

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

SUMMERLAND LAKEFRONT SUB GEOGRAPHICAL INDICATION

MAY 21, 2021

Submitted by Rick Thrussell on behalf of the Summerland Bottleneck Drive Winery
Association and grape growers in the District of Summerland

Introduction

This document puts forth the case for a sub geographical indication for the Okanagan Valley called Summerland Lakefront. Under section 9 of the Wines of Marked Quality Regulation (the "Regulation"), the factors making this region unlike any other from a grape growing perspective. This report also provides a summary of Summerland's geology and landforms, soil properties, climate and its viticultural characteristics.

We have secured support letters from her worship Tony Booth Mayor of Summerland, MLA Dan Ashton and MP Dan Albas included, along with our application.

The technical report has been prepared for the stakeholders in the proposed area by Dr. Scott Smith, Eterna Consulting, Dr. Pat Bowen, Pacific Agri-Food Research Centre Summerland and Rick Thrussell past president of Summerland's Bottleneck Drive Winery Association. The technical report attached is a part of the final submission.

The Regulation

The Regulation as set out in Section 9(3) specifies the characteristics needed for application of a new sub geographic indication (sub-GI) in British Columbia:

(3)If the administrator intends to recommend to the minister new subdivisions of geographical indications for the purpose of section 56 (1) [geographical indications], the administrator must first ensure that all of the following criteria are met with respect to the geographical area represented by the proposed new subdivision:

(a)the area must be geographically distinct and have clearly defined boundaries;

(b)appropriate consultations must have taken place in the area and the region surrounding the area, with no credible objections made on the basis that the area is not geographically distinct;

(c)grape production in the area must be commercially viable;

(d)the administrator must hold a vote, by ballot, with respect to the proposal, and the proposal must be supported by at least 2/3 of the following:

(i)the practice standards certificate holders who process, in the area, at least 2/3 of the total wine processed from grapes grown in that area;

(ii)the registered grape growers who grow at least 2/3 of the total volume of grapes grown in that area by registered grape growers

Summerland Lakefront Defined Area

The proposed Sub GI meets the requirements of being distinct with clearly defined boundaries.

The central concept of this Sub Geographic Indication (GI) is to encompass the contiguous landscape composed of glaciolacustrine (lake bottom) and deltaic sediments along the western shore of Okanagan Lake within the District of Summerland. The glaciolacustrine sediments provide predominantly silty, carbonate(lime)-rich, stone-free soils on elevated benches above Okanagan Lake. The deltaic sediments at the mouth of Trout Creek are variable, often stony, and lie just above the elevation of Okanagan Lake. The vineyards located on these lakefront experience climatic conditions that are strongly moderated by the lake. The vineyards located on the surface of the glaciolacustrine bench have predominantly east and south-easterly aspects with good sun exposure. This set of conditions provides for excellent growing conditions for viticulture.

The total area is just over 760 ha (1,880 ac) of which 550 ha are located on the glaciolacustrine bench above the lakeshore and 255 ha lie on the Trout Creek delta. The area spans approximately 12 km of lakefront and there are an estimated 65 ha of vineyards, producing predominantly white wine grapes.

Consultations

The winery stakeholders have been consulted from the very beginning of the process to establish the Summerland Lakefront Sub GI. Meetings have been held with all of the winery stakeholders including the BCGA as the need for a decision to be made, a boundary to be changed or discussed or any other factor that would influence the application. Most of the farmed acres in the region are owned by the winery stakeholders who put forth this application. The winery and winery/growers in this area understand that the British Columbia Wine Authority (BCWA) will be naming each grower found within the Sub GI borders and holding an informational meeting as to the process, the application and the voting to determine if it will be approved by these stakeholders. The stakeholders who have driven this process welcome such a meeting and look forward to being able to vote on the proposal. Section 9(3b) will be fully satisfied after all the registered grape growers are able to review and exercise their opinion on the proposal.

Commercially Viable

The Summerland Lakefront defined area currently comprises of 160 acres of planted vines, the first of which were established in 2001, and the most recent in 2007. The area comprises of four wineries, all with tasting rooms, with a new winery opening its doors in 2022, adding to the growth of the grape growing and winery industries, and cementing the region's reputation for quality and commercial viability. The majority of the vineyards in Summerland Lakefront are certified organic, also reflecting a long-term commitment to sustainable viticulture practices and care for the land. The area also supports a diverse tourism industry, hotels, resorts, restaurants as well as ancillary businesses such as tour operators, private chauffeurs and designated drivers. They are well positioned to offer a multi-faceted service to wine savvy consumers from around the world who visit our region annually.

Voting by Ballot

The stakeholders understand that the British Columbia Wine Authority (BCWA) will conduct a vote by ballot of the practice standards certificate holders within the proposed Summerland Sub GI. All wineries within the Sub GI have indicated their support and independent, registered grape growers will be informed of the proposal and any concerns will be addressed before voting occurs. It is also understood that in order for the proposal to pass, 2/3 of the practice standards certificate holders in the area and 2/3 of the registered grape growers in the area must support this Sub GI proposal.

Conclusion

The proposed Summerland Lakefront Sub GI is a very unique region of the Okanagan Valley. Its establishment will allow for better consumer recognition of the unique qualities that the wines made and grown within this defined region represent. The notion of place and terroir and a shared viticultural story is what this unique region is all about. It is the essence of what brings people to this valley and as we move our industry forward we are building the foundation for why the world is starting to pay attention to this rapidly developing wine region. On behalf of the Summerland stakeholders, our wineries and growers we submit this application for a distinct Sub GI to the British Columbia Wine Authority. We look forward to joining the other regions in the province who have previously submitted applications and have been granted approval.