

Fields Landing

People and Place

Location

Fields Landing is an unincorporated community in northern California's Humboldt County. The community is on Humboldt Bay south of Redwood National Park. The closest major city is San Francisco, 265.7 miles south. The geographic coordinates of Fields Landing are lat 40°43'28"N, long 124°12'54"W.

Demographic Profile

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, Fields Landing had a population of 213. The gender composition was 46.9% female and 53.1% male. The median age was 29.8, compared to the national average of 35.3. Of the population 18 years of age and older, 78% had a high school education or higher, 10% had a bachelor's degree, and no one had a graduate or professional degree. The national averages were 79.7%, 22.3%, and 7.8% respectively. A high school education was the highest attainment for 50% of the population.

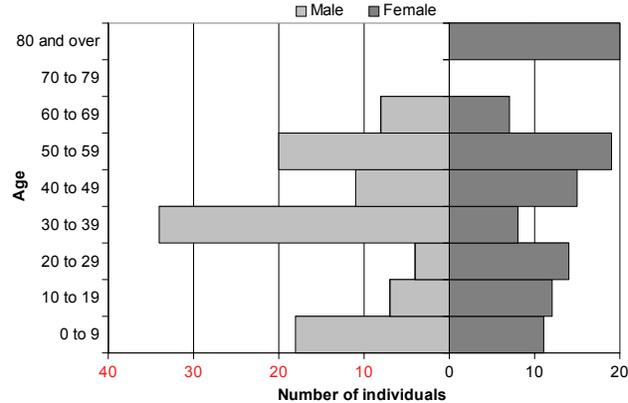
The majority of the racial composition was white (83.1%), followed by individuals who identified with some other race (4.7%), Native American and Alaska Native (4.2%), individuals who identified with two or more races (4.2%), Asian (2.3%), black (0.9%), and Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander (0.5%). Ethnicity data indicate 15% identified as Hispanic. No residents were foreign-born.

History

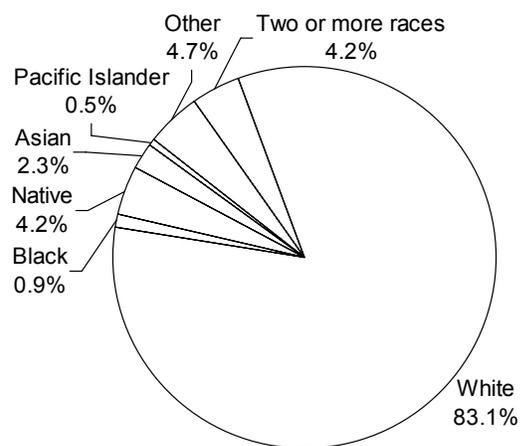
Before the arrival of Euro-American settlers, the area now known as Humboldt County was occupied by several diverse nations. The Wiyot, Yurok, Hupa, Karuk, Chilula, Whilkut, and southern Athabascans occupied specific territories, spoke individual languages, and shared similar, yet distinct cultural systems.¹ Fields Landing is within the original territory of the Wiyot. The Wiyot used local resources for food, medicine, and basketry, including salmon, wildlife, and roots. Across the Humboldt Bay is Indian Island, "the center of the Wiyot People's world" and home of the ancient village of Tuluwat.² Beneath the village site is a large clamshell midden that covers more than 6 acres and is estimated to be 1,000 years old. Today many of the Wiyot people live on 88 acres called the Table Bluff Reservation, 10 miles south of Fields Landing.

The first recorded entrance into Humboldt Bay was in 1806 by employees of the Russian-American

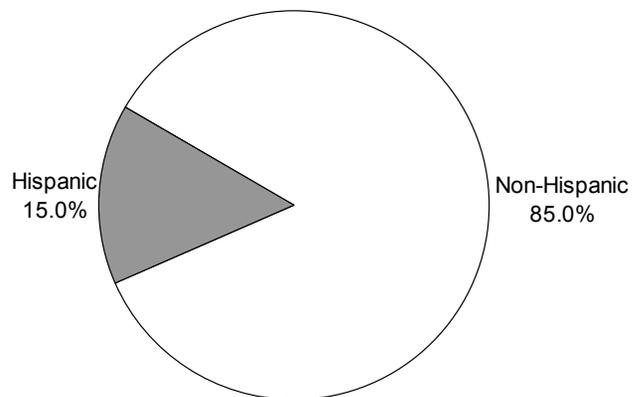
2000 Population structure



2000 Racial structure



2000 Hispanic ethnicity



Company of Sitka, Alaska. The Gregg-Wood party arrived by land in 1849 and by 1850 the first ships arrived bringing prospectors looking for gold. As the gold rush subsided, the economy shifted to natural resources, primarily timber, salmon, and agriculture. The area was a prime exporter of agricultural products from 1857 to 1900.³

