

terrace land. With few exceptions, this terrace land lies below the 200-foot elevation line and is characterized by less well-drained alluvial soils. According to the petitioner, this type of soil is generally not suitable for the cultivation of premium wine grapes. Therefore, land below 200 feet is not included in the proposed Eola Hills boundaries.

Topography

The main ridge of the Eola Hills runs north-south and has numerous lateral ridges that run east-west on both sides. Slopes on the west side of the ridge tend to be somewhat steeper and pocketed, and they fall away below 200 feet more abruptly than those slopes on the east side, which tend to be gentler and more extensive. Both sides, however, provide vineyards sites with very similar soils and growing conditions. The highest point in the south end of the hills is 1,093 feet. In the central area, near the Polk-Yamhill County line, the ridge peaks at around 1,160 feet; in the north, it peaks at 863 feet. The majority of Eola Hills vineyard sites are found in the elevation range of 250–700 feet, although suitable sites exist above this elevation, given proper sun exposure and microclimate. The most common orientation of vineyards here is south, southwestern, and southeastern. However, in gently sloping terrain, due east- and due west-facing sites are also capable of producing high quality wine grapes.

Climate

According to the petitioner, the Eola Hills are blessed with a temperate climate. Summers are warm, but seldom excessively hot, while winters are mild, with temperatures usually above freezing. Annual rainfall ranges from under 40 inches on the southeastern edge of the Eola Hills to more than 45 inches in the higher elevations. More important, only about 15 percent of the total annual rainfall in the mid-Willamette Valley occurs from April through September. Thus, rainfall averages during the growing season are uniform throughout the Eola Hills.

The petitioner states that the Eola Hills are influenced more by their position due east of the Van Duzer Corridor than by their location in the rain-shadow of the Coast Range. Ocean winds vented through this Corridor often cause late-afternoon, summer temperatures to drop dramatically, which further distinguishes the area from the hills further north. During the growing season, average maximum temperatures at the middle elevations range from 62° F in April to 83° F in

July. This contributes to the ideal conditions for the “cool-climate” grape varieties which dominate in Eola Hills vineyards, such as Pinot Noir, Pinot Gris, and Chardonnay.

The petitioner notes that Eola Hills slopes experience greater heat accumulation during the growing season than does the surrounding Willamette Valley floor, due to the effects of thermal inversion. Cool air drains toward the valley floor during the night, which layers warmer air on the lower slopes. To demonstrate the differences between sites in the Eola Hills and the valley floor, the petitioner submitted monthly heat accumulation data that compares a valley floor site, the site of the Salem, Oregon, airport, and an Eola Hills vineyard site, Seven Springs Vineyard, for the years 1992–95. This data showed that the Seven Springs Vineyard site had consistently higher seasonal heat accumulation for the years in question. According to data gathered from the Salem WSO Airport, a typical vineyard site in the Eola Hills has a growing season (April 1 to October 31) heat accumulation range of 2,300–2,500 degree-days, with a base of 60° F. Based on standards for determining climatic regions using temperature summation, this places it high in the Region 1 category (2,500 degree-days or less).

What Boundary Descriptions Have Been Provided?

The proposed Eola Hills viticultural area is located in the northern half of the existing Willamette Valley viticultural area in Oregon. Two-thirds of the area lies within Polk County, while the northern one-third extends into Yamhill County. A detailed description of the proposed boundaries can be found in the proposed regulations below in this notice.

What Maps Were Provided?

The petitioner provided the required maps, and we list them in the proposed regulation.

Public Participation

We request comments from anyone interested. Please support your comments with specific information about the proposed area's name, growing conditions, or boundaries.

Because of the potential impact of an Eola Hills viticultural area on current brand names that include “Eola,” we are particularly interested in comments regarding the proposed area's name. Are there other names for this area that would not conflict with current brand names? We are also interested in suggestions for preventing conflicts between viticultural area names and

brand names of geographic significance, as discussed above under “What impact may this notice have on current wine labels?”

All comments must include your name and mailing address, reference this notice number, and be legible and written in language acceptable for public disclosure.

Although we do not acknowledge receipt, we will consider your comments if we receive them on or before the closing date. We will consider comments received after the closing date if we can. We regard all comments as originals.

Will TTB Keep My Comments Confidential?

We do not recognize any submitted material as confidential. All comments are part of the public record and subject to disclosure. Do not enclose in your comments any material you consider confidential or inappropriate for disclosure.

How May I Submit Comments?

You may submit comments in any of four ways.

- *By mail:* You may send written comments to TTB at the address listed in the **ADDRESSES** section.

- *By facsimile:* You may submit comments by facsimile transmission to 202–927–8525. Faxed comments must—

- (1) Be on 8.5- by 11-inch paper;

- (2) Contain a legible, written signature; and

- (3) Be five or less pages long. This limitation assures electronic access to our equipment. We will not accept faxed comments that exceed five pages.

- *By e-mail:* You may e-mail comments to nprm@ttb.gov. Comments transmitted by electronic mail must—

- (1) Contain your e-mail address;

- (2) Reference this notice number on the subject line; and

- (3) Be legible when printed on 8.5- by 11-inch paper

- *By online form:* We provide a comment form with the online copy of this notice on our Web site at <http://www.ttb.gov/alcohol/rules/index.htm>. Select the “Send comments via email” link under this notice number.

You may also write to the Administrator to ask for a public hearing. The Administrator reserves the right to determine, in light of all circumstances, whether a public hearing will be held.

What Information Will TTB Disclose?

You may view copies of this notice, the petition, the appropriate maps, and any comments received by appointment at the ATF Reference Library in room