

Fields Landing, California

People and Place

Location

Fields Landing is located in northern California at 40°43'28"N and 124°12'54"W. The community is situated on Humboldt Bay, south of Redwood National Park. The closest major metropolitan area is San Francisco, which is 265.7 miles south of the community.

Demographic Profile

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, Fields Landing had a total population of 213 people. About 83.1% of the inhabitants were White, 1% African American, 4.2% Native American, 2.3% Asian, and 0.5% Pacific Islander. A total of 4.7% identified with some other race and 4.2% with two or more races. Another 15% of the population identified themselves as having Hispanic or Latino origins. According to the 2000 U.S. Census, zero Fields Landing residents were foreign-born. Population trends for the area are difficult to determine as Fields Landing has not been recognized by the U.S. Census.

In 2000, Fields Landing was composed of 53.1% males and 46.9% females. The median age of the community was 29.8 years in 2000 as compared to the national average of 35.3 for the same year. The 2000 U.S. Census reports that 16.9% of the population was between the ages of 18 and 24, compared to the national average of 9.6%. The 55 and older age group represented 14.6% of the total population in 2000, while the national average for this age group was 21.1% for the same year. The 2000 U.S. Census stated that 50% of the population 18 years and older received a high school degree as their highest educational attainment compared to the national average of 28.6%. In the community, 78% received a high school degree or higher, while 10% received a bachelor's degree or higher. According to the 2000 U.S. Census, zero residents of Fields Landing had received a graduate degree or higher compared to the national average of 7.8% for the same year.

History

Before the arrival of European settlers, the area now known as Humboldt County was occupied by several diverse nations. The Wiyot, Yurok, Hupa, Karuk, Chilula, Whilkut, and the southern Athabascans occupied specific territories, spoke individual languages, and shared similar, yet distinct cultural systems.¹ Fields Landing is within the original territory of the Wiyot nation. Just as they continue to do today, the Wiyot people utilized the surrounding resources for food, medicine, and basketry, including wildlife, salmon, and roots. Across the Bay is Indian Island, "the center of the Wiyot People's world" and home of the ancient village of Tuluwat.² Beneath the village site is a large clamshell midden that is over 6 acres in size and estimated to be 1000 years old. It contains the remains of meals, tools, ceremonies, and burial sites. Today, many of the Wiyot people live on 88 acres called the Table Bluff Reservation, located 10 miles south of Fields Landing.

The first recorded entrance into Humboldt Bay was in 1806 by employees of a Russian-American Company out of Sitka. The Gregg-Wood party arrived by land in 1849 and by 1850 the first ships came to the Bay bringing men looking for gold. As the Gold Rush subsided, the economy shifted to the use of the surrounding natural resources, mainly timber, salmon, and agricultural land. The area was a prime exporter of agricultural products from 1857 to 1900.³

Development around the Bay led to the displacement of the Wiyot and increased tension between groups. During the 1860 World Renewal Ceremony on Indian Island, a group of armed settlers paddled to the Island during the night and killed the sleeping Wiyot. Two other village sites were raided that same night. The few remaining Wiyot people were moved to Fort Humboldt for their protection and then on to a series of reservations. The fort was built in 1853 to assist in resolving conflicts between American Indians and settlers. An Indian Candlelight Vigil is held every February to remember the 200 lives lost in the massacre.⁴

In the 1880s, docks were built in Fields Landing for shipping redwood and other timber. When the Northwestern Pacific Railroad was extended into the Bay area in 1900, it functioned as a dike and allowed the tidal marshes to be converted into agricultural lands. The construction of U.S. 101 in 1927 also created more fill, allowing most of the marshes to be drained and diked.⁵

After World War II, a new Douglas fir and plywood industry brought in many out-of-state loggers and mill workers. From the 1940s to 1951, the last active whaling station in the Western United States on the Pacific Coast operated out of Fields Landing.⁶ However, the timber industry continued to dominate life in the community into the 1970s. The next era brought a fresh perspective on resource use, paving the way for a more diverse economy. New groups of people began to arrive, namely Hispanic workers and families and refugees from the Vietnam War.⁷

Humboldt Bay is found to be one of the largest bays on the West Coast. Diking, drainage, and filling reduced the historic 27,000 acres of Bay and wetlands to around 13,000 acres. The Bay includes a variety of complex habitats that support 95 species of fish, at least 180 species of invertebrates, and thirty species of clams, oysters, and mussels. The economic health of Fields Landing continues to be “tied to the Bay, the resources it provides, and the natural resources around it.”⁸

