

Stanwood, Washington

People and Place

Location

The City of Stanwood, situated at 48°14'29"N, 122°22'10"W, is located in Snohomish County along the Stillaguamish River in north-central Washington. The area encompasses approximately 2 square miles of land and 0 square miles of surface water. Stanwood is located about 50 miles north of Seattle and 13 miles south of Mount Vernon.

Demographic Profile

According to the 2000 U.S. Census the population of Stanwood was 3923. Between 1990 and 2000, U.S. Census data reports that the population of Stanwood increased 100.1%. In 2000 the percentage of males and females was 47.3% and 52.7% respectively. The racial composition of the population in 2000 was predominantly White (91.6%), followed by Asian (1.1%), American Indian and Alaska Native (0.9%), Black or African American (0.6%), and Pacific Islander (0.2%). Few individuals (2.5%) classified themselves as belonging to some other race and 3.1% identified themselves as belonging to two or more races. A small percentage of the population (5%) identified themselves as Hispanic or Latino.

In 2000 the median age of the population was 33.9, which was slightly lower than the national median of 35.3. In the same year approximately 31% of the population was between the ages of 25 and 45 and 26.9% were under the age of 15. Of the foreign-born population (4.1%), 59.7% were born in Mexico. Approximately 81% of the population of Stanwood was living in family households in 2000. In the same year the U.S. Census reports that 84.4% of the population over 18 years of age had received a high school degree or higher, 16.5% had received a Bachelor's degree or higher, and 4.6% received a graduate or professional degree; as compared to the national averages of 84.4%, 22.3%, and 7.8% respectively.

History

The area surrounding Stanwood was home to Native Americans primarily of the Stillaguamish and Skagit Tribes. The Stillaguamish Tribe is composed of descendents of the 1855 Stoluck-wa-mish River Tribe which resided on the main branch, and north and south forks of the river.¹ Historically tribal members made their living fishing for salmon, hunting for deer, and gathering berries and roots. There were no separate reservations established for the Stillaguamish Indians at the time of the 1855 Point Elliot Treaty. Some tribal members have moved to the Tulalip Reservation but the majority live in the aboriginal area along the Stillaguamish River. In 1970 the tribe was granted 58,600 acres from the Federal Government in northern Snohomish County. Tribal headquarters, including their Natural Resource Department, are located in Arlington, Washington, about 7 miles east of Stanwood. There are 237 individuals enrolled as tribal members. For information on the Skagit Tribe see the LaConnor Community Profile.

In the late 1850s settlers arrived in the Stanwood area via Utsalady located on the north end of Camano Island, 5 miles to the west. In 1864 the first logging camps and farms were established around a trading post named Florence, located about 3 miles southeast of Stanwood, on the Stillaguamish River. Over the next ten years Florence competed with another trading post to the north, named Centerville that was first settled in 1866. Centerville had two lumber mills and canneries. In 1877 the Post Office in Centerville was renamed Stanwood and the town

became the largest community at the mouth of the Stillaguamish River. Meanwhile settlers established several other small but thriving communities with their own stores, churches, and schools including the community of Silvana. Stanwood and Silvana were largely Scandinavian farming communities; farmers in the area sold their oats, hay, and shingles for cash. In the late 1890s the area was home to one of the largest settlements of Norwegian immigrants in the West.²

The railway arrived in the Stanwood area in the early 1900s, and a large depot was built east of town. A new settlement, East Stanwood, developed around this time and the two communities maintained a bitter rivalry until 1960, when they finally united.³ Today Stanwood is known for both for its farms and sense of community. Construction, development, service, and technology careers have as a whole surpassed Stanwood's historical natural resource career base. The downtown area supports numerous art galleries and the world famous Pilchuck School, founded by glass artist Dale Chihuly, has attracted several fine artists to the area.

Stanwood residents and tourists enjoy numerous annual events such as the Fourth of July Celebration, the Stanwood-Camano Community Fair, the Juried Art Show, and the Lions' Lutefisk dinner. In addition to the city's riverfront, there are several parks including Snohomish County's Kayak Point Park and three Washington State Parks – Wenbert, Camano Island, and Cama Beach.

