

Proposal for the Approval of a New Subdivision of the  
Okanagan Valley Geographical Indication

OKANAGAN FALLS SUB-GI

03 December 2017

As amended 30 January 2018

Prepared by the Sub- GI Committee of the Okanagan Falls Winery Association

## **Introduction**

The purpose of this document is to apply for approval of an Okanagan Falls Sub-Geographical Indication (“Sub-GI”) as per Section 29 of the Wines of Marked Quality Regulation (“Regulation”). The proposed Sub-GI has been identified as a unique area with respect to landform, landscape position, meso-climate, air drainage and soil materials. The combination of these particular characteristics is unique in the Okanagan Valley.

This report has been prepared by the Sub-GI Committee of the Okanagan Falls Winery Association. The scientific research relied upon in this report was prepared by Dr. Scott Smith, until recently, a soil scientist with the Pacific Agri-Food Research Centre (“PARC”) in Summerland in conjunction with Dr. Pat Bowen, a Viticulture Research Scientist at PARC. Their scientific summaries are attached as Appendix 1 at the end of this Application.

## **The Regulation**

Section 29(3) of the Regulation states:

“(3) The process to be developed under subsection (2) must take into account the following criteria:

- (a) a geographical indication or subdivision must represent an area that is geographically distinct and has clearly defined boundaries;
- (b) grape production in a proposed geographical area or subdivision must have reached commercially viable levels;
- (c) at least two thirds of practice standards certificate holders in a proposed geographical area or subdivision, who produce at least two thirds of the total production of wine made from grapes grown in that area or subdivision, must have voted, by ballot, in favour of the proposed geographical area or subdivision;
  - (c.1) at least two thirds of registrants in a proposed geographical area or subdivision, who produce at least two thirds of the total grape production in that area or subdivision, must have voted, by ballot, in favour of the proposed geographical area or subdivision;
- (d) appropriate consultations must have taken place within the region of the proposed geographical area or subdivision and there must not have been any credible objections that claim that the proposed geographical area or subdivision is not distinctive;
- (e) Repealed. [B.C. Reg. 307/2016, s. 10(c).]

## **The Defined Area**

The proposed Sub-GI is geographically distinct as required by Section 29(3)(a) of the Regulation.

Dr. Scott Smith of Eterrna Consulting (in consultation with Dr. Pat Bowen of the Summerland Research and Development Centre, Agriculture and Agri-Foods Canada) evaluated the area outlined by the Appellation Task Group's conceptual map of contiguous Sub-GI's around the Hawthorne Mountain, West Skaha Lake, East Skaha Lake and Okanagan Falls areas. After detailed evaluation of this large **heterogeneous** area, Dr. Smith narrowed his focus to the unique Okanagan Falls area. Dr. Smith stated:

"[F]ollowing detailed examination of geological, climatic, topographic and soil factors this rather large, heterogeneous area was narrowed down to focus on the unique surficial geology and resultant viticultural properties of the landscape on the east side of the valley from Vaseux Lake to just north of Shuttleworth Creek.

Dr. Smith concluded that: "The proposed OK Falls sub-Geographic Indication (sub-GI) has a unique terroir combining climatic, topographic and soil characteristics that influence the development and performance of grapevines including the compositional development of fruit that determines wine quality. The essence of this sub-GI is a landscape created during deglaciation some 12,000 year (sic) ago. Most of the area is covered by what geologists call glaciofluvial deposits, sands and gravels that were deposited by glacial meltwater during deglaciation. The proposed sub-GI covers an area just under 800 ha. According to a provincial agricultural land use survey conducted in 2015 there are approximately 150 ha of vineyards within this area."

A copy of the map showing the proposed Okanagan Falls Sub-GI's defined boundaries as well as the justification for the boundaries are contained in Dr. Smith's report which is attached as Appendix 1 to this Application."

## **Commercially Viable**

There are currently approximately 150 ha of vineyards in the proposed Sub-GI producing approximately 1111 tonnes of grapes annually. There are also 9 existing wineries in the proposed Sub-GI producing in excess of 100,000 cases of wine annually. The requirement of Section 29(3)(b) is satisfied.

## **Voting by Ballot**

It is understood that the British Columbia Wine Authority ("BCWA") will conduct a vote by ballot of the practice standards certificate holders within the proposed Sub- GI. All wineries in the proposed Sub-GI have indicated their support for the application.

### **Consultations Within the Sub-GI**

The BCWA sent emails (and in some cases followed up with phone calls) to all of the wineries and practice standards certificate holders within the proposed Sub-GI asking for permission to provide their email information to the Sub-Committee of the Okanagan Falls for the purposes of scheduling a town hall meeting to discuss the proposed Sub-GI and answer any questions or address any concerns about the application. All wineries and practice standards certificate holders whose contact information was provided by the BCWA were contacted by email, provided with background information concerning the proposed application and were invited to attend a meeting to discuss the information. That meeting took place at Noble Ridge Vineyard & Winery on May 31, 2017 and approximately 12 people attended. After discussion which lasted approximately 45 minutes. No opposition was expressed by anyone who attended and any questions asked have been responded to by the information contained in Appendix 1.

### **Conclusion**

As noted in the report prepared by Dr. Smith, the proposed Okanagan Falls Sub-GI is a unique and distinctive region within the Okanagan Valley and the classification of this region as a Sub-GI will help consumers identify with the grapes and wines grown within this region. It is respectfully requested that this application be approved.

