

# Domestic Geographic Name Report

1 Use this form to recommend a feature name or to suggest a name change.

2. For features on Federal lands, coordinate requests with the agency (U.S. Forest Service, National Park Service, Bureau of Land Management, etc.) For the administrative area in which the land is located.

3. On the reverse side of this form give information on the local usage and authority for recommended name.

4. For more information about the Geographic Names Information System or the National Gazetteer Program, contact the U.S. Board on Geographic Names at 703-648-4544.

5. Return this form to:

Executive Secretary for Domestic Geographic Names  
U.S. Geological Survey  
523 National Center  
Reston, VA 22092

**Action Requested:**

|                     |                                     |
|---------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Proposed New Name:  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Application Change: | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| Name Change:        | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| Other:              | <input type="checkbox"/>            |

|                              |                                   |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <b>Recommended Name:</b>     | Bergh Peak                        |
| <b>State:</b>                | Alaska                            |
| <b>County or Equivalent:</b> | Denali Borough                    |
| <b>Administrative Area:</b>  | Denali National Park and Preserve |

**Specific Area Covered:**

|            |    |             |     |          |     |          |           |             |           |   |    |   |    |   |   |
|------------|----|-------------|-----|----------|-----|----------|-----------|-------------|-----------|---|----|---|----|---|---|
| Latitude:  | 63 | °           | 29  | '        | 03  | "        | N         | Longitude:  | 150       | ° | 11 | ' | 19 | " | W |
| Latitude:  |    | °           |     | '        |     | "        |           | Longitude:  |           | ° |    | ' |    | " |   |
| Center:    |    |             |     |          |     |          |           | Heading End |           |   |    |   |    |   |   |
| Section(s) | 36 | Township(s) | 16S | Range(s) | 14W | Meridian | Fairbanks | Elevation   | 5,497 ft. |   |    |   |    |   |   |

|   |  |    |   |         |  |                           |  |      |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|---|--|----|---|---------|--|---------------------------|--|------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| <b>Type of Feature</b> (stream, mountain, populated place, etc.):   |  |    |   |         |  |                           |  | Peak |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| <b>Is the feature identified (including other names) in the Geographic Names Information System (GNIS)?</b> |  |    |   |         |  |                           |  |      |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Yes   |  | No | X | Unknown |  | If Yes, how is it listed? |  |      |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| <b>Description of Feature (physical shape, length, width, direction of flow, etc.):</b>                     |  |    |   |         |  |                           |  |      |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

The peak is near mile 60 of the Denali Park Road. It is 2.3 miles north-northeast of Stony Dome, 5.8 miles west-southwest of Divide Mountain. The summit proposed to be named Bergh Peak is located one mile northeast of the site where Bergh Lake was. From the peak you can see the airplane crash site and former Bergh Lake site.

| Maps and other sources using recommended name (include scale and date). | Other name (variants) | Maps and other sources using other name or application (include scale and date). |
|---|-----------------------|--|
|   |                       |  |
|   |                       |  |
|   |                       |  |
|   |                       |  |

**Name information such as origin, meaning of the recommended name, historical significance, biographic data (if commemorative), nature of usage or application, and any other pertinent information:**

Knute Bergh was born in Washington in 1909 and served as an Army flight instructor during World War II. After the war, he moved to Bellingham, Washington and started a local air service. When business was slow during the summer months, Bergh did contract work flying in Alaska. In 1953 he was hired by the U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey to fly mapping surveys in Mt. McKinley National Park. In June that year he was flying a Super Cub with surveyor Lt. Gordon Scott to check a possible landing site near the Stony Creek bridge in the park. The plane crashed and both men were killed. The name Scott Peak was proposed for a summit ten miles south of the crash site to commemorate Scott, and the U.S. Board of Geographic Names approved the name in December 1953.

About a month after the crash, an earthquake following a heavy rain caused a landslide that blocked Stony Creek near the bridge, forming a lake. According to Bergh's widow, the Park superintendent at the time wrote a memo in which he stated, "No doubt, Mrs. Knute H. Bergh and her three children wonder why their husband and father, who was killed while piloting the plane in which he and Scott crashed, did not merit the same honors accorded Lt. Scott," and "We think that the new lake would be a splendid way to honor Mr. Bergh." The name Bergh Lake was in local use by USGS surveyors in 1954 and added in 1957 to the topographic map.

