

Neah Bay

People and Place

Location

Neah Bay is at the northwestern-most point of the contiguous United States, across the Strait of Juan de Fuca from Vancouver Island, British Columbia. Situated in Clallam County, Neah Bay is the main settlement on the Makah Indian Reservation. The nearest major U.S. city is Seattle, a 165-mile drive and ferry ride southeast. Neah Bay's geographic coordinates are lat 48°22'06"N, long 124°37'25"W.

Demographic Profile

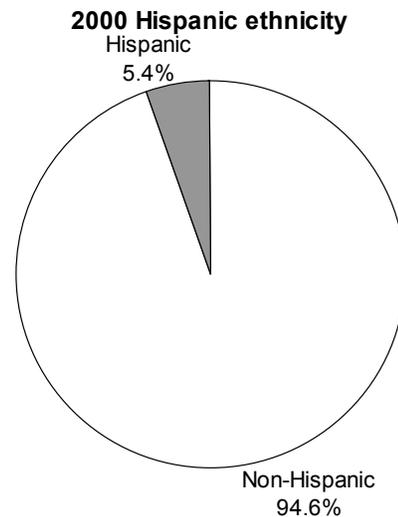
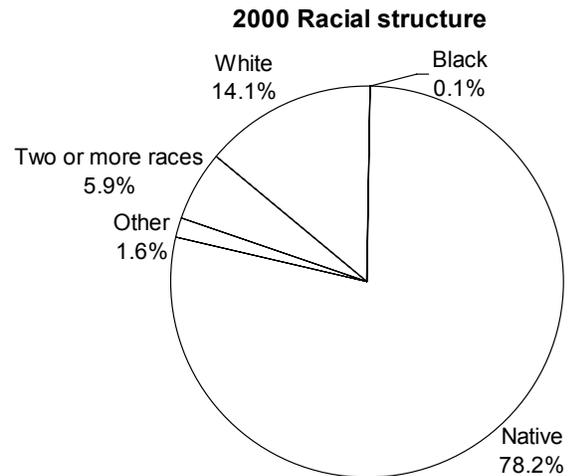
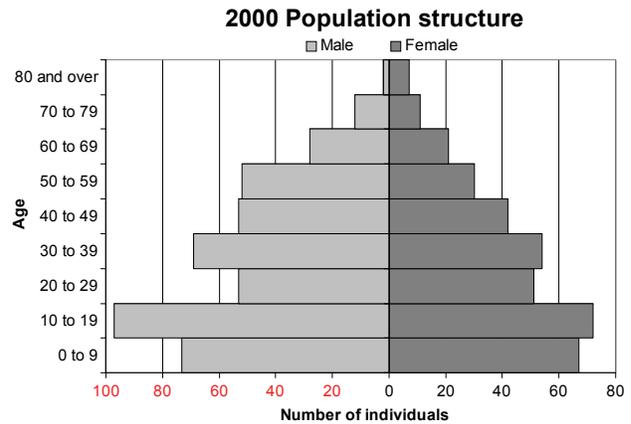
According to the 2000 U.S. Census, Neah Bay's population was 794, a 13.3% decrease from 916 in 1990. The gender composition was 55.3% male and 44.7% female. The median age of 28.9 was considerably lower than the national median age of 35.3. Of the population age 18 years of age and older, 77.8% had a high school education (including equivalency or higher), 7.1% had received a bachelor's degree or higher, and 1.8% had attained a graduate or professional degree. These figures are lower than the national averages of 79.7%, 22.3%, and 7.8% respectively.

The vast majority of the Neah Bay's racial structure recorded by the 2000 U.S. Census was American Indian and Alaska Native (78.2%), followed by white (14.1%), people who identified with two or more races (5.9%), people who identified with another race (1.6%), and black (0.1%). Ethnicity data indicate that 5.4% identified as Hispanic. In 2000 0.8% were foreign, with 67% from Canada.

According to the Makah Tribe, tribal enrollment was about 2,300 in 2000 and 70% of enrolled members lived on the reservation. Not all reservation residents live in the settlement at Neah Bay.

