

Florence

People and Place

Location

Florence, located along U.S. Highway 101 on the Oregon coast, is the major coastal city in western Lane County. The community is approximately 172 miles southwest of Portland and 61 miles west of Eugene. Florence covers 4.9 square miles of land and 0.6 square miles of water. The geographic coordinates of Florence are lat 43°58'58"N, long 124°05'55"W.

Demographic Profile

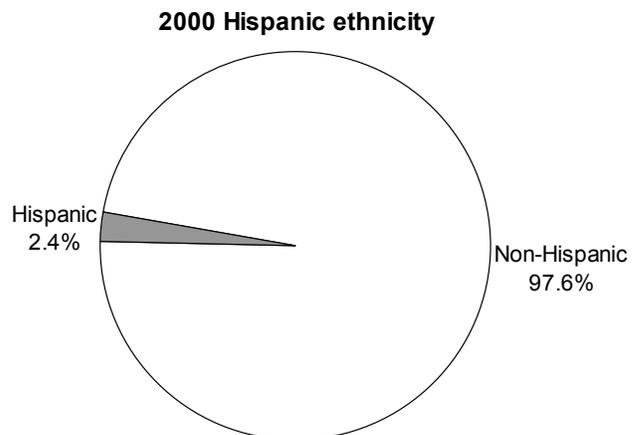
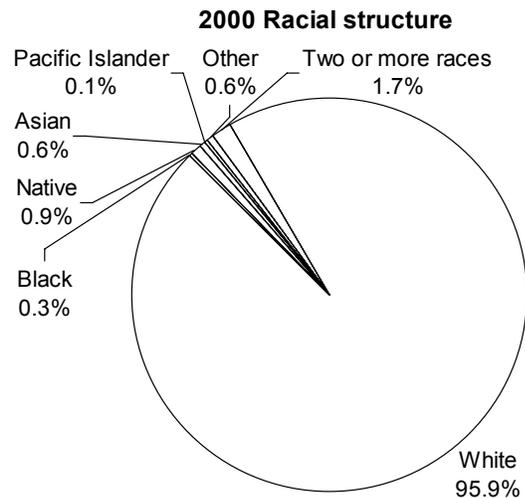
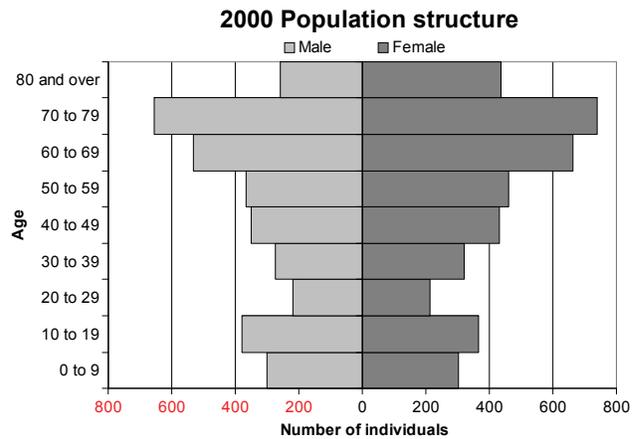
According to the 2000 U.S. Census, the population of Florence was 7,263, a 40.7% increase from 1990. The gender composition was 54.1% female and 45.9% male. The median age was 55.8, considerably higher than the national median of 35.3. Only 16.8% of the population was younger than age 17. Of the population 18 years of age and older, 82.2% had a high school education or higher, 16.5% had a bachelor's degree or higher, and 7.7% had a graduate or professional degree; the national averages were 79.7%, 22.3%, and 7.8% respectively.

The majority of the population of Florence recorded by the 2000 U.S. Census was white (95.9%), followed by people who identified with two or more races (1.7%), American Indian and Alaskan native (0.9%), Asian (0.6%), people who identified with another race (0.6%), black (0.3%), and Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander (0.1%). Ethnicity data indicate 2.4% identified as Hispanic. Less than 5 percent (3.5%) of the population was foreign-born. Of those, 26.2% were born in Canada and 17.2% in Germany.

In 2000 76.4% of the population lived in family households.

History

Florence is bordered by the Siuslaw River and it's tributaries to the west, south, and east. The river is named for the Indian tribe of the same name who originally inhabited the area. Spaniards explored the Oregon coast, including the area surrounding the present-day Florence, but it was the English Captain James Cook who gave European names to many of the coastal landmarks in the Florence vicinity. In the latter half of the nineteenth century Europeans began arriving in large numbers. The encroachment of Euro-American settlers upon Siuslaw land in 1850 roughly coincided with the end of a smallpox epidemic that dramatically reduced the tribe's numbers.



