

Brookings, Oregon

People and Place

Location

Brookings is located in Curry County at 42°03'10"N and 124°16'58"W. The community is the southern most city on the coast of Oregon and is situated at the mouth of the Chetco River. The nearest major metropolitan area is Portland, which is found 344.5 miles to the northeast. According to the 2000 U.S. Census, Brookings encompasses a total area of 2.8 square miles, including 0.03 square miles of water and 2.8 square miles of land.

Demographic Profile

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, Brookings had a total population of 5447 people with a population density of 1951.6 people per square mile of land. Brookings revealed a 23.8% gross population growth from years 1990 to 2000. In 2000 a total of 90.5% of the inhabitants were White, 0.2% African American, 2.4% Native American, 1.3% Asian, and 0.1% Pacific Islander. A small percentage, 1.4%, identified with some other race and 4% with two or more racial groups. Another 4.7% of the population identified themselves as having Hispanic or Latino origins. The ethnic composition of the community changed between 1990 and 2000; with a 193% gross population growth for those inhabitants who identified themselves as having Hispanic origins. The Census identified 3.7% of the inhabitants as foreign-born, of which 22.9% were born in Mexico and 21.9% were born in Canada.

In 2000, Brookings was composed of 47.5% males and 52.5% females. The median age of the community in 2000 was 43.1 years, compared to the national median age of 35.3 for the same year. The 2000 U.S. Census reports that 29.5% of the population was under the age of 25 compared to the national average of 35.3%. In the same year the 55 and older age group represented 34.8% of the total population, while the national average for this age group was 21.1%. The 2000 U.S. Census stated that 35% of the population 18 years and older received a high school degree as their highest educational attainment. In the community, 83.3% received a high school degree or higher in the same year. A total of 15.7% received a bachelor's degree or higher, whereas the national average is 22.3%. Additionally, 5% received a graduate degree or higher compared to the national average of 7.8%.

History

The earliest known inhabitants of what today is the Brookings-Harbor area were members of the Chetco Tribe of Indians, an Athapascan linguistic group who lived along the Chetco River and regions of the lower Winchuck River northward to Cape Ferrelo. Evidence suggests that humans first moved southward through the ice-free routes in central North America, after crossing the land bridge from Siberia more than 10,000 years ago, and that their descendants may first have come into western Oregon between 1000 and 3000 years ago. During the late 1800s the Chetco were probably the most numerous of the 12 coastal tribes, but the population suffered severe declines following contact with Euro-American settlers.¹

Members of the Chetco Tribe utilized resources from their natural environment. Tools such as axes and knives were made from stone and flint. Their cooking was done by roasting before the fire or in pots, made airtight with grass and heated with hot stones. Fish, acorns, elk and deer meat were their principal sources of subsistence. Most marine resources, principally fish and mussels, were probably gathered in relatively close proximity to the coast as their boats

were shallow, hollowed-out logs, and apparently awkward to manage on the open ocean. Presumably, at the time of contact cultural similarities were strong between the Chetco and their neighbors to the south, the Tolowa who shared the same customs regulating social relationships and frequently intermarried.²

Settlers became interested in the region in the mid-1800s when explorers discovered gold and other precious metals in the rivers and along the coastlines of what was to become Curry County. Initially settlement was concentrated along the coasts and transport was limited to the waterways. The slow development of inland transportation routes kept the county relatively isolated well into the twentieth century. While there is still some mining of cobalt, nickel, and chromium in the Gasquet Mountain area, the economy has largely reoriented to agriculture and timber as well as fishing.³

The original, industrially oriented town of Brookings was founded by John Brookings, a cousin of Robert Brookings of the Brookings Institute, when he relocated his lumber business from the San Bernardino Mountains of Southern California to the area in the early 1850s. The town was architecturally designed which accounts for its present layout of what is now the core area of the city. The City was incorporated in 1951 and is now the largest city in Curry County. Due to its favorable climate, beautiful coastline, and quality of life, the city has become attractive to retirees.⁴ Tourism in the area is also becoming increasingly popular. Yearly festivals and events include the 10k Salmon Run, Chetco Village Chowder Cook-off, Seafood Luncheon, Silver Salmon Golf Tournament, and the Fall Harvest Festival. The Southern Oregon Kite Festival & Regatta includes the Parade of the Fleet and the Annual Regatta and Yacht Races.

