

Gold Beach

People and Place

Location

Gold Beach is situated at the mouth of the Rogue River. It is the county seat of Curry County and is considered the “heart of America’s Wild Rivers Coast.”¹ Portland, the nearest major metropolitan area, is 298.9 miles to the northeast. Gold Beach encompasses 2.3 square miles of land and 0.2 square miles of water. The geographic coordinates are lat 42°24’27”N and long 124°25’14”W.

Demographic Profile

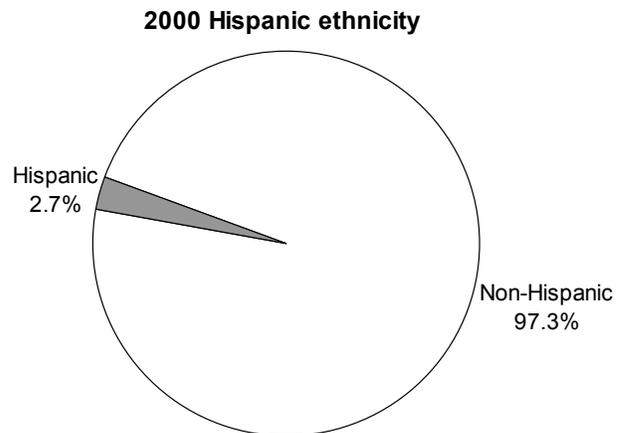
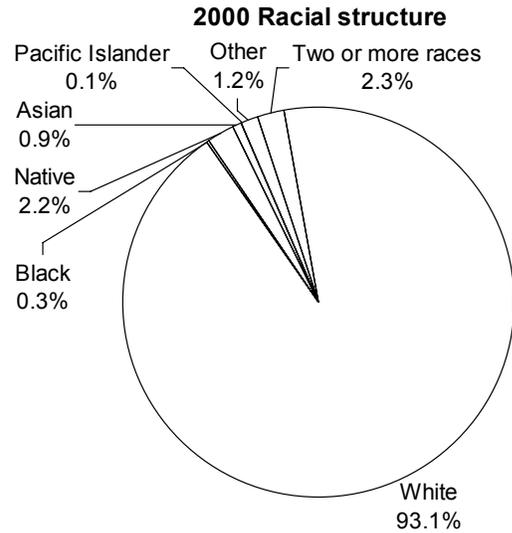
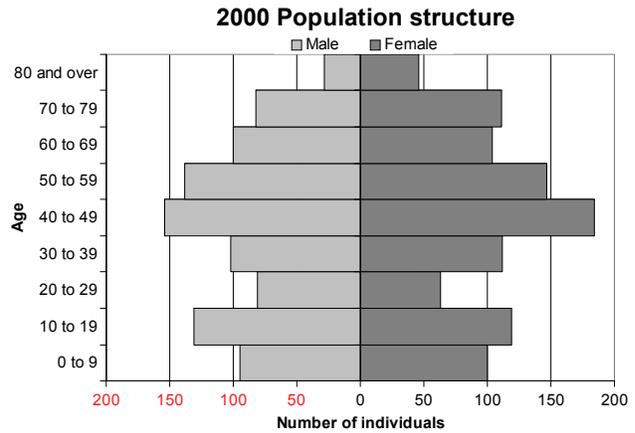
According to the 2000 U.S. Census, the population of Gold Beach was 1,897, a 22.7% increase over 1990. The gender composition was 52% female and 48% male. The median age was 44.8, higher than the national median of 35.3. Of the population 18 years of age and older, 74.2% had a high school degree or higher, 17.9% had a bachelor’s degree or higher, and 7.4% had a graduate or professional degree. The national averages were 79.7%, 22.3%, and 7.8% respectively.

The majority of the population of Gold Beach was white (93.1%) followed by individuals who identified with two or more races (2.3%), Native American (2.2%), individuals who identified with another race (1.2%), Asian (0.9%), Pacific Islander (0.1%), and black (0.3%). Ethnicity data indicate 2.7% identified as Hispanic. The census identified 1.5% of the inhabitants as foreign-born, of which 28.6% were born in Romania.

