

## Dillon Beach, California

### People and Place

#### *Location*

Dillon Beach is located on the northern coast of Marin County, approximately 60 miles north of San Francisco and 4 miles west of State Highway 101. Dillon Beach, located at approximately 38°14'59"N, 122°57'50"W, covers 3 square miles of land.

#### *Demographic Profile*

At the time of the 2000 U.S. Census the population of Dillon Beach was 319. In 2000 the percentage of males and females was 48.9% and 51.1% respectively. The racial composition of the population was 94% White, followed by Asian (2.8%), Black or African American (0.3%), and American Indian and Alaskan Native (0.3%). A small percentage, 0.3%, identified with some other race and 2.2% classified themselves as belonging to two or more races. Overall, 0.9% of the population identified themselves as Hispanic or Latino. Of the foreign-born population (3.3%), 100% were born in the United Kingdom.

The median age of the population in 2000 was 51.5, higher than the national median of 35.3 for the same year. In 2000 approximately 53% of the population was between the ages of 30 and 59. The U.S. Census reports that in 2000 a total of 97.3% of the population of Dillon Beach over 18 years of age had received a high school degree or higher, 47.7% had received a bachelor's degree or higher, and 21.5% received a graduate or professional degree; as compared to the national averages of 79.7%, 22.3%, and 7.8% respectively. A total of 80.9% of the population of Dillon Beach was living in family households in 2000.

#### *History*

The first inhabitants of the Dillon Beach area were the Miwok Indians. The Coastal Miwok, called Olamentke by early writers, are part of the Penutian language family.<sup>1</sup> The Miwok occupied the territory bounded on the north by Cosumnes River, on the east by the ridge of the Sierra Nevada, on the south by Fresno Creek, and on the west by the San Joaquin River.<sup>2</sup> The Miwok are known to be the largest "nation" in California and it is said that a "man of any of their tribes or settlements may travel from the Cosumnes to the Fresno and make himself understood without difficulty, so uniform is their language."<sup>3</sup>

The Coast Miwok inhabited about 885 square miles of Marin and southern Sonoma Counties. At the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century there were approximately 3000 Miwok in about 40 villages; each village consisted of 75-100 persons.<sup>4</sup> In 1910 the Miwok population was estimated at 699.<sup>5</sup> The Miwok traveled in boats made from tule reeds from which they traveled around the Bay and to Angel Island, the largest island in San Francisco Bay.<sup>6</sup> Their diet consisted primarily of nuts, pinole – a meal made of plant seeds, roots, fruit, jack-rabbit, deer, sea lions, seals, sea otters, fish, and shellfish.<sup>7</sup> According to evidence from several archaeological sites, the Miwok used the sand dunes and a small valley on the southerly slope of Little Sugar Hill for drying shellfish, the basis for subsequent trade with inland tribes.<sup>8</sup> Fish were taken by gorge-hook (made from bone) and spear, dip nets (bags of netting attached to wooden frames on a handle), and by narcotization; woven surf nets were used along the open beaches.<sup>9,10</sup>

The Miwok's first contact with Europeans occurred in 1579 when Sir Francis Drake, the first Englishman to sail around the world, was greeted upon his arrival by Indians in a village near Tomales, 4 miles inland from Dillon Beach. Later, in 1775, Father Vincente, who arrived to

claim San Francisco Bay with Captain Ayuala described the Coast Miwok as “humorous, with courteous manners.”<sup>11</sup> During the Spanish Mission Era the Coast Miwok learned how to build with adobe and cultivate new food crops, which they in turn traded to the Spanish missions.<sup>12</sup> For decades the Coast Miwok resisted the Spanish and Mexicans but fell before European firepower. In 1953 Congress passed public law 280 which turned over law enforcement on California reservations to state and county agencies. By 1958, the federal government “terminated” the recognition of several tribes including the Coast Miwok.<sup>13</sup> In December 2000 legislation was signed granting The Federated Indians of the Graton Rancheria, formerly known as the Federated Coast Miwok, full rights and privileges afforded federally recognized tribes. Today there are over 500 registered tribal members.<sup>14</sup>

In the early 1800s the Dillon Beach area was inhabited by Russian fur trappers out of the Fort Ross area to the north, but the trappers left in the mid-1800s when otter populations plummeted. In 1859 the Irish immigrant George Dillon settled in Dillon Beach. Mr. Dillon built a small, successful hotel and in 1903 he began selling some of his beachfront holdings. John Keegan purchased a section of beachfront in 1903 and laid out the plans for the village. Keegan then sold his interests to the California Eucalyptus Plantation Company of San Francisco in 1911. In 1923 Sylvester Lawson of Sacramento leased the town from the Plantation Company and with the help of his sons, purchased the resort in 1926. In 1933 the Lawson’s loaned one of their buildings to the University of California and in 1948 a Marine Biological Station was established. Many students and scientists came to the area to study the area’s marine life until the station was closed in the late 1970s. In the mid-1960s the Oceana Marin subdivision was established in an area just north of the Dillon Beach Village and many homes continue to be built in this area.<sup>15</sup>

