

## REQUEST FOR BOARD ACTION

### HENDERSON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

**MEETING DATE:** June 19, 2019

**SUBJECT:** Village of Flat Rock – Highland Lake

**PRESENTER:** Chairman Grady Hawkins

**ATTACHMENTS:** Yes

- 1) Village of Flat Rock letter to the Executive Secretary for Domestic Names – U.S. Geological Survey
- 2) Highland Lake description
- 3) Village of Flat Rock letter to Chairman Hawkins
- 4) Email from Matt O'Donnell – Contractor in support of U.S. Board on Geographic Names
- 5) Henderson County Letter of Support to Executive Secretary for Domestic Geographic Names

#### **SUMMARY OF REQUEST:**

On behalf of the Village of Flat Rock, a letter was received from Mayor Robert Staton requesting support of the County to change the impoundment of water located within the Village of Flat Rock that is historically known as Highland Lake. The lake was identified in 1965 and later editions of U. S. Geological Survey topographic maps as Madonna Lake.

The Village of Flat Rock has applied to the U.S. Board of Geographic Names for a change in the records of the U.S. Geological Survey to reflect the historic and current name of the lake as Highland Lake.

#### **BOARD ACTION REQUESTED:**

If the Board is so inclined staff requests approval to send a letter to the Executive Secretary for Domestic Geographic Names in support.

#### **Suggested Motion:**

*I move that the Board approves the letter of support to the Executive Secretary for Domestic Geographic Names in favor of identifying the impoundment of water as Highland Lake in the U.S. Geological Survey topographic maps.*



Village of Flat Rock  
North Carolina

Incorporated in 1995

March 20, 2019

Executive Secretary for Domestic  
Geographic Names  
U.S. Geological Survey  
12201 Sunrise Valley Drive  
Reston, VA 20191-0523

Dear Sir or Madam:

Enclosed is a Domestic Geographic Report form together with documentation in support of a name change of a lake identified among the records and maps of the U.S. Geological Survey since ca. 1965 as Madonna Lake. The lake, located in the Village of Flat Rock, was historically known and is known today as Highland Lake.

From 1955 – 1985, the lake and surrounding property was owned by the Roman Catholic Diocese of Raleigh and operated as a diocesan retreat center and summer camp known as Our Lady of the Hills. During the diocese's ownership, the name of the lake was changed to Madonna Lake in honor of the Virgin Mary. Following the sale of the property in 1985, the name of the lake reverted to Highland Lake, and it is known by that name today.

On behalf of the Council of the Village of Flat Rock, I submit this report and request recognition of the name of Highland Lake and a change from identification of the lake as Madonna Lake to Highland Lake.

Sincerely,

Robert V. Staton  
Mayor

Enclosures

## HIGHLAND LAKE FLAT ROCK, NORTH CAROLINA

*Highland Lake* is the historic name and the name currently in use for the body of water identified in 1965 and later editions of U.S. Geological Survey topographic maps as *Madonna Lake*. The impoundment originated ca. 1795 to provide power for John Earle's grist mill, and it was known as Earle's mill pond. It was subsequently known by the surname of the owner of the mill. From ca. 1873, Rhett's mill was located on Rhett's mill pond, the last name by which the impoundment was known before it became Highland Lake.

Although our limited research has not revealed the date of origin of the name Highland Lake, it is reasonable to believe it was in use by the end of the nineteenth century and beginning of the twentieth century. In 1910, the lake and surrounding property were acquired by organizers of an exclusive private club known as the Highland Lake Club. Although the club had a short life, the name of the lake remained unchanged through subsequent ownerships at least until 1955 when it was acquired by the Roman Catholic Diocese of Raleigh for a diocesan retreat center and summer camp known as Our Lady of the Hills. It was during the diocese's ownership of the property that the lake's name was changed to Madonna Lake in honor of the Virgin Mary. The lake was known by that name until 1985 when the property was acquired by the Lindsey family who resumed the historic name of the lake and operated the property as the Highland Lake Inn and Conference Center, by which name the property is operated today by its current owner.

Today the lake is again commonly known in the community as Highland Lake. The two public roads that pass by the property are North Highland Lake Road (SR 1783) and Highland Lake Drive (SR 1825). A nearby major subdivision developed by a Lindsey entity is known as Highland Lake Village, which is within the Highland Lake Planned Mixed Use Development.

Located within the Village of Flat Rock near its northeast corner, the lake is approximately 2,400 feet long and varies in width from 200 to 600 feet. Its water source is a mountain stream known as King Creek, a stream that flows northward through the lake and exits at the dam on North Highland Lake Road.