History

Gold Beach was created in 1853 when gold was discovered in the sands of the Rogue River. Initially the settlement was called Ellensburg, although people referred to the quickly established community as Gold Beach. In 1858 it became the county seat of Curry County. Gold sluicing in the area was never as profitable as in other gold fields. Once the gold was exhausted, the community survived primarily on coho salmon runs.²

In 1877 R.D. Hume opened the first salmon cannery in Oregon in the area as well as a fish hatchery.³ At the time it was not known that salmon could be caught using hook and line gear, but in 1896 a man named Mr. Frank was surprised when he caught an 18-pound salmon while trout fishing with a fly rod on the Rogue River. Sportfishing in the river soon became a new pastime. Since then salmon has been an important community



resource, surviving as the lumber, fur, and gold industries faded. Commercial fishing for salmon in the Rogue River increased quickly after 1908 and largely depleted the stock. Commercial fishing on the river ended in 1935. Following the closure of commercial fishing, sportfishing in the area became even more popular and today draws anglers to the area to fish for salmon, trout, steelhead, and other sport fish.⁴

The community's natural resources continue to draw large numbers of tourists and sportfishermen. Yearly festivals and events include America's Wild Rivers Coast Seafood, Art and Wine Festival; the Rogue River Salmon Derby Competition, Fisherman's Fish Fry, Clam Chowder Festival, and Annual Crab Crack.

Infrastructure

Current Economy

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, 56.5% of the population 16 years of age and older were employed, 2.1% were unemployed, and the unemployment rate was 3.6% (calculated by dividing the unemployed population by the labor force). In addition, 41.3% were not in the labor force. The top employment sectors were government (25.3%), educational, health, and social services (19.6%), retail (14.2%) and arts, entertainment recreation, and accommodation and food services (12.7%). Natural resource jobs including agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting employed 4.7%, but this percentage may be artificially low because many fishermen are self-employed and are underrepresented in the data.

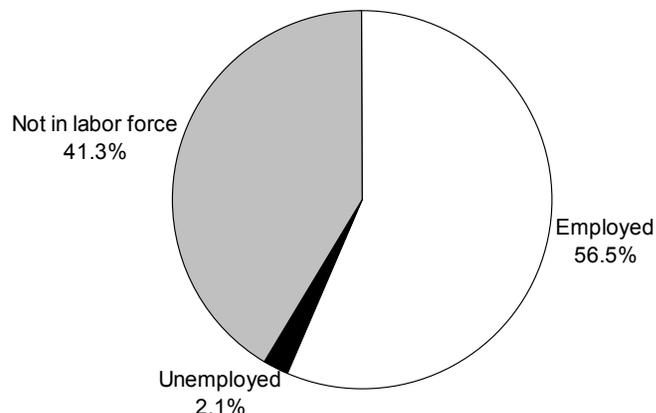
The major industries in Gold Beach are fishing, lumber, and recreation and tourism. The five largest employers in the area include Curry County, Central Curry School District, Freeman Marine, U.S. Forest Service, and state offices.⁵

The per capita income in 1999 was \$16,717 and the median household income was \$30,243. In 1999 about 12.4% were below the poverty level. In 2000 Gold Beach had 987 housing units, 84% were occupied and 16% were vacant. Of the occupied units, 66.3% were by owner and 33.7% were by renter. About 37.3% of the vacant units were for seasonal, recreational, or occasional use.

Governance

Gold Beach is an incorporated city that operates under a council-manager charter. The State of Oregon has no general sales tax but levies a 1% overnight lodging tax that funds the Oregon Tourism Commission. See the Governance subsection (page 43) in the

2000 Employment structure



Overview section for a more detailed discussion of taxes affecting fishermen and processors in Oregon.

Gold Beach is 177 miles from the National Marine Fisheries Service research station in Newport. Gold Beach is home to an Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) field office. The community is 79.1 miles from the nearest U.S. Coast Guard Unit in Coos Bay and 298.9 miles from the closest U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services Office in Portland. The nearest meetings of the Pacific Fishery Management and North Pacific Fishery Management councils are held in Portland.

Facilities

Gold Beach, located on U.S. Highway 101, is accessible by land, sea, and air. Curry Public Transit connects Gold Beach to Bandon, Crescent City, Brookings, Port Orford, Coos Bay, and North Bend with regular shuttle service. Gold Beach Municipal Airport serves small planes. Gold Beach is 312 miles from the Portland International Airport.

Local schools include one K-8 elementary school and a high school. Coos-Curry Electric Cooperative provides electricity. The City of Gold Beach supplies water and sewer services, and the Gold Beach Police Department administers local law enforcement. Curry General Hospital provides medical services. Lodging accommodations include bed and breakfasts, hotels, and motels, campgrounds and recreational vehicle parks, and vacation rentals.

The Port of Gold Beach serves commercial and recreational craft and offers a small item freight facility.⁶ The harbor entrance is only 13-feet deep. According to an Oregon Sea Grant study, “[a] major concern for all Oregon ports is that as fishing tonnage drops, there is less justification for dredging, which is required to keep most of the ports safe for commerce.”⁷

Volunteers from Curry Anadromous Fisherman under the ODFW Salmon and Trout Enhancement Program operate Indian Creek Hatchery, producing 75,000 fall Chinook salmon smolts annually for the lower Rogue River fishery.⁸ Another hatchery, the ODFW Elk River Hatchery, is located north of Gold Beach along the Elk River in Port Orford.

