

UNITED STATES  
BOARD ON GEOGRAPHIC NAMES

Approved

Promulgation authorized  
Executive Secretary  
Domestic Geographic Names

CASE BRIEF (Domestic)

**Six Mile Creek:** stream; 20 mi. long; heads in the Town of Dryden 0.7 mi. ENE of Yellow Barn Hill, 2.9 mi. WNW of Dryden Lake at 42°28'03"N, 76°19'44"W, flows S, W, and NW through Yellow Barn State Forest, Hammond Hill State Forest, the Town of Caroline, the Town of Ithaca, and the City of Ithaca to enter Cayuga Inlet 1 mi. S of the mouth of Fall Creek; the name reportedly comes from a trail used by Native Americans which crossed the stream six miles from its mouth; Tompkins County, New York; 42°26'47"N, 76°30'43"W; USGS map – Ithaca West 1:24,000 (mouth); Not: Sixmile Creek.

[https://geonames.usgs.gov/apex/gazvector.getesrimap?p\\_lat=42.4464617&p\\_longi=-76.5118856&fid=965323](https://geonames.usgs.gov/apex/gazvector.getesrimap?p_lat=42.4464617&p_longi=-76.5118856&fid=965323)

Proposal: to change spelling to recognize local use

Map: USGS Ithaca West 1:24,000 (mouth)

Proponent: Tim Larkin; Brooktondale, NY

Administrative area: Yellow Barn State Forest / Hammond Hill State Forest

Previous BGN Action: None

Names associated with feature:

GNIS: Sixmile Creek (FID 965323)

Local Usage: Six Mile Creek (175 years according to proponent)

Published: Notantakto Creek (Beauchamp, 1907, *Aboriginal Place Names of New York*); Sixmile Creek (USGS 1900, 1906, 1949, 1969, 1978, 1986, 1992, 2010, 2013, 2016; AMS 1950, 1958, 1962, 1965; FEMA 1981, 1985; *A History of the Town of Caroline*, Kone, 1994; Ruth's Waterfalls website, 2005; Sixmile Creek Partners report, 2007; Ithaca Trails webpage, 2017); Six Mile Creek (FEMA 1985; *An Atlas Of The State of New York*, Burr, 1840; *Gazetteer of the State of New York*, French, 1860; *New topographical atlas of Tompkins County, New York*, Stone and Stewart, 1866; *Landmarks of Tompkins County, New York*, Selkreg, 1894; *Atlas of the State of New York*, Bein, 1895; *Ithaca*, Abt, 1926; *A History of the Town of Caroline*, Kone, 1994; City Code of the City of Ithaca, 2017; Town Code of the Town of Ithaca, 2017; City of Ithaca website, 2017; Finger Lakes Land Trust website, 2017; Friends of Six Mile Creek website, 2017; Six Mile Creek Watershed website, 2017 [by the proponent]); Six-Mile Creek (*History of Tioga, Chemung, Tompkins and Schuyler counties, New York*, 1879; Finger Lakes Land Trust website, 2017); Teegastoweas Creek ("Map of Ulysses Township", de Witt, 1790)

Case Summary: This proposal is to change the spelling of the name of Sixmile Creek, a 20-mile-long stream in Tompkins County, to Six Mile Creek. The stream flows through the Town of Dryden, the Town of Caroline, the Town of Ithaca, and the City of Ithaca. The proponent states that the name Six Mile Creek has been used locally for at least 175 years and provided evidence of its usage until USGS maps labeled it Sixmile Creek in 1900. A historic marker in the Town of Caroline gives the origin of the name: "The ancient Indians 'Warrior's Trail' to Owego crossed the creek nearby --- 6 miles from the Cascadilla Creek crossing in Ithaca."

The first published name of the stream was Teegastoweas Creek, which appeared on a 1790 map of Ulysses Township (the township was later subdivided). Throughout the 1800s, the name of the stream was consistently Six Mile Creek except for one instance of Six-Mile Creek in 1879. FEMA maps from 1981 and 1985 use the name Sixmile Creek although one 1985 map uses Six Mile Creek. Recent local sources have continued to use Six Mile Creek, although there are some instances of Sixmile Creek and Six-Mile Creek. A locale with the name Six Mile Creek Vineyard is located along the stream.

The City Code of the City of Ithaca includes numerous references to Six Mile Creek when referring to the stream and the watershed; it also mentions the Six Mile Creek Natural Area and Six Mile Creek Gorge, neither of which are in GNIS, as well as the Six Mile Creek Advisory Committee, which was established in 1993 by the city council. The city's website uses Six Mile Creek, although a page links to a report of the Sixmile Creek Partners which uses Sixmile Creek. The Town Code of the Town of Ithaca consistently uses the name Six Mile Creek.

The Caroline Town Historian, who published the 1994 *A History of the Town of Caroline*, supports the proposed change (the 1994 publication used both Sixmile Creek and Six Mile Creek).

Of the 26 streams in New York recorded in GNIS with names such as Sixmile Creek (e.g. Twomile Creek, Threemile Creek, etc.), only two are in the same format as the proposed name: Three Mile Creek in Jefferson County, and Quartermile Creek in Schuyler County.

Proposed by: Tim Larkin; Brooktondale, NY  
Submitted by: same  
Prepared by: M. O'Donnell  
Case ID: 4785  
Reviewed by: J.Runyon

Date: 12/8/17  
Date: same  
Date: 12/28/17  
Quarterly Review List: 430  
Date: 12/29/17