

# Blyn creek, mountains may get 'Misty' moniker

## Owner offers proposals for unnamed geography

BY MICHAEL DASHIELL  
Sequim Gazette

The intersection of genealogy and geography is nothing new for Blyn resident Laura Beitz.

After all — though it is up to some dispute, she said, as a result of lack of documentation — her family was integral to the founding of Elma, a Grays Harbor County town.

So when a culvert on Beitz's Blyn property needed to be replaced and transportation department officials referenced the creek jutting through her property not by its name but by its location, it got her wondering about the creek's name.

Turns out, it doesn't have one.

That spurred Beitz to propose a name to state officials for not only the creek but a small nearby mountain range.

After getting approval this fall from the Washington State Committee on Geographic Names, Beitz says the creek and mountains are one step from being officially known as "Misty Creek" and Misty Mountains.

A fifth-generation Washingtonian, Beitz notes, "my ancestors founded Elma — but there's no paperwork — so I grew up that (interest in local history). Normally people don't think about naming something but because of my family history (I pursued it)," Beitz says.

She bought the Blyn property off Deerhawk Drive in 2001.

About three years ago, state and county officials started looking at replacing a culvert for improved salmon habitat, at the previously unnamed creek, a 3.2-mile long stream that flows west under US Highway 101 and into Sequim Bay. (During the restoration project the waterway was unofficially

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Laura Beitz,  
Blyn resident

referred to as "Chicken Coop Creek" by Washington State Department of Transportation officials the fish barrier removal, state officials note.)

That spurred Beitz to find the name. She checked local resources such as the Clallam County Historical Society and nearby Jamestown Tribal Library, but couldn't find a name for the creek.

"It was really interesting to follow this little trail," Beitz said.

Her next step was with the Department of Natural Resources (DNR), whom Beitz said helped her through the process of filing paperwork to get the creek and mountains named. That paperwork included a detailed description of the area, maps and photos of the property, personal reasoning for the request, signed support for the change from more than a dozen neighbors, and eventually comments from various government officials.

"They would say, 'This is what you need, fill this out,'" Beitz said.

Rather than being bothered by the request, she said DNR officials were "over the moon" and "tickled" as "a lot of people don't get involved in the process."

Beitz also got an education

in the process, working with a Washington state geologist to see if the waterway would qualify as a creek and the nearby topography as mountains.

And when it came to a name, Beitz simply chose a common characteristic — the "mistiness" — of the area.

Misty fog or low-lying clouds are quite common, she said.

"It could even be (misty) in the summertime — not enough to really bother you," she said. "It's mysterious, but not cold, damp. It doesn't stick around most of the day."

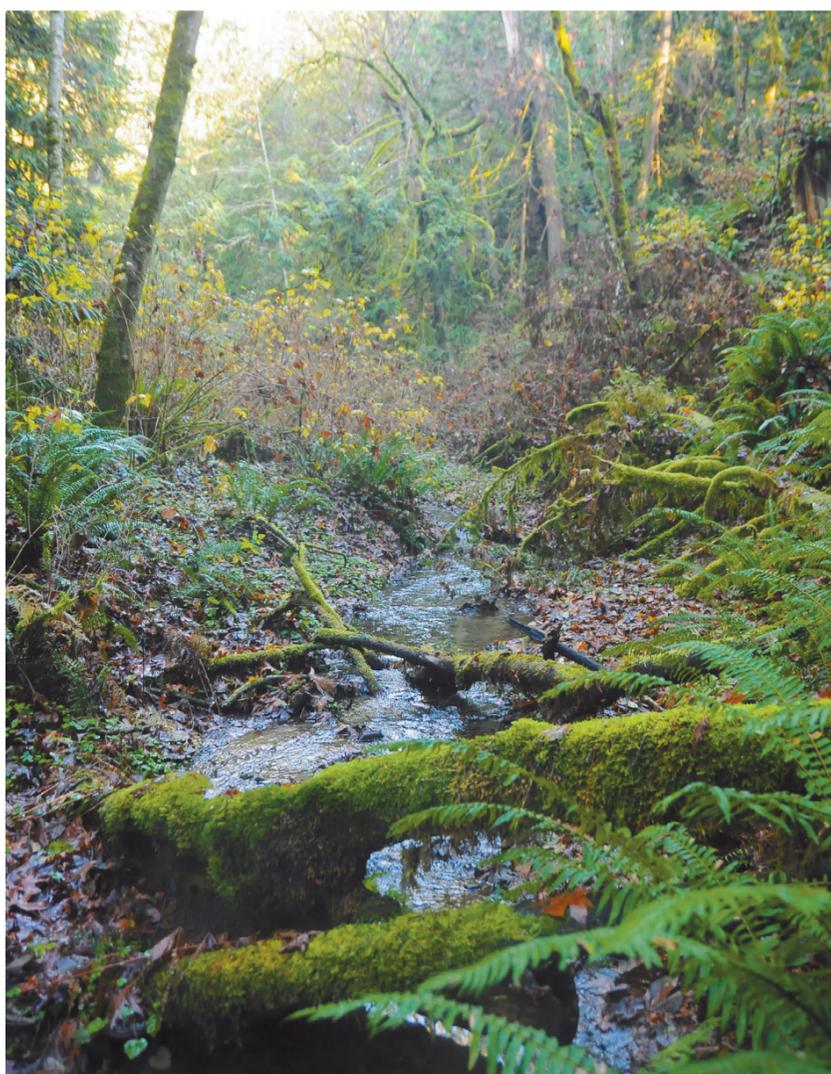
Her selection was helped, she said, that the Misty Mountains is also the name of a range in J.R.R. Tolkien's "Lord of the Rings" fantasy world of Middle Earth, one of Beitz's favorite fictional series.

