Rizeor Lake
Okanogan County - Spelling Clarification

**Township:** 35N  
**Range:** 21E  
**Section:** 28  

**USGS Quad:** Lewis Butte  

**Location Description:** Lake; 7.1 acres; located on WDFW property in the Rendezvous Wildlife Area Unit, part of the Methow Wildlife Area, 2.7 miles NW of the town of Winthrop.

**Proposal Summary:** Proponent would like to correct the spelling of an officially un-named lake located near Winthrop in the Methow Wildlife Area.

The feature appears on the WDFW website and several other websites as "Riser Lake". According to the proponent's research, the name commemorates Henry Rizeor (b. 1849). Mr. Rizeor homesteaded on the property surrounding the lake, and used the lake for irrigation purposes.

**Proponent:**  
Scott Stluka  
PO Box 1186  
Twisp, WA 98856

**Proposal Received:**  
**Initial Consideration:**  
**Final Consideration:**  
**WA Committee Decision:**  
**WA Board Decision:**  
**US Board Decision:**

**Opinions:**
WASHINGTON STATE
Geographic Name Application

Proposed Name: RIZEOR LAKE

County: OKANOGAN

Township: 35N Range: 21E Section(s): 28

Lat. 48.5064° N, Long. 120.2205° W (Begin)

Lat. _____________ N, Long. _____________ W (End)

Description

Type of feature (lake, stream, etc.): LAKE

Description of feature (location, length, depth, height, size and/or area covered): 20 ACRES, 10'- Deep

WDFW RENDEZVOUS UNIT - 3,180 acre

If a stream, number of months it flows on a yearly basis: /

Is this feature identified by other names or spellings? Please list variant names:

RISER LAKE

Has it ever been signed, posted, or publicized? If so, when? YES, WDFW, Methow Trails Assoc

History

Please provide a brief history of the feature and its immediate surroundings, this might include information on the following: 1 Native American; 2 First settlers; 3 Historical background pertinent to feature; 4 History on how the land is/was used; 5 Natural disasters (floods, fires, etc.) 6 Any significant cultural events. If appropriate, geology, flora and fauna. Cite sources. Use additional pages if needed.

Origin of name: SEE ATTACHED HISTORY DOCUMENT

If a commerative name, provide a brief summary of the ENTIRE life of the person including how and the length of time he/she was associated with the proposed feature:
Justification of Proposed Name

What is the usage of feature? BIRDS, WILDLIFE, AMPHIBIANS, REPTILES, ASPENS AND SHRUB STEPPE, RECREATIONAL TRAILS, ICE SKATING.

Please state why the proposed name will best serve the public interest:

THE CURRENT NAME (RISER LAKE) IS WRONG. LOCAL PIONEER HISTORY IS IMPORTANT TO THE VALLEY. SHAFER MUSEUM WINTHROP WA

How long has the proposed name been in use? By whom? NOT USED (YET)

Please list all sources of information used for your research: (maps, books, articles, periodicals, etc. for background history relating to proposed name) SEE ATTACHED DOCUMENT.

SHAFER MUSEUM WINTHROP, WA
OSANOGAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

What type of support is there for the proposed name?

List all groups and persons who are familiar with the proposed feature and its usage. Please provide names, addresses, telephone numbers, email addresses and his/her association with knowledge of the geographic feature:

SHAFER MUSEUM WINTHROP, WA
staff@shafermuseum.org (509) - 380 - 9911

Application submitted by:

Name: SCOTT STLUKA
Address: P.O. BOX 1186 City: TWISPA State: WA Zip: 98856
Phone #: 253-318-6106 Email: sjstluka@gmail.com Date of Application: 12/10/2021

I am aware that all information submitted is considered to be public information.