Dependent on timber and fisheries, Florence reached a population of 300 in 1900 and had a lumber mill and two general stores. The first salmon cannery opened on the Siuslaw River in 1876, and by 1901 several additional canneries were in operation, supported by a network of gillnets, drift nets, and fish traps. By 1906 a cold storage facility was added and by 1915 the Kyle Cannery in Florence set an industry standard with new automatic canning equipment that produced 600 cases a day. Fieldwork indicates from 1887–1892 more than 68,000 cases of Siuslaw salmon were packed and shipped to markets in Portland and San Francisco. Declining salmon runs in the second half of the twentieth century led to the closure of commercial salmon fishing on the river and a shift to open ocean fishing.

Located in a relatively remote part of the state, Florence depended on the mercantile system and ferry links across the Siuslaw River during the first half of the twentieth century. The community has since evolved and added retirement and tourism to its natural resource-oriented economy. Florence is active in beach cleanup programs. The community features a May festival that celebrates the local native Rhododendron plant and a shellfish festival in September called “Chowder, Blues, and Brews.” The community is home to the Historic Siuslaw River drawbridge and the nearby Sea Lion caves, both popular with tourists.

Infrastructure

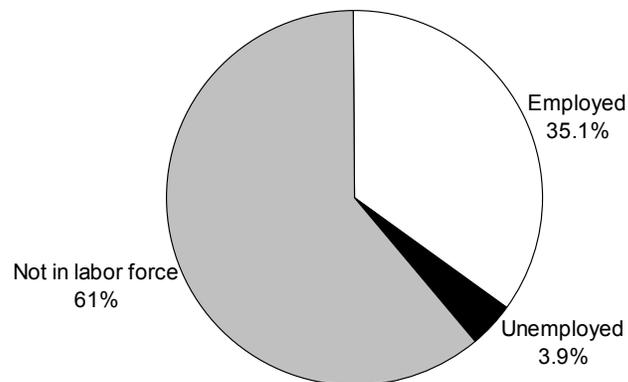
Current Economy

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, 35.1% of Florence’s potential labor force 16 years of age and older were employed, 3.9% were unemployed, and the unemployment rate was 9.9% (calculated by dividing the unemployed population by the labor force). In addition, 61% were not in the labor force. The top employment sectors were educational, health, and social services (22.9%), accommodation and food services (16.6%), retail trade (16.1%), and local, state, or federal government (12.1%). Natural resources jobs including agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting employed 3.8%, but this percentage may be artificially low because many fishermen are self-employed and are underrepresented in the data.

Fieldwork indicates the economy of Florence is shifting away from farming, fishing, and forestry to recreation, real estate, and retirement communities. The Oregon Economic and Community Development Department lists Peace Harbor Hospital, Fred Meyer retail, and the Siuslaw School District as the top three employers in 2003.¹

Airport (50 miles south in Coos Bay), a larger airport in

2000 Employment structure



According to the 2000 U.S. Census, the per capita income in 1999 was \$18,008 and the median household income was \$30,505. In 1999 14.4% were below the poverty level. In 2000 Florence had 4,174 housing units, of which 85.4% were occupied and 14.6% were vacant. Of the occupied units, 67.5% were by owner and 32.5% were by renter. Nearly one-half (49.5%) of the vacant units were for seasonal, recreational, or occasional use.

Governance

Florence is an incorporated city with a council-manager form of government. The elected five-member city council, including the mayor, is the policy-making body while the city manager is responsible for daily operations. Oregon has no general sales tax, but Lane County levies a 7% tax. This is in addition to the state’s 1% tax on overnight lodging 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.

The U.S. Coast Guard Station Siuslaw is in Florence and operates two 47-foot motor lifeboats to serve the Heceta Banks Fishery off the Florence Coast. Both the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife’s Marine Resources Program and a field station of NOAA’s Northwest Fisheries Science Center are located in Newport, 50 miles south of Florence. Portland, approximately 173 miles away, is the nearest location for meetings of the Pacific Fishery Management and North Pacific Fishery Management councils.

Facilities

Florence lies on U.S. Highway 101 and is linked to Eugene by Oregon Highway 126. Florence is served by the Florence Municipal Airport, the North Bend Regional Eugene (60 miles), and Portland International Airport.

The third largest employer in Florence, the Siuslaw School District, has an elementary, middle, and high school. Lane Community College, located in Florence, had an enrollment of 1,637 in 2001. The Central Lincoln People's Utility District provides electricity, while the City of Florence provides water and sewer services. The Florence Police Department administers local law enforcement. Peace Harbor Hospital is located in Florence as are a number of medical clinics. Florence's lodging and accommodations include several hotels, motels, and bed and breakfast operations. Visitors can also choose between a number of campgrounds, recreational vehicle parks, and vacation rentals.

