

La Push

People and Place

Location

La Push, the site of the Quileute Tribe's reservation, is on the Olympic Peninsula. Situated in Clallam County, the community encompasses nearly one square mile of land (594 acres). The nearest major U.S. city is Seattle, a 150-mile drive southeast. La Push's geographic coordinates are lat 47°54'32"N, long 124°38'07"W.

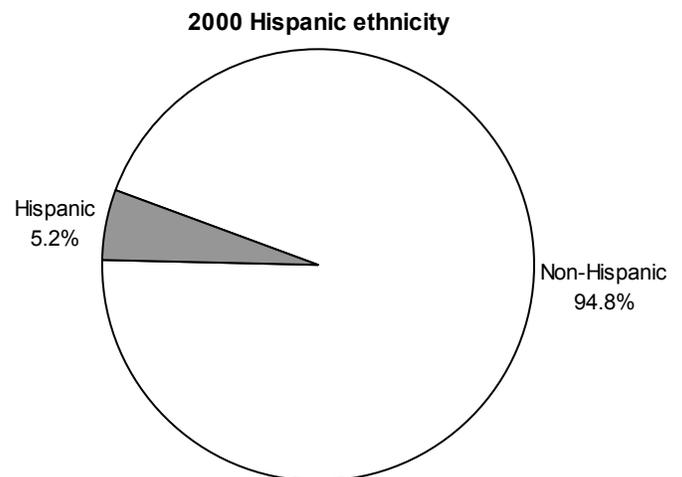
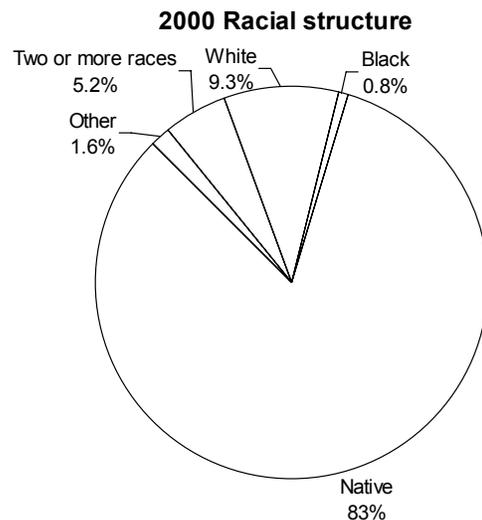
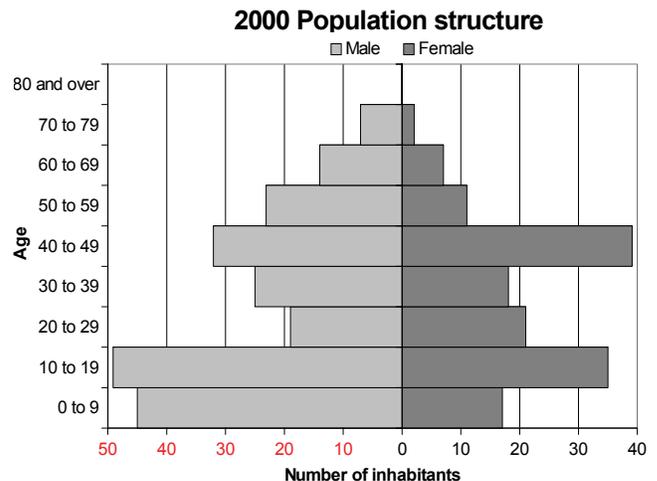
Demographic Profile

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, La Push's population was 371. The gender composition was 57.1% male and 42.9% female. The median age of 27.5 was significantly lower than the national median age of 35.3. Of the population age 18 years and older, 52.9% had a high school education (including equivalency) or higher, 4.2% had received a bachelor's degree or higher, and 1.7% had attained a graduate or professional degree. These figures are well below the national averages of 79.7%, 22.3%, and 7.8%, respectively.

The vast majority of La Push's racial structure recorded by the 2000 U.S. Census was American Indian and Alaska Native (83%), followed by white (9.3%), people who identified as two or more races (5.2%), people who identified as another race (1.6%), and black (0.8%). Ethnicity data indicate that 5.2% identified as Hispanic. In 2000 3.8% were foreign-born, with 42.9% from Mexico, 35.8% from Canada, and 21.4% from Australia.