Development led to the displacement of the Wiyot and increased tension between groups. During the 1860 World Renewal Ceremony on Indian Island, a group of six armed settlers paddled to the island during the night and killed the sleeping Wiyot. Two other village sites were raided that same night. The few remaining Wiyot people were moved to Fort Humboldt for their protection and from there to a series of reservations. The fort was built in 1853 to assist in resolving conflicts between Indians and settlers. An Indian Candlelight Vigil is held each February to remember the 200 lives lost in the massacre.⁴

In the 1880s, docks were built at Fields Landing for shipping redwood and other timber. When the Northwestern Pacific Railroad was extended into the bay area in 1900, the elevated railway bed functioned as a dike and enabled the conversion of tidal marshes to agricultural lands. The construction of U.S. Highway 101 in 1927 also created more fill, allowing most of the marshes to be drained and diked.⁵

After World War II, a new Douglas fir and plywood industry brought in many loggers and mill workers. From the 1940s to 1951, the last active whaling station on the U.S. Pacific coast operated out of Fields Landing.⁶ The timber industry continued to dominate life in the community into the 1970s. The next era paved the way for a more diverse economy. New groups of people began to arrive, namely Hispanics and Vietnamese.⁷

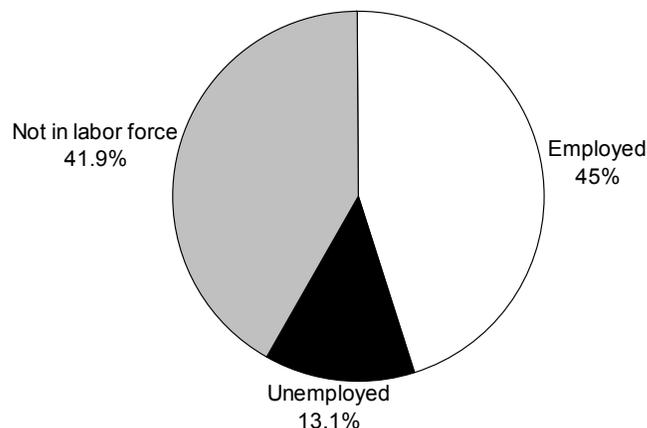
Humboldt Bay is one of the largest bays on the West Coast. Diking, drainage, and filling reduced the historic 27,000 acres of bay and wetlands to around 13,000 acres. The bay includes a variety of complex habitats that support 95 species of fish, at least 180 species of invertebrates, and 30 species of clams, oysters, and mussels. The economic health of Fields Landing continues to be “tied to the bay, the resources it provides, and the natural resources around it.”⁸

Infrastructure

Current Economy

According to the U.S. Census, 45% of the potential labor force 16 years of age and older in Fields Landing were employed, 13.1% were unemployed, and the unemployment rate was 22.6% (calculated by dividing the unemployed population by the labor force). In

2000 Employment structure



addition, 41.9% were not in the labor force. The primary employment sectors were local, state, or federal government (9.9%), education, health, and social services (8%), and arts, entertainment, recreation, and accommodation and food services (7%). No one was employed in natural resource jobs including agriculture, forestry, and fishing, but this may be inaccurate because many fishermen are self-employed and are underrepresented in these data.

The economic base of Fields Landing was founded on fishing and timber. Commercial fishing has experienced a downsizing in recent years and today the major industries are tourism and timber.⁹ One of the main employers is Humboldt Bay Forest Products, which owns one of the two shipping terminals in Fields Landing.

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, the per capita income of Fields Landing in 1999 was \$14,198, the median household income was \$35,313, and 24.5% lived below poverty level. In 2000 there were 95 housing units in Fields Landing, of which 89.5% were occupied and 10.5% were vacant. Of the occupied units, 40% were by owner and 60% were by renter.

Governance

Fields Landing is an unincorporated, noncensus designated place. The sales tax is 7.25% based on the standard statewide rate, and the county levies 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.

Fields Landing is 338.7 miles north of the National Marine Fisheries Service’s Southwest Fisheries Science Center in Santa Cruz. The community houses a U.S. Coast Guard Station in Humboldt Bay and is 6.7 miles from the closest California Department of Fish and Game

field office. Fields Landing is 265.7 miles from the nearest U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services Center in San Francisco. Pacific Fishery Management Council meetings are held in Foster City, 287.2 miles from Fields Landing. The nearest North Pacific Fishery Management Council meetings are held 420.3 miles away in Portland, Oregon.

