

Naselle

People and Place

Location

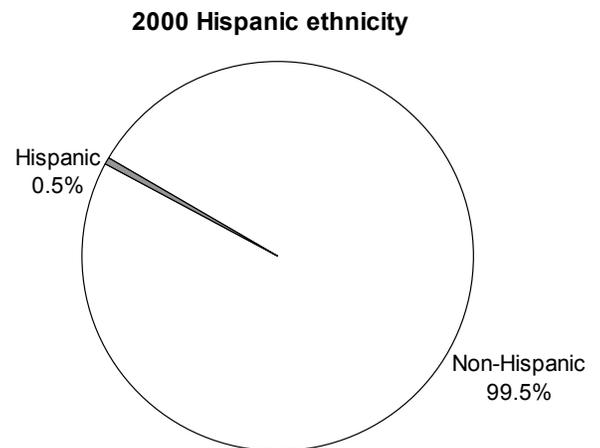
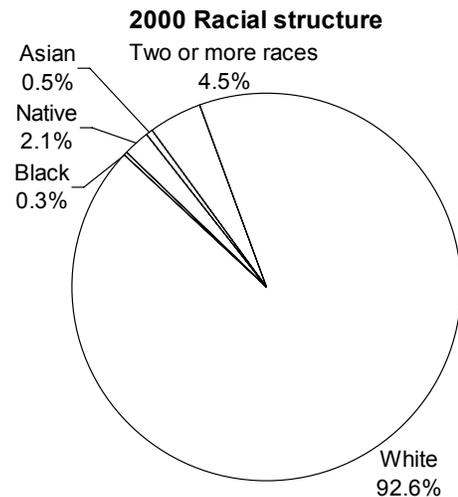
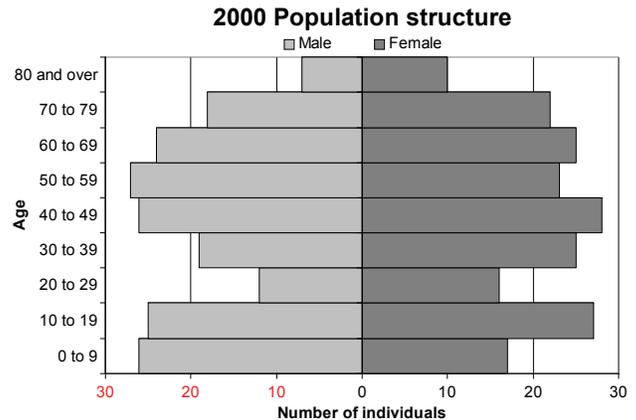
Naselle is in southwestern Washington at the confluence of the Naselle River and its south fork, midway between Willapa Bay to the north and the Columbia River to the south. Located in Pacific County, the community occupies 2.3 square miles of land. The nearest major U.S. city is Portland, Oregon, a 105-mile drive southeast, while Seattle is a 160-mile drive northeast. Naselle's geographic coordinates are lat 46°21'56"N, long 123°48'34"W.

Demographic Profile

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, Naselle's population was 377. Because Naselle was not recognized as a place on the 1990 U.S. Census, data indicating patterns of demographic evolution were not available. In 2000 the gender composition was 51.2% female and 48.8% male. The median age of 44.1 was almost 9 years older than the national median of 35.3. Naselle had an older population, with only 9.2% of its residents falling between the ages of 18 and 29, compared to 16.5% nationally. Of the population 18 years of age and older, 82.8% had a high school education (including equivalency) or higher, 15.1% had earned a bachelor's degree or higher, and 5% had attained a graduate or professional degree. The national averages were 79.7%, 22.3%, and 7.8% respectively. The highest level of educational attainment for 34.4% of residents was a high school degree.

The vast majority of Naselle's racial structure recorded by the 2000 U.S. Census was white (92.6%), followed by people who identified themselves as two or more races (4.5%), American Indian or Alaskan Native (2.1%), Asian (0.5%), and black (0.3%). Ethnicity data indicate that 0.5% identified as Hispanic. In 2000 4.2% were foreign-born, with 33.3% from Canada, 20% from Japan, 20% from northern Europe, and 13.3% from the Philippines and Mexico. In 2000 77.6% reported their ancestry, with 25.8% Finnish, 7.8% German, and 6.1% Irish. These data are consistent with historical sources that document the presence of a large and thriving Finnish community in Naselle.

Naselle's population in 2000 lived in 160 households, with 84.1% of residents living in family households.