Infrastructure

Current Economy

The economic base of Fields Landing was originally founded on fishing and timber. The commercial fishing industry experienced a downsizing in recent years and, today, the major industries are tourism and timber.⁹ One of the main employers of the area is Humboldt Bay Forest Products, which owns one of the two shipping terminals in Fields Landing. The 2000 U.S. Census indicates that 0% of the employed civilian population 16 years and over worked in the agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting industries. This percentage may not be indicative of the actual number of people in these professions as many are self-employed, especially in the fishing industry. A total of 7% worked in arts, entertainment, recreation, and accommodation and food services. Additionally, 8% worked in educational, health, and social services, while 9.9% were employed by the government. The 2000 U.S. Census states that the unemployment rate in 2000 was 22.6% (calculated by dividing the unemployed population by the labor force). For the population 16 years and older, 41.9% were not in the labor force, while 45% were employed.

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, in 1999 the median household income was \$35,313 and the per capita income was \$14,198. About 24.5% of the population was living below poverty level in 1999. Of the 95 housing units in 2000, 89.5% were occupied and 10.5% were vacant. Of the occupied housing units, 40% were owner occupied, while 60% were renter occupied.

Governance

Fields Landing is an unincorporated, non-Census designated place. Sales taxes are 7.25% based on the standard statewide rate. Humboldt County has no district tax in effect. The County transient lodging tax rate is 10%. The annual property tax for Humboldt County is approximately 1% of the property's assessed value, plus bonded indebtedness, assessment districts, and voter approved fees.

California state law assesses commercial fishing vessels, charter boats, and oceanographic research vessels at 4% of their full cash value for tax purposes. Some commercial vessels are also subject to a Ballast Water Management Fee of about \$500 per voyage. Humboldt Bay Harbor District charges a general tariff called the Harbor Improvement Surcharge for both vessels and cargo. The charge is \$5 per foot of sailing draft for vessels and \$0.08265 per metric ton of cargo for those using the Bar and Entrance Channel. An additional \$5 per foot of draft and \$0.08265 per metric ton is charged for use of the North Bay and Samoa Channels. 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.

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 are calculated per pound of fish landed and vary by species. 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.

Fields Landing is situated 593.2 miles south of the Northwest Regional Office of the National Marine Fisheries Service in Seattle. The community houses a U.S. Coast Guard Station in Humboldt Bay and is only 6.7 miles from the closest California Fish and Game Field Office. Fields Landing is 265.7 miles from the nearest U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services Center in San Francisco. The closest possible Pacific Fisheries Management Council meetings are held in Foster City, located 287.2 miles from Fields Landing. The nearest North Pacific Fisheries Management Council meeting is 420.3 miles away in Portland, Oregon.

Facilities

Fields Landing is accessible by a number of transportation options. Amtrak and Greyhound provide rail and bus service respectively from nearby communities to greater metropolitan areas throughout the country. The community is located 277.6 miles from the San Francisco International Airport. The major highway that intersects Fields Landing is U.S. Highway 101.

Students attend local elementary, middle, and high schools in the nearby community of Eureka (6.8 miles). Electricity is provided to community residents by Pacific Gas and Electric. Water and sewer services are supplied by Cal-American Water Company. The Humboldt County Sheriff Department provides local law enforcement. The closest health care facility, St. Joseph Hospital, is located nearby in Eureka. Fields Landing accommodations include one motel however additional lodging is available in nearby communities.

Fields Landing is located within the Port of Humboldt Bay Harbor, Recreation and Conservation District and the Port of Humboldt. Two shipping terminals are based in Fields Landing. Humboldt Bay Forest Products Docks include one berth with a 600-foot wooden dock with two approach ramps. Fields Landing Terminal includes one berth with a 900-foot dock.¹⁰

Involvement in West Coast Fisheries

Commercial Fishing

In 2000, of the 42 vessels that delivered landings to Fields Landing, all were commercially registered. The community had at least one processor plant in 2000. Landings in the community were in the following West Coast fisheries (data shown represents landings in metric tons/value of said landings/number of vessels landing): coastal pelagic (confidential/confidential/1), crab (41 t/\$182,619/18), groundfish (1632 t/\$1,587,756/21), highly migratory species (4 t/\$5916/4), salmon (1 t/\$2970/6), shrimp (confidential/confidential/2), and other species (5 t/\$6024/7).

