

DIVISION F / Working Group for Small Body Nomenclature Working Group for Small Body Nomenclature

CHAIR	Jana TICHA (Czech Republic)
VICE-CHAIR	Keith NOLL (USA)
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	Jin ZHU (China)
	Nader HAGHIGHIPOUR - Pres.of Div. F, ex officio member

THE TRIENNIAL REPORT (2015 Sept 1 - 2018 Feb 15)

1. Introduction

The Working Group for Small Body Nomenclature of The Division F Planetary Systems and Bioastronomy of The International Astronomical Union

The WG-SBN has a responsibility for naming of small bodies (except of satellites of major planets) in the Solar System. It covers naming of minor planets including Near Earth Objects and Transneptunian Objects, comets, dwarf planets (just these bodies together with the WG-PSN) and satellites of minor planets. The WG-SBN is working in a close cooperation with the Minor Planet Center of the IAU, which serves as the collection point for new name proposals and which publishes the approved names and citations via its *Minor Planet Circulars*. This connection is effectively realized by Gareth V. Williams, the Associate Director of the Minor Planet Center, who serves as the Secretary of the WG-SBN. There is an excellent long-time experience with this reasonable cooperation.

2. MEMBERSHIP

The membership of the WG-SBN consisted of 13 members during the triennium. The list shows that the WG-SBN membership is nicely distributed regarding both geography and gender. Two long-term WG members died during the triennium: Lutz Schmadel (Germany), on 2016 Oct. 21; and Michael A'Hearn (U.S.A.), on 2017 May 29. Due to the small membership, there is no official Organizing Committee (OC), although the Chair, Secretary and Vice-Chair work as the OC, if necessary.

3. REPORT OF ACTIVITIES

The number of numbered minor planets increased by 1820 (from 19402 to 21221) since the last General Assembly. The WG members work continually on the approval process using the special web-based voting system maintained at the Minor Planet Center of the IAU. Special proposals and controversial proposal cases are discussed either via e-mail exchange or via comments in the web-based system. "Some of the most interesting new minor-planet names approved during the triennium include Neptune Trojan (385571) Otera = 2004 UP1, Hayabusa mission target (162173) Ryugu = 1999 JU3; (15760) Albion; (624) Hektor I = Skamandrios = S/2006 (624) 1; and groups of objects named for OSIRIS-Rex mission team members and participants in the 2017 ACM meeting. A new guideline was adopted for the naming Neptunian Trojans: the names of Amazons will be used, with no differentiation between objects at L4 and L5. The discovery of the first definite interstellar object required the introduction of a new designation system. Discussions between the IAU EC via the General Secretary, the Division F President, and the co-chairs and secretary of the WG led to the assignment of the designation 1I and the name 'Oumuamua to the object provisionally designated A/2017 U1.

The WG-SBN also deals with comet naming. The majority of newly-discovered comets are named by the MPC shortly after discovery, using the comet-naming guidelines. More complicated cases are discussed via e-mail and votes are cast via the web. This process was applied to C/2017 E2 (Tsuchinshan), and C/2017 O1 (ASASSN).

The preliminary version of the newly-hosted WG-SBN website is at <http://www.klet.org/csbn/> which will be replaced by <http://www.klet.org/wgsbn/>

It contains basic information about the WG, about naming of minor planets and comets as well as direct links to the particular webpages of the Minor Planet Center including the list of named minor planets and so on. The work on this website continues.

4. PROPOSAL TO CONTINUE THE WORKING GROUP FOR SMALL BODY NOMENCLATURE(WG-SBN)

Small solar system body nomenclature has been an important, publically-visible and occasionally controversial topic for a long time. It is a useful means to communicate astronomy for public. It builds a connections between planetary science and arts, beauty and society.

The WG-SBN is necessary to handle an increasing numer of name proposals for minor planets, to approve suitable proposals, to exclude proposals of bad taste (commercial, political, military and other controversial ones) and/or proposals with technical problems (similarity of name, quality of citation). Special attention is given to objects having unusual orbits (NEOs, TNOs, Trojans), space mission targets, targets of deep physical studies and so on. As already noted, the WG-SBN works in close cooperation with the IAU Minor Planet Center, so newly approved names and citations are published in the Minor Planet Circulars as well as at webpages of the Minor Planet Center. The WG also is closely connected to the WG-PSN, when dealing with names of dwarf planets. The WG is the successor body to the Committee for Small Body Nomenclature, which was itself a successor to the Commission 20 Minor Planet Names Committee (created in 1979).

An essential task of the WG-SBN is to refine naming guidelines depending on continual changes both in science and society. Last, but by no means least, the existence of the WG-SBN is necessary to prevent the creation of commercial entities offering to name minor

planets for a fee, similar to the existing “star registries”. Consequently, the WG-SBN must be continued as a stand-alone entity.

Jana Ticha

The Chair of the WG-SBN of the IAU