

Los Osos, California

People and Place

Location

Los Osos covers 7.62 square miles of land and is located in San Luis Obispo County, California. The community is approximately 208 miles north of Los Angeles and 244 miles south of San Francisco. The geographic coordinates of Los Osos, California, are: 35°18'54"N, 120°49'52"W.

Demographic Profile

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, the population of Los Osos was 14,351, a 0.2% decrease from the 1990 U.S. Census. In 2000 the gender structure was evenly divided with slightly more females (52.0%) than males (48.0%). The median age in 2000 was 42.9, which is slightly higher than the national median of 35.3 for the same year. According to the same data, 51.3% of the population was between the ages of 22 and 59, 21.6% was age 17 or under, and 17.5% was 67 or older. For the population 18 years and over, 90.9% had a high school education or higher, 33.8% had attained a bachelor's degree or higher, and 13.1% earned a graduate or professional degree. The highest level of educational attainment was a high school diploma or equivalency for 17.0% of the population. In 2000, 80.8% of the population lived in family households.

The 2000 U.S. Census shows that the racial composition was predominantly White (88.3%) and Asian (4.6%). Black or African American, American Indian and Alaskan native, and Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander each constituted less than one percent of the population (0.6%, 0.7%, and 0.1% respectively). Overall, 2.5% classified themselves as belonging to some other race and 3.3% of the population identified themselves with two or more races. A total of 9.0% of the population identified themselves as Hispanic or Latino. Approximately 8.2% of the population was foreign-born, with 35.4% born in Malaysia and 16.5% in Mexico.

History

The community of Los Osos and its close neighbor, Baywood, share much of their history with the surrounding area in San Luis Obispo County. The area was the heart of the Chumash Indian territory for centuries. Chumash hunters, fishermen, and foragers exploited their local marine, coastal, and river resources. In unique redwood-planked boats, known as *tomols*, they regularly transported resources from their offshore islands to the mainland. These mariners imported specialized stone blades and drills manufactured on the islands, plus marine resources such as shark, bonito, and halibut. Chumash fishermen used a variety of nets, traps, baskets, hooks, spears, and plant poisons to catch or stun fish and catch seals and sea otters. On the coast they collected abalone and mussels, and the Chumash trade network passed raw marine materials such as fish, whale bones, and oils to the interior. Although the Portuguese conquistador Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo first encountered the Chumash in 1542, it was not until 1772 that five Catholic missions were established within the Chumash Nation. After the secularization of the missions in 1833, the Chumash population fell into severe decline. In 1901 the U.S. government allocated 75 acres along Zanja de Cota Creek near Mission Santa Ynez to the surviving Chumash community. Today the Chumash have their own business

council, a thriving bingo operation, and a federal housing program on their small reservation. There are approximately 5000 people who now proudly identify themselves as Chumash Indians.¹

Spanish explorers first entered the territory in 1542, but it took 200 years for exploration to get underway. With the explorers came Franciscan friars who began to founding missions in the vicinity of Los Osos-Baywood. Between 1822 and 1821, California came under the jurisdiction of Mexico when it gained independence from Spain. Land grants were made to settlers in the area until, in 1848, California became a territory of the United States and San Luis Obispo became one of California's original 27 counties. Many place names in the area reflect this heritage.² Burgeoning agriculture and quarrying in the area spurred rapid population growth in the late 1800s, facilitated by overland transport options available through the Southern Pacific Railroad line. By the 1950s conveyors were installed on the waterfront for unloading sardine boats that accelerated the commercial development of the harbors of the area in response to newly discovered fishing grounds offshore.³

Infrastructure

Current Economy

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, 60.3% of the potential labor force was employed and there was a 4.0% unemployment rate (calculated by dividing the unemployed population by the labor force). Of the population over the age of 16, 37.2% were not in the labor force. Of the employed civilian population, 24.9% worked in "Educational, health and social services" while 10.4% worked in "Retail trade." The local, state, or federal government employed a total of 26.5% of the employed civilian population in 2000, however only 0.7% of those were reported as working for the government in the "Agriculture, forestry, fishing, and mining" industries. Only 1.5% of the employed civilian population over the age of 16 was involved in "Agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting" according to the 2000 U.S. Census.