History

The Makah Tribe had an estimated precontact population of about 2,000–4,000^{1,2} and inhabited five winter villages as well as many summer villages next to the Pacific Ocean and the Strait of Juan de Fuca. The Makah are most closely related to the Nuu-chah-nulth bands on the western side of Vancouver Island, with whom the tribe continues to share cultural, linguistic, and genealogical affinities. The tribe heavily utilizes marine resources, with whales (gray, humpback, and others), seals (especially fur seals prior to 1900, and harbor seals



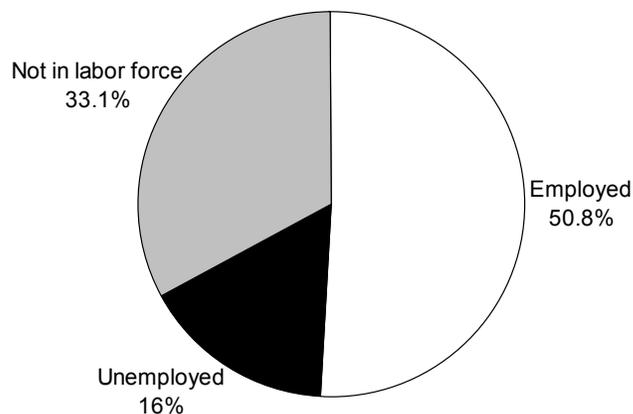
more recently), and marine fish such as halibut serving as staple foods.

Originally the tribe lived in five permanent villages: Diah't and Ba'adah along the Strait of Juan de Fuca, and Wa'atch, Tsooyes, and Ozette on the Pacific Ocean side.³ The first recorded contact with European explorers from the Spanish sailing vessel *Princesa Real* occurred in 1790, although there may have been contacts in 1775 and earlier. This was followed by a short-lived Spanish fort in Neah Bay (Nuñez Gaona) and years of regional struggle for power between Spanish, British, Russian, and later, American forces. The Makah Tribe is party to the 1855 Treaty of Neah Bay with the United States, which guarantees its right to continue hunting whale and seals, as well as to continue fishing and collecting shellfish at all "usual and accustomed grounds."⁴

Smallpox epidemics decimated the population in the 1800s, with only 654 Makahs surviving in 1861. In the late 1800s Makahs were extensively involved as crew in commercial fur seal hunting in Alaska, and later as boat owner/operators. This trade was very lucrative and kept many in the reservation population in excellent economic circumstances until they were prohibited from participating in the hunt at the turn of the century.⁵ Consolidation of the five traditional villages was forced in the early 1900s, when children were required to attend the school at Neah Bay, even if their parents lived in the other villages. The first road to Neah Bay was constructed in the 1930s, connecting the settlement, by a winding coastal highway subject to frequent landslides and washouts, with the major population and commercial centers of the Olympic Peninsula, including Port Angeles, a logging town 70 miles east. During World War II battle mounts were built into the ocean-facing cliffs west of Neah Bay. An Air Force Base (now closed) and U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) station brought many military personnel to the reservation. In 1997 a harbor breakwater and moorage facility was completed, protecting the local fishing fleet from powerful winter storms for the first time.

Whaling is an ancient tradition, with evidence from the archaeological site of Ozette village dating as far back as 2,000 years before the present, with whales consistently comprising the largest single category of resource remains over that time period. Although guaranteed by the 1855 treaty, whaling was halted in the 1920s because of a series of external factors including an attempt at acculturation of the Makah by the U.S. government, death of tribal members due to epidemics and subsequent loss of traditional knowledge, and a decline in the population of the whales due to commercial whaling by non-Indians.⁶ In 1995 following the removal of the eastern North Pacific gray whale from

2000 Employment structure



the list of endangered species, the Makah Tribe began preparations to resume ceremonial and subsistence whaling. The Makah successfully took a single gray whale in May 1999, under a tremendous amount of attention from the media and pressure from antiwhaling activists. Whether another whale is taken will depend on the final outcome of litigation, international negotiation, and public policy processes.

Unlike many other tribes in the United States, the Makah Tribe still holds title to a substantial portion of its ancestral land base, engendering "a high degree of continuity in both place-oriented identity and subsistence practice."⁷ Marine resources continue to be fundamental to the Makah. A recent tabulation in a 2001 Makah Tribal Council report indicated that "as many as 70 percent of the Makah Tribal population depends on fishing for its income or subsistence."⁸

Infrastructure

Current Economy

At the time of the 2000 U.S. Census, 50.8% of Neah Bay's potential labor force 16 years of age and older were employed, 16% were unemployed, and the unemployment rate was 24% (calculated by dividing the unemployed population by the labor force). Chronic widespread unemployment and underemployment have characterized the village for years, with the tribe estimating it to be above 50% most of the time. In addition, 33.1% were not in the labor force, compared to the national average of 36.1%. The major employment sectors were local, state, and federal governments (60.4%), public administration (34.8%), educational, health, and social services (21.2%), and arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation, and food services (8.1%). Natural resource jobs including agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting employed 17.9%, but this percentage may be artificially low given

that many fishermen are self-employed and are underrepresented in these data.