Infrastructure

Current Economy

According to the 2000 U.S. Census 54.4% of the potential labor force was employed and there was a 6.4% unemployment rate (calculated by dividing the unemployed population by the labor force). Approximately 41.8% of the population over 16 years of age was not in the labor force as compared to the national average of 36.1%. According to the 2000 U.S. Census the top three occupations in Stanwood for the eligible labor force 16 years of age and over were "management, professional and related occupations" (30%), "sales and office occupations" (24.2%), and "service occupations" (24.2%). At the time of the 2000 U.S. Census, 18.2% of the city's eligible labor force was employed within local, state, or federal governments. In the same year the U.S. Census reports that 0.6% of Stanwood population was employed in agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting.

The agriculture industry remains an important contributor to the local economy. Seed, produce, and meat production are the primary industries in north Snohomish County. The Alf Christianson Seed Company is among the nation's largest independent seed growers and Twin City Foods, a frozen vegetable wholesaler, is Stanwood's largest employer. In addition, several local growers participate in local Farmer's Markets during the summer months.

The 2000 U.S. Census reports that in 1999 12% of the population was below the poverty level. The median household income in 1999 was \$44,512 and the per capita income was \$16,775. In 2000 there were 1508 housing units in the Stanwood. The percentages of occupied housing units that were owner versus renter occupied were 58.3% and 41.7% respectively. The percent of vacant housing units was 7%, of which 15.1% were vacant due to seasonal, recreational, or occasional use.

Governance

Stanwood is governed by a mayor and five City Council members. Snohomish County levies 8.3% sales tax and a 2% hotel/motel tax.^{4,5}

Several taxes directly impact commercial and recreational fishermen. Commercial fishermen operating in Washington waters are subject to the Business and Occupation (B&O) tax under the “extraction” classification (0.48%); those fishing outside of Washington waters but selling fish within Washington are subject to the tax under either the “wholesaling” or “retailing” classifications (0.48% and 0.47% respectively), unless the fish are sold in interstate or foreign commerce.⁶ Those who both catch and sell fish in Washington are eligible for a Multiple Activities Tax Credit (MATC).⁷

Washington State levies a Food, Fish, and Shellfish Tax paid by the first commercial processor of food fish or shellfish including: Chinook, coho, and chum salmon or eggs (5.62%); sockeye and pink salmon or eggs (3.37%); oysters (0.09%); sea urchins/cucumbers (4.92%); and shellfish and other food fish or eggs (2.25%). Tuna, mackerel, and jackfish are exempt from this tax. Additionally, there is an Enhanced Food Fish Tax, which applies to the “first possession of enhanced food fish by an owner in Washington State” and is based on the “value of the enhanced food fish at the point of landing.”⁸ The rate of the tax depends upon the species of fish or shellfish.

Vessels used for commercial fishing purposes part-time are subject to an annual Washington State Watercraft Excise Tax levied at 0.5% of the fair market value of the boat. Vessels used for commercial fishing purposes full-time are subject to personal property taxes at the base rate levied by the state. Washington also levies 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 to fund sportfish restoration programs.⁹ Washington State levies a tax of \$0.28 per gallon on motor vehicle fuel. Since most of this tax is used to maintain terrestrial roadways, 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.¹⁰

There is a National Marine Fisheries Service Regional Office located approximately 50 miles south in Seattle. The nearest North Pacific Fisheries Management Council meeting also takes place in Seattle. There is a Department of Fish and Game office located about 35 miles south in Mill Creek, Washington. The nearest U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services is located in Seattle. The U.S. Coast Guard Station Bellingham, home to six vessels, is responsible for marine safety in the region. The Bellingham Station’s area of responsibility includes the San Juan Islands north to the Canadian border and south to Admiralty Inlet.

Facilities

Stanwood is accessible by ground and air. Located at the intersection of State Highway 530 and 532, Stanwood is approximately five miles west of Interstate Five. Community, Island, and Skagit Area Transit systems provide bus service to Stanwood residents. Greyhound Bus stations are located nearby in the cities of Mount Vernon and Everett. The public use Reinig Airport, at the Camano Island Airfield, is located in Stanwood. The nearest airport certified for carrier operations is located in Everett, the Snohomish County Airport - Paine Field. Seattle-Tacoma International Airport, approximately 75 miles to the south in Sea Tac, Washington is the closest airport offering international service to destinations other than Canada.