Highland Lake is the historic name of the lake that began as Earle's mill pond near the end of the eighteenth century. It is the name by which the lake was known for the first half of the twentieth century and has been known again since 1985. Today, most people in the community are likely unaware that the Highland Lake property was for thirty years a Catholic retreat center and summer camp or that the lake was then known as Madonna Lake. The records and maps of the U.S. Geological Survey should correctly reflect the name of the lake as it is known today by changing its official identification from Madonna Lake to Highland Lake.

*Robert V. Staton, Mayor  
Village of Flat Rock, North Carolina  
March 20, 2019*



Village of Flat Rock  
North Carolina

Incorporated in 1995

June 6, 2019

Honorable Grady Hawkins  
Chairman  
Henderson County Board of Commissioners  
1 Historic Courthouse Square, Suite 1  
Hendersonville, NC 28792

Re: Highland Lake

Dear Chairman Hawkins:

The impoundment of water located within the Village of Flat Rock that was known historically and is known today as *Highland Lake*, is identified in 1965 and later editions of U.S. Geological Survey topographic maps as *Madonna Lake*. That name originated sometime during the ownership of the lake and the surrounding area by the Roman Catholic Diocese of Raleigh, which acquired the property in 1955 and, for thirty years, operated it as a diocesan retreat center and summer camp. In 1985, when the property was acquired by the Lindsey family, the retreat center and camp became the Highland Lake Inn and Conference Center, and the lake once again became known by its historic name.

We have applied to the U.S. Board of Geographic Names for a change in the records of the U.S. Geological Survey to reflect the historic and current name of the lake as Highland Lake. We are advised that the North Carolina Board on Geographic Names is recommending approval of the change, and that should be confirmed in July at a meeting of the Statewide Mapping Advisory Committee.

In the meantime, we have been asked to obtain from Henderson County an indication of support of the name change, and if that indication of support is in the hands of those considering the request by August 2, the U.S. Board of Geographic Names will be able to vote on the proposal at its meeting on August 8.

Enclosed are copies of my letter of March 20, 2019, to the Executive Secretary for Domestic Geographic Names of the U.S. Geological Survey, a brief history of Highland Lake, and an email message from Matthew O'Donnell by which he advised of the status of our proposal.

Honorable Grady Hawkins  
June 6, 2019  
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We respectfully request the county's support of the name change. If you are so inclined, your approval may be addressed to the Executive Secretary at the address of my March 20 letter, and sent by email to Matthew O'Donnell at [mjodonnell@contractor.usgs.gov](mailto:mjodonnell@contractor.usgs.gov), with a copy to me.

Your assistance in this regard will be very much appreciated.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Bob Staton". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Robert V. Staton  
Mayor

Enclosures

Email address: [mayor@villageofflatrock.org](mailto:mayor@villageofflatrock.org)  
Mobile phone: (828) 606-4020

## Bob Staton

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**From:** O'Donnell, Matthew (Contractor) <mjodonnell@contractor.usgs.gov>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, June 04, 2019 2:11 PM  
**To:** mayor@villageofflatrock.org  
**Cc:** administrator@villageofflatrock.org  
**Subject:** your proposal to restore the name Highland Lake

Dear Mayor Staton,

I work with Jennifer Runyon in the Board on Geographic Names offices and I am in charge of your proposal to restore the name of Madonna Lake to Highland Lake. In your communication with Jennifer, you offered to ask Henderson County for their support. Have you been able to obtain their support? If you like, I would be happy to contact them myself.

The North Carolina Board on Geographic Names is recommending approval of the change, and that should be confirmed in July at the Statewide Mapping Advisory Committee meeting. If we have support from the county in hand by August 2nd, the US BGN will be able to vote on your proposal on August 8th.

Please let me know if you have any questions and I look forward to hearing from you.

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/fax: 703.648.4553 / 703.648.4549  
Email: [mjodonnell@contractor.usgs.gov](mailto:mjodonnell@contractor.usgs.gov) (\*\*please note new email address\*\*)  
Room 1C112 (in library offices)

# HENDERSON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

1 Historic Courthouse Square, Suite 1  
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www.hendersoncountync.gov

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June 19, 2019

Executive Secretary for Domestic Geographic Names  
U.S. Geological Survey  
12001 Sunrise Valley Drive  
Reston, VA 20191-0523

Dear Sir or Madam;

At the June 19, 2019 regularly scheduled meeting of the Henderson County Board of Commissioners, the Board voted unanimously to support the request of the Village of Flat Rock to change the identification of the impoundment of water located within the Village of Flat Rock to the historically known name of Highland Lake, previously identified in 1965 and later editions of U.S. Geological Survey topographic maps as Madonna Lake.

Sincerely,

Grady Hawkins, Chairman

cc: Mayor Robert Staton, Village of Flat Rock  
Matt O'Donnell, Contractor in support of U.S. Board on Geographic Names