

# Brookings

## People and Place

### Location

Brookings, located in Curry County, is the southernmost coastal city of Oregon. It is situated at the mouth of the Chetco River, and encompasses 2.8 square miles of land and 0.03 square miles of water. It is approximately 345 miles south southeast of Portland. Brookings' geographic coordinates are lat 42°03'10"N and long 124°16'58"W.

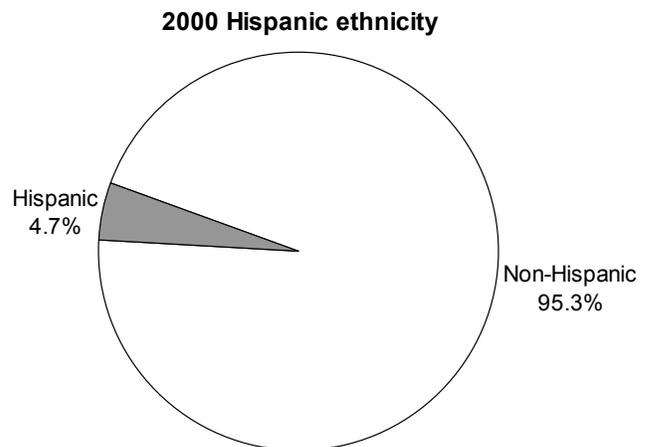
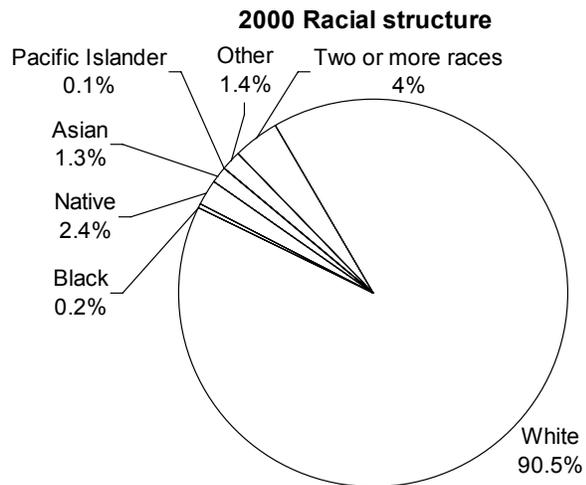
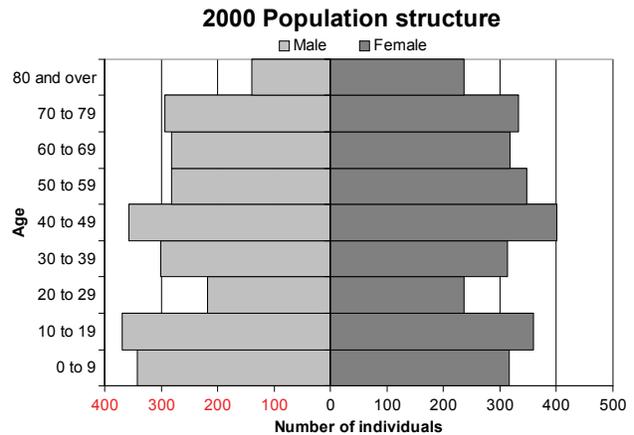
### Demographic Profile

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, Brookings' population was 5,447, an increase of 23.8% from the 1990 census. The gender composition was 52.5% female and 47.5% male. The median age was 43.1, higher than the national median age of 35.3. The census reported 29.5% of the population was under the age of 25, compared to the national average of 35.3%, and the 55 and older age group represented 34.8% of the population, while the national average was 21.1%. Of the population 18 years of age and older, 83.3% had a high school degree or higher, 15.7% had a bachelor's degree or higher, and 5% had a graduate degree or higher; the national averages were 79.7%, 22.3%, and 7.8% respectively.

The majority of Brookings' racial structure was white (90.5%), followed by people who identified with two or more races (4%), Native American (2.4%), people who identified with another race (1.4%), Asian (1.3%), black (0.2%), and Pacific Islander (0.1%). Ethnicity data indicate 4.7% identified as Hispanic. The ethnic composition of the community changed between 1990 and 2000, with a 193% increase in people who identified themselves as Hispanic. In 2000 3.7% were foreign-born, of which 22.9% were from Mexico and 21.9% were from Canada.