On the Makah Reservation, most of the full-time employment opportunities are with the Makah Tribal Council, which had 170 employees in 2001. Additional employment is available at the Indian Health Service Dental and Medical Clinic (22 employees) and with local businesses. A large percentage of the reservation population engages in seasonal employment, with as many as 300 people employed in commercial fisheries. Individuals also are engaged in timber harvesting, which is managed by the Makah Forestry Enterprise. Employment for a few residents is available off the reservation at the state prison in Clallam Bay.⁹

The per capita income in 1999 was \$11,338 and the median household income was \$21,635. In 1999 29.9% lived below the poverty level. In 2000 there were 322 housing units in Neah Bay, with 70.9% owner occupied and 29.1% renter occupied. The housing unit vacancy rate was 12.4%.

Governance

Neah Bay and the entire Makah Indian Reservation is governed by the Makah Tribal Council (MTC). Neah Bay has no separate incorporation or status. The MTC consists of five members who are elected at the Makah General Council by all voting tribal members. The chair is elected by the MTC. The Makah Tribe is a self-governing tribe under a program initiated by the Bureau of Indian Affairs in 1988, which gives greater power and autonomy to tribal governments. The MTC determines tribal policy and supplies the general manager, who subsequently watches over the enforcement of tribal policy, with direction. The tribal government is made up of five departments: Natural Resources, Administrative Service, Planning, Public Safety, and Social, Health, and Education. "A high degree of control over physical and economic development on the reservation" is maintained by the MTC, with many enterprises chartered by the MTC including the Makah Forestry Enterprises, the Neah Bay Port Authority, the Makah Housing Authority, and the Makah Cultural and Research Center; and with quasi-enterprises that are a part of the MTC including Makah Fuel, Makah Bingo, Makah Marina, Makah Smoke Shop, and Bay's Best Lodging.¹⁰

Treaty fish and shellfish taken by tribal members are not subject to state sales or use taxes, regardless of where the sale takes place. The tribe requires all nonresident motor vehicles entering the reservation to purchase a recreational use permit, proceeds of which are used to maintain trails and other tourist attractions.

The nearest National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Regional Office and the U.S. Citizenship and

Immigration Services office are in Seattle. Meetings of the Pacific Fishery Management and North Pacific Fishery Management councils are routinely held in the Seattle-Tacoma area. The nearest Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) Regional office is 159 miles east in Mill Creek. The U.S. Coast Guard Station Neah Bay is in town.

Facilities

Neah Bay is accessible by ground and sea. It is reachable by Washington Highway 112. The William R. Fairchild International Airport, 81 miles east in Port Angeles, is the nearest facility certified for carrier operations, offering international flights to Canada. The Seattle-Tacoma International Airport is the nearest major U.S. facility.

Neah Bay is in the Cape Flattery School District, which operates the Neah Bay Elementary School (grades K–6) and Neah Bay Junior/Senior High School (grades 7–12). The Clallam County Public Utility District administers electricity. Because of severe wind and storms, electricity to the reservation is usually disrupted several times each winter, sometimes for long periods of time (hours or even days). The Public Works Department, a department of the tribal government, supplies water from the Educket Creek Reservoir, two shallow groundwater wells, and an infiltration gallery in the Wa'atch River. The system serves approximately 1,350 people. Lack of additional water capacity has led to a moratorium on new buildings. The Public Works Department also provides sewer services. Two failing wastewater treatment facilities were combined and upgraded in 1997. The Makah Police Department, which runs the reservation jail, and Clallam County Fire District No. 5 administer public safety. The tribe runs a tribal court system, consisting of a permanent chief judge and associate judges who are called in as necessary. The Makah Tribe's Sophie Trettevick PHS Indian Health Center is in operation in Neah Bay and provides primary and dental health services. The tribe operates an alcohol and substance abuse program, a mental health program, and also has a community health field station.¹¹ Forks Community Hospital, 41 miles southeast, is the nearest major hospital. The tribe's senior center provides meals and other assistance to tribal elders. There are at least nine hotels, motels, or campgrounds available in Neah Bay for visitors to the area.