Today the Dillon Beach community is comprised of five areas. The agricultural lands situated to the north and east of the town consist primarily of dairy farms. Oceana Marin is the private, relatively new subdivision in the hilly, northern part of the community. There are over 250 homes in the Oceana Marin neighborhood. The residential neighborhood in the center of town is referred to as “The Village” and consists of over 150 homes. Lawson’s Dillon Beach Resort is located south of the Village and north of Lawson’s Landing. Within this 64-acre area are the Lawson’s Store, Dillon Creek, a beach parking lot and restrooms, a 17-lot residential subdivision, and extensive undeveloped areas. Lawson’s Landing refers to the private beach, bay front, and campground that extend from the Resort on the north to Tomales Bay on the south.<sup>16</sup>

The Dillon Beach area is rich with natural resources. Dillon Beach’s steep coastal bluffs, long sand beach, tall dunes, wide esteros (coastal lagoons), streams, tidal estuaries, fishing grounds, and extensive clam beds together form a unique coastal area in Marin County. The town is home to a dune system – Tomales Dunes – that is wholly in private ownership. Most of the dunes are located within the 980-acre property known as Lawson’s Landing, which has been in the Lawson family since the 1920s.<sup>17</sup> Currently the U.S. Fish and Wildlife is in the process of listing several acres of Dillon Beach as “critical habitat” for the Western snowy plover, a shorebird that has been listed as “threatened” by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife since 1993.<sup>18</sup>

## **Infrastructure**

### *Current Economy*

According to the 2000 U.S. Census the top three occupations in Dillon Beach in 2000 for the persons 16 years of age and over were “management, professional and related occupations” (28.3%), “sales and office occupations” (27.5%), and “production, transportation, and material

moving occupations” (17.4%). At the time of the 2000 U.S. Census, 8% of the City’s eligible labor force was employed within local, state, or federal governments, all working outside of natural resource industries (agriculture, forestry, fishing, hunting, and mining). The 2000 U.S. Census data reports that zero Dillon Beach residents were employed in agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting.

According to 2000 U.S. Census data, 53.1% of the potential labor force was employed and there was a 0% unemployment rate (calculated by dividing the unemployed population by the labor force). Of the population of Dillon Beach over 16 years of age, 46.9% was not in the labor force, which is higher than the national average of 36.1%. For whom poverty status was determined, 1.3% of the City’s population was living below the poverty line in 1999. The median household income in 1999 was \$47,679 and the per capita income was \$39,475. In 2000 there were 415 housing units; the percentage of occupied housing units that were owner versus renter occupied were 87.1% and 13.5% respectively. The percent of vacant housing units was 62.7%, of which 95.4% were vacant due to seasonal, recreational, or occasional use.

### *Governance*

Dillon Beach is a Census Designated Place (CDP). Dillon Beach levies a 7.25% sales and use tax on regular purchases and a 10% transient lodging tax.<sup>19,20</sup> Under Proposition 13 the maximum property tax rate for Marin County is 1% of the property’s net taxable value.<sup>21</sup> California state law assesses commercial vessels, charter boats, and oceanographic research vessels at 4% of their full cash value.<sup>22</sup> Vessels registered in California with either the Department of Motor Vehicles or the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) are assessed property taxes by the county tax collector where the vessel is moored.<sup>23</sup> Some commercial vessels are also subject to a Ballast Water Management Fee of about \$500 per voyage.<sup>24</sup> California levies a fuel tax of \$0.18 per gallon, a portion of which goes toward marine safety and education programs and boating facility administration and development.<sup>25</sup>

The State of California levies landing taxes that must be paid by fishermen and fish processors involved in the retail sale of fish products. These taxes vary by species and range between \$.0013 and \$.0125 per pound of fish.<sup>26</sup> The California Department of Agriculture also administers two commodity commissions, the California Salmon Council and the California Sea Urchin Commission, which charge fees for marketing and lobbying on behalf of fishermen involved in these specific fisheries.<sup>27</sup>

The National Marine Fisheries Service’s (NMFS) Southwest Fisheries Science Center has laboratories located 134 miles south in Santa Cruz and a NMFS Regional Office is located approximately 456 miles south in Long Beach. The California Department of Fish and Wildlife has a marine field office located about 82 miles south of Dillon Beach in Belmont. San Francisco (60 miles) is home to the nearest U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services. Pacific Fishery Management Council meetings are held approximately 81 miles south in Foster City. Dillon Beach falls under the jurisdiction of the United States Coast Guard Marine Safety Office San Francisco Bay, one of the largest and busiest marine safety units in the Coast Guard.