"It felt natural to name those the Misty Mountains," she said. "I didn't want to offend anyone. I didn't care what we called it. I just wanted it named."

Most neighbors were okay with "Misty," she said, and while some had other ideas in the end no one had serious objection.

Her application was officially filed on Dec. 7, 2017, and received consideration by the Washington State Committee on Geographic Names on May 30 of this year.

The seven-member committee, authorized by state law to establish the official names for the lakes, mountains, streams, places, towns and other geographic features, meets at least twice a year and is chaired by a representative of Commissioner of Public Lands Hilary Franz. It includes representatives of Washington state tribes, the state librarian and the Director of the Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, along with



This unnamed creek that runs through a portion of Laura Beitz's property near Blyn may soon be named Misty Creek after she proposed the name — along with Misty Mountains, for nearby peaks — to the Washington State Committee on Geographic Names. Sequim Gazette photo by Michael Dashiell

three members from the public appointed by Franz.

After deliberation, the committee on Oct. 29 approved the naming of Misty Mountains and Misty Creek, along with these others:

- Nason Bach and Wald Bach, proposed names of two unnamed creeks 20 miles from Leavenworth with names inspired by expanding

the German culture in Leavenworth to the surrounding areas within the postal code.

- Páatstel Creek, the proposed new name for Squaw Creek near Lynden in Whatcom County; the Nooksack Tribe proposed the new name after the historical village that was once located near the creek's headwaters.

According to state officials, names approved by the board are published in the Washington Administrative Code and then forwarded to the United States Board on Geographic Names for federal consideration, along with the state's recommendations.

"I'm expecting to have confirmation letter in January," Beitz said.

## Cranksgiving wheels in 2,400 pounds-plus for food bank

With 46 riders wheeling their way from store to store, the ninth-annual Sequim Cranksgiving on Nov. 16 tallied 2,465 pounds and \$323 in cash donations for the Sequim Food Bank, organizer Tom Coonelly reports.

The top team was Team Joe with 890 pounds, followed by WOW No. 2 with 320 pounds, Velo City (Sequim) with 213 pounds, Wheelers with 98 pounds and WOW No. 1 with 51 pounds.

The Big Kahuna award went to Sandy Knute (199 pounds) and Little Kahuna to Ken Stronger (10 pounds).

Denny Bellow took home



With nearly 50 participants, this year's Sequim Cranksgiving event brought in more than 2,400 pounds of food for the Sequim Food Bank. Photo courtesy of Tom Coonelly

the Fastest Finisher award. Port Angeles held its second Cranksgiving and gathered

1,000 pounds of food for the PA Food Bank — up from 400 pounds in its inaugural event.

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