

NOT APPROVED, 12/09/2021



Pending Virginia Place Name Proposal before the Domestic Names Committee, USBGN

Franklins Spirit Cliffs: cliff; elevation 1,875 ft.; approx. 1,000 ft. long; in George Washington National Forest, on the SE side of Massanutten Mountain 1.2 mi. NE of Habron Gap; named for John Franklin Payne (1929-2004), a farmer and businessman who lived in nearby Bentonville; Page County, Virginia; 38°47'31"N, 78°25'37"W; USGS map – Rileyville 1:24,000.

https://geonames.usgs.gov/apex/gazvector.getesricoor?p_lat=38.791917&p_longi=-78.426828

Proposal: new commemorative name for unnamed feature

Map: USGS Rileyville 1:24,000

Proponent: Susan Payne; Bentonville, VA

Administrative area: George Washington National Forest

Previous BGN Action: None

Names associated with feature:

GNIS: No record

Local Usage: None found

Published: None found

Case Summary: The new commemorative name Franklins Spirit Cliffs is proposed for an approximately 1,000-foot long series of cliffs on the southeast side of Massanutten Mountain in Page County and within George Washington National Forest.

The name is intended to commemorate John Franklin Payne (1929-2004), a farmer and businessman who lived and worked in Bentonville, north of the cliffs in Warren County. The proponent, the daughter of Mr. Payne, reports that Mr. Payne was active in the community and also served in the Seabees during World War II. She suggests that Franklin Cliffs “sounds better than a name like ‘Johns Cliffs.’” She reports also that her son, named Franklin for his grandfather, hiked to the cliffs on the anniversary of Mr. Payne’s death and suggested naming the cliffs after him. The proponent acknowledges that “the geographical feature has no direct connection to Mr. Payne other than his enjoyment of the Page County/Rileyville area,” but noted that the cliffs are “a feature he long admired over the 43 years he lived in the area.”

GNIS lists cliff named Franklin Cliffs in Page County, located in Shenandoah National Park near Big Meadows; an overlook on Skyline Drive is named Franklin Cliffs Overlook. That name reportedly commemorates William Buel Franklin, a Union Civil War general, who does not appear to have had an association with the area. This name was a 1933 BGN decision, along with many other names in the park, but no information about the name was recorded. Although within the same county, the two features are approximately 17 miles apart.

Source: Quarterly Review List 441 Released October 5, 2020 (<https://www.usgs.gov/us-board-on-geographic-names/dnc-review-lists>)