

Sedro Woolley, Washington

People and Place

Location

Sedro Woolley is located approximately 74 miles north of the City of Seattle in Skagit County. It is located at 48°30'14"N, 122°14'10"W. Sedro Woolley encompasses approximately 3.4 square miles of land and 0.01 square miles of water.

Demographic Profile

According to the 2000 U.S. Census Sedro Woolley had a population of 8658; of which 47.4% were male and 52.6% were female. Between 1990 to 2000 the population of Sedro Woolley increased by about 43.6% from 6031 persons in 1990. In the year 2000 about 92% were White, 0.3% were Black, 1.6% were American Indian and Alaska Native, 0.8% were Asian, and 0.1% were Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander. Approximately 3.2% recognized themselves as belonging to some other race and 2% identified with two or more races. Approximately 7.2% of residents identified as Hispanic or Latino. About 3.7% of the population was foreign-born; of the foreign-born population, over half were born in Mexico (54.8%). The largest numbers of people denoting ancestry associated themselves with German (14.7%), English (10.1%), Norwegian (9.1%), and Irish (8.8%) backgrounds.

The median age in Sedro Woolley in the year 2000 was 33.2, as compared with the national median age of 35.3 years. According to the 2000 U.S. Census, of the population 18 years of age and over, 79.2% had a high school education (including equivalency) or higher, 8.3% had received a Bachelor's degree or higher, and 1.9% had received a graduate or professional degree.

History

Sedro Woolley began its community existence as two separate settlements, Sedro and Woolley. Sedro was founded by Mortimer Cook who traveled to the area with his family in 1884 and purchased 34 acres of land, currently the site of Riverfront Park in modern day Sedro Woolley. On his land he operated the general store, opened a shingle mill, and became the first postmaster of the town. Cook decided to name the community "Cedra," meaning cedar in Spanish, after learning the disappointing news that the Washington Territory already had another community with the name Cook. He also suggested the name "Bug," for the mosquitoes; however the name was not appreciated by fellow occupants. Eventually "Cedra" was contorted into "Sedro," the first half of its present-day name.

The community of Woolley was founded by Philip A. Woolley, who purchased 84 acres north of Cedra in 1890. The town began to thrive in the mid- to late 1800s with the establishment of a coal processing plant employing 2000 people as well as many additional businesses. Woolley was also chosen over the community of Cook to be the site of the Northern Pacific Railroad Depot; three railroads serviced the area which aided in the success of these communities. Woolley however, had two considerable fires in 1891 and 1893 which slowed the growth of the town. Cook was also having economic troubles at the time and the two communities merged into one for obvious benefits,

despite the rivalries which had previously developed. Neither community would give up its name and thus the town Sedro Woolley was born; the town was incorporated in 1898.¹

Today, about five miles east of Sedro Woolley lies the 84-acre reservation and tribal center of the Upper Skagit Tribe.² The Upper Skagit are descendents of a tribe that previously inhabited 10 villages on the Upper Skagit and Sauk rivers; archaeological studies reveal evidence of human habitation in the Upper Skagit River basin dating to 8500 years ago. The Skagit River provided the Tribe with abundant natural resources including salmon and shellfish; however dam construction on the river, beginning in 1923, altered the riverine ecosystem. In 1995 the Tribe opened the Skagit Valley Casino Resort, halfway between Everett and Bellingham. The facility offers the members of the Upper Skagit Tribe an employment alternative to fishing and logging.³ Today, the Tribe is governed by a seven member Tribal council, each member serving staggered 3-year terms.⁴

Infrastructure

Current Economy

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, 61.1% of the potential labor force in Sedro Woolley was employed; there was an 8.7% unemployment rate in the community for the same year (calculated by dividing the unemployed population by the labor force). Approximately 33.1% of the population age 16 years and over was not in the labor force at the time of the 2000 U.S. Census, compared to the national average of 36.1%.

About 3.1% of employed Sedro Woolley residents worked in agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting, according to the 2000 U.S. Census. The top employment industries for residents in 2000 were “educational, health, and social services” (17.6%); “manufacturing” (15.4%); “retail trade” (13.6%); “arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation, and food services” (11.5%); “construction” (10.4%); and “professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste management services” (8.2%). About 1.7% of Sedro Woolley’s labor force was in the armed forces and 16.5% was employed by either the local, state, or federal government.

The major employers in Sedro Woolley are Affiliated Health Services; Cascades Job Corps; Cascadian Farm, Inc.; City of Sedro Woolley; NW Hardwoods; S-W School District; Life Care Center of Skagit Valley; and Snelson Companies, Inc.⁵

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, the per capita income in Sedro Woolley in 1999 was \$16,517 and the median household income was \$37,914. The 2000 U.S. Census reports that in 1999 the income of 11.3% of the population was below the poverty level.

