

## HOW TO CHECK GEOLOGIC NAMES

### Background

In the past, a full-time WRD person at the Director's approval level performed a geologic names review of all reports that included a discussion of the lithology, stratigraphy, and (or) geologic structure of an area. Due to budget cuts, reorganization, and the demise of the Geologic Names Committee, that position has not been filled since about 1995. There was a national workshop led by Sy Subitzky and Steve Craigg in 1996 concerning geologic and aquifer nomenclature. I have a copy of the handout from this workshop but I don't think it will be very useful for our purposes, especially now that we have the GEOLEX database (see below). As it stands now, an individual within each District in Northeastern Region is supposed to review the geologic names in any District reports that contain geologic names. I checked with the other Regional Reports Specialists and they are following the same procedure of within- District checking of the geologic names.

### What should be checked?

1. name spelled correctly, including proper capitalization if it is a formal<sup>a</sup> geologic name (for example, "Niagara Falls Member," not "Niagara Falls member")
2. make sure a reference is cited if the term used is not a USGS-accepted term
3. correct lithologic modifier (for example, "Goat Island Dolomite," not "Goat Island Limestone")
4. correct stratigraphic rank (for example, "Niagara Falls Member," not "Niagara Falls Formation")
5. correct geologic age (for example, "Silurian," not "Ordovician")

<sup>a</sup> A formally named unit is one that has been named according to an established classification system such as the North American Stratigraphic Code. The first letter of the rank (for example, "Member") or lithologic term (for example, "Goat Island Dolomite") is capitalized if it is a formal name. Informal names are used for economic and scientific purposes. They are appropriate for most economic units (aquifers, coal beds, etc.), units defined by unconventional criteria, and for units that are too thin to show at typical map scales. Informal geologic units are designated with nouns, adjectives, geographic terms, and lithologic terms that are not capitalized (for example, Zenone coal seam).

### How can I find out the above information about a specific geologic name?

1. Every District should have a copy of the CD-ROM "Stratigraphic nomenclature databases for the United States, its possessions, and territories." This was published in 1996 and is DDS-6, release 3 of "U.S. Geological Survey Digital Data Series."
2. The National Geologic Map Database Geologic Names Lexicon "GEOLEX" is online at [http://ngmsvr.wr.usgs.gov/Geolex/geolex\\_home.html](http://ngmsvr.wr.usgs.gov/Geolex/geolex_home.html). This is a search tool for lithologic and geochronologic unit names. As of March 2004, it has over 16,000 entries and includes 90% of the unit names from the above CD-ROM. It is a rapid, user-friendly search tool.