

Working Group on Planetary Systems Nomenclature (WGPSN)

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1. Activities in the Last Triennium

Since the IAU General Assembly in Sydney in July 2003, the WGPSN has conducted its business through numerous e-mail exchanges between the members. A nomenclature workshop was held at Hardingasete, western Norway on September 1–3, 2005. That meeting was attended by eight members from the WG and two from the Task Groups (TG) for the small bodies and for the outer solar system. Input to the meeting had also been received by e-mail from other members.

The purpose of the meeting was not to discuss individual nomenclature but to review categories for names and the guidelines and rules by which the WG and its TG's operate.

2. New Nomenclature

By September 2005 184 names on surface features on planets, asteroids and satellites, including 45 on Titan, have been provisionally approved by the WGPSN since the last IAU GA. Several satellites of Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus and Neptune have also been named. All these names, and additional ones to be assigned before the IAU GA in Prague in August 2006, are awaiting final IAU approval in Prague. The IAU approved names will be published in the IAU Transactions from that meeting. Immediately upon approval by the WGPSN, all provisional names are entered in the *Gazetteer of Planetary Nomenclature* on the web site <http://planetarynames.wr.usgs.gov>.

More than 7000 small craters on the Moon have been marked on maps by letters surrounding the names of bigger craters. Such lettered craters were approved by the IAU in 1964 but revoked in 1973. Despite this, Lunar scientists strongly support IAU approval for the lettered craters which are widely used and well entrenched in the literature; they appear in the 1982 NASA Catalog of Lunar Nomenclature and can be seen, e.g., in the 2004 Clementine Atlas of the Moon. The WGPSN decided to reinstitute the lettered craters which will be incorporated into the *Gazetteer of Planetary Nomenclature*.

The successes of the Cassini/Huygens and Deep Impact missions have created a need for defining name categories for surface features on Saturn's satellite Titan and on the comet 9P/Tempel:

On Titan:

- Albedo features: Sacred or enchanted places, paradise, or celestial realms from legends, myths, stories, and poems of cultures from around the world
- Craters and ringed features: Gods and goddesses of wisdom
- Facula: Names of islands on Earth that are not politically independent
- Faculae: Names of archipelagos
- Flumina: Names of mythical or imaginary rivers

- Lacus: Lakes on Earth, preferably with a shape similar to the lacus on Titan
 - Other features (maculae, regiones, and arcus): Deities of happiness, peace, and harmony from world cultures
 - Virgae: Gods and goddesses of rain
- On comets:
- Features on cometary nuclei may be named for scientific use

3. Changes in WGPSN Rules and Guidelines

At Hardingasete a thorough review was made of the way in which the WG and TG's are appointed and operate, and of the guidelines for assigning new nomenclature to the planetary bodies. The details can be found on the afore-mentioned web site. The lack of response from some WG and TG members to e-mails is of concern. This has made it necessary to adopt more specific rules for appointment and dismissal of WG and TG members and for their obligations:

- The WG chair and WG members are appointed by the IAU Division III.
- The WG chair is the final authority in all nomenclature proposals and bases his/her decision on advice from the WG membership.
- New members of the WG should make themselves fully aware of all nomenclature rules and guidelines of the WG and of each of the TG's. The WG chair shall assure that all new members are so notified.
- TG chairs are appointed by the WG chair.
- TG members are appointed by the WG chair in consultation with the TG chair.
- TG's operate as consultants to the WG. The WG is under no formal obligation to accept the recommendations of TG's and, when deemed necessary, can adopt nomenclature without consulting the TG's.
- New members of the TG's should make themselves fully aware of all rules and guidelines relating to their TG's. The TG chair shall assure that all new members are so notified.
- The WG chair shall conduct an annual review of all TG chairs for their level of participation. TG chairs who are unwilling or unable to carry out their responsibilities will be replaced by the WG chair with an acting chair until such time that the problem can be resolved or a permanent replacement can be appointed.
- The WG chair shall conduct an annual review of all TG members in consultation with the TG chairs. Non-responsive TG members will be given a warning by the WG chair. TG members who remain unresponsive will be replaced by the WG chair in consultation with the TG chair.

K. Aksnes
Chairperson of the Working Group