

Ok Folks, So here's our response.

Steamworks started brewing Cascadia Cream Ale almost from the time it first fired up its steam kettles in August of 1995. Like many things at Steamworks, we were the first to use the word Cascadia with beer, just cause we liked the whole concept of Cascadia . For 15 years we quietly brewed and served our Cascadia, and nobody except cream beer lovers paid much attention to us. This is not a new trademark as some would have you believe.

We thought our Cascadia should not just be a name but a full brand. As Chuck noted, we built up a brand image around our idealized image of Cascadia. Sorry you don't like it Chuck but what's kitsch to you is nostalgic to others. Anyway we hired a designer, used the imagery in artwork, printed hundreds of thousands of coasters and created a brand which fitted in really well in our brewpub.

We liked our Cascadia brand and others did too, it even made the front page of the Vancouver Sun business section, so in 1999 we decided to make the investment and trademark CASCADIA so we could secure our right to continue using it. If we didn't trademark it somebody else could come along, no names mentioned, and try to stop us from using it.

Well wouldn't you know it but our trademark application was initially opposed by Granville Island, who at the time had never used Cascadia in trade but were owned by a company called Cascadia Brands.

After much back and forth, Granville Island eventually withdrew its opposition to CASCADIA and in 2006 CASCADIA became an officially registered Canadian trademark.

So this spring, it first came to our attention that other breweries were using the term Cascadia or Cascadian in the names of their beers. A very low key, friendly phone call went out, to the effect of "hey I don't know if you realized it but Cascadia is a registered trademark". Most brewers were immediately apologetic, they hadn't done a trademark search and didn't realize they were infringing. Our approach was "no worries, use up the existing stock of your labels/packaging we don't want you to suffer any financial hardship".

You see, as Chuck rightly points out, when it comes to trademarks, it's not just a question of use it or lose it, but it's also a question of protect it or lose it. Second , We have never opposed breweries using the word "Cascadia " for referring to their hop ingredients on their label. We did however have issue with people using it as a brand name which does violate our trademark which as business owners know is a necessary thing to do. You couldn't start using JJ Bean or Lululemon without getting John or Chip's approval.

One brewery, we approached said bluntly that they didn't think our trademark was valid. Well what were we supposed to do? What would you do? Who do you think it was? Molson owned Granville Island.

Despite the fact Granville Island withdrew their opposition to our trademark in 2006 they knowingly decided to flaunt international intellectual property law and infringe on the trademark. Now who is acting like the big bully here?

Anyway, what has become apparent over the last few months is that unlike in 1995, a whole lot of other brewers want to brew a certain style of beer that has become associated with the Pacific Northwest, and this is a good thing.

It's also apparent that brewers want a name for this style of beer that has some flair, not just American Black Ale, (heck we're in Canada) but something that captures the spirit of our little part of the planet earth: Oregon, Washington, Northern California and coastal BC. Cascadia? Gee, the concept of Cascadia was pretty novel in 1995, that's why we chose it! I guess if a whole group of people want to use a name we came up with in 1995 because we were farsighted about the concept of Cascadia we should be flattered.

So having said all this, we've been evolving our position on this issue in the last few months and have decided that protecting our trademark vs. Molson owned Granville Island Brewing is the best course of action so as to preserve the integrity of the name "Cascadia" for true craft breweries not for large multi-national breweries to homogenize or lay claim to the name. Our plan is to license the trademark to other true B.C. craft breweries for a very nominal fee (\$1 perhaps) which is legally needed to protect the trademark for all. These discussions are on-going and not 100% finalized but so far have been well received, hence our reason for "No Comment" to Chuck, Normally we wouldn't discuss legal things in progress but given the hoopla we've broken our silence. No hard feelings, Chuck.

I hope this sheds some light on the subject and we can now get back to brewing and enjoying great B.C. craft beer!

Cheers,

Team Steam