The per capita income of Los Osos in 1999 was \$24,838, while the median household income was \$46,558. In 1999 a total of 8.5% of the population was below the poverty level. In 2000 there were 6214 housing units in Los Osos, 94.8% of which were occupied, 5.2% were vacant. Of the occupied housing units, 69.9% were owner occupied and 30.1% were renter occupied. Almost half (49.4%) of the vacant housing units were for "seasonal, recreational, or occasional" use.

Governance

The town of Los Osos created the Los Osos Community Services District (LOCSD) in 1998. This replaced the County's Service Area 9, and provided the first public agency governed by Los Osos residents.⁴ The LOCSD has a Board of Directors consisting of five members that are elected at-large. The Board then chooses two members to be President and Vice President.⁵

Los Osos levies a 7.25% sales and use tax rate. San Luis Obispo County uses a 9.0% transient lodging tax rate, which earned \$4,229,463 in revenue for the 2000-2001 fiscal year.⁶ California state law assesses commercial vessels, charter boats, and oceanographic research vessels at 4% of their full cash value.⁷ 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 it is moored.⁸ Some commercial vessels are also subject to a Ballast Water Management Fee of about \$500 per voyage.⁹ 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.¹⁰

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.¹¹ 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.¹²

There is a California Department of Fish and Game Marine Region Field Office and a U.S. Coast Guard station located approximately 6 miles away in Morro Bay. Foster City, approximately 225 miles away, is the nearest city that holds Pacific Fisheries Management Council meetings. The nearest National Marine Fisheries office is the Pacific Fisheries Environmental Laboratory, located about 130 miles north in Pacific Grove.

Facilities

Los Osos is located 12 miles west of Highway 101, 3 miles south of Highway 1, and 14 miles from the San Obispo County Airport, which is serviced by major airlines. Los Osos belongs to San Luis Coastal Unified School District, which encompasses six schools. Los Osos Community Services District provides fire protection and emergency service to area residents, as well as maintaining storm water drainage, the water supply, and wastewater. They are also charged with the management of parks and street lighting. Telephone, electricity and gas services are supplied by private providers. Los Osos and the surrounding area have an extensive tourism industry with a well-established infrastructure, including accommodations, catering to a multitude of tourism activities.

Involvement in West Coast Fisheries

Commercial Fishing

In 2000 there were no landings made in Los Osos. However, there were 35 commercial vessels owned by Los Osos residents, 13 of which participated in the Federally Managed Groundfish fishery. According to recorded data the number of vessels owned by Los Osos residents in 2000 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), salmon (0/1/14), shellfish (NA/0/NA), shrimp (NA/0/4), and other species (1/0/0).¹³ According to available data, there were no seafood processors operating in Los Osos in 2000.

In 2000, four federal groundfish permits were held by five community members. In the same year, recorded data indicates that the number of Los Osos residents holding permits in each said fishery by state (WA/OR/CA) was: coastal pelagic (0/0/1), crab (0/0/2), groundfish (0/0/21), highly migratory species (NA/0/6), salmon (0/1/28), shellfish (0/0/NA), shrimp (1/0/11), and other species (2/0/23).¹⁴

According to available data, there were at least 137 commercial fishing permits, including 133 state registered permits, held by Los Osos residents in 2000. Recorded data indicates that the number of state permits held by Los Osos residents in each said fishery by state (WA/OR/CA) was: coastal pelagic (0/0/1), crab (0/0/2), groundfish (0/0/25), highly migratory species (NA/0/10), salmon (0/1/49), shellfish (0/0/NA), shrimp (1/0/17), and other species (2/0/25).¹⁵