By the late 1980s the lake had dried up and the GNIS entry was updated to make it "historical". While driving tourist buses in the park, Wayne Iverson, the name proposer, met Bergh's sons and determined another nearby feature should be named for Bergh. The proposer contacted the family and offered to try to get a new feature named for Bergh. The proposed Bergh Peak, and the historic Bergh Lake, are in the Denali Wilderness, but near the park road. The applicant stated that the area adjacent to the park road, although in the wilderness boundary, is "less pristine" due to the dust and noise produced by vehicles on the road. He also believes the name should be applied because Bergh has been honored by a name for a feature that no longer exists and that "the naming would also provide unique educational opportunities and a nice human interest story."

|  |     |                          |    |                                     |                                       |  |
|--|-----|--------------------------|----|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|
| <b>Is the recommended name in local usage?</b> | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | No | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | If Yes, approximately how many years? |  |
|--|-----|--------------------------|----|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|

**Is there local opposition to, or conflict with the recommended name (as located)?**

The peak is within a federally designated wilderness area in Denali National Park.

**For proposed new name, please provide evidence that feature is unnamed:**

No name for the peak is in the USGS Geographic Names Information System (GNIS) or on the USGS Denali B-1, 1:63,360 topographic map.

**Additional information:**

Denali Borough, 2,14,2018 – resolution in support of naming Bergh Peak.  
 Sandra Brightbill, Okanogan, Washington, 2.10.2018 – supports name, Bergh family lives in county  
 Clay Walker (Mayor, Denali Borough), 1.17,2018 – personally supports name

Proposal sent with a letter indicating to endorse or oppose the proposed name a response must be in writing to:

- Denali National Park and Preserve, Superintendent
- National Park Service, U.S. Board of Geographic Names representative
- Native Village of Cantwell, President
- Ahtna, Inc.

The Alaska Historical Commission will review this proposed name at their April 4, 2018 meeting.

|  |   |               |      |
|--|---|---------------|------|
| Copy submitted by: Name (first, M.I., last)                              | Title   | Phone (day)   | Date |
| Wayne Iverson  |   | 405.740.8480  |      |
| Company or Agency  | Address (city, State, and Zip)                                      |               |      |
| liciawayne@prodigy.net   | 925 Maple Dr., Salida, Colorado 81201                               |               |      |
| Copy Prepared by (if other than above)                                   | Title   | Phone (day)   | Date |
| Joan M. Antonson   | Deputy SHPO   | 907. 269.8721 |      |
| Company or Agency  | Address (city, State, and Zip)                                      |               |      |
| Alaska Department of Natural Resources/Office of History and Archaeology | 550 West 7 <sup>th</sup> Ave., Suite 1310, Anchorage, AK 99501-3565 |               |      |

## Bergh Biography

Knute Bergh was born near Republic, Washington in 1909. Knute's father, Thorston, was born in 1861 in Norway and emigrated in 1885 when he was 24. He first homesteaded in the Red River Valley in Montana with a partner in the late 1800s. The partner was deathly afraid of snakes. A year later, they came upon a den of rattlesnakes and the partner quit. Thorston couldn't run the homestead by himself, so he continued moving west by foot. He got to Republic and it reminded him of Norway, so he petitioned to get a homestead there. He and another man were in competition for the same property, so they had a horse race to determine who got the land. He said it was the unluckiest day of his life because he won. He said he made the wrong choice because another property he could have had was way more productive. He married Kristine Sather in 1901 in Stevens, Washington. Kristine was born in 1871 in Norway and emigrated in 1877 when she was 6. Knute had five siblings. Tom, Myrtle, and Evelyn were older. Hans and Christine were younger. Kristine died in 1912, not long after their sixth child was born. Knute's father worked as a miner and logger in Republic. Knute owned a successful service station with a partner. He went to a barnstorming exhibition and fell in love with flying, becoming a pilot at a young age and a member of the local Republic Flying Club. When World War II broke out, Knute was too old to be an Army pilot, however the Army was desperate for flight instructors, so he served his country in that way – as an AP1 Air Pilot First Class. He was stationed in Bend, Oregon, Walla Walla, Washington and Omaha, Nebraska.

While stationed in Bend, he met his future wife. Irene Jacobson was born in 1921 and raised in Stacyville in north central Iowa. Her maternal grandfather, Simon Hanson, came by boat from Norway by himself at age seven. Irene had four younger brothers, Dick, Bob, Jimmy, and Larry. She graduated from Osage High School in 1939 and got a job as a secretary. The mother of her best friend, Helen, was moving to Bend to manage a restaurant so Irene decided to go there and work for her as a waitress. Knute and Irene were married in Bend in early 1943 and their first son, Brian, was born in Walla Walla later that same year. Son Roger was born in 1946 and Bob in 1951. Brian was single, got a college degree, and worked for Washington State Employment and the family orchard. He died unexpectedly in 2016. Roger married Carol and they have two children, Stephanie and Michael, and one grandson. Roger had a military career and lives in Statesboro, Georgia. Bob married Robin and they have two children, Anna and Erik, and one grandchild, Cecelia, as well. Bob lives in Tonasket, Washington and owns and operates an orchard.

