Mount David.

The use of surnames to link geographical features to that of a historical figure in our history is crucial. The utilization of a surname, especially combined with a first name, invokes the curiosity of the human condition to look beyond the name of the feature and promote a rediscovery of its historical significance.

It is therefore my request, on behalf of the North American David Thompson Bicentennials – Canadian Initiative, that the Geographical name for this mountain feature be clarified to **Mount David Thompson**, thus including the

surname "**Thompson**". It is also my request that this clarification occur on the 200th Anniversary of David Thompson's crossing of Howse Pass; that being on June 22, 2007. It was on that date in 1807 that Thompson wrote in his journal that he had reached a "*rill whose current descends to the Pacific Ocean - may God in his mercy give me to see where its waters flow into the ocean, and return in safety.*"

CONCLUSION

In conclusion please allow me to state that unlike early in the 20th Century, the utilization of both a first name and surname to identify a geographical feature is not unheard of. Mount Edith Cavell and Mount Terry Fox are just two examples of features carrying both the first name and the surname of a historical individual. This is an opportunity to help in the commemoration of a unique Canadian. A major recognition of David Thompson is long over due given his accomplishments. If anything, the clarifying of the name of Mount David will ensure that there is an unbreakable link from the geographical features to that of the historical figure David Thompson. The name "Mount David Thompson" will summon our curiosity to look beyond the name and promote a rediscovery of its historical significance and inherently a rediscovery of our own history.

APPENDIX A: LOCATION OF MOUNT DAVID

GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION

Feature: **Mountain**

Elevation: **2780 m** (9121 ft.)

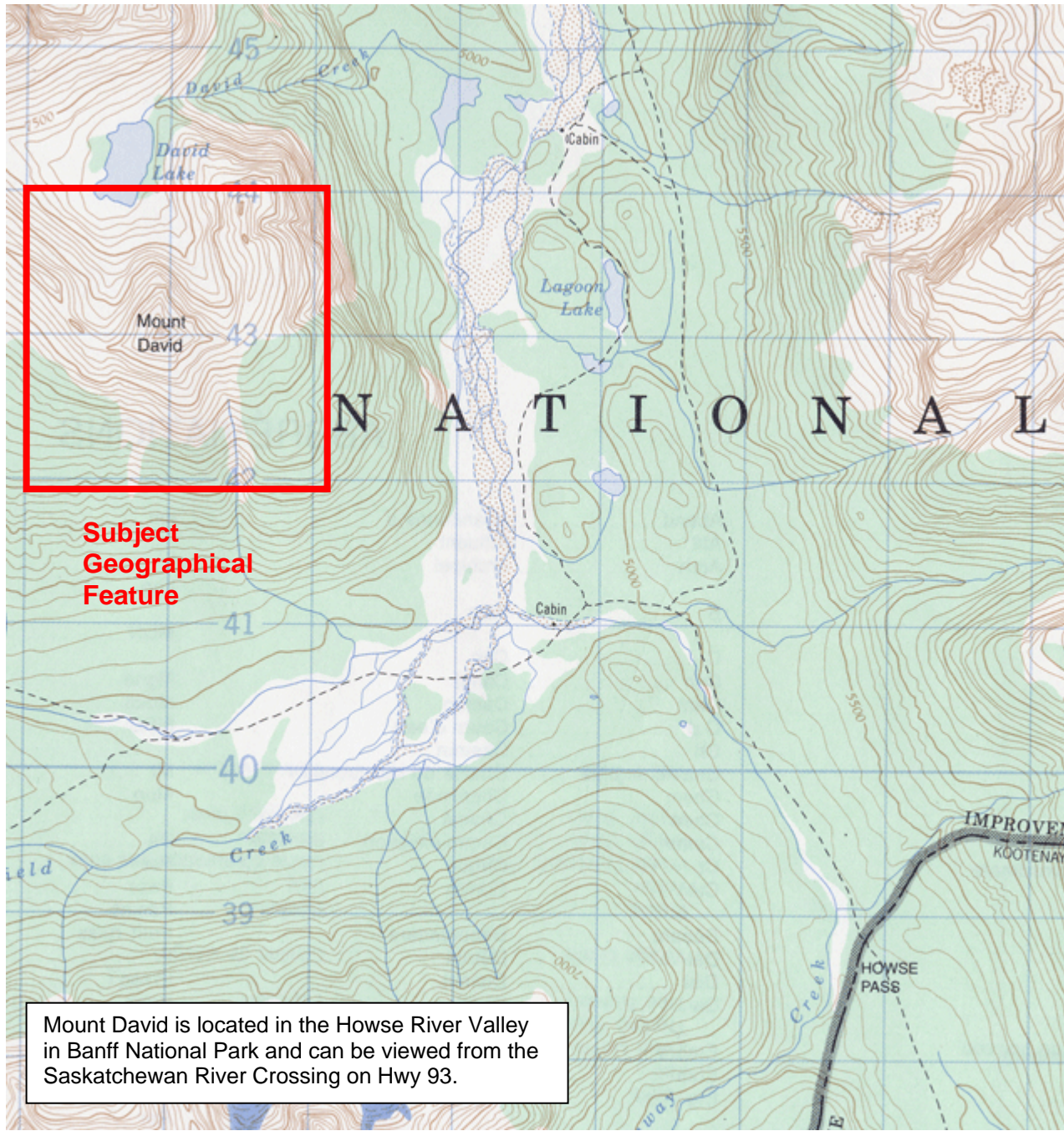
Latitude: **51.838889° N**

Longitude: **-116.826389° W**

NTS Map: **82N/15, Mistaya Lake**

Legal Description: **Township 33 Range 20 West of 5th Meridian**

MAP OF LOCATION



NATURAL RESOURCES CANADA-CANADIAN GEOGRAPHIC NAMES

The following table was extracted from the Natural Resources Canada-Canadian Geographic Names Web Site to further identify the geographical feature.

Current Names: Query Record Details

Name:	Mount David
Province/Territory:	Alberta
Feature type:	Mountain
Location:	33-20-W5
Latitude - Longitude:	51° 50' 00" N - 116° 49' 00" W
NTS Map:	082N15
National Park:	Banff National Park of Canada
CGNDB Unique Identifier:	IAPRW