



TTB Boot Camp for Wineries

BEYOND THE BASICS: AVAS



TTB Disclaimer

Notice:

- This information is being presented to help the public to understand and comply with the laws and regulations that the Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau administers
- It is not intended to establish any new, or change any existing, definitions, interpretations, standards, or procedures regarding those laws and regulations
- In addition, this presentation may be made obsolete by changes in laws and regulations - please consult the regulations for the most current regulatory requirements
- Sample documents (such as records, returns, and labels) are for illustrative purposes only and contain fictitious data



Agenda

In this beyond the basics session we will cover:

- Appellations of Origin
 - American Viticultural Areas (AVAs)
- AVA Map Explorer
- Applying to establish or modify an AVA
- TTB establishment process
- Resources

Appellations of Origins & AVAs





What is an Appellation of Origin?

- An appellation of origin generally designates the geographic area in which the fruit or other agricultural product was grown.
- Using an appellation of origin on your label also indicates that the wine meets certain production requirements.
- If certain information about a wine is included on the label, an appellation of origin is required.

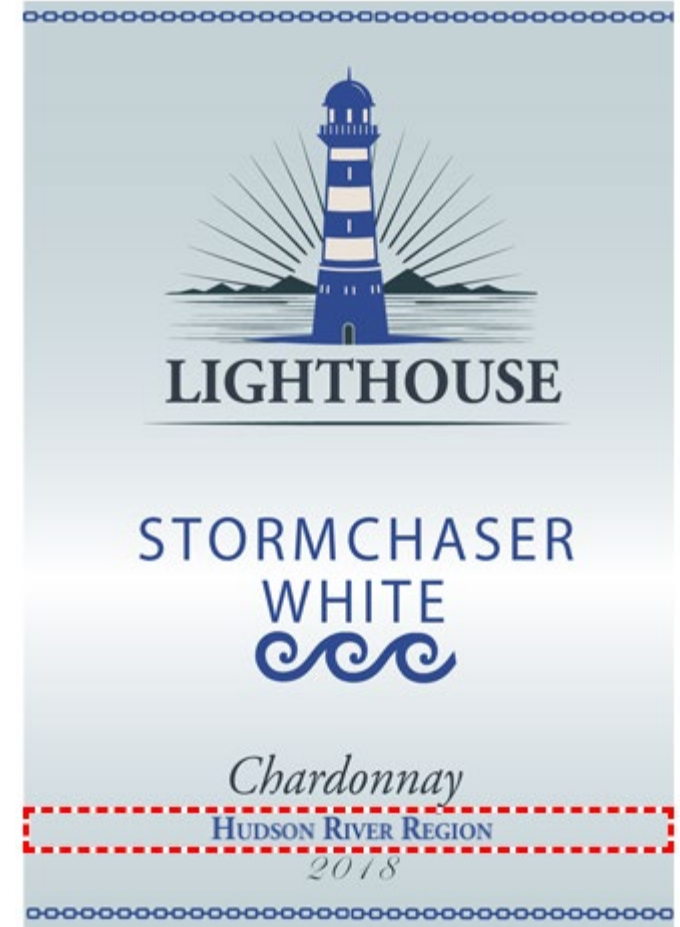


Appellation Types for American Wine

In general, the appellation for American wine can be:

- The United States
- A state(s)
- A county(s)
- **An approved American Viticultural Area(s) (AVA)**

Note: See [Appellation of Origin](#) for information on appellations of origin for imported wine.





When is an Appellation of Origin Required on Wine Labels?

An appellation of origin is not required on all wine labels. However, the label **must** include an appellation of origin **IF** the wine is labeled with:

- A vintage date;
- A varietal designation;
- A type designation of varietal significance;
- A semi-generic designation; or
- An “estate bottled” claim (must use AVA)
- **An AVA may be used as an appellation of origin only on grape wine!**



What is an AVA?

- An **American Viticultural Area (AVA)** is a type of appellation of origin specific to grape wine.
- It is a defined grape-growing region having a name, distinguishing features, and a delineated boundary as established in 27 CFR part 9.
- The names and boundary descriptions for all established AVAs are described in our regulations (See Code of Federal Regulations at [27 CFR part 9](#)).