After the war, the Berghs moved to Odessa, Washington where Knute and a partner, Kenneth Foote, did crop dusting for a while. The family then relocated to Bellingham, Washington where Knute operated the Bellingham Air Service with Foote. Business was slow in the summertime so Knute began travelling to Alaska to do contract work. In 1952 he flew Republic RC-3 Seabees between Nome and Kotzebue, Alaska. In 1953, he hired on with the U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey, doing work around what was then Mt. McKinley National Park.

The major contractor for the Coast and Geodetic Survey was a man name Brown, who the previous year and brought up fifteen Super Cubs from the lower 48. Knute went up to Alaska early in 1953 to get the planes out of cold storage and get them ready for the season. In June 1953 he was flying with surveyor Lt. Gordon Scott checking out a potential landing site near the Stony Creek bridge in the park. He crashed there and both he and Lt. Scott were killed. About a month later there was a deluge, an earthquake, and a landslide that blocked Stony Creek downstream of the bridge. A lake formed behind it that was officially named Bergh Lake in 1954. By the late 1980s, it had drained out. A mountain was named for Scott in 1954. Knute is buried in Oroville, Washington, just north of Tonasket.

After Knute died, Irene and the three boys moved to Tonasket, Washington (forty miles west of Republic) to be closer to Knute's family. Once there, Irene purchased an orchard in 1955 and with the help of the boys, operated it for years. Irene later married Leland Robinson, who worked in sawmills in the area. They still live on a portion of the orchard Irene bought in 1955.

Several nice quotes about Knute Bergh appeared in the official records. In a memorandum to the Region Four Director of the Park Service, Grant Pearson, Mt. McKinley Park Superintendent, wrote, "Mr. Dick Peck, pilot of the USGS helicopter operating in the park this summer, said he received his aviation from Pilot Bergh, and spoke very highly of him, saying Pilot Bergh had made several hazardous mercy flights in the states, and that he was respected by all who knew him." One of his mercy flights was to fly a polar bear cub from Alaska to the Woodland Zoo in Seattle, Washington. The cage was not too secure and the cub rocked him all over the place. That bear later became the zoo's star attraction for many years. Bradford Washburn of the Boston Museum of Science and Knute's boss at the time of his death wrote that, "I had only known him for about a week, but I had got to like him a great deal and we made three very interesting flights together."











PROPOSED "BERGH PEAK"

5,497 ft



6,180 ft.