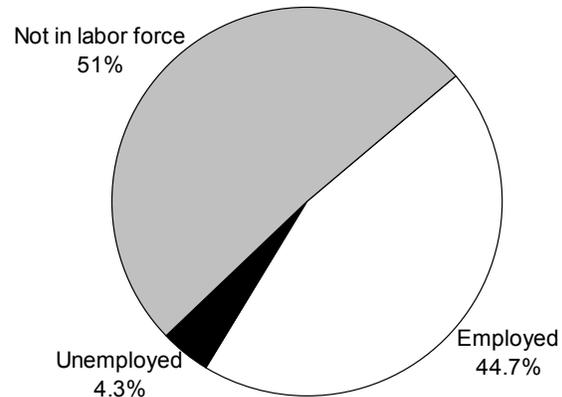
History

The community of Naselle derives its name from the Nisal band of Chinook Indians who dominated the area prior to European American settlement. The Chinook Indians were historically a group of linguistically related peoples whose territory included the lower Columbia River in Washington and Oregon and much of the area surrounding Willapa Bay.¹ These native groups depended heavily on fishing and coastal resources and developed extensive trade networks within the region. In the local Chinook dialect, Nisal meant “protected, sheltered, or hidden.” White settlers entered the area in the early 1850s and experimented with several variations on the original native name before permanently adopting the contemporary spelling in 1920.²

Naselle is unique among Pacific County towns because of its large population of Finnish immigrants and their descendants. In its early history the community became a popular destination for Finnish settlers who sought a forested landscape and employment similar to that in their native country. Many older residents continue to speak now-archaic dialects of Finnish and the community hosts a Finnish American Folk Festival that attracts more than 1,200 visitors biennially.

Throughout its history Naselle has remained a community rooted in three main industries: logging, farming, and fishing. Before the development of the local logging industry, many Finnish settlers worked in lumber mills in Astoria, Oregon, until they had earned enough to buy farmland in the Naselle vicinity.³ Weyerhaeuser operated a mill in Naselle until 1980, and today numerous smaller logging and construction companies are based in the area. Commercial and sport fishermen from Naselle have long been active in salmon gillnetting on Willapa Bay, and following the collapse of the local salmon industry, many Naselle fishermen now travel seasonally to Alaska. The Naselle Hatchery, which produces large numbers of Chinook salmon and coho salmon for Willapa Bay, also makes the community central to the regional fishing industry. Until the construction of the Astoria-Megler Bridge in 1966, Naselle remained relatively isolated, with the Naselle and Columbia rivers serving as main transportation corridors through the region. Today many travelers headed for the Pacific coast pass through Naselle, and the community attracts some tourists interested in its Finnish history and cultural heritage.

2000 Employment structure



Infrastructure

Current Economy

At the time of the 2000 U.S. Census, 44.7% of Naselle’s potential workforce 16 years of age and older were employed, 4.3% were unemployed, and the unemployment rate was 8.8% (calculated by dividing the unemployed population by the labor force), which exceeded the national unemployment rate of 5.7%. In addition, 51% did not participate in the labor force, much higher than the national average of 36.1. The major employment sectors were local, state, and federal governments (39.3%), education, health, and social services (21.5%), arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation, and food services (12.6%), retail and wholesale trade (10.4%), public administration (8.9%), construction (6.7%), and manufacturing (3%). Natural resource jobs including agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting employed 13.3%, but this percentage may be artificially low given that many fishermen are self-employed and are underrepresented in these data.

The largest employer in the community is the Naselle Youth Camp, a juvenile detention and rehabilitation facility built in 1966. The youth camp provides jobs for 122.⁴ Support services for sport fishermen passing through Naselle to fish Willapa Bay or the Naselle River also provide jobs and revenue for the community. The Washington State Business Records database includes entries for several small logging and fisheries companies based in Naselle, some of which feature distinctive Finnish names. These include Monte Cristo Fisheries, Manke Seafoods, Blackheart Seafoods, Wirkkala Logging and Construction, Haataia Fishing, and Kipona Brothers Logging.⁵

The per capita income was \$17,714 in 1999 and the median household income was \$35,769. In 1999 4.7%

lived below the poverty level, which was much lower than the national average of 12.4%. There were 184 housing units in Naselle in 2000, with 71.9% owner occupied and 28.1% renter occupied. The housing unit vacancy rate was 13%, with 20.8% due to seasonal, recreational, or occasional use.