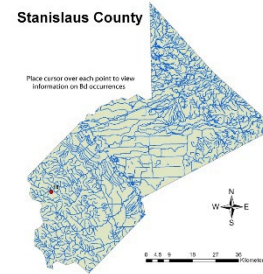
Appellation Types and Requirements for Use

State



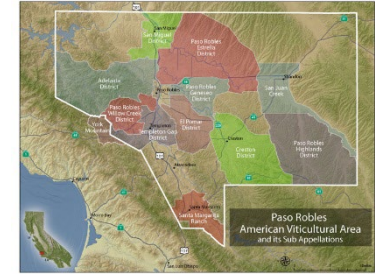
- At least 75% of the grapes are from the State.
- Fully finished within the labeled state or an adjacent state.
- All states are automatically eligible for use.

County



- At least 75% of the grapes are from the county.
- Fully finished within the state where the county is located.
- All counties are automatically eligible for use.

AVA

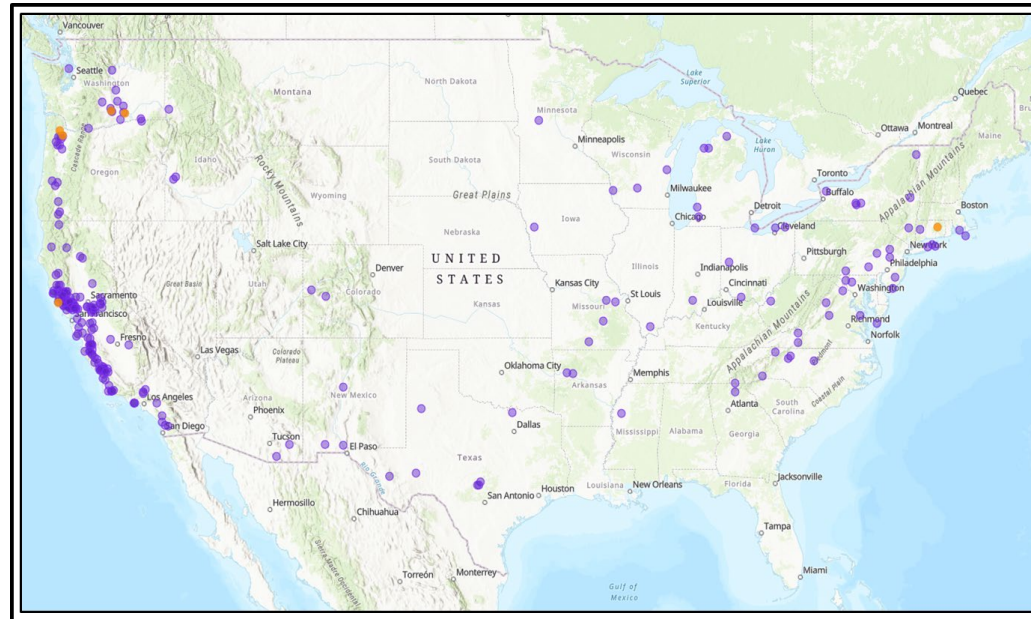


- **At least 85% of the grapes are from the AVA.**
- **Fully finished within the state where the AVA is located.**
- **Required if also using “estate bottled”.**
- **Must be established by TTB.**



AVA Map Explorer

Use TTB's American Viticultural Area (AVA) Map Explorer to view the boundaries of all established and proposed AVAs