Facilities

Fields Landing has a number of transportation options. Amtrak and Greyhound provide rail and bus service respectively. The nearest major airport is San Francisco International Airport. U.S. Highway 101 intersects Fields Landing.

Students attend local elementary, middle, and high schools in nearby Eureka. Pacific Gas and Electric provides electricity and Cal-American Water Company provides water and wastewater services. The Humboldt County Sheriff Department provides local law enforcement. The closest health care facility, St. Joseph Hospital, is in Eureka. Fields Landing accommodations include one motel. Additional lodging is available in nearby communities.

Fields Landing is within the Humboldt Bay Harbor, Recreation and Conservation District and the Port of Humboldt. Two shipping terminals are based in Fields Landing. Humboldt Bay Forest Products has one berth with a 600-foot wooden dock and two approach ramps. Fields Landing Terminal has one berth with a 900-foot dock.¹⁰

Involvement in West Coast Fisheries

Commercial Fishing

In 2000 all 42 vessels that delivered landings to Fields Landing were commercially registered. The community had at least one processor plant in 2000. Landings were in the following West Coast fisheries (data shown represents landings in metric tons/value of landings/number of vessels landing): coastal pelagic confidential/confidential/1; crab 41 t/\$182,619/18; groundfish 1,632 t/\$1,587,756/21; highly migratory species 4 t/\$5,916/4; salmon 1 t/\$2,970/6; shrimp confidential/confidential/2; and other species 5 t/\$6,024/7.

Fields Landing residents owned eight vessels in 2000, all of which participated in the federally managed groundfish fishery. The number of vessels owned by Fields Landing residents that participated in each fishery by state (WA/OR/CA) was: crab 0/0/2, groundfish 0/0/NA, highly migratory species NA/0/NA, shellfish NA/0/NA, and shrimp NA/0/1.¹¹

Three residents held seven federal groundfish fishery permits in 2000. The number of community members holding permits in each fishery by state (WA/OR/CA) was: crab 0/0/2, highly migratory species NA/0/0, shellfish 0/0/NA, and shrimp 0/0/1.¹²

Ten permits were registered to Fields Landing residents in 2000, of which three were registered state permits. Recorded data indicates that the number of permits in each fishery by state (WA/OR/CA) was: crab 0/0/2, highly migratory species NA/0/0, shellfish 0/0/NA, and shrimp 0/0/1.¹³

Sportfishing

Available sources did not provide current or 2000 data on West Coast sportfishing for Fields Landing.

Subsistence

The California Department of Fish and Game captures data on fishermen who do not earn revenue from fishing, but use it for personal consumption under their “recreational” data. Information on subsistence fishing in Fields Landing is not discussed in detail due to the lack of available data. Many local residents, including members of the Wiyot Tribe, engage in subsistence fishing. Under the trust doctrine, the federal government is charged to protect tribal resources and by constitutional mandate to protect natural resources.

Involvement in North Pacific Fisheries

Commercial Fishing

Fields Landing residents did not participate in North Pacific fisheries in 2000.

Sportfishing

One Fields Landing resident purchased an Alaska sportfishing license in 2000.

Notes

1. S. Van Kirk. 1999. Humboldt County: A briefest of histories. Online at <http://www.humboldthistory.org/> [accessed 15 February 2007].

2. Wiyot Tribe. No date. History and culture: Indian Island. Online at <http://www.wiyot.com/history.htm> [accessed 15 February 2007].

3. Natural Resources Services. 2001. Humboldt Bay trails feasibility study: Setting. Online at <http://www.rcaa.org/baytrails/pdfs/Chapter02.pdf> [accessed 15 February 2007].

4. See note 2.

5. See note 3.

6. California Department of Fish and Game. No date. No title. Online at http://www.dfg.ca.gov/mrd/mambk_a.pdf [accessed 15 February 2007].

7. See note 1.

8. See note 3.

9. Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission. 2004.

California state counties. Online at http://www.psmfc.org/efin/docs/communities_2004/communities_pages65_84.pdf [accessed 15 February 2007].

10. Humboldt Bay Harbor. Recreation and Conservation District. No date. Port of Humboldt Bay: Shipping terminals. Online at <http://www.humboldtby.org/portofhumboltdbay/terminals/> [accessed 15 February 2007].

11. NA refers to data that were not available, for example, due to few recorded permit numbers or the partially permitted nature of a fishery in 2000.

12. See note 11.

13. See note 11.