The Stanwood-Camano School District, serving over 5000 students, operates five elementary schools, one high school, and one alternative high school. Skagit Valley College, located 13 miles south in Mount Vernon, has an enrollment of over 3400. Additionally Everett Community College serves over 8000 students.

The Snohomish County Public Utility District is responsible for providing electricity to Stanwood residents. The city's water and sewer services are provided by the Water Department at Stanwood Utilities. Cascade Natural Gas is the natural gas provider for Snohomish County. There are approximately five hotels located within the city. Public safety is provided by the Stanwood Police Department. The Stanwood Camano Medical Center serves community residents and the nearest hospital, Skagit Valley Hospital, is located nearby in Mount Vernon. There are several community services and organizations located in Stanwood including the Stanwood Community Library, Camano Action for a Rural Environment, the Stanwood Area Historical Society, and several places of worship.

The Snohomish County Marine Resources Advisory Committee (MRC), based 25 miles south in Everett, is an 11-member group of citizen volunteers established in 1999 to address local issues related to marine resource management and advise county officials. Of the Northwest Straits counties, Snohomish County is the most populous and has the largest amount of modified shoreline (99 miles of a total 133 miles), which is mainly due to the railroad bed that has been in existence for over a century. The Snohomish MRC has been involved in several projects including: a Dungeness crab stewardship plan for Snohomish County, nearshore restoration projects, juvenile crab habitat projects, as well as numerous public involvement and education activities.¹¹

Involvement in West Coast Fisheries

Commercial Fishing

Landing data for Stanwood were recorded as part of the Other North Puget Sound Ports port group which also includes Coupeville, Deer Harbor, Point Roberts West Beach, and Whidbey Island. Reported landings for this port group in 2000 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/2), crab (17 t/\$77,754/8), salmon (7 t/\$13,164/4), shrimp (14 t/\$73,992/6), and other species (confidential/confidential/2).

Stanwood residents owned nine vessels in 2000 that participated in West Coast fisheries. In the same year community members owned three vessels that participated in the Federally Managed Groundfish fishery. Recorded data indicates that the number of vessels owned by Stanwood 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 (5/0/0), shellfish (NA/0/NA), shrimp (NA/0/0), and other species (2/0/0).¹²

Recorded data indicates that in 2000 the number of Stanwood residents holding permits in each said fishery by state (WA/OR/CA) was: coastal pelagic (0/0/1), crab (6/0/0), highly migratory species (NA/0/0), salmon (7/0/0), and shellfish (0/0/NA).¹³

A total of 16 state permits were held by Stanwood residents in 2000. In the same year recorded data indicates that the number of permits held by Stanwood community members in each said fishery by state (WA/OR/CA) was: coastal pelagic (0/0/1), crab (8/0/0), highly migratory species (NA/0/0), salmon (7/0/0), and shellfish (0/0/NA).¹⁴

North Star Cold Storage, a full service cold storage facility with processing services, is located in Stanwood. North Star, founded in 1989, offers custom processing of crab and finfish, flack ice for fresh fish packing, and rail service.

According to the Boldt Decision,¹⁵ the usual and accustomed fishing grounds of the Stillaguamish Tribe, based 14 miles southeast in Arlington, include the entire Stillaguamish watershed. Though the Tribe has rights "there is little participation [in commercial fishing]

because of the [poor] market prices.”¹⁶ The Stillaguamish Tribe does not have a fish processor. The Tribe operates a hatchery and a smolt trapping system on the Stillaguamish River; the smolt trap is located 8 miles southeast in Silvana.

Sportfishing

In 2000 and 2003 there was at least one non-salmonid charter business operating in Stanwood. According to the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife’s Licensing Sales Reporting System, there are zero sportfishing license agents in Stanwood. In Catch Record Card Area 8-2 (Port Susan and Gardner) the 2000 license year (1 April – 31 March) sport salmon catch, based on catch record cards, was 12,798, including: 3208 Chinook, 9574 coho, 4 chum, and 12 pink salmon. In the same area there were approximately 33,536 marine angler trips in the 2000 sport salmon fishery. In the same year 70 sturgeon were caught in Catch Record Card Area 8-2. In 2000 a total of 1449 coastal bottomfish were caught in Puget Sound within Areas 8.1 (Deception Pass, Hope Island, and Skagit Bay) and 8.2. There was no recreational harvest estimate of clams and oysters for Area 8-2 in 2000. There is a local branch of Trout Unlimited located in Stanwood.