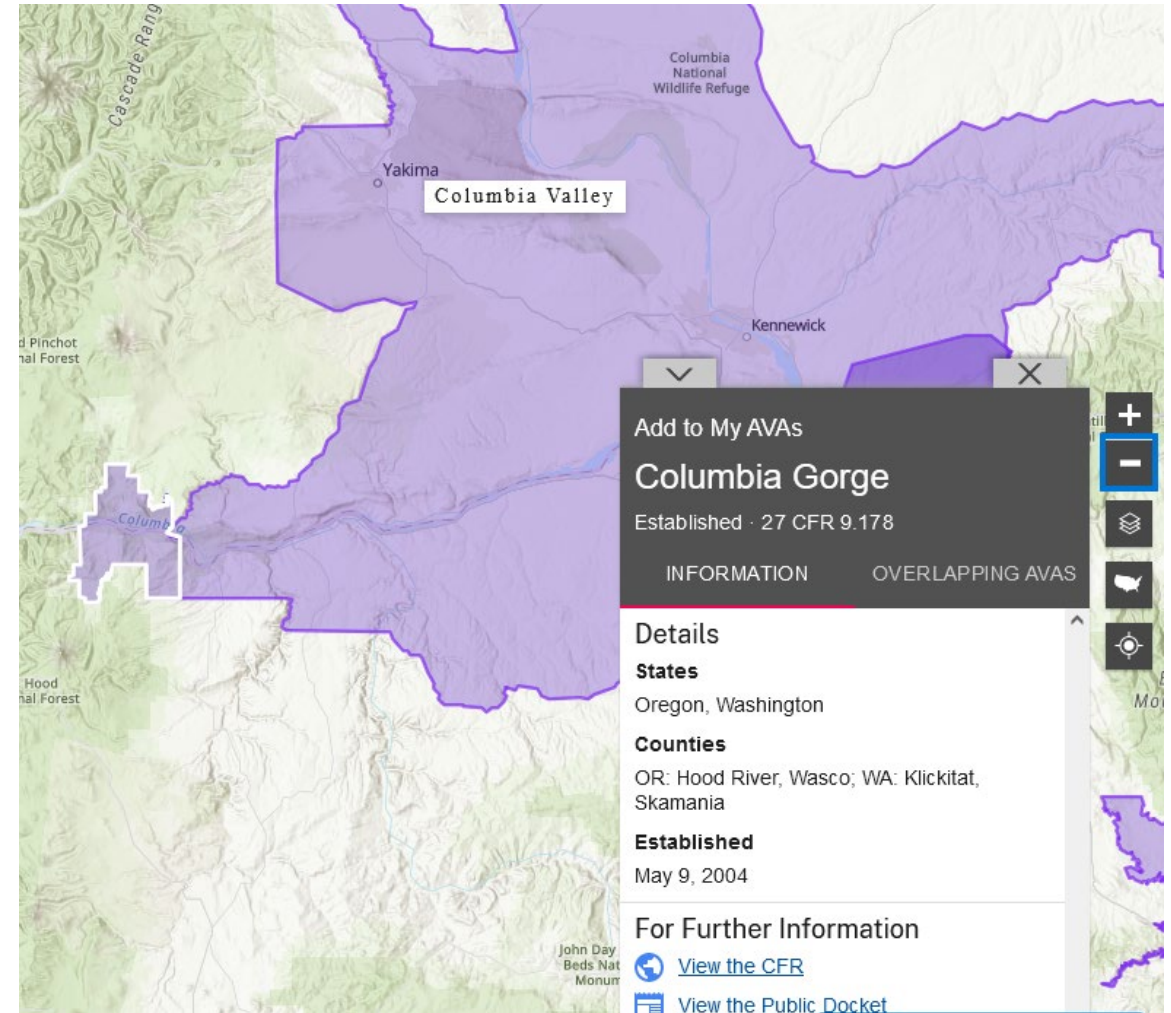
Available at: [AVA Map Explorer | TTB: Alcohol and Tobacco Tax Trade Bureau](#)



AVA Map Explorer

You can also:

- Learn more about each AVA, including other AVAs it contains or is within
- Determine whether a specific location is within an AVA
- See details of proposed AVAs
- View historical data