Printed Name: SCOTT STLUKA
Signature: SCOTT STLUKA Date: 12/10/2021

Please mail completed form along with copies of any additional materials to:

WA State Board on Geographic Names
PO Box 47030
Olympia, WA 98504-7030
(Phone: 360-902-1280 - Fax: 360-902-1778 - Email: bogn@dnr.wa.gov)
Print, Photographic - Harmon and Zella Lewis, for whom Lewis Butte is named, at their homestead about 1930. "Grandma Lewis" as she was later known, came to the Methow by team and wagon on the recommendation of her uncle, Jack Rizeor, who had a homestead at Rizeor Lake. The wagon stopped in front of the Duck Brand Saloon just as the bartender threw a drunk man out. He rolled down the stairs, stood up and brushed himself off. "That was my first view of Winthrop," she was fond of saying. Shirley Haase, who later lived on the Lewis homestead, recalled that Grandma Lewis, was very sweet, tough and made sugar cookies for the Haase children. She spent time in a cabin on the property and Shirley helped look out for her.

2004.001.076

Record Type: Photo
Maud and Victorine, both deceased; Loleta, a bright girl in school. Mr. Risley and his wife deserve the esteem and confidence bestowed by the people, as they are worthy people whose labors in social and business life have been faithful and wise.

[Source: An Illustrated History of Stevens, Ferry, Okanogan, and Chelan Counties in the State of Washington; Western Historical Publishing Company, 1904. Transcribed by Nina Kramer]

**RIZEOR, Henry**

HENRY J. RIZEOR has resided in Okanogan county for nearly fifteen years and has always labored for the development of the county and is now possessed of a comfortable property. His farm lies three miles northwest from Winthrop, and is improved in good shape. He raises diversified crops and handles some stock.

Henry J. Rizeor was born in Piatt county, Illinois, on January 16, 1849, the son of Thomas H. and Matilda (Wright) Rizeor. The family crossed the plains in 1853 with ox teams and located in Benton county, Oregon, where our subject grew to manhood. He was there educated in the public schools and continued assisting his father on the farm until his majority. The parents remained on the old homestead until their death. After his majority, Mr. Rizeor went from Oregon to Idaho, and settled near Eagle Rock, where two years were spent in prospecting and trapping. From that place, Mr. Rizeor went to Juneau, Alaska, and there prospected for one year. Later he went to Ashcroft, British Columbia, where he prospected and did trapping until 1889, when he came to Okanogan county. He located a squatter’s right on the land he now owns and afterward took it as a homestead. He does general farming and raises good fruit and melons, having a lake from which he irrigates a portion of his land. Mr. Rizeor is also greatly interested in mining. He owns stock in various gold mines in eastern Oregon and also has properties in different localities. He owns a portion of the Ninety-nine on Slate creek and other properties in this county.

Mr. Rizeor has given names to several creeks in this county, among which is Cub creek, which flows into the north branch of the Methow river. The incident that named the creek was the slaying of two cubs by Mr. Rizeor when out hunting.

Mr. Rizeor is still leaving untried the seas of matrimony and does not as yet depart from the quieter joys of the bachelor’s life.

[SOURCE: An Illustrated History of Stevens, Ferry, Okanogan, and Chelan Counties in the State of Washington; Western Historical Publishing Company, 1904. Transcribed by: Helen Coughlin]

**ROUNDS, Edwin**
Riser Lake

3,180-acre WDFW wildlife area with open-water wetland ringed by riparian woodland below gentle hills. In spring and summer, birdwatching is excellent. Look for Eastern Kingbirds, Tree Swallows, Western Meadowlarks, Western Bluebirds, Bullock's Orioles, House and Winter Wrens, Lazuli Buntings, and Spotted Sandpipers. Spring and fall migrants include Cinnamon Teal, Barrow's Goldeneyes, and Pied-billed Grebes. A 0.5-mile path drops to Riser Lake, which is circled by a deer trail. Morning birding is especially fine.
**Directions:** From Hwy 20 at milepost 9.5, turn north onto West Chewuch Rd. Drive 0.9 mile. Turn left (west) onto Rendezvous Rd. Drive mile. Turn left (northwest) onto Gunn Ranch Rd. Drive 0.8 mile. Turn left (south) on unmarked road. Drive 0.1 mile to parking lot.
External Email

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** Suzanne Perin <suzanne@shafermuseum.org>  
**Date:** January 24, 2022 at 9:33:47 AM PST  
**To:** Scott and Joan Stluka <sjstluka@gmail.com>  
**Subject:** Re: Rizeor Lake

Hello Scott- this is good news! The Shafer Museum would be happy to provide support or background information for the effort. I'm copy & pasting from an email from Sharon Sumpter, an avid volunteer archivist here, about the Rizeor/Lewis connection & families.

