



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Rocky Reach is Washington’s 20th American Viticultural Area

Defining characteristics of new AVA include geology, soils, topography, and climate



Rocky Reach AVA. Courtesy of Dave Sproul, District4Creative.

SEATTLE (June 3, 2022)—Rocky Reach is Washington’s 20th American Viticultural Area (AVA). Today, the Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau (TTB) published the final rule for Rocky Reach AVA to officially define it as a designated wine grape-growing region.

“We are extremely pleased to have the Rocky Reach AVA approved,” said David and Michelle Dufenhorst, who own Rocky Pond Winery and two vineyards located within the AVA. “This is an essential step towards recognizing what we’ve known for some time—that this is a remarkable place to grow and produce top tier grapes and wines.”

Located between Chelan and Wenatchee, Rocky Reach straddles the Columbia River and is wholly contained within the larger Columbia Valley. The AVA covers 32,333 total acres, though the Columbia River and Rocky Reach Reservoir make up approximately a quarter of the area. There are currently eight commercial vineyards covering 117 acres.

The AVA takes its name from the Rocky Reach Dam and the Rocky Reach Reservoir, though the name originated from steamboat captains in the late 1800s who used the term to describe the rapids within a stretch, or “reach,” of the Columbia River.

To qualify as an AVA, a wine grape-growing region must have distinguishing features. According to Kevin Pogue, Professor of Geology at Whitman College, who wrote the AVA petition for Rocky Reach, its defining characteristics are its geology, soils, topography, and climate:

- **Geology:** Rocky Reach is unique from almost all other appellations in the Columbia Valley in that it has predominantly granitic bedrock, a feature it shares with only Lake Chelan.
- **Soils:** While the area has the windblown sand and silt (loess) that is ubiquitous throughout the Columbia Valley, in Rocky Reach, these soils overlie cobblestones and gravels.
- **Topography:** Rocky Reach is located on an area of the Columbia River where the river has eroded a deep canyon. Within this canyon are flat-topped terraces along both sides of the river near the valley floor, ideally suited for viticulture and other agriculture.
- **Climate:** Rocky Reach is located at low elevations within this valley. These lower elevations are considerably warmer and have a longer growing season relative to the surrounding mountains and plateaus.

“Rocky Reach represents an important milestone as our state’s 20th AVA, further signifying the continued growth and development of our wine industry,” said Steve Warner, President of the Washington State Wine Commission.

Beginning on July 5, 2022, wineries may submit a Certificate of Label Approval (COLA) request to the TTB for a label using Rocky Reach AVA as the appellation of origin.

Resources for Media:

- [Final Rule: Rocky Reach AVA](#), TTB
- [Rocky Reach AVA Profile](#), Washington State Wine Commission
- [Photos of Rocky Reach](#), courtesy of Dave Sproul, District4Creative
- [Washington AVA Map](#), Washington State Wine Commission

About the Washington State Wine Commission:

The Washington State Wine Commission (WSWC) represents every licensed winery and wine grape grower in Washington State. Guided by an appointed board, WSWC provides a marketing platform to raise positive awareness about the Washington wine industry and generate greater demand for its wines. Funded almost entirely by the industry through assessments based on grape and wine sales, WSWC is a state government agency, established by the legislature in 1987. To learn more, visit www.washingtonwine.org.

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