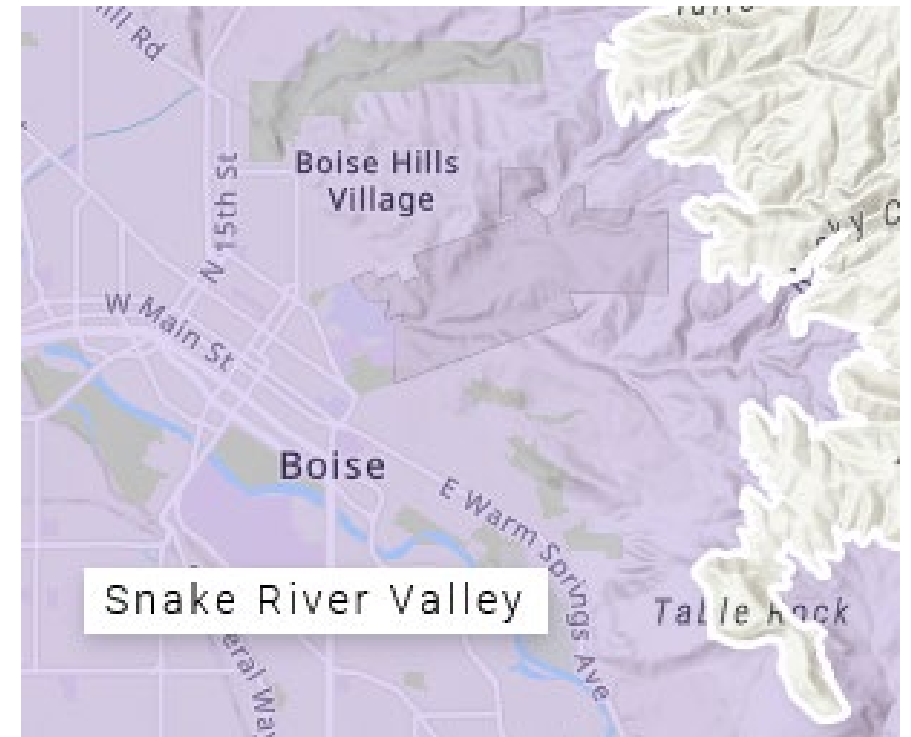




AVA Map Explorer

In addition to the AVA boundary, maps can display:

- Topographic features
- Satellite imagery
- Roads
- Structures
- Political boundaries



Topographic Map

AVA Petitions





How to Apply for or Modify an AVA

- Any interested individual or group may petition TTB to establish a new AVA or to modify an existing AVA.
- The complete process for creating and submitting a petition is outlined in our regulations (see 27 CFR Part 9).
- Currently, online petitions are not accepted.
- For assistance with drafting your petition, send a request via the TTB Web form: <https://www.ttb.gov/contact-rrd>





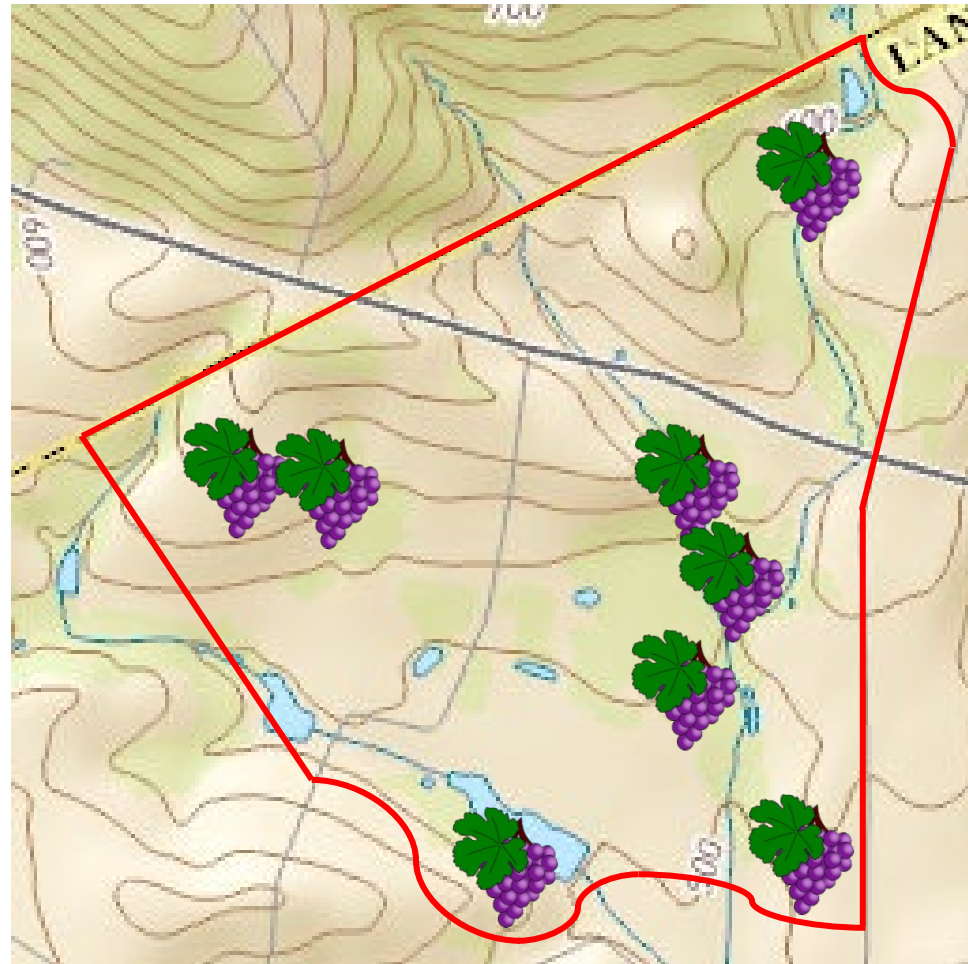
What to Include in a Petition

The main elements of an AVA petition include:

- **Viticulture Evidence:** Evidence of commercial viticulture in the proposed area.
- **Proposed AVA Name:** Name of proposed AVA with supporting evidence.
- **Distinguishing Features:** A description of the geographic and/or climatic features that distinguish the proposed AVA from the surrounding regions and impact how grapes are grown, along with evidence to support your claims.
- **Boundary Description:** A written description of the proposed AVA boundary.
- **Map(s):** The appropriate U.S.G.S. topographic map(s) with the boundary drawn on it.