Fields Landing residents owned eight vessels in 2000, all of which participated in the Federally Managed Groundfish fishery. Recorded data indicates that the number of vessels owned by Fields Landing residents that participated in each said fishery by state (WA/OR/CA) was: crab (0/0/2), groundfish (0/0/NA), highly migratory species (NA/0/NA), shellfish (NA/0/NA), and shrimp (NA/0/1).¹¹

Seven Federally Managed Groundfish fishery permits were held by three Fields Landing residents in 2000. According to recorded data for the same year the number of community members holding permits in each said fishery by state (WA/OR/CA) was: crab (0/0/2), highly migratory species (NA/0/0), shellfish (0/0/NA), and shrimp (0/0/1).¹²

According to available data, 10 permits were registered to Fields Landing residents in 2000, of which three were registered state permits. Recorded data indicates that the number of permits in each said fishery by state (WA/OR/CA) was: crab (0/0/2), highly migratory species (NA/0/0), shellfish (0/0/NA), and shrimp (0/0/1).¹³

Sportfishing

Available sources did not provide current or 2000 data on West Coast sportfishing for Fields Landing.

Subsistence

The California Department of Fish and Games captures those fishermen that do not earn revenue from fishing, but use it to provide food for personal consumption, under their “recreational” data. Therefore, specific information on subsistence fishing in Fields Landing is not discussed in detail in this Community Profile due to the lack of available data.

Many local community members engage in subsistence fishing. Both nontribal and tribal fishermen, including members of the Wiyot Tribe, utilize marine and stream resources for subsistence means from the areas within and surrounding Fields Landing. Under the trust doctrine, the federal government is charged to protect tribal resources and by constitutional mandate to protect natural resources. The government-to-government agreements made between tribal groups and the United States through treaties guarantee fishing rights on traditional grounds.

Involvement in North Pacific Fisheries

Commercial Fishing

According to available data, Fields Landing residents did not participate in North Pacific fisheries in 2000.

Sportfishing

Available data indicates that residents purchased one sportfishing licenses for Alaskan fisheries in 2000.

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- ¹ Van Kirk, S. 1999. Humboldt County: a briefest of histories, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://www.humboldthistory.org/> (access date - August 2004).
 - ² Wiyot Tribe. No date. History and culture: Indian Island, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://www.wiyot.com/history.htm> (access date - July 2004).
 - ³ Natural Resources Services. 2001. Humboldt Bay trails feasibility study: setting, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://www.rcaa.org/baytrails/pdfs/Chapter02.pdf> (access date - August 2004).
 - ⁴ Wiyot Tribe. No date. History and culture: Indian Island, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://www.wiyot.com/history.htm> (access date - July 2004).
 - ⁵ Natural Resources Services. 2001. Humboldt Bay trails feasibility study: setting, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://www.rcaa.org/baytrails/pdfs/Chapter02.pdf> (access date - August 2004).
 - ⁶ California Department of Fish and Game. No date. No title, [Online]. Available: URL: http://www.dfg.ca.gov/mrd/mambk_a.pdf (access date - August 2004).
 - ⁷ Van Kirk, S. 1999. Humboldt County: a briefest of histories, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://www.humboldthistory.org/> (access date - August 2004).
 - ⁸ Natural Resources Services. 2001. Humboldt Bay trails feasibility study: setting, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://www.rcaa.org/baytrails/pdfs/Chapter02.pdf> (access date - August 2004).
 - ⁹ Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission. 2004. California State counties, [Online]. Available: URL: http://www.psmfc.org/efin/docs/communities_2004/communities_pages65_84.pdf (access date - August 2004).
 - ¹⁰ Humboldt Bay Harbor, Recreation and Conservation District. No date. Port of Humboldt Bay: shipping terminals, [Online]. Available: URL: http://humbolddbay.cnrs.humboldt.edu/about/shipping_terminals.htm (access date - August 2004).
 - ¹¹ 'NA' refers to data which was not available, for example, due to few recorded permit numbers or the partially permitted nature of a fishery in 2000.
 - ¹² 'NA' refers to data which was not available, for example, due to few recorded permit numbers or the partially permitted nature of a fishery in 2000.
 - ¹³ 'NA' refers to data which was not available, for example, due to few recorded permit numbers or the partially permitted nature of a fishery in 2000.