

Areas, contains the list of approved viticultural areas.

Definition

Title 27 CFR 4.25(e)(1) defines an American viticultural area as a delimited grape-growing region distinguishable by geographic features whose boundaries have been delineated in subpart C of part 9. These designations allow consumers and vintners to attribute a given quality, reputation, or other characteristic of wine made from grapes grown in an area to its geographic origin.

Requirements

Section 4.25(e)(2) outlines the procedure for proposing an American viticultural area. Any interested person may petition TTB to establish a grape-growing region as a viticultural area. The petition must include:

- Evidence that the proposed viticultural area is locally and/or nationally known by the name specified in the petition;
- Historical or current evidence that the boundaries of the proposed viticultural area are as specified in the petition;
- Evidence of growing conditions, such as climate, soils, elevation, physical features, etc., that distinguish the proposed area from surrounding areas;
- A description of the specific boundaries of the proposed viticultural area, based on features shown on United States Geological Survey (USGS) or USGS-approved maps; and
- Copies of the appropriate map(s) with the boundaries prominently marked.

Impact on Current Wine Labels

As appellations of origin, viticultural area names have geographic significance. Our 27 CFR part 4 label regulations prohibit the use of a brand name with geographic significance on a wine unless the wine meets the appellation of origin requirements for the named area. Our regulations also prohibit any other label references that suggest an origin other than the true place of origin of the wine.

If we establish this proposed viticultural area, bottlers who use brand names, including trademarks, like Chehalem Mountains must ensure that their existing products are eligible to use the viticultural area's name as an appellation of origin. For a wine to be eligible, at least 85 percent of the grapes in the wine must have been grown within the viticultural area, and the wine must meet the other requirements of 27 CFR 4.25(e)(3).

If a wine is not eligible for the appellation, the bottler must change the brand name or other label reference and obtain approval of a new label. Different rules apply if a wine in this category bearing a brand name traceable to a label approved prior to July 7, 1986. See 27 CFR 4.39(i) for details.

Chehalem Mountains Petition

We have received a petition from Alex Sokol-Blosser, secretary of the North Willamette Valley AVA Group proposing establishment of a new viticultural area to be called "Chehalem Mountains." David Adelsheim, Paul Hart, and Richard Ponzi authored the petition. The proposed viticultural area is wholly within Oregon's Willamette Valley approved viticultural area. It is located toward the northern end of the valley and begins approximately 19 miles southwest of Portland, Oregon and 45 miles inland from the Pacific Ocean. It includes 106 square miles (67,840 acres) and straddles the boundary between Yamhill and Washington Counties and extends well into Clackamas County. As of 2002 at least 80 vineyards, totaling over 1,100 acres, plus 12 commercial wineries exist within the proposed boundaries of the Chehalem Mountains viticultural area, with more added each year.

The proposed Chehalem Mountains viticultural area constitutes a single, continuous landmass (measuring over 20 miles in length and 5 miles in width) uplifted above the floor of the Willamette Valley. The 200-foot elevation line generally defines the perimeter of the area, which consists of a series of ridges and highpoints, including two highly delineated spurs, Ribbon Ridge and Parrett Mountain. The petitioners decided to use physical features and elevation as the primary factors in defining the boundaries of the proposed area.

Name Evidence

The petitioners indicate the area is locally known as the Chehalem Mountains. They cite references that state the modern word "Chehalem" comes from the Indian name "Chahelim," which is listed under the heading Atfalati (Tualatin) in the "Handbook of American Indians." This name was given to the more than 20 bands of Indians living in the general vicinity of the Chehalem Mountains in the early 1800s.

Further, the petitioners state the word "Chehalem" appears to have entered the vocabulary of the early European settlers in the north Willamette Valley prior to 1840. A lumber mill was installed on Chehalem Creek in 1834,

and in 1848 Joseph B. Rogers had the town of "Chehalem" platted on property he owned where Newberg, Oregon, stands today. The town had one of the earliest post offices in Yamhill County (established March 14, 1851), but the office closed within a year.

The petition supplies evidence that Chehalem has been used since that time to name a Parks and Recreation District, businesses (27 examples), housing developments, and public roads. The two public middle schools in the Newberg school district are named Chehalem Valley and Mountain View. Additionally, Chehalem has long been used in geographic names, such as Chehalem Creek, which runs through Chehalem Valley, which, in turn, forms the south side of the Chehalem Mountains. The entry for Chehalem Mountains in "Oregon Geographic Names" by Lewis L. McArthur reads, "These are the highest mountains in the Willamette Valley * * *. The Chehalem Mountains and some independent spurs extend from the Willamette River east of Newberg to the foothills of the Coast range south of Forest Grove, Oregon."

The term "Chehalem Mountains" figures prominently on four of the six USGS quadrangle maps (Newberg, Oregon; Dundee, Oregon; Laurelwood, Oregon; and Scholls, Oregon) submitted with this petition. The petitioners state that the Chehalem Mountains (including the Parrett Mountain spur, the Ribbon Ridge spur, and multiple other named hills, peaks, and ridges, such as Laurel Ridge, Bald Peak, Iowa Hill, Spring Hill, and Fern Hill) constitute a single uplifted landmass easily distinguished from the surrounding valley floor areas. Further, they contend that the historical name "Chehalem Mountains" (plural) is meant to include hilltops, ridges, and spurs, even one as large as Parrett Mountain.

Boundary Evidence

The petitioners state they know of no previous attempts to define the exact boundaries of the Chehalem Mountains. However, the evidence submitted uses physical features and elevation as the primary factors in defining the boundaries of the proposed area, as well as historical information relating to viticultural activity.

The petition includes maps that show the Chehalem Mountains constitute a single, continuous landmass, uplifted above the floor of the Willamette Valley, which is delineated for much of the west side and all of the north side by the valley formed by the Tualatin River and its tributaries. On the east side, it is separated from the high ground around Tonquin by wetlands of Rock Creek and