HIGH POINT

LAND-SLIDE  
OCCURRED  
HERE

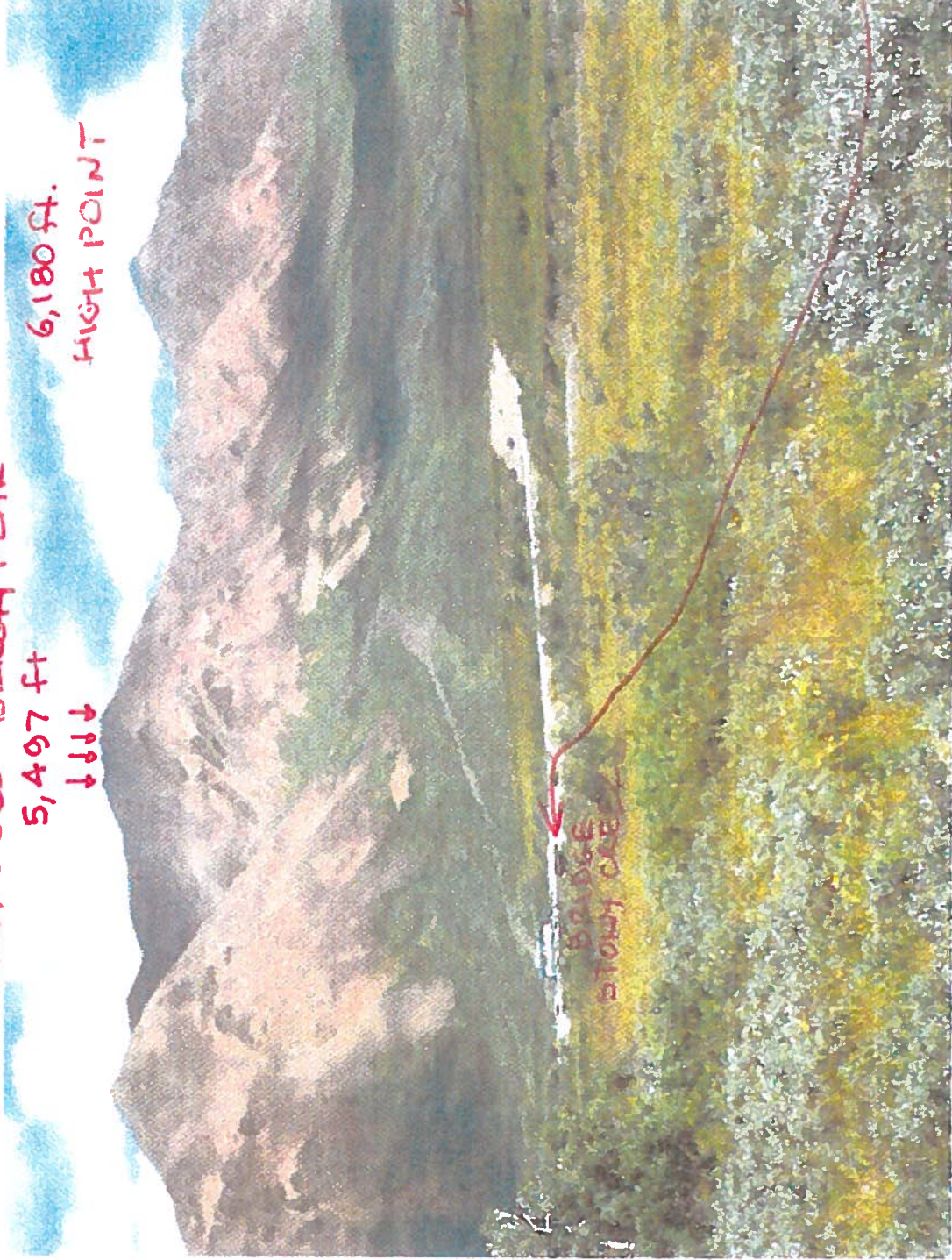
BERGH  
LAKE WAS  
ABOUT  
HERE

BASK KNUTE'S  
WING HIT

STONY CREEK  
BRIDGE

BRIDGE  
STONY CREEK

PHOTO 1



# DENALI BOROUGH

PO Box 480 – Healy, AK 99743  
Phone (907) 683-1330 – Fax (907) 683-1340  
dbgovt@mtaonline.net – www.denaliborough.org



## DENALI BOROUGH, ALASKA RESOLUTION NO. 18-03

### A RESOLUTION BY THE DENALI BOROUGH ASSEMBLY SUPPORTING THE TRANSFER OF THE NAME BERGH FROM A LAKE TO A PEAK WITHIN THE DESIGNATED WILDERNESS AREA OF DENALI NATIONAL PARK.

**WHEREAS**, the Denali Park Road corridor, which travels primarily through the designated Denali Wilderness, is located entirely within the Denali Borough; and

**WHEREAS**, the Denali Borough Assembly is the governing body of the Denali Borough; and

**WHEREAS**, in June 1953, Pilot Knute Bergh and Lt. Gordon Scott were killed in a plane crash near the Stony Creek Bridge of the Denali Park Road; and

**WHEREAS**, in August 1953, a landslide blocked the channel of Stony Creek, which led to the formation of a new lake; and

**WHEREAS**, in 1954, Superintendent Grant Pearson approved the naming of a nearby peak "Scott Peak" and the new lake "Bergh Lake", writing "We feel that the new lake would be a splendid way to honor Mr. Bergh"; and

**WHEREAS**, in 1988, Bergh Lake drained out, and today this area is unassociated with the name Bergh; and

**WHEREAS**, the Bergh family has requested the name be transferred to a nearby unnamed peak which overlooks the area; and

**WHEREAS**, the Wilderness Names Policy of the United States Geologic Survey (USGS) Board of Geographic Names (BGN) states that no new names in wilderness area will be approved unless reason is provided for such an exemption.

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, the Denali Borough supports the transference of the name Bergh from the obsolete lake to the identified nearby peak.



**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, the Denali Borough believes this circumstance, where a named physical formation no longer exists, provides ample cause for such an exemption of the Wilderness Names Policy.

PASSED AND APPROVED by the Denali Borough Assembly this 14<sup>th</sup> day of February, 2018

  
MAYOR CLAY WALKER

ATTEST:   
AMBER RENSHAW, BOROUGH CLERK

PASSED UNANIMOUSLY  
ABSENT: ZAPPONE, HOLMES

