

to July 7, 1986. See 27 CFR 4.39(i) for details. Additionally, if you use the viticultural area name on a wine label in a context other than appellation of origin, the general prohibitions against misleading representation in part 4 of the regulations apply.

Homeland Security Act of 2002

Effective January 24, 2003, the Homeland Security Act of 2002 divided the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (ATF) into two new agencies, the Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau (TTB) in the Department of the Treasury and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives in the Department of Justice. Regulation of alcohol beverage labels, including viticultural area designations, is the responsibility of the new TTB. References to ATF and TTB in this document reflect the time frame, before or after January 24, 2003, of the viticultural area establishment process.

Bennett Valley Petition

ATF received a petition from Matanzas Creek Winery of Santa Rosa, California, proposing a new viticultural area to be called "Bennett Valley." The 8,140-acre viticultural area currently has 650 acres of planted vineyards. It is located in Sonoma County, California, just southeast of the city of Santa Rosa and approximately 45 miles northeast of San Francisco. The Bennett Valley viticultural area is entirely within the North Coast viticultural area, is almost completely within the Sonoma Valley viticultural area, and has a small 281-acre overlap into the Sonoma Coast viticultural area to the west. It also partially overlaps the Sonoma Mountain viticultural area, which is entirely within the larger Sonoma Valley viticultural area.

The Bennett Valley viticultural area is about 5.5 miles long, northwest to southeast, 3.15 miles across at its widest point, and resembles the shape of a downward-pointing bullet. The floor of Bennett Valley runs the petitioned area's length, and Bennett Valley Road meanders from its northwest to southeast boundaries. The Bennett Valley viticultural area, including the surrounding hills and mountains, comprises the Matanzas Creek watershed. This creek flows west into the Russian River drainage system and eventually to the Pacific Ocean. Differences in topography, soils, and climate distinguish the Bennett Valley viticultural area from the surrounding areas.

Name Evidence

The area is locally known as Bennett Valley. It is named after James N. Bennett, an 1849 immigrant settler who arrived by wagon train. His arrival coincided with the 1849 Gold Rush that brought settlers to California, helping Bennett Valley grow as an agricultural region known for grapes, apples, hay, wheat, oats, barley, and livestock. The Bennett Valley Grange Hall was built in 1873 and it still stands on Grange Road in Bennett Valley, as noted on the USGS Santa Rosa quadrangle map. An excerpt from the 1877 "Historical Atlas Map of Sonoma County" states that if Bennett Valley "has any specialty, it is for fruit and grape culture."

Evidence for the current use of the Bennett Valley name includes references from a book by Don Edwards, "Making the Most of Sonoma County, A California Guide," which states, "Bennett Valley—squeezed between Taylor Mountain and the Sonoma Mountains on the west, Bennett Peak (Yulupa to the Indians) and Bennett Ridge to the east—has been ranching and farming country since the days when Missourian William Bennett settled here." The Bennett Valley Homeowner's Association's web site includes a boundary description similar to that of the Bennett Valley viticultural area. The Sonoma County telephone book has 24 business listings using the Bennett Valley name, including the Bennett Valley Union School District. The Bennett Valley School is identified on the USGS Santa Rosa quadrangle map just inside the area's northwest boundary line. The Sonoma County government's Bennett Valley Area Plan includes all but the northern-most portion of the viticultural area.

Boundary Evidence

The Bennett Valley viticultural area's boundaries are based on historical and current viticulture, the physical limits of the Matanzas Creek watershed, and the area's growing conditions, including its soil, terrain, and a unique microclimate with a strong coastal influence in a sheltered, inland location. Historically, 24 grape growers are linked with Bennett Valley agriculture. In 1862, early settler Isaac DeTurk planted a 30-acre vineyard at the base of Bennett Mountain. By 1878 he was producing 100,000 gallons of wine from his own and purchased grapes at his winery located within this viticultural area on Grange and Bennett Valley roads.

Modern accounts indicate that, around the turn of the century, phylloxera disease killed some of Bennett Valley's estimated 2,000

vineyard acres, while Prohibition ended the balance of the Valley's wine grape industry. A resurgence of wine grape growing in Bennett Valley started in 1975 when the Matanzas Creek Winery planted 20 acres of grapes, and the Valley now has approximately 650 vineyard-acres.

Physical Features

Bennett Valley is surrounded on three sides by the Sonoma Mountain Range and on the north side by the city of Santa Rosa. The mountainous boundaries, generally defined by ridgelines, indicate the outer limits of the Matanzas Creek watershed. Taylor and Bennett Mountains provide anchors for the area's western and eastern boundary, respectively, while the 1,600-foot elevation line on Sonoma Mountain defines the southern boundary. Elevations within the area range from 250 to 1,850 feet, with most vineyards between the 500- and 600-foot level.

The Bennett Valley viticultural area boundary starts at Taylor Mountain's peak and continues straight northeast, coinciding with a portion of the Sonoma Valley viticultural area boundary line. The lower northern elevations open to the Santa Rosa Valley and the city of Santa Rosa, where, at the northernmost point, the boundary line turns southeast at a 65-degree angle. The northeastern and eastern boundaries, primarily a series of straight lines connecting elevation points, follow the ridgelines through the peak of Bennett Mountain that outline the eastern side of the Matanzas Creek watershed.

The Bennett Valley area's southern boundary follows the 1,600-foot elevation line along Sonoma Mountain's north side and then a westerly straight line to a 900-foot elevation point. The southwestern boundary uses intersections and markers, within the Matanzas Creek watershed, to close the boundary line at Taylor Mountain. Crane Canyon, on the area's southwestern side, provides an opening in the mountains for the cooling coastal fogs and breezes from the Pacific coast, which moderate the Bennett Valley's climate.

Growing Conditions

Soils

The Bennett Valley viticultural area's soils vary from the surrounding areas, due to the different composition percentages of its predominant Goulding-Toomes-Guenoc Association. There are differences in the distribution of Spreckels, Laniger, Haire, and Red Hill clay loam soils between the Bennett Valley viticultural area and nearby