A five-member port commission governs the Port of Siuslaw, located in Florence. The port offers berths for recreational boats and fishing vessels, and can accommodate vessels up to 85-feet in length. Barge facilities are also available at the port. In addition, the port is the only local source of marine diesel fuel on the Siuslaw River. Fieldwork indicates several private marinas are located on the river serving local anglers and pleasure craft.

Local marine-related organizations are active in salmon habitat improvement efforts in the area. The Siuslaw Partnership received the 2004 International Thiess River award in recognition of its combined work on salmon habitat restoration projects in the Siuslaw River basin. The U.S. Forest Service, the Siuslaw Soil and Water Conservation District, and the Siuslaw Watershed Council make up the Siuslaw Partnership.

Involvement in West Coast Fisheries

Commercial Fishing

No fish processors operated in Florence in 2000; however, fieldwork indicates several vessels landing catch sold seafood directly to the public and to local seafood retail shops and restaurants. Fieldwork also suggests crab landed in Florence typically is sold to the live crab market and therefore is not subject to processing.²

West Coast fishery landings in Florence in 2000 were delivered by 38 commercially registered vessels. Landings in Florence were made in the following West Coast fisheries (data shown represents landings in metric tons/value of landings/number of vessels landing): crab 112.8 t/\$562,057/10; groundfish 124.3 t/\$442,781/15; highly migratory species 6.9 t/\$11,712/5; salmon 29.7 t/\$113,885/22; shrimp 35.7 t/\$28,529/5; and other species 1.5 t/\$6,808/5.

Florence residents owned 41 commercial vessels in 2000, including 19 that participated in the federally managed groundfish fishery. According to recorded

data, the number of vessels owned by residents that participated in each fishery by state (WA/OR/CA) was: crab 0/14/0, groundfish 0/0/NA, highly migratory species NA/0/NA, salmon 0/41/2, shellfish NA/1/NA, and shrimp NA/2/0.³

Five residents held four federal groundfish permits in 2000. The number of Florence residents holding permits in each fishery by state (WA/OR/CA) was: crab 0/12/0, highly migratory species NA/0/0, salmon 0/33/2, shellfish 0/1/NA, and shrimp 0/2/0.⁴

Florence residents held at least 60 commercial fishing permits in 2000, including 56 state registered permits. Recorded data indicates the number of state permits held by Florence residents in each fishery by state (WA/OR/CA) was: crab 0/13/0, highly migratory species NA/0/0, salmon 0/37/3, shellfish 0/1/NA, and shrimp 0/2/0.⁵

Sportfishing

Recreational fishing on the Siuslaw River has a strong economic impact on the Florence community. In 2000 seven sportfishing licensing agents operated in Florence who sold 4,907 sportfishing licenses at an estimated value of \$80,163. Available data indicates at least one sportfishing charter business operates in Florence.

For the port complex around Florence, the 2000 recreational salmonid catch in the Ocean Boat Fishery was 250 Chinook and 472 coho salmon. The recreational nonsalmonid catch in the fishery was 213 fish. The top species landed include greenstripe, canary, and yelloweye rockfish, and Pacific halibut. The area is also known for exceptional sea-run cutthroat trout fishing in the lower Siuslaw.

Subsistence

Local community members, both tribal and nontribal, may engage in subsistence fishing for marine and stream resources in Florence and the surrounding area. Specific information on subsistence fishing in Florence 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 one vessel owned by a Florence resident participated in North Pacific fisheries. The vessel made landings in the following North Pacific fisheries, but landings data (metric tons/value of landings) are confidential: Bering Strait Aleutian Island (BSAI)

groundfish, and Gulf of Alaska groundfish, halibut, salmon, shellfish, and other finfish.

One community resident held a state permit for Alaska fisheries and seven Florence residents held federal permits for North Pacific fisheries. Florence residents held five commercial fishing permits in 2000 for North Pacific fisheries. Residents held individual fishing quota shares for North Pacific halibut (10,863) and sablefish (1,535). In the same year, residents of Florence held one Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission permit for BSAI groundfish and one groundfish License Limitation Program permit.

Four Florence residents held crew member licenses for North Pacific fisheries in 2000.

Sportfishing

Florence residents purchased 59 Alaska sportfishing licenses in 2000.

Notes

1. State of Oregon. 2004. Oregon Economic & Community Development: Florence community profile. Online at <http://info.econ.state.or.us:591/FMPro?-db=Community.fp4&-Format=forms.htm&-lay=webpage&-op=eq&sort%20name=Florence&-script=hit%20count&-Find> [accessed 12 January 2007].
2. Field notes, fisherman. Florence, OR. May 2006.
3. 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.
4. See note 3.
5. See note 3.