

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

SUMMERLAND VALLEYS 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 Valleys. 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 Valleys Defined Area**

The central concept of this Sub Geographical Indication (GI) is to encompass the arable land that exists within the District of Summerland in the areas known as Prairie Valley and Garnett Valley. These valleys are at higher elevation and have cooler climatic conditions than agricultural lands found elsewhere in the District. The Summerland Valleys GI contains some of the highest elevation vineyards in the Okanagan Valley. The Sub GI extends from just south of the Garnett Lake dam to the lower slopes of Conkle Mountain in the south. The Sub GI links the two separate valleys by incorporating land along the lower flanks of Cartwright Mountain. The total area of the Sub GI is approximately 1350 ha (3330 acres). There were some 35 ha (85 ac) of reported grape production in 2019. There is on-going expansion of vineyard area currently in the Sub GI.

The valley floor in these valleys ranges between 500 and 550 m elevation. The placement of the upper limit Sub GI boundary is governed by slope angle, the occurrence of high elevation arable land and bedrock outcropping. Arable land extends up to a maximum of 700 m elevation in the upper reaches of Garnett Valley. Elsewhere the upper elevation of the Sub GI is placed at around 650 m elevation which roughly corresponds to the climatic limit for the consistent production of vinifera grape cultivars.

## **Consultations**

The winery stakeholders have been consulted from the very beginning of the process to establish the Summerland Valleys 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 Valleys Sub GI defined area currently comprises of 85 acres of planted vines, the first of which were established in 1968, and the most recent in 2016, with new plantings coming online every year. Six wineries have key vineyards in this area and one winery planning on planting another 22 acres over the next five years, adding to the growth of the grape growing and winery industries, and cementing the

regions reputation for quality and commercial viability. The majority of the vineyards in Summerland Valleys are certified organic, with many others undergoing transition, also reflecting a long-term commitment to sustainable viticulture practices and care for the land.

### **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 Valleys 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 Valleys 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.