### *Facilities*

Dillon Beach is accessible via ground transportation. The major roads connecting Dillon Beach to neighboring cities are State Highway 101 north to Santa Rosa and south to San Francisco. Golden Gate Transit makes two trips daily on weekends only between San Rafael and Inverness, at the southern end of Tomales Bay. There is no public transportation between Point

Reyes Station and Dillon Beach. The Marin Senior Coordinating Council provides specialized van service for eligible elderly and disabled individuals in Dillon Beach. The San Francisco International Airport is located 60 miles south of Dillon Beach and is home to several commercial carriers.

Dillon Beach lies within the boundaries of the Shoreline Unified School District. Students from the community attend Tomales Elementary and Tomales High Schools. The nearest college, Sonoma State University, is located 20 miles away in Sonoma County. The nearest County Library is located nearby in Point Reyes Station. Water is supplied to Dillon Beach businesses and residences by two private water companies: Coast Springs Water Company and Estero Mutual Water Company. Sewage treatment and disposal services are supplied by several independent systems including a centralized sewer system and individual on-site septic systems.<sup>28</sup> Public safety in the community is administered by the Sheriff's West Marin Substation in Point Reyes Station and the Tomales Fire Station. Dillon Beach residents utilize medical services run by both Marin and Sonoma Counties.<sup>29</sup> The nearest hospital is Palm Drive Hospital, located approximately 15 miles northeast in Sebastopol. Additional local facilities include: a popular campground – Lawson's Landing, Dillon Beach Vacation Home Rentals, and several Bed and Breakfasts. In business since 1957, Lawson's Landing has boat rental, a bait shop/snack bar, and a fuel dock, the only one located on Tomales Bay. Lawson's also operates a grocery store located about 1 mile inland.

## **Involvement in West Coast Fisheries**

### *Commercial Fishing*

Landings data for Dillon Beach were recorded as part of the Other Sonoma and Marin County Outer Coast Ports port group which includes the nearby communities of San Rafael, Inverness, Bolinas, Jenner, Windsor, Marshall, Petaluma, Novato, Stewarts Point, Sebastopol, Drakes Bay, Healdsburg, Kentfield, Muir Beach, Guerneville, Sonoma, Nicasio, Greenbrae, Forest Knolls, Occidental, Cloverdale, San Quentin, Rohnert Park, Corte Madera, Mill Valley, Tiburon, Stinson Beach, Hamlet, Marconi, Millerton, and Santa Rosa. Reported landings for this port group in 2000 were in the following West Coast fisheries (data shown represent landings in metric tons/value of said landings/number of vessels landing): coastal pelagic (135 t/\$116,723/15), crab (6 t/\$42,768/7), groundfish (1 t/\$1704/9), highly migratory species (confidential/confidential/1), salmon (5 t/\$31,805/4), shrimp (3 t/\$23,875/6), and other species (4 t/\$23,656/16). According to available data there were zero seafood processors operating in Dillon Beach in 2000. See the Novato, Sebastopol, Corte Madera, and Santa Rosa Community Profiles for additional information on these communities.

Available data indicates that there were zero landings made in Dillon Beach in 2000. However Dillon Beach residents owned four vessels that participated in West Coast fisheries in the same year. Recorded data indicates that the number of vessels owned by Dillon Beach residents that participated in each said fishery by state (WA/OR/CA) was: crab (0/0/1), groundfish (0/0/NA), highly migratory species (NA/0/NA), salmon (0/0/2), shellfish (NA/0/NA), shrimp (NA/0/0), and other species (0/0/0).<sup>30</sup>

In 2000 one Dillon Beach resident held a single Federally Managed Groundfish fishery permit. In the same year recorded data indicates that the number of Dillon Beach residents holding permits in each said fishery by state (WA/OR/CA) was: coastal pelagic (0/0/1), crab (0/0/4), groundfish (0/0/0), highly migratory species (NA/0/0), salmon (0/0/7), shellfish (0/0/NA), shrimp (0/0/0), and other species (0/0/2).<sup>31</sup>

According to available data, 20 permits were registered to 13 Dillon Beach residents in 2000, including 19 state registered permits. Recorded data indicates that the number of state permits held by these community members in each said fishery by state (WA/OR/CA) was: coastal pelagic (0/0/1), crab (0/0/4), highly migratory species (NA/0/0), salmon (0/0/12), shellfish (0/0/NA), and other species (0/0/2).<sup>32</sup>

### *Sportfishing*

Sportfishing on Tomales Bay is extremely popular among North Marin County residents. Surf fishing for redbait and rubberlip perch is popular in the spring, along with salmon and halibut. Pier fishing for perch and crab and clamming are also popular activities among Dillon Beach residents and visitors. The nearest charter fishing businesses are Wills Fishing Adventures and the Bodega Bay Sport Fishing Center, both located 16 miles north of Dillon Beach. Lawson's Landing in Dillon Beach offers boat launching and rentals. There are two sportfishing license agents located in Dillon Beach.