History

The area of La Push has always been the center of activities for the traditional land of the Quileute Tribe, which extends throughout some 850 square miles of drainage basins in the treaty ceded area. The marine usual and accustomed area (U&A) extends from Ozette to the Quinault River and west at least 40 miles.¹ According to their creation story, the Quileute "were changed from wolves by a wandering Transformer" and their "only kindred, the Chimakum Tribe, were washed away by flood and deposited near present-day Port Townsend," eventually to be wiped out by the Suquamish Tribe in the 1860s. Historically the Quileute fished as well as hunted seals and whales, whaling in red cedar canoes as far as southeast Alaska and California.² On land they also hunted for a variety of large and small game. The Quileute were considered by many as



“second only to the Makah as whalers, and first among all the tribes as sealers.”³

European traders first made contact with the Quileute as early as the 1700s. The Quileute’s first official contact with Americans occurred during the signing of the Treaty of Quinault River in 1855 (including the Quinault and Hoh tribes) with the members of the Washington Territory Governor Isaac Stevens’ staff representing the United States. In 1856 a delegation of Quileute and a number of new signatories as well as original ones signed the Treaty of Olympia, which reauthorized the original treaty and included some omitted parties. In both treaties signatories ceded most of their land to the United States (except for reservations).⁴ Although the treaties would have moved the Quileute onto a reservation, they were not forced to leave because of the remoteness of their traditional land and lack of pressure to settle that area.⁵ Schoolteacher A. W. Smith arrived in the village in 1882, assembled a school, and renamed Quileutes with names derived from the Bible, American history, and by anglicizing Quileute names.⁶

In 1889 a one square mile reservation was arranged at La Push by an Executive Order of President Grover Cleveland. At that time there were 252 persons inhabiting the reservation. In the same year all of the houses in the village were completely burned by a settler who was attempting to lay claim to the land. In 1893 a separate reservation was allotted for the 71 members of the Hoh River band of Quileutes. Through the treaties the Quileutes maintained the right to gather, hunt, and fish in their “usual and accustomed places” and to hunt and gather in “open and unclaimed lands” within the lands ceded under the treaty.

The name “La Push” originates from the use of the Chinook word for “river mouth” by traders, a distortion of the French “la bouche.” The 1936 Constitution and By-Laws of the Quileute Tribe and the 1937 Corporate Charter, issued by the Secretary of Interior, asserted the tribe’s sovereignty. During World War II the area was part of the 13th Naval District’s Coastal Lookout System with sites on James Island and in La Push. In 1997 evidence of earlier habitation of the village was found from an archeological exploration.⁷

Presently La Push contains the Quileute Headquarters, a K-12 school, a seafood firm, oceanfront resorts, a fish hatchery, a marina, a general store, a recreational vehicle park, a post office, and additional amenities.⁸ The Quileute Reservation covers 594 acres and is situated on the south bank of the Quillayute River and the Pacific Ocean.^{9,10} The reservation also includes James Island and small islands between it and the mainland that are connected at lowest tides, and the entire



width of the river bottom insofar as it is adjacent to the reservation.¹¹

Infrastructure

Current Economy

At the time of the 2000 U.S. Census, 42.6% of La Push’s potential labor force 16 years of age and older were employed, 16.1% were unemployed, and the unemployment rate was 27.4% (calculated by dividing the unemployed population by the labor force). In addition, 41.4% were not in the labor force, compared to the national average of 36.1%. The largest employment sectors in La Push were the local, state, or federal governments (54.7%), educational, health, and social services (23.6%), public administration (17.9%), arts, entertainment, and recreation (9.4%), and food services and accommodations and manufacturing (7.5%). Natural resource jobs including agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting employed 12.3%, but this percentage may be artificially low given that many fishermen are self-employed and are underrepresented in these data.