### History

The earliest known inhabitants of the Brookings-Harbor area were members of the Chetco Indian Tribe, an Athapascan linguistic group who lived along the Chetco River and lower Winchuck River northward to Cape Ferrelo. Evidence suggests the tribe's predecessors may have come to western Oregon between 1,000 and 3,000 years ago. During the late 1800s the Chetco were probably the most numerous of the 12 coastal tribes, but the population suffered severe declines following contact with Euro-American settlers.<sup>1</sup>



The Chetco Tribe utilized resources from its natural environment. Cooking was done by roasting before the fire or in pots made airtight with grass and heated with hot stones. Fish, acorns, and elk and deer meat were principal food sources. Most marine resources, principally fish and mussels, were likely gathered in relatively close proximity to the coast as their boats were shallow, hollowed-out logs, and apparently awkward to manage on the open ocean. Presumably, at the time of contact, cultural similarities were strong between the Chetco and their neighbors to the south, the Tolowa, who shared the same customs regulating social relationships and frequently intermarried.<sup>2</sup>

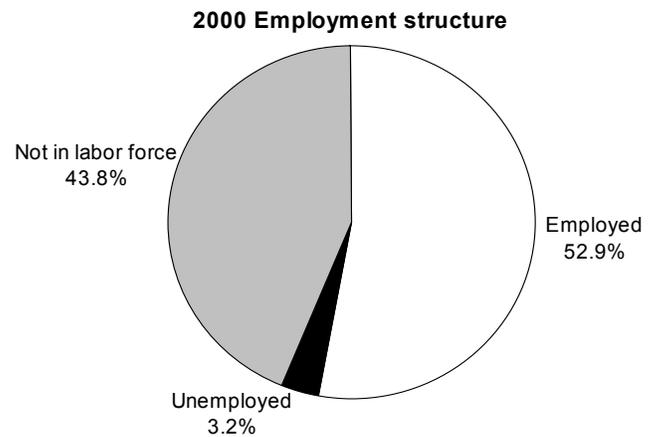
Euro-American settlers became interested in the region in the mid-1800s when explorers discovered gold and other precious metals in the rivers and along the coastlines of what became Curry County. Initially settlement was concentrated along the coasts and transport was limited to the waterways. Slow development of inland transportation routes kept the county relatively isolated well into the twentieth century. While there is still some mining of cobalt, nickel, and chromium in the Gasaquet Mountain area, the economy has largely reoriented to agriculture and timber as well as fishing.<sup>3</sup>

John Brookings, a cousin of Robert Brookings of the Brookings Institute, founded the original, industrially oriented town of Brookings when he relocated his lumber business from the San Bernardino Mountains of Southern California to the area in the early 1850s. The town was architecturally designed, which accounts for the present layout of what is now the city's core. The community incorporated in 1951 and is now the largest city in Curry County. Due to its favorable climate, beautiful coastline, and quality of life, the city has become attractive to retirees.<sup>4</sup> Tourism in the area is also growing. Yearly festivals and events include the 10k Salmon Run, Chetco Village Chowder Cook-off, Seafood Luncheon, Silver Salmon Golf Tournament, and the Fall Harvest Festival. The Southern Oregon Kite Festival & Regatta includes the Parade of the Fleet and the Annual Regatta and Yacht Races.

## Infrastructure

### Current Economy

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, 52.9% of the labor force 16 years and older were employed, 3.2% were unemployed, and the unemployment rate was 5.8% (calculated by dividing the unemployed population by the labor force). In addition, 43.8% were not in the labor force. The largest employment sectors were government (21%), retail trade (17.3%), and educational, health, and



social services (14.1%). Natural resource jobs including agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting industries employed 5%, but this percentage may be artificially low because many fishermen are self-employed and are underrepresented in the data.

The major industries in Brookings are recreation and tourism, fishing, and lumber. The four largest employers are South Coast Lumber Co., Freeman Rock Enterprises, Inc., Elenwood Cabinets, and Dick & Casey's Gourmet Seafood.<sup>5</sup>

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, the per capita income was \$17,010 and the median household income was \$31,656. In 1999 11.5% of the population lived below the poverty level. In 2000 there were 2,614 housing units in Brookings, of which 88.3% were occupied and 11.7% were vacant. Of the occupied units, 56.9% were by owner and 43.1% were by renter. Nearly 40% of the vacant units were for seasonal, recreational, or occasional use.

