El Granada

People and Place

Location

El Granada is in San Mateo County about 26 miles south of San Francisco and 43 miles northwest of San Jose. This area of the coastline is comprised of many small communities including Montara, Moss Beach, Half Moon Bay, San Gregorio, and Pescadero. El Granada covers 5.39 square miles of land. Its geographic coordinates are lat 37°30′10″N, long 122°28′06″W.

Demographic Profile

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, El Granada’s population was 5,724, an increase of 29.3% from 1990. The gender composition was 49.5% female and 50.5% male. The median age was 38.3 and approximately 57.8% of the population were between the ages of 25 and 59. Of the population 18 years of age and older, 90.1% had a high school education or higher, 47% had a bachelor’s degree or higher, and 17% had a graduate or professional degree; the national averages were 79.7%, 22.3%, and 7.8% respectively.

The majority of the racial structure of El Granada was white (84.2%), followed by individuals who identified with some other race (6.8%), individuals who identified with two or more races (4.3%), Asian (2.8%), American Indian and Alaskan Native (1%), black (0.6%), and Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander (0.2%). Ethnicity data indicate 15.7% identified as Hispanic. Of the foreign-born population (15.8%), 47.1% were born in Mexico.

In 2000 87.2% of the population of El Granada lived in family households.

History

In 1769 Gaspar de Portola, a Spanish explorer, discovered San Francisco Bay while searching for Monterey Bay. More than 10,000 Indians lived in central California’s coastal areas between Big Sur and San Francisco Bay at the time of Portola’s arrival. The Indians consisted of approximately 40 tribal groups ranging in size from 100 to 250 members. When the Spanish arrived, they referred to the tribes collectively as “costenos,” meaning coastal people. The name was eventually changed to “Costanoan.” Native Americans in the San Francisco Bay area were referred to as Costanoans for years until descendents chose to call themselves Ohlones, meaning “the abalone people.”

1
The Ohlones were hunter-gatherers, taking advantage of rich natural resources in the area. They hunted large game animals including deer, elk, bear, whale, sea lion, otter, and seal. Freshwater and saltwater fish were important in the Ohlone diet, including steelhead, salmon, sturgeon, and lamprey. Shellfish were also important, including mussels, abalone, clams, oysters, and hornshell.

The Muwekma Ohlone Tribe is comprised of lineages aboriginal to the San Francisco Bay region who trace their ancestry through the Dolores, Santa Clara, and San Jose missions. The Muwekma Tribal Council organized between 1982 and 1984 and members are working for federal recognition.

During 23 years of Mexican rule, San Mateo County became the site of 17 large ranchos. Two years after the Mexicans were defeated in the Mexican American War, gold was discovered in the area in 1848 and the population of the San Francisco peninsula grew rapidly. Many influential persons purchased land in San Mateo County, building large mansions on old Mexican land grants. San Mateo County, which had been part of San Francisco County, was created in 1856.

El Granada, along with several other coastal communities in the area, was established between 1906 and 1909 during the real estate boom that followed construction of the Ocean Shore Railroad. The railroad planned El Granada as the “Jewel of the Coast,” a resort area to rival Atlantic City and Long Beach. Development plans were cut short when the railroad failed to reach El Granada, however, the town’s distinctive layout of radial and semicircular streets and divided landscaped boulevards gives the community a unique, distinctive style.

Located between the sea and the mountains, the area is known for its scenic beauty. Thousands of eucalyptus trees were planted on the hillside surrounding El Granada and today a large forest surrounds the town. Several late nineteenth century weekend cottages are being restored and the construction of new homes continues. For more information on the area see the Half Moon Bay, Princeton, and San Francisco community profiles.

**Infrastructure**

**Current Economy**

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, 75.5% of El Granada’s the potential labor force 16 years of age and older were employed, 1.9% were unemployed, and the unemployment rate was 2.4% (calculated by dividing the unemployed population by the labor force). In addition, 22.6% were not in the labor force, less than the national average of 36.1%. The primary employment sectors were management, professional, and related occupations (45.6%), sales and office occupations (22.1%), local, state, or federal government (15%), and service occupations (14%). Natural resource jobs including agriculture, forestry, fishing, hunting, and mining employed 1.1%, but this percentage may be artificially low because many fishermen are self-employed and are underrepresented in the data.

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, El Granada’s per capita income in 1999 was $38,832, the median household income was $91,719, and 3% lived below the poverty line. In 2000 El Granada had 2,097 housing units, of which 96.7% were occupied and 3.3% were vacant. Of the occupied units, 81% were by owner and 19% were by renter. Of the vacant units, 42% were due to seasonal, recreational, or occasional use.

**Governance**

El Granada is an unincorporated town defined by the U.S. Census as a Census Designated Place. Residents pay a 8.25% sales and use tax and visitors pay a 10% transient lodging tax. See the Governance subsection (page 43) in the Overview section for a more detailed discussion of taxes affecting fishermen and processors in California.