The Neah Bay Marina, completed in 1997, "safely harbors over 200 commercial and sportfishing vessels as well as pleasure craft."¹² The marina can moor vessels from 30- to 200-feet. Every slip is equipped with electrical service and running water; a wastewater pump-out station also is available.¹³ The Neah Bay harbor is

shielded by a small island and a breakwater. The marina also hosts two emergency oil spill response boats, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration boats, the state's emergency tugboat, and serves as a base for aquaculture development.¹⁴ Commercial Fishing

West Coast fisheries landings in Neah Bay in 2000 were delivered by 100 vessels, including 23 commercial, 70 tribal, and 7 personal use vessels. Landings in the community were in the following West Coast fisheries (data shown represent landings in metric tons/value of said landings/number of vessels landing): crab confidential/confidential/2; groundfish 1,489 t/\$1,941,780/65; salmon 94 t/\$204,055/65; and other species 62 t/\$273,369/37.

Neah Bay residents owned at least 10 vessels in 2000, including 8 that participated in the federally managed groundfish fishery. This number is questionable because of the noticeable difference between the number of tribal vessels delivering landings to the community in 2000 and because field observations indicate a larger participation by community members. According to recorded data the number of vessels owned by Neah Bay residents participating in each said fishery by state (WA/OR/CA) was: coastal pelagic 1/0/0, groundfish 2/0/NA, highly migratory species NA/0/NA, salmon 2/0/0, shellfish NA/0/NA, shrimp NA/0/0, and other species 3/0/0.¹⁵

Four community members held five federal groundfish fishery permits in 2000. The number of Neah Bay residents holding permits in each said fishery by state (WA/OR/CA) was: groundfish 3/0/0, highly migratory species NA/0/0, salmon 1/0/0, shellfish 0/0/NA, and other species 6/0/0.¹⁶

Neah Bay residents held at least 22 permits, including 5 federal groundfish permits and 17 state permits, in 2000. The number of permits held by residents in each said fishery by state (WA/OR/CA) was: groundfish 8/0/0, highly migratory species NA/0/0, salmon 1/0/0, shellfish 0/0/NA, and other species 8/0/0.¹⁷

No processor voluntarily reported processing information in Neah Bay in 2000, though at least 100 vessels offloaded fish in the community. An offloading dock and processing facility operate in town, though it has been marked by instability and changes in ownership in recent years.

The MTC engages in mussel aquaculture and has three rafts in operation. Every 18 months approximately 30,000 pounds of Mediterranean mussels are grown on the rafts, which are sold to the WDFW and Taylor Seafood.¹⁸ Tribal members own and participate in commercial dive operations for sea urchins, scallops, sea cucumbers, and other commercially viable shellfish species. Geoduck clams are present in the area, but

commercial operations await adequate tribal stock assessments.

According to the Boldt Decision,¹⁹ the usual and accustomed (U&A) fishing grounds of the Makah Tribe are "located off northern Washington in U.S. waters north of lat 48°02'15"N (at the Norwegian Memorial), east of long 125°44'00"W, and west of long 123°42'30"W (at Tongue Point just east of Crescent Bay in the Strait of Juan de Fuca). The Makah U&A is within the Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary in coastal waters" and "overlaps two of the National Wildlife Refuges (Flattery Rocks and Quillayute Needles) in northern Washington."²⁰ Tribal members fish commercially within their U&A for halibut, whiting, rockfish, lingcod, sablefish, flatfish, sturgeon, steelhead, salmon, shellfish, groundfish, and gray whales.²¹

Many tribal fishermen fish for salmon and steelhead in the Wa'atch and Tsooyes rivers with gill nets operated by hand or from a small skiff. The Makah Fisheries Department regulates fishing openings and the relative positions of the nets in the river. As with most tribal fishing, a portion of the catch is sold commercially and a portion is kept for subsistence purposes.