### Governance

Brookings is an incorporated city that operates under a council-manager charter. The State of Oregon has no general sales tax. An overnight lodging tax of 1% is levied that funds the Oregon Tourism Commission. See the Governance subsection (page 43) in the Overview section for a more detailed discussion of the taxes affecting fishermen and processors in Oregon.

The nearest National Marine Fisheries Service research station is in Newport, 205.1 miles from Brookings. The nearest Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) field office is in Gold Beach, 28.2 miles away. The U.S. Coast Guard Station Chetco River is located on Port of Brookings Harbor property and operates a pair of 47-foot motor lifeboats.<sup>6</sup> The community is 344.5 miles from the closest U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services Office in Portland.

Meetings of the Pacific Fishery Management and North Pacific Fishery Management councils are held in Portland.

## Facilities

Brookings is accessible by land, sea, and air. U.S. Highway 101 connects Brookings to Harbor and Gold Beach, and to Crescent City, California. Curry Public Transit connects Brookings to Bandon, Crescent City, Gold Beach, Port Orford, Coos Bay, and North Bend. Greyhound provides bus service to nearby communities and metropolitan areas. The local Brookings Airport serves small planes. The community is 357.6 miles from the Portland International Airport.

The Harbor and Brookings School districts consolidated in 1950. Local schools include two elementary schools, a middle school, and a high school. The Coos-Curry Electric Cooperative provides electricity. The City of Brookings supplies water and sewer services and its Police Department administers local law enforcement. The Sutter Coast Hospital is located nearby in Crescent City.

The Port of Brookings Harbor was created in 1956 and is classified as a shallow-draft harbor. It covers an area of 400 square miles and represents more than 75 percent of the population base for Curry County.<sup>7</sup> According to the port, it is the busiest recreational port on the Oregon coast with more than 95,000 anglers taking more than 31,000 trips. It is also one of the most active Chinook salmon harbors. The port receives more than 5,000 commercial fishing vessels annually.

The port operates its own wireless telecommunications corporation and its own re-lending fund. Additionally, it is one of only two ports in Oregon to have a license to perform its own construction and maintenance. The port manages a 9,300 square-foot retail center, leases space to 34 businesses, and plans an additional 13,000 square feet of commercial space.<sup>8</sup> Facilities include a full-service marina, six-lane launch ramp, 671 slips, two transient docks, fueling facility, launch services, and a full-service boat yard with a heavy lift. The recently constructed marina includes two basins; Basin One is primarily for recreational fishing, while Basin Two supports the commercial fishing industry.<sup>9</sup> The nearest ODFW fish hatchery is the Elk River Hatchery, north of Brookings along the Elk River in Port Orford. Organizations involved in fisheries-related activities include the Brookings Harbor Commercial Fishermen's Wives Association and Oregon South Coast Fishermen.

## Involvement in West Coast Fisheries

### Commercial Fishing

Brookings had at least one processor plant in 2000.

In 2000 all 112 vessels that delivered landings to Brookings were commercially registered. Landings in 2000 were in the following West Coast fisheries (data shown represents landings in metric tons/value of said landings/number of vessels landing): crab 472 t/\$2,026,095/49; groundfish 1,144 t/\$1,456,019/70; highly migratory species 34 t/\$78,570/11; salmon 106 t/\$384,599/71; shrimp 748 t/\$507,617/29; and other species 2 t/\$6,160/18.

Brookings residents owned 80 vessels in 2000, of which 6 participated in the Groundfish Vessel Buyback Program. Community members owned 42 vessels that participated in the federally managed groundfish fishery. According to recorded data the number of vessels owned by Brookings residents in 2000 that participated in each said fishery by state (WA/OR/CA) was: crab 0/35/23, groundfish 0/2/NA, highly migratory species NA/0/NA, salmon 0/54/23, shellfish NA/2/NA, and shrimp NA/11/8.<sup>10</sup>