The National Marine Fisheries Service’s (NMFS) Southwest Fisheries Science Center has laboratories 64 miles south in Santa Cruz and there is a NMFS regional office 404 miles south in Long Beach. The California Department of Fish and Game has offices in Bodega Bay, Monterey, and Sacramento. A U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services office is 26 miles north in San Francisco. Meetings of the Pacific Fishery Management Council are held 18 miles northeast in Foster City. The U.S. Coast Guard Marine Safety Office San Francisco Bay, one of the largest and busiest marine safety units in the USCG, has jurisdiction over the El Granada area.
Facilities

El Granada is accessible by land, sea, and air. The major road connecting El Granada to neighboring cities is California Highway 1, also known as the Pacific Coast Highway, north to San Francisco and south to Santa Cruz. The San Francisco International Airport is located 30 miles north of El Granada. The San Mateo County Transit District provides SamTrans bus service throughout the county and into parts of San Francisco and Palo Alto.

There are one public and two private elementary/middle schools in El Granada. Two high schools are 4 miles south in Half Moon Bay. The College of San Mateo, with an enrollment of more than 5,000, is 16 miles east in San Mateo. The Coastside County Water District supplies water and the Granada Sanitary District provides wastewater services. Pacific Gas and Electric provides electricity. The San Mateo County’s Sheriff’s Office administers public safety. The closest hospital, St. Catherine’s, is 4 miles north in Moss Beach.

The nearest port facilities are half a mile northwest at Pillar Point, just outside of Princeton. Pillar Point is a working fishing harbor with 369 berths. The San Mateo County Harbor District also operates Oyster Point Marina in the city of South San Francisco, a 600-berth recreational boating marina. The Port of San Francisco is located 26 miles northeast of El Granada. El Granada has several marine organizations including the Half Moon Bay Fishermen’s Marketing Association, Coastside Fishing Club, and Save Our Shores.

The San Mateo County Harbor District supports the Alliance of Communities for Sustainable Fisheries, a recently formed group of fishermen from the four harbors that adjoin or lie within the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary: Monterey, Moss Landing, Pillar Point, and Santa Cruz. Pillar Point fishermen actively participate in alliance activities including hearings on the Marine Life Protection Act, Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council meetings, conferences, and other meetings regarding area fishing.

Involvement in West Coast Fisheries

Commercial Fishing

No landings were reported for El Granada, however, landings for the nearby communities of Half Moon Bay and Princeton were in the following West Coast fisheries (data shown represents landings in metric tons/value of landings/number of vessels landing): coastal pelagic 319 t/$53,582/30; crab 165 t/$879,522/72; groundfish 699 t/$766,728/89; highly migratory species 16.3 t/$36,204/22; salmon 350 t/$1,465,453/231; shrimp confidential/confidential/2; and other species 52 t/$276,978/57.

El Granada residents owned 25 vessels in 2000 that participated in West Coast fisheries, of which 17 participated in the federally managed groundfish fishery. The number of vessels owned by El Granada residents that participated in each fishery by state (WA/OR/CA) was: coastal pelagic 0/0/1, crab 0/0/13, groundfish 0/0/NA, highly migratory species NA/0/NA, salmon 0/0/23, shellfish NA/0/NA, and other species 0/0/1.7

Five El Granada residents held four federal groundfish fishery permits in 2000. The number of El Granada residents holding permits in each fishery by state (WA/OR/CA) was: coastal pelagic 0/08/2, crab 0/0/14, groundfish 0/0/18, highly migratory species NA/0/0, salmon 0/0/44, shellfish 0/0/NA, shrimp 0/0/3, and other species 0/0/12.8

In 2000 El Granada residents held 164 registered state and federal permits. The number of permits held by these community members in each fishery by state (WA/OR/CA) was: coastal pelagic 0/0/20, crab 0/0/15, groundfish 0/0/22, highly migratory species NA/0/0, salmon 0/0/75, shellfish 0/0/NA, shrimp 0/0/11, and other species 0/0/17.9

Fieldwork indicates the fishing industry in El Granada has changed considerably over the years. Despite changes due to federal regulations, rising fuel costs, and restricted Klamath River salmon runs, among others, local fishermen have adapted and remain active. In 2000 the processor Morning Star, located at Romeo’s Pier, began operating a hoist formerly leased by H&N, a Vietnamese company. Although the number of Vietnamese working as fishermen in the area has declined, fieldwork indicates a handful of boats remain. Other local fishermen lease fish hoists in El Granada, working closely with local seafood companies. Three seafood processors operated in El Granada in 2000: Exclusive Freshness, Pemberton Fish, and Three Captain’s Sea Products. The number of individuals employed by the processors is confidential. In 2000 the top three processed products, in terms of tonnage and dollars, were Chinook salmon, Dungeness crab, and sablefish.

Sportfishing

El Granada has two sportfishing license agents. Two Commercial Passenger Fishing Vessels were licensed in El Granada in 2002 and 2003. Internet resources indicate at least three sportfishing businesses in El Granada: Riptide Sportfishing, Huck Finn, and Huli Cat Sport Fishing, all offering sportfishing, ecotourism, and specialty trips.
Subsistence

Specific information on subsistence fishing in El Granada is not discussed due to the lack of available data. The California Department of Fish and Game uses the term “recreational” for fishermen who do not earn revenue from their catch, but fish for pleasure or to provide food for personal consumption. Information on subsistence fishing is captured to some degree in the sportfishing data.

Involvement in North Pacific Fisheries

Commercial Fishing

In 2000 one El Granada resident held a single registered Bering Sea Aleutian Island Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission permit.

Sportfishing

El Granada residents purchased 10 Alaska sportfishing licenses in 2000.

Notes

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.