Subsistence

Subsistence hunting, fishing, and gathering activities are fundamental to the way of life of some coastal community members. Both tribal and nontribal individuals participate in subsistence fishing. Members of the Stillaguamish Tribe are engaged in subsistence fishing for salmon (steelhead, chum, coho, and pink) and shellfish in the Stillaguamish River.¹⁷ However subsistence fishing is not discussed in great detail in this Community Profile due to the lack of available data.

Involvement in North Pacific Fisheries

Commercial Fishing

In 2000 Stanwood residents owned 30 vessels that were involved in North Pacific fisheries. In the same year recorded data indicates that 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/2), Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands (BSAI) groundfish (confidential/confidential/1), other finfish (confidential/confidential/2), Gulf of Alaska (GOA) groundfish (confidential/confidential/2), halibut (confidential/confidential/3), herring (146 t/\$31,620/4), and salmon (1735 t/\$1,316,570/23).

In 2000 36 Stanwood residents served as crewmembers in North Pacific fisheries. In the same year 31 community residents held registered state permits and 18 held registered federal permits.

A total of 65 state and federal permits were registered to individuals in Stanwood in 2000. Community members held two crab and six groundfish License Limitation Program (LLP) permits in the same year. Residents also held 6 crab, 5 BSAI groundfish, 4 halibut, 8 herring, 2 shellfish, and 26 salmon Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission (CFEC) permits. The halibut and sablefish individual fishing quota shares for people residing in the community were 1,117,432 and 1,288,776, respectively.

Sportfishing

In 2000 there were 141 Alaska sportfishing licenses purchased by Stanwood community residents.

¹ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Indian Health Service. 2003. Stillaguamish Tribe, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://www.ihs.gov/FacilitiesServices/AreaOffices/Portland/portland-tribe-stillaguamish.asp> (access date - October 2004).

² Stanwood Area Historical Society. No date. A Short History of Stanwood and Camano Island, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://www.sahs-fncc.org/sahshistory2.html> (access date - October 2004).

³ Herald Net. 2004. City Guide, Welcome to Stanwood, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://www.heraldnet.com/guide/stanwood/> (access date - November 2004).

⁴ Washington State Department of Revenue. 2004. Local Sales & Use Tax Rates and Changes, [Online]. Available: URL: http://dor.wa.gov/Docs/forms/ExcsTx/LocSalUseTx/LocalSlsUseFlyer_Quarterly.pdf (access date - July 2004).

⁵ Washington State Department of Revenue. 2003. Lodging Tax Rates by Location, [Online]. Available: URL: http://dor.wa.gov/docs/forms/excctx/locsalusetx/lodgingrates_03_a.pdf (access date - July 2004).

⁶ Washington State Department of Revenue. 2004. Commercial fishing, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://dor.wa.gov/content/taxes/Industry/Fish/default.aspx> (access date - July 2004).

⁷ 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).

⁸ Washington State Department of Revenue. 2001. Commercial Fishing, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://dor.wa.gov/content/taxes/Industry/Fish/default.aspx#enhanced> (access date - July 2004).

⁹ 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).

¹⁰ 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).

¹¹ Snohomish County Marine Resource Committee. 2003. The Role of the Snohomish County Marine Resources Advisory Committee in the Northwest Straits Marine Conservation Initiative, [Online]. Available: URL: http://www.psat.wa.gov/Publications/03_proceedings/PAPERS/ORAL/10b_johns.pdf (access date - September 2004).

¹² '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.

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 Center for Columbia River History. No date. Boldt Decision, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://www.ccrh.org/comm/river/legal/boldt.htm> (access date - October 2004).

¹⁶ Fishery Biologist, Stillaguamish Tribe, Arlington, WA. Pers. commun., 28 October 2004.

¹⁷ Fishery Biologist, Stillaguamish Tribe, Arlington, WA. Pers. commun., 28 October 2004.