Viticulture Evidence



- Provide total number of commercial wine grape vineyards and vineyard acreage.
- Helpful to include a map showing the locations of the vineyards.
- No regulation setting minimum number of vineyards or acres but viticultural activity should be distributed sufficiently.



Common Pitfalls of Viticulture Evidence

- Lack of viticulture.
- Uneven distribution of vineyards.
- Single-vineyard AVAs.





Proposed AVA Name

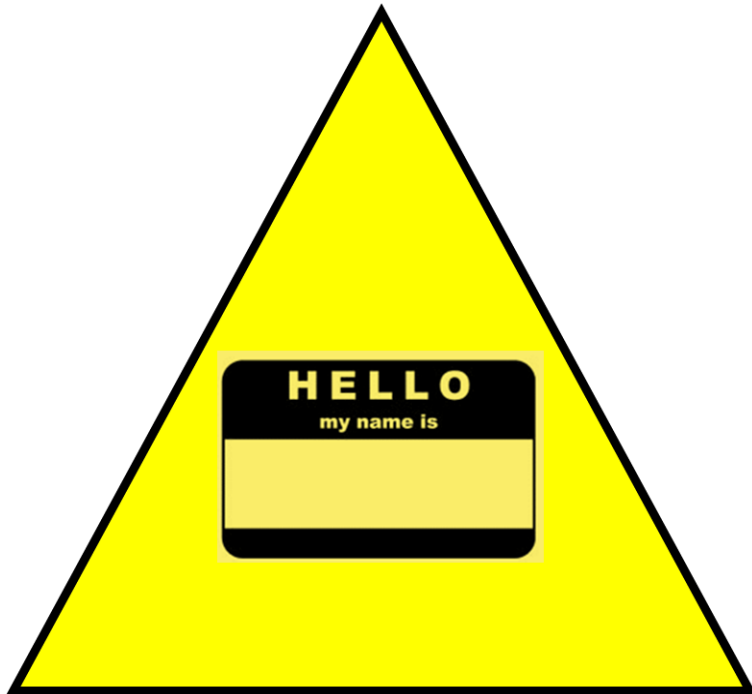


**COCALICO CREEK
ROAD**

- Is currently used to describe the area;
- Must apply to the entire proposed AVA, but may also extend beyond; and
- Be supported by evidence such as:
 - Geographical landmarks within proposed AVA
 - Roads within/passing through proposed AVA
 - Names and advertising of businesses and organizations
 - Government entities within or serving the proposed AVA
 - Recent magazine, newspaper, or web articles
 - Tourism Materials
 - Real Estate Listings



Common Pitfalls with Proposed AVA Names



- Other regions with the same name (may require adding a geographic modifier).
- Evidence that is not independent of the petitioner (Example: cannot be only from the name of petitioner's winery or articles about that winery).
- Providing only historical evidence of name use.
- Providing only anecdotal/testimonial evidence.
- Using geographical features that exist within the AVA, but don't lend their names to whole region of proposed AVA.



Distinguishing Features

- Describe natural features that distinguish proposed AVA from surrounding regions such as:
 - Climate (growing degree days, growing season length, annual rainfall, etc.)
 - Topography (elevation, slope angle/aspect, etc.)
 - Soils
- Choose feature(s) that best distinguish your proposed AVA.
- Provide evidence to support your claims.
- Describe how each distinguishing feature affects viticulture.



Common Pitfalls with Distinguishing Features

- Missing data from surrounding areas.
- Missing data from within proposed AVA.
- Lack of viticultural effects.
- Short time periods for climate data.