In 2000 there were a total of 3334 housing units in the community, of which 96.1% were occupied and 3.9% were vacant. Of the occupied housing units, 60.2% were owner occupied and 39.8% were renter occupied.

Governance

Sedro Woolley was incorporated in 1898 and is governed by a City Council including a mayor, six wards, and one council at-large member. Sedro Woolley levies a 7.9% sales and use tax a 2% lodging tax.

Several taxes directly impact commercial and recreational fishermen. These taxes include a Washington State tax for boats which are used part-time in commercial fishing, levied at 0.5% of their fair market value; however vessels which are used full-time for

commercial fishing are subject to personal property tax at the state levy rate. An Enhanced Food, Fish, and Shellfish Tax is levied by Washington State and is paid by the first commercial processor of food fish or shellfish (Chinook salmon, 5.6%; sockeye salmon, 3.4%; oysters, 0.09%; sea urchins/cucumbers, 4.92%; other, 2.25%). Tuna, mackerel, and jackfish are exempt from this tax. Commercial fishermen operating in Washington waters are subject to a Business and Occupation tax at the rate of 0.48% of the selling price of the fish; those operating outside of Washington waters but who sell their fish in Washington are subject to either the “wholesaling” rate (0.48%) or the “retailing” rate (0.47%) of the selling price of fish, unless the fish are sold in interstate or foreign commerce. Commercial fishermen who operate and sell their fish in the State of Washington are eligible for a Multiple Activities Tax Credit (MATC).⁶

Washington State levies a tax of \$0.28 per gallon on motor vehicle fuel. Since most of this tax is used to maintain roadways rather than waterways, Washington boaters are entitled to a refund of about \$0.17 per gallon. The difference includes state sales tax and a penny per gallon contribution to a Coastal Protection Fund. Most diesel fuel sold at docks has already had this tax removed.⁷ In addition, there is a Sport Fish Restoration Program Tax which includes a 10% excise tax on fishing equipment, a three percent tax on electric motors and sonar fish finders, and import duties on tackle and pleasure boats.⁸

The nearest federal fisheries enforcement office is located in Seattle, about 71 miles away and is the Northwest Enforcement Office of the National Marine Fisheries Service. The nearest regional office for state fisheries, the North Puget Sound Region Office of the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife is located 54 miles south of Sedro Woolley in Mill Creek, Washington. The nearest meetings of the North Pacific Fisheries Management Council and the Pacific Fisheries Management Council are in Seattle. There is a U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) District Office located in Seattle. The closest U.S. Coast Guard office is located approximately 30 miles northwest in Bellingham.

Facilities

Sedro Woolley is accessible by ground via State Route 20. The community is located approximately 93 miles north of SeaTac International Airport in Sea Tac, Washington. The Bellingham International Airport, located 30 miles northwest in Bellingham, is the nearest airport certified for carrier operations with international flights to Canada.

There are eight public schools in Sedro Woolley (four elementary schools, one middle school, two high schools, and one special programs school). Sewer, garbage, and recycling services are provided by the City of Sedro Woolley. Water services are provided by the Public Utility District. Electrical service is administered by Puget Sound Energy and gas service is provided by Cascade Natural Gas Corporation. The Sedro Woolley Police and Fire Departments provide for public safety and security in the community. United General Hospital, offering inpatient and outpatient care, is located west of town and Affiliated Health Services lies approximately 11 miles away in Mount Vernon. There are at least three hotels and motels located in the community which provide accommodations for visitors. Sedro Woolley is not located on the water and therefore has no available marine facilities; however a major harbor is located nearby in Bellingham.

Involvement in West Coast Fisheries

Commercial Fishing

Recorded data indicates that there were zero landings delivered to Sedro Woolley in 2000. There were also no known processors operating in the community in 2000. In the same year a total of nine vessels were owned by residents of Sedro Woolley; residents owned five vessels that participated in the federal groundfish fishery. According to recorded data the number of vessels owned by Sedro Woolley residents in 2000 participating in each said fishery by state (WA/OR/CA) was: coastal pelagic (0/0/1), crab (2/0/0), groundfish (0/0/NA), highly migratory species (NA/0/NA), salmon (2/0/0), shellfish (NA/0/NA), shrimp (NA/0/0), and other species (2/0/0).⁹

