

*LaBarque Creek, Missouri - recap of the official naming process**(This is an update of the original document dated July 25, 2014).***Background:**

By far the easiest way to name to officially name a geographic place is to define its physical borders, and gather support to incorporate the place as a city or village. The chosen name is then automatically added to maps and other reference materials over time.

However, it is no small task to gather support to incorporate a place. And, while there are benefits to incorporation there are numerous requirements which need to be met.

Here then is a recap of our step by step experience relating to **officially naming** the area now known as **LaBarque Creek, Missouri**.

In 2004 several Missouri State Agencies, Jefferson County officials and East West Gateway representatives convened a series of meetings in which a large number of property owners and NGO's were invited to participate. Several objectives were agreed upon. Among them to convey the pristine character of the area and begin developing a set of planning objectives and guidelines for future protection and enhancement of the **LaBarque Creek Watershed**.

As a result of these meetings on October 28, 2009 **the LaBarque Creek Watershed Conservation Plan** was signed and became the official document for preservation and conservation.

Naming a Geographic Place:

Name selection -

The area known as the LaBarque Creek Watershed is an unincorporated place located entirely within northwest Jefferson County, Missouri. It is part of the greater St. Louis metropolitan area and comprises approximately 13 square miles with a population of about 1400 residents. *However, the area is known mostly by mailing addresses which include some five zip codes and municipalities and parts of three counties. Thus confusion existed and continues over the actual location of said 1400 residents.*

One of the early stated "planning objectives" was to help establish a "**Sense of Place**" in the watershed. This lead to the concept of "Officially" naming the area. It was agreed that it made sense to name the area after the watershed which had already been identified as an "official geographic feature". The name LaBarque Creek, Missouri was then agreed upon.

The Naming Process -

Officially naming a geographic place is something none of us had done before. So we started at square one. In this case square one seemed logically to be the **Director of Planning, Development and Code Enforcement for Jefferson County**, Martin Toma . Mr. Toma thought it might be a good idea to contact the US Bureau of the Census to see if that agency could help. We then contacted the Bureau of Census in Kansas City and explained our request. And the timing could not have been better. We received a prompt reply requesting information about our area so Census Bureau geographers could delineate the LaBarque Creek Watershed as a "**Census Designated Place**" and be part of the 2010 US Census.

The willingness of the US Bureau to work with us was both a pleasant surprise and a big boost. We then furnished aerial photos and maps and all related data available. We stressed that the entire watershed lie within one county - Jefferson County and not parts of three counties as is the case with our zip codes.

The US Postal Service was also contacted. First the postmaster of each of the five zip codes serving parts of our area were contacted by letter stating the desire to have LaBarque Creek, MO recognized as an official mailing address. Many weeks later, a reply came from the St. Louis office that our request was under consideration. Much

later we received a letter from the **US Gateway District** office stating that our request would be granted “administratively” but cautioning that a new name may slow mail delivery at times. Further they stressed the need to have LaBarque Creek, MO recognized as having a legal boundary description or other legal status.

In pursuit of further legal recognition the office of the **Secretary of State** in Jefferson City was contacted to learn of other requirement to be addressed in having LaBarque Creek, Missouri become the official designation for our geographic area. We were advised that the Missouri Board on Geographic Names (MOBGN) was the appropriate agency to contact and we were put in touch with the Secretary of that board.

MOBGN functions as a commission, (and is the Missouri branch of the USGS), which makes recommendations in favor or opposed to new geographic names in Missouri. Its membership of some 18 persons is made up of Geographers, Historians, Civil Engineers, University Professors and a range of others with encyclopedic knowledge of the State of Missouri. We were duly impressed with this board and the comprehensive nature of its review of each proposed name to be considered.

We were asked by the Secretary to fill out an appropriate form which was available on-line. Then to submit as much informational possible in support of the proposed geographic name. Particular emphasis was place on having support of the proposed name by Jefferson County officials and other agencies as well as letters of support from area property owners.

Following the November 2009 hearing of our case by the Board and its favorable recommendation, our request together with the MOBGN recommendation was then forwarded to the **United States Geographic Survey (USGS) Board** in **Washington DC** for final acceptance.

On June 14, 2010 we received word from the Missouri Board on Geographic Names that at a regular meeting held June 10, 2010 the United States Geographic Survey Board approved the name LaBarque Creek, Missouri as a “Populated Place” and the official name of our geographic area.

Respectfully submitted by,

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Note:

It is important to note that the days of having your own small post office or even a new zip-code are pretty much over. The US postal Service is operating at a deficit and looking for ways to economize.

Therefore, we will see more consolidation of existing postal facilities and regular postal rate increases to fulfill their mission. Other Information is available at Wikipedia - LaBarque Creek, MO