**CAUTION!
INSUFFICIENT
EVIDENCE**



Boundary Description and Maps

1. Purchase the necessary U.S.G.S. maps

2. Mark your boundary

3. Identify any shared AVA boundaries

4. Create a written boundary description

5. Keep a copy of the maps for reference



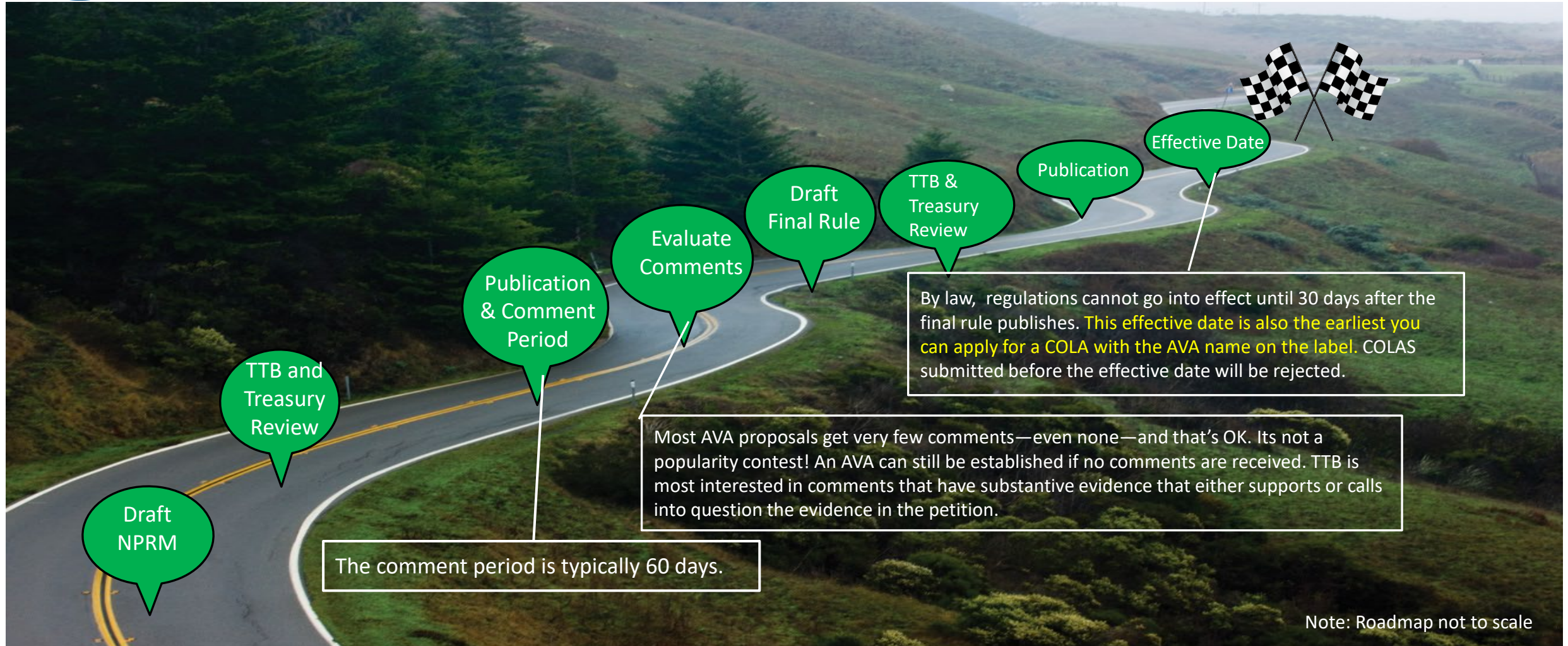
TTB Establishment Process

Petitioner submits petition and TTB will:

1. Send written acknowledgement within 30 days of receipt of the petition.
2. Perform an initial review of the petition to determine whether it contains all the basic elements required.
3. If missing required elements, return petition with a letter explaining the deficiencies. Petitioner may submit a revised petition.
4. If petition meets regulatory requirements, send a letter to petitioner as to whether TTB intends to proceed with the rulemaking process.



AVA Rulemaking Process



By law, regulations cannot go into effect until 30 days after the final rule publishes. **This effective date is also the earliest you can apply for a COLA with the AVA name on the label.** COLAS submitted before the effective date will be rejected.

Most AVA proposals get very few comments—even none—and that’s OK. Its not a popularity contest! An AVA can still be established if no comments are received. TTB is most interested in comments that have substantive evidence that either supports or calls into question the evidence in the petition.

The comment period is typically 60 days.

Note: Roadmap not to scale



Appellation of Origin and AVA Resources

Web Resources:

- Wine Appellations of Origin [Webpage](#)
- AVA [Webpage](#)
- Applying to Establish or Modify an AVA [Webpage](#)
- AVA [Manual](#) for Petitioners
- AVA Mapping [Tool](#)

Web Form: <https://www.ttb.gov/contact-rrd>

Mail:

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