Sportfishing

In 2002 and 2003, at least eight charter businesses serviced sport fishermen and tourists in Los Osos. There are no license agents selling sportfishing licenses in Los Osos. In 2000 San Luis Obispo County residents purchased: 43,399 resident sportfishing licenses, 40 nonresident sportfishing licenses, 52 sport salmon punch cards, and 30 abalone report cards. In the port group consisting of Avila Beach and Morro Bay, 12 commercial passenger fishing vessels served 17,759 anglers in 2000. These vessels reported 123,441 landings composed of more than a dozen species. Rockfish (unspecified) and Albacore tuna accounted for 93.9% and 4.6% of the landings respectively.

Subsistence

Local tribal and nontribal community members might be engaged in subsistence fishing in the Los Osos area. However, specific information on subsistence fishing in Los Osos 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

In 2000 there was one vessel owned by a Los Osos resident that participated in North Pacific fisheries. The vessel made landings in the North Pacific salmon fishery, but specific information (landings in metric tons/value of landings) is confidential.

Five Los Osos residents worked as crewmembers on vessels involved in North Pacific fisheries in 2000. In the same year, one community resident held a state permit for Alaska fisheries; the permit was a Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission salmon permit.

Sportfishing

While the majority of the sport fishermen in Los Osos target West Coast fisheries, 27 Los Osos community members purchased Alaska sportfishing licenses in 2000.

¹ Houghton Mifflin Company. No Date. Encyclopedia of North American Indians: Chumash, [Online]. Available: URL: http://college.hmco.com/history/readerscomp/naind/html/na_007400_chumash.htm (access date - September 2004).

-
- ² The County of San Luis Obispo Online. 2005. About the County, [Online]. Available: URL: http://www.co.slo.ca.us/SLOCo_InterPortal.nsf/SLOCo_AboutCounty.htm?OpenPage&charset=windows-1252 (Access Date - January 2005)
- ³ History in San Luis Obispo County. 2004. Timeline, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://www.historyinslocounty.com/index.htm> (Access Date - January 2004).
- ⁴ Los Osos California. No Date. Local Government, [Online]. Available: URL: http://www.losososbaywoodpark.org/local_government_Los_Osos.html (access date - November 2004).
- ⁵ Los Osos Community Service District. No Date. About the CSD, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://www.losososcsl.org/about.html> (access date - November 2004).
- ⁶ State of California. 2004. California Counties Transient Lodging Tax Revenue, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://www.sco.ca.gov/ard/local/locprep/adhoc/county/0001cotranslodgtax.pdf> (access date - July 2004).
- ⁷ State of California Board of Equalization. No date. Property Tax Rules, Rule 151. Vessels Subject to the Four Percent Assessment, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://www.boe.ca.gov/proptaxes/pdf/r151.pdf> (access date - July 2004).
- ⁸ California Department of Motor Vehicles. 2003. How to register a vessel, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://www.dmv.ca.gov/boatsinfo/boatreg.htm#how> (access date - July 2004).
- ⁹ State of California Board of Equalization. 2004. Ballast Water Management Fee, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://www.boe.ca.gov/sptaxprog/bllstweb12.htm> (access date - July 2004).
- ¹⁰ U.S. Department of Transportation. 2001. Provisions Governing the Distribution of State Motor Fuel Tax Receipts: California, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/ohim/hwytaxes/2001/california.htm> (access date - July 2004).
- ¹¹ State of California. No date. Fish and Game Code Section 8040-8070, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/cgi-bin/displaycod?section=fgc&group=08001-8070> (access date - July 2004).
- ¹² State of California Department of Agriculture. 2004. List of Marketing Programs, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://www.cdffa.ca.gov/mkt/mkt/mktbrds.html> (access date - July 2004).
- ¹³ '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.
- ¹⁴ '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.
- ¹⁵ '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.