
Building a "Roadmap to Sustainability in Texas wine": Praxis for sustainability in a dynamic socio-environmental region

Colleen Myles*¹

¹Texas State University (TXST) – États-Unis

Résumé

A small but dedicated group of Texas wine growers and winemakers have been asking themselves some important questions: *What is sustainability? What is sustainability in wine? What is sustainability in Texas wine?* Although each has their own perspectives and needs as producers, they all share some common goals, namely: promoting and pursuing sustainability in Texas wine. However, to promote or pursue a thing, you need to understand it. So, my team and I have been working closely with these sustainability stakeholders over the past year and a half to discover what sustainability *does* look like, *could* look like, and *will* look like for Texas wine.

Within the "Roadmap to Sustainability in Texas Wine" project, we envision sustainability as tripart, encompassing environmental as well as economic and equity components, and we in the Fermented Landscapes Lab have been working alongside Texas winegrowers and winemakers to conceptualize and, crucially, *operationalize* sustainability in their practices and process. Specifically, through a series of extensive qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis activities, we have been working to identify shared goals for sustainability; fostering effective collaboration across the group; and producing shared guidelines for sustainability best practices within-and beyond-those organizations. This work has occurred alongside outreach and education for other producers who have expressed interest in getting involved in the future.

Texas has a handful of well-established geographic indicators (GIs) as well as some notable (sub-)appellations in development, but there are no applicable sustainability regimes for the region (despite there being about a dozen wine sustainability certification options in the United States). Although the project participants agreed that not all producers in Texas would necessarily want to participate in a formal wine sustainability certification, we also knew that some might appreciate the opportunity to certify, were that an option. Thus, some of our collective efforts have been targeted toward preparing a proposal of necessary adjustments to an existing sustainability certification paradigm in use elsewhere to ensure the eligibility of Texas participants. That proposal is currently under consideration by the selected certifying body.

Regardless of the outcome of our bid for an official certification option, though, through our efforts we have been working diligently to develop guiding principles for wine sustainability in the state of Texas and foster a durable partnership for those seeking to improve their sustainability practices. Such a partnership is critical for sharing strategies and tools,

*Intervenant

maintaining a commitment to this challenging work, making progress clear to consumers, and celebrating successes.

This paper offers a report on our community-based, action research project, which serves as a praxis for sustainability in Texas wine. This work has demonstrated that, as a place with a dynamic (and difficult) environmental context, embedded in a unique cultural and regulatory landscape, Texas wine producers are necessarily innovative and creative when it comes to addressing sustainability issues. In sum, there has been much progress made in the Texas wine industry, and we look forward to using our shared "roadmap" to push Texas wine along the path toward sustainability.

Mots-Clés: sustainability, wine, fermented landscapes, praxis, action research