Infrastructure

Current Economy

The major industries in Brookings are recreation and tourism, fishing, and lumber. The four largest employers of the area include South Coast Lumber Co, Freeman Rock Enterprises, Inc., Elenwood Cabinets, and Dick & Casey's Gourmet Seafood.⁵ The 2000 U.S. Census indicates that 5% of the employed civilian population 16 years and over worked in agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting industries. The percentage may not be indicative of the actual number of people in these professions, particularly in fishing, as many are self-employed. Another 17.3% worked in retail trade, while 14.1% were in educational, health and social services. Additional 21% were employed by the government. The 2000 U.S. Census states that the unemployment rate in 2000 was 5.8% (calculated by dividing the unemployed population by the labor force). For the population 16 years and older, 43.8% were not in the labor force, while 51.4% were employed.

In 1999, median household income was \$31,656 and per capita income was \$17,010. About 11.5% of the population was living below poverty level in 1999. Of the 2614 housing units in 2000, 88.3% were occupied and 11.7% were vacant. Almost 40% of the vacant units were for seasonal, recreational, or occasional use. Of the occupied housing units, 56.9% were owner occupied, while 43.1% were renter occupied.

Governance

Brookings is an incorporated city that operates under a Council-Manager charter. The State of Oregon has no general sales tax. The lodging tax is levied at 1% of the fee charged to the customer for overnight lodging and funds the Oregon Tourism Commission. Property tax is

determined by a permanent rate set for the taxing district. The tax rate ranges from \$7 to \$15 per \$1000 of real market value.

Fishing businesses located in Oregon or deriving income from Oregon resources must pay a corporate excise or income tax totaling 6% of their net Oregon income. Wholesale fish dealers, canners, and bait dealers pay a landing fee that is determined from a percentage of the value of the food fish purchased from commercial harvesters. Salmon and Steelhead Restoration and Enhancement (R&E) landing fees are \$0.05 per pound for round, \$.0575 per pound for dressed, and \$.0605 per pound for dressed with heads off. Other regular landing fees are based on value; salmon and steelhead are 3.15% of value (including eggs and parts); all other fish and shellfish are 1.09% of value, and near-shore species are 5% of value.

Vessel owners must pay registration and title fees, and marine fuel taxes that support boating facilities, marine law enforcement, and boating safety education. Fishing boats and equipment may be taxed as personal property if they are valued at less than \$1 million. If their value exceeds this amount, they are taxed as industrial property. In 2004, title transfer fees are \$30 and registration fees are \$3 per foot based on center length of vessel. Oregon levies a fuel tax of \$0.24 per gallon of gasoline and use fuel. The Oregon Department of Agriculture administers four commodity commissions, Oregon Albacore Commission, Oregon Dungeness Crab Commission, Oregon Salmon Commission, and Oregon Trawl Commission. Fishermen pay fees to these commissions for marketing and lobbying on behalf of fishermen involved in these specific fisheries.

Brookings is 205.1 miles from the National Marine Fisheries Service research station in Newport and 28.2 miles from the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) field office in Gold Beach. The U.S. Coast Guard Station Chetco River is located on Port of Brookings-Harbor property and operates a pair of 47-foot motor lifeboats.⁶ The community is located 344.5 miles from the closest U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services Office in Portland. The Pacific Fisheries Management Council and North Pacific Fisheries Management Council meetings are held 344.5 miles away in Portland.