The per capita income in 1999 was \$9,589 and the median household income was \$21,750. In 1999 34.5% lived below the poverty level, almost three times higher than the national average of 12.4%. In 2000 there were 128 housing units in La Push, with 87.1% owner occupied and 12.9% renter occupied. The housing unit vacancy rate was 9.4%. In La Push only the housing structures are owned by tribal members; the land is held in trust.¹²

Governance

La Push, home of the Quileute Tribe’s reservation, is governed by the Quileute Tribal Council. The council “exercises the powers to ... veto any sales, disposition,

lease, or other encumbrance of tribal lands; advise on and approve appropriations; levy and collect taxes and license fees from nonmembers doing business on the reservation; enforce ordinances dealing with visitors, trespassers, and tribal memberships; and operate a tribal court and to maintain law and order.”¹³

The nearest National Marine Fisheries Service Regional Office and U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services office are in Seattle. The nearest Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) Regional Office is in Montesano, 134 miles southeast. Meetings of the Pacific Fishery Management and North Pacific Fishery Management councils are routinely in the Seattle-Tacoma area. The U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) Station Quillayute River is in La Push.

Facilities

La Push is accessible by ground and sea. La Push is located off U.S. Highway 101 via Washington Highway 110. The La Push Harbor is the home of the La Push fleet, nontribal commercial and recreational vessels, and the USCG. The harbor provides vessel moorage, a fuel dock, and a waste water pump. The William R. Fairchild International Airport in Port Angeles, 69 miles east, is the nearest public airport.¹⁴ The Seattle-Tacoma International Airport is the nearest major U.S. facility.

The Quileute Tribal School in La Push covers grades K-12. The tribe operates water, waste water, and sanitation services.¹⁵ The La Push Police Department and volunteer fire department administer public safety. The Quileute Tribal Clinic provides primary medical and dental care, behavioral health services, and family and addiction counseling and support.¹⁶ There are several oceanfront resorts situated in La Push.

The Quileute Tribe utilizes the WDFW’s Sol Duc Hatchery in Beaver, the Bogachiel Hatchery in Forks, and the Quileutes’ Lonesome Creek Hatchery in La Push to reach population recovery goals for local salmon runs.^{17, 18} The tribe, working under a cooperative agreement with the WDFW’s hatcheries, strives to enhance wild summer run Chinook salmon and winter steelhead populations.

Involvement in West Coast Fisheries

Commercial Fishing

In 2000 44 vessels, including 32 commercial and 12 tribal, delivered landings in La Push. Landings were in the following West Coast fisheries (data shown represent landings in metric tons/value of said landings/number of vessels landing): crab 334 t/\$1,594,592/31; groundfish 229 t/\$751,982/29; highly migratory species 21 t/

\$38,644/5; salmon 78 t/\$137,025/13; and other species confidential/confidential/1.

La Push residents owned three vessels in 2000, including one vessel that participated in the federally managed groundfish fishery. The number of vessels owned by La Push residents that participated in each said fishery by state (WA/OR/CA) was: groundfish 1/0/NA, highly migratory species NA/0/NA, salmon 1/1/0, shellfish NA/0/NA, shrimp NA/0/0, and other species 1/0/0.¹⁹

Federal fishing permits are held by nontribal persons, because tribal treaty fishing does not require permits. Tribal members do, however, purchase state crab and salmon permits.²⁰ One nontribal community member held one federal groundfish fishery permit. The number of La Push residents holding permits in each said fishery by state (WA/OR/CA) was: crab 2/0/0, highly migratory species NA/0/0, salmon 1/1/0, shellfish 0/0/NA, and other species 1/0/0.²¹

La Push residents held at least six state commercial fishing permits in 2000. The number of permits held by community members in each said fishery by state (WA/OR/CA) was: crab 3/0/0, highly migratory species NA/0/0, salmon 1/1/0, shellfish 0/0/NA, and other species 1/0/0.²²

At least one seafood company, High Tide Seafood, is located in La Push.