Governance

Under Washington State law an area cannot be incorporated as a city unless it houses a minimum of 1,500 residents. Naselle is therefore classified as an unincorporated area governed by Pacific County. Naselle has neither a city council nor its own separate municipal tax structure. Naselle residents elect county officials, whose offices are in the county seat of South Bend, approximately 31 miles north along U.S. Highway 101. Pacific County, which was organized in 1851, has a 7.8% sales tax and a 9.8% lodging tax. See the Governance subsection (page 43) in the Overview section for a more detailed discussion of taxes affecting fisherman and processors in Washington.

The nearest National Marine Fisheries Service's Northwest Regional Office is in Seattle. The nearest U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services office is Portland. Meetings of the Pacific Fishery Management and North Pacific Fishery Management councils are routinely held in Portland. The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) Southwest Regional Office is 97 miles southeast in Vancouver. The nearest U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) Group and Air Station is 20 miles east in Warrenton, Oregon. The USCG operates the National Motor Lifeboat School (NMLB) in Ilwaco (22 miles).⁶

Facilities

Naselle is accessible via land, air, and water. Naselle is on Washington Highway 401, which branches off from the Washington Highway 4 (the Ocean Beach Highway) and cuts inland directly across the southwestern portion of the state. Astoria Regional Airport is the nearest airport facility certified for carrier operations, and the Port of Ilwaco Airport (7 miles) provides an unattended paved runway that is open to the public. The Portland International Airport is the nearest major facility. There are a few small motels, campgrounds, and recreational vehicle parks located in the vicinity of Naselle, but neighboring communities of Ilwaco and Long Beach attract more overnight travelers. Public Utility District No. 2 administers electrical service. The Naselle Water District provides water. Because the community has no municipal sewer district, residents rely on septic tanks. The Naselle Youth Camp School operates a small wastewater treatment facility,

and electricity is supplied. The Pacific County Sheriff's Office and the Pacific County Fire Department #4 in Naselle administer public safety. Columbia Memorial Hospital in Astoria, Ocean Beach Hospital in Ilwaco, and Willapa Harbor Hospital in South Bend are the closest major health care facilities.

Naselle-Grays River Valley School District No. 155 operates Naselle Elementary School (grades K–6) and Naselle Junior Senior High School (grades 7–12). The Washington Department of Social and Health Services also operates a local juvenile rehabilitation facility, the Naselle Youth Camp School (grades 9–10). This state-run facility provides traditional classes, vocational training, and work programs for its 107 residents. The Naselle-Grays River Valley School District and the DSHS facility serve Naselle and other small communities throughout southeastern Pacific County and part of Wahkiakum County.⁷

The Naselle Ramp, a public boat launch just outside of town, provides parking and space for small boats to enter the Naselle River, which flows north into Willapa Bay. The Naselle Hatchery, operated by WDFW, is responsible for producing roughly half of the Chinook salmon and about a third of the coho salmon in Willapa Bay. These fish are crucial to the area's gillnet fishing industry. In 2003 the hatchery released more than 3 million Chinook salmon and roughly 550,000 coho salmon smolts.⁸ The facility also released 50,000 steelhead. In past years the hatchery has produced as many as 6.5 million young fish.⁹ This facility reportedly suffers from design flaws and lacks a weir to help collect returning fish, problems that have resulted in extremely poor return rates. Several interest groups are currently lobbying for additional funding to improve the hatchery, which is one of only three located on Willapa Bay tributaries. Another hatchery operated by the Naselle Youth Camp aquaculture program produces all of the rainbow trout for Pacific County's lakes and it averages about 20,000 fish each year.¹⁰

Involvement in West Coast Fisheries

Commercial Fishing

Fishermen living in Naselle are primarily involved in the West Coast salmon and crab fisheries. Landings data for Naselle were recorded as part of the Willapa Bay Port Group that includes the communities of Bay Center, Nahcotta, Tokeland, South Bend, and Raymond. Reported landings for this port group in 2000 were in the following West Coast fisheries (data shown represent landings in metric tons/value of said landings/number of vessels landing): coastal pelagic (confidential/

confidential/1), crab 444.9 t/\$1,941,008/44; groundfish 4.6 t/\$3,889/6; salmon 122.5 t/\$178,084/71; shellfish 26.8 t/\$73,534/63; shrimp 399.9 t/\$397,143/8; and other species 13.1 t/\$31,242/51. See the Tokeland, South Bend, and Raymond community profiles for additional information.