Facilities

Brookings is accessible by a number of transportation options. Greyhound provides bus service to nearby communities and to greater metropolitan areas throughout the country. The local Brookings Airport is a landing base for small planes. The community is also located 357.6 miles from the Portland International Airport. State Highway 101 connects Brookings to the nearby communities of: Harbor, Oregon (1 mile); Crescent City, California (26 miles); and Gold Beach, Oregon (28 miles).

The Harbor and Brookings School Districts were consolidated in 1950. Local schools include two elementary schools, a middle school, and a high school. Electricity is provided to community members by Coos-Curry Electric Cooperative. Water and sewer services are supplied by the City of Brookings. The Brookings Police Department administers local law enforcement. The Sutter Coast Hospital is located nearby in Crescent City.

The Port of Brookings-Harbor was created in 1956 and is classified as a shallow-draft harbor. It covers an area of 400 square miles and represents over 75 percent of the population base for Curry County.⁷ According to the Port, it is the busiest recreational port on the Oregon coast with more than 95,000 anglers taking more than 31,000 trips. It is also one of the most active Chinook salmon harbors. The Port receives visits from more than 5000 commercial fishing vessels annually. The Port operates its own wireless telecommunications corporation and

its own re-lending fund. Additionally, it is one of only two ports in Oregon to have a license to perform its own construction and maintenance. The Port of Brookings-Harbor also manages a 9300 square-foot retail center and leases space to 34 businesses. An additional 13,000 square feet of commercial space are currently being planned.⁸ Facilities include a full-service marina, six-lane launch ramp, 671 slips, two transient docks, fueling facility, launch services, and a full-service boat yard with a heavy lift. The newly constructed Marina includes two basins; Basin One is mainly for recreational fishing, while Basin Two supports the commercial fishing industry.⁹ The nearest ODFW fish hatchery is the Elk River Hatchery, located North of Brookings along the Elk River in Port Orford. The Brookings area is home to organizations involved in fisheries-related activities including the Brookings Harbor Commercial Fishermen's Wives Association and Oregon South Coast Fishermen.

Involvement in West Coast Fisheries

Commercial Fishing

In 2000, of the 112 vessels that delivered landings to Brookings, all of them were commercially registered. Landings in the community in 2000 were in the following West Coast fisheries (data shown represents landings in metric tons/value of said landings/number of vessels landing): crab (472 t/\$2,026,095/49), groundfish (1144 t/\$1,456,019/70), highly migratory species (34 t/\$78,570/11), salmon (106 t/\$384,599/71), shrimp (748 t/\$507,617/29), and other species (2 t/\$6160/18). Brookings had at least one processor plant in 2000.

Brookings residents owned 80 vessels in 2000, of which six were a part of the Groundfish Vessel Buyback Program. Community members owned 42 vessels that participated in the Federally Managed Groundfish fishery. According to recorded data the number of vessels owned by Brookings residents in 2000 that participated in each said fishery by state (WA/OR/CA) was: crab (0/35/23), groundfish (0/2/NA), highly migratory species (NA/0/NA), salmon (0/54/23), shellfish (NA/2/NA), and shrimp (NA/11/8).¹⁰

Thirteen Federally Managed Groundfish fishery permits were held by 11 Brookings residents in 2000. Recorded data indicates that the number of individual community members holding permits in each said fishery by state (WA/OR/CA) was: crab (0/30/24), groundfish (0/2/4), highly migratory species (NA/0/12), other species (1/1/1), salmon (0/45/35), shellfish (0/2/NA), and shrimp (3/7/17).¹¹

According to available data, 288 permits were registered to Brookings residents in 2000, of which 275 were registered state permits. According to recorded data the number of permits held by community members in each said fishery by state (WA/OR/CA) was: crab (0/69/26), groundfish (0/2/5), highly migratory species (NA/0/12), salmon (0/50/60), shellfish (0/2/NA), shrimp (3/17/22), and other species (1/5/1).¹²

Sportfishing

In 2003 Brookings had at least 16 outfitter guide businesses and seven licensed charter vessel businesses. In the same year four licensed charter vessel businesses from Gold Beach (2), Tualatin (1), and Harbor (1) used Brookings as their homeport. Internet fishing guide sources indicate that there are at least 12 sportfishing businesses currently operating in the community.