Involvement in West Coast Fisheries

Commercial Fishing

According to available data, no fish processors operated in Gold Beach in 2000. In 2000 50 vessels, all commercially registered, delivered landings to Gold Beach. Landings in the community were in the following West Coast fisheries (data shown represents landings in metric tons/value of landings/number of vessels landing): crab 30 t/\$133,107/5; groundfish 43 t/\$236,173/36; salmon confidential/confidential/1; and other species 131 t/\$173,950/17.

Gold Beach residents owned 20 vessels in 2000, 7 of which participated in the federally managed groundfish fishery. The number of vessels owned by Gold Beach residents that participated in each fishery by state (WA/OR/CA) was: crab 0/3/3, groundfish 0/0/NA, highly migratory species NA/0/NA, salmon 0/8/4, shellfish NA/0/NA, and shrimp NA/0/0.⁹

One Gold Beach resident held one federal groundfish fishery permit in 2000. The number of individual community members holding permits in each fishery by state (WA/OR/CA) was: crab 0/3/3, highly migratory species NA/0/0, salmon 0/6/7, shellfish 0/0/NA, and other species 1/2/2.¹⁰

In 2000 40 permits were registered to Gold Beach residents, of which 39 were registered state permits. The number of permits held by Gold Beach community members in each fishery by state (WA/OR/CA) was: crab 0/6/3, highly migratory species NA/0/0, salmon 0/6/10, shellfish 0/0/NA, and other species 2/10/2.¹¹

Sportfishing

Gold Beach had at least 27 outfitter guide businesses in 2003. Ten licensed charter vessel businesses were located in the community, two of which had their homeport in Brookings. Internet sources indicate at least 28 sportfishing businesses doing business in Gold Beach in 2003 and 29 in 2006.¹²

Migrating fish make their first appearance in the Rogue River at the end of March and range in weight from 15 to 40 pounds. The fall Chinook salmon run begins in mid July and goes through October. Summer steelhead and coho salmon runs start in late August and

mid September. The Gold Beach ocean charter season goes year-round and targets lingcod and rockfish.¹³

Gold Beach has nine licensing vendors. In 2000 agents sold 3,566 licenses at a value of \$60,984. The 2000 recreational salmonid catch in the Ocean Boat Fishery was 74 Chinook salmon. The recreational nonsalmonid catch in the fishery was 15,416 fish. The top species landed include black rockfish, blue rockfish, canary rockfish, and lingcod.

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 surrounding Gold Beach. Specific information on subsistence fishing in Gold Beach is not discussed in detail in this community profile due to the lack of available data.

Involvement in North Pacific Fisheries

Commercial Fishing

Two community members held two registered salmon Alaska Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission (CFEC) permits in 2000. Two Gold Beach residents held crew member licenses for North Pacific fisheries.

Sportfishing

Gold Beach residents purchased 27 Alaska sportfishing licenses in 2000.

Notes

1. City of Gold Beach. No date. Factsheet. Online at http://www.goldbeach.org/html/PressRoom/pressroom_factsheet.cfm [accessed 16 January 2007].

2. City of Gold Beach. No date. Gold Beach historic snapshot. Online at <http://www.goldbeach.org/html/history.cfm> [accessed 16 January 2007].

3. J. Gilden. 1999. Oregon's changing coastal fishing communities: Appendix B, Oregon community summaries: Gold Beach. Online at <http://seagrant.oregonstate.edu/sgpubs/onlinepubs/o99001.html#appb> [accessed 16 January 2007].

4. See note 2.

5. Oregon Economic & Community Development Department. 2004. Gold Beach community profile. Online at <http://info.econ.state.or.us:591/FMPro?-db=Community.fp4&-Format=forms.htm&-lay=webpage&-op=eq&sort%20name=Gold%20Beach&-script=hit%20count&-Find> [accessed 16 January 2007].

6. NOAA Coastal Services Center. 2002. Gold Beach port and Harbor profile. Online at <http://www.csc.noaa.gov/products/tsunamiis/htm/cascadia/gbeach.htm> [accessed 16 January 2007].

7. See note 3.

8. Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife. 2002. Indian Creek Hatchery receives grant to repair water system. Online at <http://www.dfw.state.or.us/public/NewsArc/2002News/October/100102newsb.htm> [accessed 16 January 2007].

9. 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.

10. See note 9.

11. See note 9.

12. Goldbeach.net. 2003. Fishing guides. Online at <http://www.goldbeach.net/fishing.htm> [accessed 16 January 2007].

13. City of Gold Beach. No date. Fishing. Online at <http://www.goldbeach.org/html/ThingsToDo/fishing.cfm> [accessed 16 January 2007].