

Proposal report considered by the Board on 15 September 2025 with the Board's decisions for Sealy Glacier

[altered from Sealey Glacier]



Summary

The proposal is to alter the official place name Sealey Glacier to Sealy Glacier. The glacier is in the Olivine Range flowing west from between Holloway Peak and Typhoon Peak into (the correctly spelled) Sealy Stream (recorded name) and on to Pyke River. Although possibly retreating, recent satellite imagery shows it is still a glacial feature.

Board archives confirm the ample evidence provided by the proposer that the glacier was named after mountaineer Eldred H. Sealy, following two expeditions led by John T. Holloway in 1937 and 1938. Significant corroborating evidence confirms the spelling Sealy is correct. 'Sealey' Glacier was proposed to the Honorary Board in 1940, which was accepted, and gazetted in 1948.

Official topographic maps have used the proposed spelling Sealy since at least 1971. Land & Survey were instructed to do so by the Surveyor General/Board Chairperson at the time, although no follow-up to legally change the name through the Board's process was made. The NZTopo50 map is therefore breaching section 32 of the New Zealand Geographic Board (Ngā Pou Taunaha o Aotearoa) Act 2008.

TRONT¹ has advised that Te Rūnanga o Makaawhio are the relevant Papatipu Rūnaka and have contacted them. They have not yet received a response. In noting that TRONT hasn't advised of an original Māori name for the glacier, it can still make an objecting submission if the Board accepts the proposal.

Board's decisions

At its 15 September 2025 hui the Board made these decisions on the proposal:

Accept the proposal to **alter** the official place name Sealey Glacier to **Sealy Glacier**, based on:

- the Board's responsibility to examine cases of doubtful spelling,
- significant evidence from the proposer and in the Board archives of the correct spelling for the namesake Eldred H. Sealy,
- past Surveyor General/Board Chairperson's instruction to use the correct spelling on topographic maps, despite this being inconsistent with the gazetted official name,
- the glacier still existing and being discrete from adjacent named glaciers,
- consistency with the spelling of the associated currently unofficial recorded name Sealy Stream,
- an alteration to the spelling being unlikely to impact on emergency services as the correct spelling has been used on topographic maps since at least 1971 and there is no difference in how the current and proposed names are correctly pronounced.

Noting no feedback from Te Rūnanga o Makaawhio has yet been received via TRONT,

and

Notify a proposal to alter for one month.

AND

Accept the Board's proposal to **approve** the unofficial recorded name Sealy Stream as official, based on:

- there being no alternative recorded place name known for the feature,
- public objection being unlikely,
- its correct spelling having been confirmed,
- consistency as an official name with Sealy Glacier, once it becomes official,

Subject to consultation with TRONT confirming the stream does not have an original Māori name,

and

Notify a proposal to approve for one month, alongside the proposal for Sealy Glacier.

¹ Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu

Secretariat assessment

The proposal

The proposer is seeking to alter the official place name Sealey Glacier to Sealy Glacier.

The proposer advises that the glacier is named after Eldred H. Sealy (1913-1993), who accompanied John T. Holloway on two expeditions in the Olivine Range area in 1937 and 1938. The proposer provides significant evidence from newspaper and journal articles detailing the expeditions of Holloway and Sealy in the area. The glacier flows west down from between Holloway Peak, which is named for John T. Holloway, and Typhoon Peak. Holloway was a prominent mountaineer who along with a host of various companions, explored, mapped and named many of the peaks in the Olivine Range during the 1930s.

The proposer has provided a significant amount of biographical research and reference material that spell the name Sealy as proposed. This includes birth and death certificates of E.H. Sealy.

Name shown on maps and plans

‘Sealy’ has been consistently spelled without a second [e] on topographic maps since at least 1971 after the Surveyor General/Board Chairperson instructed the map producers to use that spelling.

Map/plan	Date	Name
Olivine Alps Map by Ian Whitehead in <i>New Zealand Alpine Journal</i> , vol. 8, no. 27, pg. 188, 189 (provided by the proposer)	June 1940	Sealey Glacier
NZMS 156	1959 ed.	Sealey Glacier
NZMS 156	1971 ed.	Sealy Glacier
NZMS 1 S105	1974	<i>no glacier depicted</i>
NZMS 260, E39, Edition 1	1999	Sealy Glacier
NZTopo50-CA10, edition 1.05	2019	Sealy Glacier

Location, geographic feature type and generic term

The glacier is in the Olivine Range flowing west from between Holloway Peak and Typhoon Peak into (the correctly spelled) Sealy Stream and on to Pyke River, within Mount Aspiring National Park, and approximately 70km northwest of Wānaka.

As slowly moving compacted ice, the feature meets the definition of a [glacier](#). It is discrete from adjacent named glaciers. Although it is likely to be retreating, recent satellite imagery shows it is still a glacial feature.²

New Zealand Gazetteer, associated names and duplication

[Sealey Glacier](#) is the official name of the feature. No other feature in the *Gazetteer* is named ‘Sealey.’

