

Charleston

A full profile including graphics was not completed for Charleston due to insufficient information.

Charleston is not identified by the U.S. Census Bureau as it is an unincorporated town within Coos County.

Various types of data are lacking in this profile, however, Charleston was selected for profiling due to its function as a harbor at the mouth of the Coos Bay estuary.

People and Place

Location

Charleston is located in Coos County at the mouth of Coos Bay, approximately 226 miles south of Portland and 539 miles north of San Francisco. Charleston's geographic coordinates are lat 43°20'25"N and long 124°19'44"W.

Demographic Profile

U.S. Census Bureau demographic information was not available for Charleston.

History

Ancestors of the modern day Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua, Siuslaw, and Coquille Indians originally inhabited Coos Bay. Tribal communities along the Oregon coast played an important role in the region, particularly in gathering seafood. The bay is Oregon's largest coastal estuary and has provided natural resources to local inhabitants for centuries. In 1579 Sir Francis Drake sought shelter for his ship, the *Golden Hind*, in the area.¹ Spanish and English ships sailed along the coast as early as the sixteenth century. It is likely the first Europeans to explore the area were Hudson's Bay Company fur traders in the 1820s. In 1852 the vessel *Captain Lincoln* shipwrecked on the north spit of Coos Bay and 52 surviving soldiers explored the area.² Upon their rescue, they drew attention to the area and soon afterwards merchants, settlers, and miners were drawn there.

The California gold rush in the late 1840s drew more Euro-American settlers. By 1853 the first group of settlers reached the Coos Bay area and established the first town, Empire City.³ Sawmills, shipbuilding, coal mining, and farming activities were major industries of surrounding settlements. Despite a war in 1855–1856 that resulted in the forced relocation of local tribes onto reservations on Oregon's north coast, the tribes continue to play an important role in the region. For example, in September 2005 the Coquille Economic Development Corporation (CEDCO) began construction on its Mill

Casino Hotel and 102-space recreational vehicle park in North Bend, the first business enterprise on CEDCO's 50.5-acre waterfront development property.⁴

Coos Bay became a midway point between the ports of San Francisco and Portland for lumber, coal, salmon, and agricultural goods. In the late 1880s to the early 1900s, the economy shifted to forest and coal mining industries. Gold was discovered in the hills, streams, and beaches around Charleston, leading to a minor boom in the 1900s. Dairy farming became important and shipbuilding expanded during World War I, but declined after the war. The first store was built in Charleston in 1917 and in 1936 the Hallmark Fisheries Plant opened.

The area continues to be a center for commercial and recreational fishing as well outdoor activities. Charleston has many parks including Cape Arago State Park, Sunset Bay State Park, and Shore Acres State Park. The Coos Historical Museum and the Coos Art Museum are located there. Recreational activities include bird watching, whale watching, fishing, clamming, crabbing, beach combing, charter boat tours, hiking, biking, and kayaking. Events scheduled throughout the year include the Charleston Merchant's Annual Crab Feed, the Annual Salmon Barbeque, the Sandblast Show and Shine, the Charleston Seafood Festival, and the Oregon Shorebird Festival.

Infrastructure

Current Economy

Current economic information was not available from the 2000 U.S. Census Bureau for Charleston. For information on the contemporary economies of the neighboring communities of North Bend and Coos Bay, please refer to their community profiles.

Governance

Charleston is unincorporated and under the jurisdiction of Coos County. It is dependent on county services and does not maintain its own governance structure. The State of Oregon has no general sales tax; however an overnight lodging tax of 1% is levied that funds the Oregon Tourism Commission. See the Governance subsection (page 43) in the Overview section for a more detailed discussion of taxes affecting fishermen and processors in Oregon.

Charleston is about 104 miles from the National Marine Fisheries Service research station in Newport. An Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) office is located in Charleston. The U.S. Coast Guard

has a Group/Air Station located in North Bend 9 miles to the northeast. The closest U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services Office is 226 miles away in Portland, which also holds meetings of the Pacific Fishery Management and North Pacific Fishery Management councils.

Facilities

Charleston is accessible by land, sea, and air. U.S. Highway 101 is the major road connecting Charleston to other communities. One bus company operates in the area, the Porter Stage Line, offering service to Eugene. In addition, small shuttle services (Dial-A-Rides) also run north and south along U.S. Highway 101. The North Bend Airport (9 miles), Newport Municipal Airport (104 miles), and Portland International Airport (212 miles) provide air transportation. Commercial freight rail service is available in North Bend and Coos Bay. Amtrak, located in Eugene, provides the closest passenger service.

Charleston children attend Coos Bay School District 9 and the North Bend School District 13. The South Coast Education Service District provides Coos County with special educational programs and services. Southwestern Oregon Community College is the local college and the University of Oregon, located in Eugene, is the closest four-year college. In Charleston, the University of Oregon's Institute of Marine Biology conducts research and offers courses in marine biology and related fields.

The Coos Bay-North Bend Water Board supplies water. Verizon Communications provides telephone services, and Pacific Power provides electric power. Coos County and the Charleston Fire District administer public safety. The closest hospital is the Bay Area Hospital located in Coos Bay, followed by Coquille Valley Hospital in Coquille. According to the Chamber of Commerce, there are three hotels in Charleston, four bed and breakfast facilities, and six state, county, and private campgrounds and recreational vehicle parks.⁵

The Oregon International Port of Coos Bay manages the Charleston Marina Complex, which is in the port district of Coos Bay Harbor. The marina supports most recreational and commercial fishing. The majority of the commercial fishing vessels, approximately 95–99%, moor in Charleston, which provides approximately 550 moorages. Commercial fishing vessels occupy about 200.⁶ Recreational fishers prefer the area because of its protected bay and bar area. Facilities include charter fishing, marine supplies, shipyard, fuel, groceries, lodging, dining, and recreational activities. The marina annually hosts the Seafood Festival in August.