### *Subsistence*

Specific information on subsistence fishing in Dillon Beach is not discussed in detail in this Community Profile due to the lack of available data. The California Department of Fish and Game uses the term "recreational" to refer to fishermen that do not earn revenue from their catch but rather fish for pleasure and/or to provide food for personal consumption. Therefore information on subsistence fishing in California is captured, to some degree, within the above sportfishing data.

## **Involvement in North Pacific Fisheries**

### *Commercial Fishing*

According to available data for 2000, Dillon Beach residents were not involved in North Pacific commercial fisheries. Zero landings were made in the community and no vessels involved in North Pacific fisheries were owned by community members in 2000. Residents were also not involved as crewmembers or permit holders in North Pacific fisheries.

### *Sportfishing*

A single Alaska sportfishing license was purchased by a Dillon Beach community member in 2000. Available data indicates that there were zero North Pacific sportfishing business in the community in the same year.

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<sup>1</sup> Curtis, Edward. 1924. The Miwok, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://www.yosemite.ca.us/history/curtis/> (access date - January 2005).

<sup>2</sup> Access Genealogy. 2004. California Indian Tribes, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://www.accessgenealogy.com/native/tribes/californiatribes.htm> (access date - January 2005).

<sup>3</sup> Access Genealogy. 2004. California Indian Tribes, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://www.accessgenealogy.com/native/tribes/californiatribes.htm> (access date - January 2005).

<sup>4</sup> Rohnert Park Historical Society. 2000. Miwok Villages, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://www.rphist.org/html/miwok.html> (access date - January 2005).

<sup>5</sup> Curtis, Edward. 1924. The Miwok, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://www.yosemite.ca.us/history/curtis/> (access date - January 2005).

<sup>6</sup> Angel Island Association. 2003. Miwok Information, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://www.angelisland.org/miwok.htm> (access date - January 2005).

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- <sup>7</sup> Angel Island Association. 2003. Miwok Information, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://www.angelisland.org/miwok.htm> (access date - January 2005).
- <sup>8</sup> The Marin County Planning Department and Wallace, Roberts & Todd. 1989. Dillon Beach Community Plan, [Online]. Available: URL: [http://www.co.marin.ca.us/depts/CD/main/pdf/planning/Dillon\\_Beach\\_Community\\_Plan\\_1989.PDF](http://www.co.marin.ca.us/depts/CD/main/pdf/planning/Dillon_Beach_Community_Plan_1989.PDF) (access date - March 2005).
- <sup>9</sup> Curtis, Edward. 1924. The Miwok, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://www.yosemite.ca.us/history/curtis/> (access date - January 2005).
- <sup>10</sup> Miwok Archeological Preserve of Marin. No date. History of the Coast Miwok at Point Reyes, [Online]. Available: URL: [http://www.pointreyesvisions.com/NewFiles/Science\\_Folder/Coast\\_Miwok.html](http://www.pointreyesvisions.com/NewFiles/Science_Folder/Coast_Miwok.html) (access date - January 2005).
- <sup>11</sup> Wlaker, Richard. 2001. A Hidden Geography, [Online]. Available: URL: [http://geography.berkeley.edu/PeopleHistory/faculty/R\\_Walker/AHiddenGeography.html](http://geography.berkeley.edu/PeopleHistory/faculty/R_Walker/AHiddenGeography.html) (access date - January 2005).
- <sup>12</sup> Novato Chamber of Commerce. No date. Novato's History, [Online]. Available: URL: [http://www.localcommunities.org/servlet/lc\\_ProcServ/dbpage=page&GID=00125000000976770154594203&PG=00126000000976848350676363](http://www.localcommunities.org/servlet/lc_ProcServ/dbpage=page&GID=00125000000976770154594203&PG=00126000000976848350676363) (access date - January 2005).
- <sup>13</sup> Miwok Archeological Preserve of Marin. No date. History of the Coast Miwok at Point Reyes, [Online]. Available: URL: [http://www.pointreyesvisions.com/NewFiles/Science\\_Folder/Coast\\_Miwok.html](http://www.pointreyesvisions.com/NewFiles/Science_Folder/Coast_Miwok.html) (access date - January 2005).
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- <sup>30</sup> 'NA' refers to data which was not available, for example, due to few or no recorded permit numbers, or the partially permitted nature of a fishery in 2000.
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