

Approved

Promulgation authorized
Executive Secretary
Domestic Geographic Names

UNITED STATES
BOARD ON GEOGRAPHIC NAMES

CASE BRIEF (Domestic)

Mount Blue Sky: summit; elevation 14,264 ft.; in Mount Evans Wilderness on the boundary of Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forests and Pike and San Isabel National Forests, 1.4 mi. NE of Mount Bierstadt; named for the Arapaho, known as the “Blue Sky People” and the Cheyenne, who have an annual ceremony of renewal of life called “Blue Sky”; Sec 26, T5S, R74W, Sixth Principal Meridian; Clear Creek County, Colorado; 39°35’18”N, 105°38’37”W; USGS map – Mount Evans 1:24,000; Not: Evans Peak, Monte Rosa, Mount Evans, Mount Rosa, Mount Rosalia, Rosa Mountain.
https://geonames.usgs.gov/apex/gazvector.getesrimap?p_lat=39.588228&p_longi=-105.643716&fid=204716

Proposal: to change a name considered offensive

Map: USGS Mount Evans 1:24,000

Proponent: Fred Mosqueda; Concho, OK

Administrative area: Mount Evans Wilderness / Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forests /
Pike and San Isabel National Forests / Denver City and County Parks

Previous BGN Action: None

Names associated with feature:

GNIS: Mount Evans (FID 204716)

Local Usage: Mount Evans (many sources)

Published: Evans Peak (Wheeler, 1879, *Topographical Atlas*); Monte Rosa (Ludlow, 1864, “Reminiscences of an Overlander: Part II” in *The Golden Age*; Hart, 1925, *Fourteen Thousand Feet*); Mount Evans (USGS 1903, 1905, 1957, 1983; AMS 1953, 1957, 1958, 1960, 2011, 2013, 2016; USFS 1970, 1974, 1997, 2012, 2018; Rand McNally, 1879 and onwards; Thayer, 1880, Colorado map; Hayden, 1881, *Geological and Geographical Survey*; Adams and Son, 1887, Colorado map; Gannett, 1906; many other local, state, and national sources, both historical and current); Mount Rosa (Byers, 1890, “Bierstadt’s Visit to Colorado” in *Magazine of Western History*; Hart, 1925, *Fourteen Thousand Feet*; *Denver Post*, 2017); Mount Rosalia (Denver Pacific Railway map, 1868); Mount Rosalie (Hart, 1925, *Fourteen Thousand Feet*; Bright, 1993, *Colorado Place Names*; *Denver Post*, 1987, 2017); Rosa Mountain (USGS)

Case Summary: This proposal is to change the name of Mount Evans in Clear Creek County to Mount Blue Sky. It was submitted as a counterproposal to three earlier proposals to change the name to Mount Cheyenne Arapaho (Review List 432), to change the name to Mount Soule (Review List 435), and to change the name to Mount Rosalie (Review List 441). [The proposal for Mount Cheyenne Arapaho has since been withdrawn and proponent noted that she endorses Mount Blue Sky.]

The name Mount Blue Sky was submitted by the Director of Wilderness Policy at The Wilderness Society, on behalf of the Language & Culture Program, Arapaho Coordinator of the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes, Oklahoma.

The summit’s current name was given in honor of John Evans (1814-1897), the second Territorial Governor of Colorado from 1862 to 1865. The original proposal was to change the name Mount Evans because of Evans’ “part in the infamous Sand Creek Massacre and its subsequent cover up.” The Sand Creek Massacre occurred on November 29th, 1864 when U.S. Cavalry led by Colonel John Chivington attacked a village consisting of Cheyenne and Arapaho who had sought protection near Fort Lyon in

present-day southeastern Colorado. (For more information about the Sand Creek Massacre, John Evans, and Silas Soule, see the Mount Cheyenne Arapaho proposal on Review List 432 (since withdrawn) and the Mount Soule proposal on Review List 435. The Mount Rosalie proposal on Review List 441 provides more background on the various names applied to the summit and nearby peaks by individuals such as Albert Bierstadt, William Byers, Ellsworth Bethel, and John Lathrop Jerome Hart.)

The summit is the fourteenth highest peak in Colorado and located in the Mount Evans Wilderness on the border of the Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forests and the Pike and San Isabel National Forests. Denver City and County Parks manages Summit Lake Park just below the summit. Colorado Parks and Wildlife manages the Mount Evans State Wildlife Area, approximately eight miles east of the summit.

In a joint statement, the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes and The Wilderness Society state, “Evans was roundly condemned, forced to resign in disgrace, and is not deserving of recognition” and “[w]e propose to rename Mt. Evans as Mt. Blue Sky as it signifies the Arapaho as they were known as the Blue Sky People and the Cheyenne who have an annual ceremony of renewal of life called Blue Sky.”

On January 11, 2020, the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes Legislature passed Resolution 8L-RS-2020-01-004, “A Resolution to Support the Renaming of Mt. Evans and the Mt. Evans wilderness area in Colorado to Mt. Blue Sky and Mt. Blue Sky Wilderness Area.” The resolution, which called on the U.S. Congress to change the names, states that “Mt. Evans and the Mt. Evans Wilderness Area stand within the traditional homeland of the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes. . . . The Tribal Council finds that there is no place in Cheyenne and Arapaho homeland or anywhere in Indian Country to honor the perpetrators of atrocities against Native Americans [including Evans].”

U.S. Geological Survey maps have used the name Mount Evans since 1903. Countless other sources have used it since the late 1800s.

Proposed by: Fred Mosqueda; Concho, OK
Submitted by: Paul Spitler; Washington, DC
Prepared by: M. O'Donnell
Case ID: 5479
Reviewed by: J.Runyon

Date: 11/30/20
Date: same
Date: 12/23/20
Quarterly Review List: 442
Date: 12/23/20