Fieldwork indicates four oyster growers in the Coos Bay area including Coos Bay Oyster Company (Charleston), North Bend Oyster Company (Coos Bay), Qualman Oyster Farms (Charleston), and Clausen Oysters (North Bend). In addition, there are three hatcheries (Morgan Creek, Daniels Creek, and Noble Creek) and several water improvement projects in the area. Local tribes are engaged in stream reclamation and are attempting to reestablish fish runs. Nonprofit organizations located in Charleston include Friends of the South Slough Sanctuary, Coos Bay Trawlers' Association, Oregon Troller Association, Charleston Fish-Wives, and Bandon Submarine Cable Council. Additionally, the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, Coos River Salmon and Trout Enhancement Program (STEP), Coos Watershed Association, and the Coquille Watershed Association are involved in salmon and trout enhancement projects.

Involvement in West Coast Fisheries

Commercial Fishing

There were at least four seafood processors operating in Charleston in 2000. Approximately 281 individuals were employed, processing an estimated 6,721,831 pounds of fish at a value of \$19,841,262. In 2000 the top three processed products in the community, in terms of pounds and revenue earned, were flounder 2,840,741 lbs/\$10,200,376; crab 1,693,587 lbs/\$4,457,208; and halibut 1,230,700 lbs/\$2,790,900. Several seafood processors are located in the Coos Bay area including Hallmark Fisheries (Charleston), Bandon Pacific Seafoods (Charleston), Oregon Brand Seafood (Coos Bay), Chuck's Seafood (Coos Bay), and Fishermen's Wharf (Charleston).

In 2000 no vessels delivered landings to Charleston; however, residents owned 36 vessels that participated in West Coast fisheries, including 23 vessels involved in the federally managed groundfish fishery. The number of vessels owned by Charleston residents in 2000 that participated in each fishery by state (WA/OR/CA) was: crab 0/11/2, groundfish 0/3/NA, highly migratory species NA/0/NA, salmon 0/33/5, shellfish NA/3/NA, and shrimp NA/9/1.⁷

In 2000 seven community members held seven groundfish fishery permits. Recorded data indicates the number of Charleston residents holding permits in each fishery by state (WA/OR/CA) was: crab 0/10/2, groundfish 0/3/0, highly migratory species NA/0/0, salmon 0/25/7, shellfish 0/2/NA, shrimp 3/6/2, and other species 5/0/0.⁸

According to the data, 76 permits were registered to Charleston residents in 2000, with 69 registered state

permits and seven federal permits. Recorded data indicates the number of permits held by these community members in each fishery by state (WA/OR/CA) was: crab 0/0/2, groundfish 0/4/0, highly migratory species NA/0/0, salmon 0/29/11, shellfish 0/3/NA, shrimp 3/9/2, and other species 6/0/0.⁹

Coos Bay is a large estuary that encompasses both the towns of North Bend and Coos Bay which are profiled separately; please see these community profiles for additional information on fish processed in the area.

Fieldwork in the area indicates some residents are finding it increasingly difficult to engage in the salmon fishery. Some residents travel north to Florence (55 miles) for fishing opportunities. Local businesses impacted by salmon closures include Basin Tackle, England Marine Supply, Skallerud Marine and Boat Repair, and Charleston Ice.¹⁰

Sportfishing

Charleston had two licensed charter vessel businesses in the community in 2003. Internet fishing guide sources indicate there are at least two sportfishing businesses.¹¹ Charleston has two sportfishing license vendors.

Involvement in North Pacific Fisheries

Commercial Fishing

In 2000 Charleston residents held two federal permits and one groundfish License Limitation Program permit. A single Charleston resident held a crew member license for North Pacific fisheries.

Sportfishing

Charleston fishermen purchased five sportfishing licenses for Alaska fisheries in 2000.

Notes

1. City of Coos Bay Oregon. No date. History of Coos Bay. Online at <http://www.coosbay.org/cb/aboutcb/CBHistory.htm> [accessed 17 January 2007].

2. Coos County Historical Society. 2004. A selective chronology of south coast history: Origins to 1900. Online at <http://www.cooshistory.org/> [accessed 9 January 2007].

3. Oregon Bay Area History. No date. No title. Online at <http://www.cooshistory.org/ptwo.html> [accessed 9 January 2007].

4. The Mill Casino. 2005. CEDCO launches Mill Casino. Online at <http://www.themillcasino.com/press.shtml> [accessed 9 January 2007].

5. Oregon's Bay Area Chamber of Commerce. No date. No title. Online at <http://www.oregonsbayareachamber.com/> [accessed 17 January 2007].

6. Port of Coos Bay, OR. Pers. commun., October 2005.

7. NA refers to data that were not available, for example, due to few or no recorded permit numbers, or the partially permitted nature of a fishery in 2000.

8. See note 7.

9. See note 7.

10. Field notes, fisherman, Charleston, OR., May 2006.

11. Charleston Marina Complex. No date. No title. Online at <http://www.charlestonmarina.com/visitor.htm> [accessed 9 January 2007].