Eleven Brookings residents held 13 groundfish fishery permits in 2000. Recorded data indicates the number of individual community members holding permits in each fishery by state (WA/OR/CA) was: crab 0/30/24, groundfish 0/2/4, highly migratory species NA/0/12, other species 1/1/1, salmon 0/45/35, shellfish 0/2/NA, and shrimp 3/7/17.<sup>11</sup>

According to available data, 288 permits were registered to Brookings residents in 2000, of which 275 were registered state permits. The number of permits held by community members in each fishery by state (WA/OR/CA) was: crab 0/69/26, groundfish 0/2/5, highly migratory species NA/0/12, salmon 0/50/60, shellfish 0/2/NA, shrimp 3/17/22, and other species 1/5/1.<sup>12</sup>

### Sportfishing

In 2003 Brookings had at least 16 outfitter guide businesses and 7 licensed charter vessel businesses. In the same year four licensed charter vessel businesses from Gold Beach (2), Tualatin (1), and Harbor (1) used Brookings as their homeport. Internet fishing guide sources indicate at least 12 sportfishing businesses are currently operating in the community.

Eight sportfishing license vendors sold 2,372 licenses in 2000 at a value of \$38,671. The 2000 recreational salmonid catch in the Ocean Boat Fishery was 11,744 Chinook and 61 coho salmon. The recreational nonsalmonid catch in this fishery was 100,560 fish. The top species landed include black

rockfish, blue rockfish, canary rockfish, lingcod, kelp greenling, and cabezon.

## 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 around Brookings. The federal government is charged under trust doctrine to protect tribal resources and by constitutional mandate to protect natural resources. Specific information on subsistence fishing in Brookings is not discussed in detail in this community profile due to the lack of available data.

## Involvement in North Pacific Fisheries

### Commercial Fishing

Brookings residents owned eight vessels in 2000 involved in North Pacific fisheries. In the same year Brookings residents landed fish in the following North Pacific fisheries (data shown represents landings in metric tons/value of landings/number of vessels landing): Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands (BSAI) groundfish confidential/confidential/1, Gulf of Alaska groundfish confidential/confidential/2, and halibut confidential/confidential/1.

In 2000 three Brookings residents held registered state permits and six held registered federal permits. A total of 11 permits were registered to individuals in Brookings. Community members held 1 crab and 4 groundfish License Limitation Program permits, and 1 halibut and 3 BSAI groundfish Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission permits. The halibut and sablefish individual fishing quota shares for people residing in the community were 797,393 and 1,192,743 respectively. Five community members held crew member licenses for North Pacific fisheries in 2000.

### Sportfishing

Brookings had three Alaskan sportfishing guide businesses in 2000. Residents purchased 51 sportfishing licenses for Alaskan fisheries.

## Notes

1. Curry Coastal Pilot. 2004. First residents were the Chetco. Online at [http://www.currypilot.com/news/story.cfm?story\\_no=1495](http://www.currypilot.com/news/story.cfm?story_no=1495) [accessed 9 January 2007].

2. See note 1.

3. Brookings-Harbor Oregon. 2004. Curry County history. Online at <http://arcweb.sos.state.or.us/county/cpcurryhome.html> [accessed 9 January 2007].

4. The City of Brookings, Oregon. 2004. Brookings' history. Online at <http://www.brookings.or.us/About%20Brookings/history.htm> [accessed 9 January 2007].

5. Oregon Economic & Community Development Department. 2004. Newport community profile. Online at <http://info.econ.state.or.us:591/FMPro?-db=Community.fp4&-Format=forms.htm&-lay=webpage&-op=eq&sort%20name=Brookings&-script=hit%20count&-Find> [accessed 9 January 2007].

6. Port of Brookings Harbor. 2003. Fishing: commercial. Online at [http://www.port-brookings-harbor.org/fishing\\_commercial.html](http://www.port-brookings-harbor.org/fishing_commercial.html) [accessed 9 January 2007].

7. Port of Brookings Harbor. 2003. About the port. Online at <http://www.port-brookings-harbor.org/?nav=about> [accessed 17 January 2007].

8. See note 7.

9. Port of Brookings Harbor. 2003. Fishing: recreational. Online at [http://www.port-brookings-harbor.org/fishing\\_recreational.html](http://www.port-brookings-harbor.org/fishing_recreational.html) [accessed 9 January 2007].

10. 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.

11. See note 10.

12. See note 10.