According to the 1974 Boldt Decision,²³ usual and accustomed fishing grounds of the Quileute (and Hoh) before, during, and after treaty times “included the Hoh River from the mouth to its uppermost reaches, its tributary creeks, the Quillayute River and its tributary creeks, Dickey River, Soleduck River, Bogachiel River, Calawah River, Lake Dickey, Pleasant Lake, Lake Ozette, and the adjacent tidewater and saltwater areas.” It is important to note that this decision was left open for future subproceedings to refine and amend treaty interpretation on fishing methods and areas, and some 70-plus decisions have been heard since the original one.²⁴ Members of the tribe fish within the U&A for shellfish, groundfish, flatfish, rockfish, lingcod, trout, steelhead, salmon, sablefish, Dungeness crab, and halibut.²⁵

Sportfishing

Sportfishing is gaining popularity in the La Push area. Today at least three charter companies operate there. Surf fishing also is readily available on the beaches of La Push. Local anglers fish for salmonids (Chinook salmon, coho salmon, and steelhead) and bottomfish (halibut, rockfish, and lingcod).²⁶

In Catch Record Card Area 3 (from the Queets River north to Cape Alava), the 2000 sport catch, based on catch record cards, was 11,652 fish, including 211 Chinook salmon, 2,298 coho salmon, and 10 pink salmon. In 2000 marine anglers made 2,205 trips to Area 3. Sport fishermen caught 17 steelhead and 10,994 coastal bottomfish.

Subsistence

Quileute Tribal members fish within their U&A for shellfish, groundfish, flatfish, rockfish, lingcod, trout, steelhead, salmon, sablefish, Dungeness crab, and halibut.²⁷

Involvement in North Pacific Fisheries

Commercial Fishing

Three La Push residents held crew member licenses for North Pacific fisheries in 2000.

Sportfishing

One La Push resident purchased an Alaskan sportfishing license in 2000.

Notes

1. Field notes, Quileute Tribe, La Push, WA, 26 April 2006.
2. Quileute Natural Resources. No date. History. Online at <http://www.quileutetribe.org/7.html> [accessed 31 January 2007].
3. Indian Health Service. 2001. Quileute Tribe. Online at <http://www2.ihs.gov/PortlandAO/about/quileute.asp> [accessed 31 January 2007].
4. See note 1.
5. Quileute Natural Resources. No date. Treaty of Olympia. Online at <http://www.quileutetribe.org/8.html> [accessed 31 January 2007].
6. Online Highways. 2004. Quileute Tribe. Online at <http://www.ohwy.com/wa/q/quiltrib.htm> [accessed 31 January 2007].
7. See note 2.
8. Forks Forum. No date. Quileute Tribe. Online at <http://www.forks-web.com/fg/quileute.htm> [accessed 31 January 2007].
9. Northwest Portland Area Indian Health Board. 2003. Quileute Tribe. Online at http://www.npaihb.org/profiles/tribal_profiles/Washington/Quileute%20Tribal%20Profile.htm [accessed 31 January 2007].
10. K. Krueger, environmental attorney, Quileute Tribe, La Push, WA. Pers. commun., 26 April 2006.
11. See note 1.
12. See note 1.
13. See note 6.
14. See note 1.
15. See note 1.
16. See note 9.
17. Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission. 2004. Quileute Trib's Chinook spawning efforts provide more fish for all. Online at <http://www.nwifc.wa.gov/newsinfo/newsrelease.asp?ID=266> [accessed December 2005].
18. See note 10.

19. 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.

20. Field notes, Quileute Natural Resources, La Push, WA, 26 April 2006.

21. See note 20.

22. See note 20.

23. Center for Columbia River History. No date. Boldt Decision. Online at <http://www.ccrh.org/comm/river/legal/boldt.htm> [accessed 31 January 2007].

24. See note 1.

25. National Marine Fisheries Service. 2004. Groundfish bycatch programmatic DEIS, Appendix D: Treaty tribes. Online at <http://www.pcouncil.org/groundfish/gfbdpeis/apdx.pdf> [accessed 31 January 2007].

26. G. Johnston, 2003. La Push boasts a new attitude and great fishing. Seattle Post-Intelligencer, 24 July 2003. Online at http://seattlepi.nwsource.com/getaways/132040_lapush24.html [accessed 31 January 2007].

27. See note 23.