Brookings is home to eight sportfishing license vendors. In 2000, the number of licenses sold by active agents was 2372 at a value of \$38,671. For the community of Brookings, the 2000 recreational salmonid catch in the Ocean Boat Fishery was 11,744 Chinook salmon and 61 coho salmon. The recreational non-salmonid catch in the Ocean Boat Fishery was a total of 100,560

fish. The top species landed include black rockfish, blue rockfish, canary rockfish, lingcod, kelp greenling, and cabezon.

Subsistence

Many local community members engage in subsistence fishing. Both nontribal and tribal fishermen utilize marine and stream resources for subsistence means from the areas within and around Brookings. 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. Specific information on subsistence fishing in Harbor is not discussed in detail in this Community Profile due to the lack of available data.

Involvement in North Pacific Fisheries

Commercial Fishing

In 2000, Brookings residents owned eight vessels that were involved in North Pacific fisheries. In the same year inhabitants landed fish in the following North Pacific fisheries (data shown represents landings in metric tons/value of said landings/number of vessels landing): BSAI groundfish (confidential/confidential/1), GOA groundfish (confidential/confidential/2), and halibut (confidential/confidential/1).

Five community members served as crewmembers aboard vessels involved in North Pacific fisheries in 2000. In the same year three Brookings residents held registered state permits and six held registered federal permits. A total of 11 permits were registered to individuals in Brookings. Brookings community members held one crab and four groundfish License Limitation Program (LLP) permits, and one halibut and three Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands (BSAI) groundfish Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission (CFEC) permits. The halibut and sablefish individual fishing quota shares for people residing in the community were 797,393 and 1,192,743, respectively.

Sportfishing

Brookings had three Alaskan sportfishing guide businesses in 2000. In the same year residents purchased 51 sportfishing licenses for Alaskan fisheries.

¹ Curry Coastal Pilot. 2004. First residents were the Chetco, [Online] Available: http://www.currypilot.com/news/story.cfm?story_no=1495 (access date - January 2005).

² Curry Coastal Pilot. 2004. First residents were the Chetco, [Online] Available: http://www.currypilot.com/news/story.cfm?story_no=1495 (access date - January 2005).

³ Books-Harbor Oregon. 2004. Curry County History, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://arcweb.sos.state.or.us/county/cpcurryhome.html> (access date - January 2005).

⁴ The City of Brookings, Oregon. 2004. Brookings's History, [Online]. Available: <http://www.brookings.or.us/About%20Brookings/history.htm> (access date - January 2005).

⁵ Oregon Economic & Community Development Department. 2004. Newport community profile, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://info.econ.state.or.us:591/FMPro?-db=Community.fp4&-Format=forms.htm&-lay=webpage&-op=eq&sort%20name=Brookings&-script=hit%20count&-Find> (access date - October 2004).

⁶ Port of Brookings Harbor. 2003. Fishing: commercial, [Online]. Available: URL: http://www.port-brookings-harbor.org/fishing_commercial.html (access date - November 2004).

⁷ Port of Brookings Harbor. 2003. About the port, [Online]. Available: URL: http://www.port-brookings-harbor.org/about_the_port.html (access date - November 2004).

⁸ Port of Brookings Harbor. 2003. About the port: port history, [Online]. Available: URL: http://www.port-brookings-harbor.org/about_the_port_history.html (access date - November 2004).

⁹ Port of Brookings Harbor. 2003. Fishing: recreational, [Online]. Available: URL: http://www.port-brookings-harbor.org/fishing_recreational.html (access date - November 2004).

¹⁰ '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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