As far as objections - if it's a name spelling correction, I can't think of specific people or groups who would raise strong objections. Worth a heads-up to Methow Trails, others?

"The name is Rizeor, named after Henry Jackson Rizeor, who was a ne'er do well, who homesteaded a quarter section near Lewis Butte. He talked his niece Zella, who married Harmon Lewis, into coming to the Methow. Lewis Butte is named for Harmon Lewis. We have a wonderful family story from Harmon Johnson..... I think Harmon and his grandsons were here on the Memorial Day weekend. I met him this fall in Coeur d'Alene on my way back from Missoula and my granddaughter visit. I was trying to get better quality photos from him. He is 93, and not many more years left, I think."

~Suzanne

Suzanne Perin, PhD  
Director, Shafer Historical Museum  
Winthrop, WA  
[www.shafermuseum.org](http://www.shafermuseum.org)  
(206)369-5769 cell  
(509)380-9911 office  
Work hours: Monday, Tuesday & Thursday 8:30-2:30pm
On Sat, Jan 22, 2022 at 1:01 PM Scott and Joan Stluka <sjstluka@gmail.com> wrote:

State is moving ahead with possible name change of Riser lake. Looking for anyone with possible objections?
-Scott Stluka (Twisp)

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: "MAKI, CALEB (DNR)" <CALEB.MAKI@dnr.wa.gov>
Date: January 10, 2022 at 10:05:01 AM PST
To: sjstluka@gmail.com
Subject: Rizeor Lake

Great talking with you Scott, here’s my contact info in the meantime…

Caleb A. Maki
Photogrammetry Supervisor – Engineering Division
Washington State Department of Natural Resources (DNR)
Phone: 360-902-1280 / Fax: 360-902-1778
caleb.maki@dnr.wa.gov
www.dnr.wa.gov
Very nicely said Mary, thank you for your heartfelt and clear sight!

David

Methow Field Institute/Methow Valley Interpretive Center
http://www.methowvalleyinterpretivecenter.com
509-997-0620

On Thu, Apr 14, 2022 at 9:10 AM Mary Yglesia <mvcc@mvcitizens.org> wrote:

Thank you David for your reasoned and respectful approach to this issue. The topic of renaming the lake to correct the spelling of a homesteader has been a conversation here in the office. I personally, not as a representative of MVCC, have been drafting a letter to the editor about the name change of this lake. I do not advocate for using original place names unless we lend our efforts to the work of indigenous folks. I do want to encourage dialog about continuing to name features of the natural world with the names of folks who colonized places that were already homes to the first people. Aren’t descriptive names good enough? How about Hidden Lake or Clear Lake or Lake Abundance or Hard to Reach Lake? I do not wish to “steal” anything from the history of homesteaders but do want to encourage us to mitigate damages done. When we know better, should we not do better?

~Mary
Riser Lake, to me, doesn't fall into this same category because it is not a derogatory name. However, the conversation could be had about bringing back the original names of places whenever there is an opportunity to do so such as the proposed renaming of Riser to Rizeor. If this were the path that we wanted to head down then we should be prepared for it to be a long and unpredictable path. By that I mean that Methow descendants may not care about the renaming of Riser (meaning that it is not worth their time and energy), may not agree upon a re-name, may not know what it was called traditionally (if it was at all), etc. In addition, there may be pushback from the white settler community.

My two cents would be: If the name is derogatory then we should work to change it (ex. the "S" word). If we want to work towards bringing more indigenous names to places then this should be a long-term vision that begins with conversations with Methow and other Indigenous descendants to see if this is wanted and if so how we go about this. That way we are letting our Indigenous neighbors lead and we are ready to respond to opportunities for renaming in the future.

Hope that all makes sense.

David LaFever
Executive Director

Methow Field Institute/Methow Valley Interpretive Center
http://www.methowvalleyinterpretivecenter.com
509-997-0620
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