

beneath the cooling effects of higher elevation (maximum height of area is 683 feet). The area between these two elevation lines receives maximum heat accumulation, as well as good air and water drainage.

Degree-day accumulations in the proposed area average 2,455, as compared to 2,541 at McMinnville (southwest of Ribbon Ridge) and 2,650 at Portland (northeast of Ribbon Ridge). The data on Ribbon Ridge is typical of hillside sites with earlier starts to warming, less nighttime temperature drops, and clipped heat spikes in midsummer that provide a consistent climate for adequate ripening. According to the petitioners, these features allow longer, cooler growing seasons, which are ideal for delicate varieties like Pinot Noir, Chardonnay, and Pinot Gris.

To the best of their knowledge, the petitioners state that all of the existing vineyards in the proposed viticultural area are located between 240 to 680 feet. Further, they believe the 240-foot contour line minimum height boundary will exclude alluvial soils, which are not best suited for viticulture.

#### Climate

The petitioners state that Ribbon Ridge's island-like characteristics and the proximity of surrounding landmasses tend to shield and uniquely protect the proposed area from many of the extremes that affect the other agricultural microclimates in the northern Willamette Valley. Air and water drainage exist on all sides. Low clouds tend to accumulate on the surrounding hilltops; fog tends to settle on the valley floor in early and late parts of the growing season. The Coast Range and Yamhill mountains to the west encourage weather systems to drop moisture before reaching Ribbon Ridge and to moderate wind extremes from Pacific storms. The Chehalem Mountains, Bald Peak, and Portland hill systems to the north tend to protect this area from the Columbia Gorge and eastern Oregon weather systems that deliver cold in the winter and heat or winds in the summer. The Dundee Hills to the south shield Ribbon Ridge from extreme winds that funnel coastal weather systems through the Van Duzer corridor, whether hot, cold, or wet in the summer or winter.

The petitioners provided an analysis of compiled daily weather data comparing exposed valley floor weather stations such as Salem (south of Ribbon Ridge), McMinnville (southwest of Ribbon Ridge), and Portland Airport (east of Ribbon Ridge) to hillside vineyard stations on Ribbon Ridge

(Whistling Ridge). The analysis indicates a tendency towards slightly warmer and drier conditions on grape-growing hillsides of the northern valley, such as the proposed Ribbon Ridge viticultural area. These apparent differences are even more significant during the grape-growing season (April–October), when the nature of hillside warming is especially important in achieving ripening similar to that of warm valley sites without the risk of frost or the problems of excess soil moisture. Specifically, hillside data showed higher minimum (2–3 °F) and maximum (2–7 °F) daily temperatures during early and late growing seasons than those of exposed valley floor sites. This moderation permits early growth in the spring, consistent and even ripening with retention of acids over the summer, and a long, full ripening in the fall.

The petitioners supplied data suggesting precipitation on protected hillsides in the Ribbon Ridge area is up to 10 inches less, approximately 25 percent, than it is on unprotected valley sites. Growing season precipitation is reduced even farther, with 7.7 inches accumulated April–October on average, or approximately 35 percent reduction from the Coast Range or valley floor sites. For example, the annual rainfall at Whistling Ridge in the proposed Ribbon Ridge viticultural area averages 29 inches as compared to 36 inches for the Portland International Airport, (located east of the proposed area), 39 inches for Salem (south of Ribbon Ridge), while the Coast Range, located west of the Ribbon Ridge, has an average range of 80 inches to more than 100 inches per year. Further, the petitioners state that Ribbon Ridge's annual rainfall is less than other wine growing regions in the immediate vicinity, such as Yamhill-Carlton District's 42 inches, Chehalem Mountains' 37–60 inches, and Dundee Hills' 30–45 inches.

#### Proposed Boundaries

The USGS maps required for determining the boundary of the proposed Ribbon Ridge viticultural area are:

- (1) Laurelwood Quadrangle, Oregon, 7.5 Minutes Series, 1956, revised 1978; and
- (2) Dundee Quadrangle, Oregon, 7.5 Minute Series, 1956, revised 1993.

A complete description of the proposed area's boundaries is found in the proposed rule text below.

#### Public Participation

##### *Comments Sought*

We request comments from anyone interested. Please support your

comments with specific information. Examples include name evidence and data about growing conditions or area boundaries. All comments must include your name and mailing address, reference this notice number, and be legible and written in language generally 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.

##### *Confidentiality*

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.

##### *Submitting 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](mailto: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 proposed rule. See the TTB Internet Web site at <http://www.ttb.gov/alcohol/rules/index.htm> and select "Send comments via e-mail" under this notice number.

You may also write to the Administrator before the comment closing date 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.

##### *Disclosure*

You may view copies of the petition, the proposed regulations, the appropriate maps, and any comments by