Recorded data indicates that in 2000 the number of Sedro Woolley residents holding permits in each said fishery by state (WA/OR/CA) was: coastal pelagic (0/0/5), crab (4/0/0), groundfish (2/0/0), highly migratory species (NA/0/0), salmon (5/1/0), shellfish (0/0/NA), and other species (1/0/1).¹⁰

There were 25 state permits registered to Sedro Woolley residents in 2000. Recorded data indicates that community members held the following number of permits in each said fishery by state (WA/OR/CA) in 2000: coastal pelagic (0/0/8), crab (5/0/0), groundfish (5/0/0), highly migratory species (NA/0/0), salmon (5/0/0), shellfish (0/0/NA), and other species (1/0/1).¹¹

Sportfishing

In 2000 there was at least one salmonid charter fishing business in Sedro Woolley. There are two licensed vendors in Sedro Woolley that sell fishing permits. In the year 2003 there were 4574 sportfishing license transactions made in the community, valued at \$8259.

Community members most likely travel to nearby Catch Record Card Area 7 (San Juan Islands, all marine waters north of the Trial Island line described under Area 6 to the U.S.-Canada border) to engage in salmon sportfishing. The 2000 sport salmon catch, based on catch record cards, in Area 7 was 7178 fish, including: 4495 Chinook, 2644 coho, 21 chum, and 18 sockeye. In the same year there were approximately 30,627 marine angler trips in the sport salmon fishery. There were 84 steelhead caught by sportfishermen in 2000-2001 in Area 7. In the same area a total of 5897 bottomfish were caught by boat-based anglers in 2000. The recreational harvest of clams (lbs) and oysters (#) for the same area in 2000 was estimated to be 115,273 and 0 respectively; harvest occurred over an estimated 19,752 user trips. Anglers on the Skagit River fish for salmon, steelhead, trout and sturgeon; in the year 2000-2001 a total of nine sturgeon were caught on the Skagit.

Subsistence

Tribal and nontribal community members may be engaged in subsistence fishing. Subsistence fishing 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 Sedro Woolley residents owned 15 vessels that were involved in North Pacific fisheries. In the same year community members landed fish in the following North Pacific fisheries (data shown represents landings in metric tons/value of said landings/number of vessels landing): crab (confidential/confidential/1), Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands groundfish (confidential/confidential/1), Gulf of Alaska groundfish (confidential/confidential/1), halibut (confidential/confidential/1), herring (confidential/confidential/2), and salmon (1050 t/\$706,950/8).

Fifty-three Sedro Woolley residents held crewmember licenses for North Pacific fisheries in 2000. In the same year six community members held federal commercial fishing permits and 16 individuals held state permits.

There were a total of 27 permits held by Sedro Woolley residents in 2000. In the same year residents held 280,670 halibut Individual Fishing Quota (IFQ) shares and 988,862 sablefish IFQ shares. A total of one crab License Limitation Program (LLP) permit and one groundfish LLP permit were held by community members in 2000. Residents held 1 crab, 2 Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands groundfish, 1 halibut, 7 herring, and 12 salmon Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission (CFEC) permits in 2000.

Sportfishing

There were 131 Alaskan sportfishing licenses purchased by residents of Sedro Woolley in 2000.

¹ Sedro Woolley Chamber of Commerce. No Date. History, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://www.SedroWoolley.com/history.html> (access date - November 2004).

² Northern Puget Sound Ecological Characterization. No Date. Tribes, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://www3.csc.noaa.gov/npsec/html/human/tribes.htm> (access date - December 2004).

³ U.S. History.com. 2005. Native Americans: Upper Skagit Tribe, Washington, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://www.u-s-history.com/pages/h1581.html> (access date - September 2005).

⁴ Northern Puget Sound Ecological Characterization. No Date. Tribes, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://www3.csc.noaa.gov/npsec/html/human/tribes.htm> (access date - December 2004).

⁵ Sedro Woolley Chamber of Commerce. No Date. Business & Economy, Employment, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://www.SedroWoolley.com/employment.html> (access date - December 2004).

⁶ Washington State Department of Revenue. 2002. Information on Washington's Tax Structure: Fish Taxes, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://dor.wa.gov/content/taxes/industry/fish/default.aspx> (access date - July 2004).

⁷ Washington State Department of Licensing. 2003. Fuel Tax Frequently Asked Questions, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://www.dol.wa.gov/vs/ft-faq.htm> (access date - July 2004).

⁸ National Conference of State Legislatures. 2004. Environment, Energy, and Transportation Program: Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://www.ncsl.org/programs/esnr/FISHHUNTWILD.htm> (access date - July 2004).

⁹ "NA" refers to data which was not available, for example, due to few or no recorded permit numbers, or the partially permitted nature of the fishery in 2000.

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