In 2000 Naselle fisherman involved in the West Coast fisheries owned 15 vessels, including seven that participated in the federally managed groundfish fishery. The number of vessels owned by Naselle residents that participated in each said fishery by state (WA/OR/CA) was: crab 2/1/0, groundfish 0/0/NA, highly migratory species NA/0/NA, salmon 5/6/0, shellfish NA/0/NA, and shrimp NA/0/0.¹¹

No individuals living in Naselle in 2000 held federal groundfish fishery permits. In 2000 the number of Naselle residents holding permits in each said fishery by state (WA/OR/CA) was: crab 0/1/0, highly migratory species NA/0/0, salmon 11/3/1, shellfish 0/0/NA, and shrimp 1/0/0.¹²

Naselle residents held 19 state permits in 2000. The number of permits held in each said fishery by state (WA/OR/CA) was: crab 3/0/0, highly migratory species NA/0/0, salmon 13/0/2, shellfish 0/0/NA, and shrimp 1/0/0.¹³

Sportfishing

The boat launch located near Naselle is relatively small, but the facility attracts some recreational fishermen interested in salmon and sturgeon fishing on the Naselle River or less busy routes into Willapa Bay. According to the WDFW, there is one sportfishing license vendor operating in Naselle.

Catch Record Card Area 2-1 (Willapa Bay) is the closest area to Naselle. In Area 2-1 the 2000–2001 sport catch, based on catch record cards, was 870 fish, including 468 Chinook salmon, 354 coho salmon, and 48 jack salmon (immature males). The total catch is down from 2,137 salmon recorded in the 1999–2000 season. The number of marine angler trips in the sport salmon fishery is not available. In 2000–2001 96 sturgeon were caught.

Subsistence

Subsistence hunting, fishing, and gathering activities are fundamental to the way of life of some coastal community members. Tribal and nontribal individuals participate in subsistence fishing. Today members of the Chinook Tribe and other nontribal subsistence fishermen may obtain fishery resources from waters near Naselle, particularly from the Naselle River, nearby tributaries, and Willapa Bay; 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

Naselle residents owned 14 vessels that participated in North Pacific fisheries in 2000. Community members landed fish in the following North Pacific fisheries (data shown represent landings in metric tons/value of said landings/number of vessels landing): other finfish confidential/confidential/1, herring confidential/confidential/1, Gulf of Alaska (GOA) groundfish confidential/confidential/1, halibut confidential/confidential/1, herring 384.8 t/78,700/6, and salmon 243.8 t/\$372,24/7.

Naselle residents held 17 North Pacific permits, including 3 individuals who held federal permits and 10 individuals who held state permits (note: it is possible for individuals to hold more than one permit at a time). Naselle residents held two halibut, eight herring, and six salmon Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission permits. Naselle fishermen held 84,954 halibut and 0 sablefish individual fishing quota shares in 2000.

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

Sportfishing

Naselle residents purchased 15 Alaska sportfishing licenses in 2000.

Notes

1. University of Oregon. 2004. Chinook Tribes. University of Oregon, Dept. Linguistics, Eugene. Online at <http://logos.uoregon.edu/explore/oregon/chtribes.html> [accessed 31 January 2007].
2. Tacoma Public Library. 2004. Washington State place names index. Online at <http://search.tpl.lib.wa.us/wanames/placfull.d.asp?1-5157> [accessed 31 January 2007].
3. T. Paulu. 2002. From start to Finnish. The Daily News, Longview, WA. 20 July 2002. Online at <http://www.tdn.com/articles/2002/07/21/news-101790.txt> [accessed 31 January 2007].
4. See note 3.
5. Washington State Department of Revenue. 2004. Washington State business records database. Online at <http://dor.wa.gov/content/home/BRD/default.aspx> [accessed 31 January 2007].
6. U. S. Coast Guard. 2004. Station Cape Disappointment. Online at <http://www.uscg.mil/d13/units/gruastoria/cd.htm> [accessed 21 January 2007].
7. Naselle-Grays River Valley School District. 2004. Home page. Online at <http://www.naselle.wednet.edu/default.html> [accessed 31 January 2007].
8. P. Drake. 2004. Partnerships may save hatchery from closure. The Daily Astorian, Astoria, OR, 6 April 2004. Online at <http://www.dailyastorian.com/main.asp?SectionID=2&subsectionID=398&articleID=15071&Q=61945.96> [accessed 31 January 2007].

9. E. Apalategui. 2004. Lawmakers ensure one more year for hatchery. The Daily News, Longview, WA, 10 April 2004. Online at http://www.tdn.com/articles/2004/04/10/area_news/news03.txt [accessed 31 January 2007].

10. See note 8.

11. 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.

12. See note 11.

13. See note 11.