The associated [Sealy Stream](#) is the unofficial recorded name of a stream that flows from Sealey Glacier into Pyke River. A. W. Reed & Peter Dowling, *Place Names of New Zealand*, lists the origin as ‘probably also named for the early mountaineer and surveyor E.P. Sealy.’ The Reed entry appears to be incorrect based on the evidence of the association of Sealey Glacier with E. H. Sealy, a different person (the grandson of E. P. Sealy). ‘Sealey Ck’ also appears to be

named for the first time on the map of the *The Olivine Alps* published by Ian Whitehead in 1940.

Action for the Secretariat: The Reed entry will be retired and Oratia Media advised.

[Sealy Tarns](#) is the only official 'Sealy' name. These are small alpine lake features at the north end of the unofficial recorded name [Sealy Range](#) in Aoraki/Mount Cook National Park. The highest point in Sealy Range at 2627m is [Mount Sealy](#) which A.W. Reed & Peter Dowling record as being 'named by Julius von Haast after Edward P. Sealy, the Canterbury provincial surveyor and photographer, who was the first European to visit the glacier and pass.' These three features are approximately 150km northeast of Sealey Glacier, also in Aoraki/Mount Cook National Park.

A further Sealy name is at [Sealy Pass](#), approximately 200km northeast of Sealey Glacier, also within Aoraki/Mount Cook National Park.

The northern Sealy names are given for the grandfather, E. P. Sealy. The southernmost Sealy names for the glacier and stream are given for the grandson, E. H. Sealy. Both sets of names have been in long term use and unlikely to cause confusion because they each have different generic terms.

Research, history
and references to
the features

The Board's archives³ record that on 19 December 1939 the Board received a proposal from J. P. Findlay to name features from explorations in the Olivine Range. Against 'Sealey Glacier' J. P. Findlay advised:

Situated in the northern Olivine Range, and flows in a westerly direction to beget a branch of the Pyke River. Lies due north of Trinity Peaks, and arises from Typhoon Peak. Named after E. Sealey, a member of two expeditions into this country during 1936 and 1937.

The Board approved the proposal on 2 May 1940.

The evidence provided by the current proposer including the mountaineer's birth and death certificates strongly indicate that J. P. Findlay had spelled Sealey with a second [e] in error. The correct spelling of the personal name is 'Sealy'.

Also in this 1939 proposal was Holloway Peak to be named after J. T. Holloway "in commemoration of his exploratory work in this country over a period of four years."

In 1947 Johannes Anderson reviewed the draft gazette notice that would validate prior Honorary Board decisions under [Section 17](#) of the New Zealand Geographic Board Act 1946. He wrote that he was 'pretty sure' the Sealey spelling was correct.⁴ Sealey Glacier was notified as official in *New Zealand Gazette* 1948 (42) p.939.

In 1970 the Secretary reviewed the spelling of 'Sealey Stream' and 'Sealey Glacier' for the publication of a new edition of map NZMS 156 Lake Wakatipu. Secretary Evans confirmed 'Sealy' was correct⁵ and the 'Sealy' spelling was published on the map. No action was taken to alter the existing official name.

³ Board correspondence, Volume 16, pp.57-58

⁴ Correspondence Vol.22 f.45

⁵ Correspondence Vol.41 f.133

Consultation	<p>TRONT has advised that Te Rūnanga o Makaawhio are the relevant Papatipu Rūnaka. TRONT contacted Makaawhio on the Secretariat's behalf in mid-July and advised it would pass on any feedback. No feedback has been received as of 22 August 2025.</p> <p>The Secretariat will communicate with the alpine community if the Board accepts the proposals.</p>
Relevant sections from the NZGB Act 2008 Standard for New Zealand place names	<p>Under sections 10(1)(c) and 11(1)(b) of the Act the Board has a responsibility to examine cases of doubtful spelling.</p> <p>1.3 Undesirable names and other considerations</p> <p>(c) A name that already exists in a neighbouring area or is already in use throughout New Zealand should be avoided except where the story/kōrero explains the unique heritage and meaning(s) of the name. This avoids confusion and makes it easier to identify the correct place in an emergency. However, associated names with different generic terms are allowed.</p> <p><i>Secretariat comment: Other features with the same specific name have different generic terms.</i></p> <p>1.6 Altered names</p> <p>Any alteration should balance the cultural and historical significance of the name against long-term use and the practical need for location identification.</p> <p><i>Secretariat comment: The glacier has been labelled on official topographic maps with the proposed and correct spelling for 54 years.</i></p>
Media	<p>The glacier is very remote so there is unlikely to be media coverage if the Board accepts the proposals for consultation. A biography of Eldred Sealy was published in the <i>New Zealand Alpine Journal</i> Autumn 2025 edition.</p>

Supporting information

1. Proposal for Sealy Glacier – 2025-04-28
2. Response from TRONT – will pass on any feedback from Makaawhio, relevant Papatipu Rūnaka – 2025-07-16
3. Holmes, G. (2025). Eldred Sealy – 1913-1993, *New Zealand Alpine Journal*, Autumn.