Sportfishing

Recreational fishing in the salt water near Neah Bay for salmon and bottomfish is among the best in the United States, outside of Alaska. Neah Bay is the state's most important location for charter halibut fishing. In addition, rainbow and cutthroat trout are available in nearby freshwater lakes and steelhead and salmon from the local rivers.²² It was reported that in 1995 approximately 85,000 visitors were brought to the Makah Reservation for sportfishing.²³ In 2000 there were at least three salmonid charter fishing businesses in Neah Bay. Many more charter boats operate out of Neah Bay during the sportfishing season, although none of these are operated by tribal members.²⁴ Many sport fishermen trailer their own boats to Neah Bay and use the public boat launch facilities. There are three vendors in Neah Bay licensed to sell fishing permits; however two of the vendors operate on a seasonal basis. In 2003 there were 1,751 sportfishing license transactions made in Neah Bay valued at \$3,409.

In Catch Record Card Area 4 (from Cape Alava north and inside the Strait of Juan de Fuca to the Seiku River) the 2000 sport catch, based on catch record cards, was 11,652 fish including 381 Chinook salmon, 11,258 coho salmon, 5 chum salmon, and 8 pink salmon. Marine anglers made 11,114 trips in Area 4. Eight steelhead and 87,682 coastal bottomfish were the recorded catch in 2000.

Subsistence

Members of the tribe fish within their U&A for halibut, whiting, rockfish, lingcod, sablefish, flatfish, sturgeon, steelhead, salmon, shellfish, groundfish, and gray whales.²⁵ Subsistence shellfish include clams, mussels, oysters, barnacles, urchins, octopus, and chitons. Tribal members also consume harbor seals incidentally caught in other fisheries, under a Memorandum of Understanding with NMFS. According to a survey conducted of Makah households in 1997–1998, “99 percent of all households participated in subsistence activities, either by directly harvesting and consuming local resources, or by receiving them from other households through tribal sharing networks.”²⁶ From the same survey it also was determined that residents consumed an annual 174 pounds per capita of subsistence resources including fish, shellfish, marine mammals, terrestrial mammals, and birds. This made up “approximately 65% of all solid animal protein in the contemporary diet.”²⁷

Involvement in North Pacific Fisheries

Commercial Fishing

There were no vessels owned by Neah Bay residents in 2000 involved in North Pacific fisheries. However in past years, several tribal whiting boats have been seasonally leased to participants in Alaska fisheries. Fourteen Neah Bay residents held crew member licenses for North Pacific fisheries in 2000.

Sportfishing

Neah Bay residents purchased three Alaskan sportfishing licenses in 2000.

Notes

1. J. Sepez. 2003. Makah. In S. Kutler (ed.), *Dictionary of American history*, 3rd edition. Charles Scribner's Sons, New York.
2. Makah Indian Tribe. No date. Culture. Online at <http://www.makah.com/culture.html> [accessed 31 January 2007].
3. Olympic Peninsula Web Sites. No date. The Makah Nation on Washington's Olympic Peninsula. Online at <http://www.northolympic.com/makah/> [accessed 31 January 2007].
4. Treaty of Neah Bay. No date. Treaty text reproduced by Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission. Online at <http://www.nwifc.wa.gov/tribes/documents/TreatyofNeahBay.pdf> [accessed 31 January 2007].
5. J. Sepez. 2001. Political and social ecology of contemporary Makah hunting, fishing, and shellfish collecting practices. Doctoral thesis. Univ. Washington, Seattle.
6. National Marine Fisheries Service. 2001. Environmental assessment on issuing a quota to the Makah Indian Tribe for a subsistence hunt on gray whales for the years 2001 and 2002. Draft. NOAA, NMFS, Silver Spring, MD. Online at <http://72.14.253.104/>

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7. See note 5.
8. Forest Community Research. 2002. Assessment of the Northwest Economic Adjustment Initiative. Sierra Institute for Community and Environment, Taylorsville, CA. Online at <http://www.sierrainstitute.us/neai/NEAIndex.html#Anchor-Washington-14210> [accessed 31 January 2007].
9. See note 8.
10. See note 8.
11. Northwest Portland Area Indian Health Board. 2003. Makah Tribe. Online at http://www.npaihb.org/profiles/tribal_profiles/interface.htm [accessed 31 January 2007].
12. See note 3.
13. National Marine Fisheries Service. 2004. Appendix D: Social, economic and historical information regarding treaty tribes. Groundfish bycatch draft programmatic environmental impact statement. National Marine Fisheries Service, Northwest Regional Office, Seattle, WA. (Bob Lohn, Groundfish Fishery Management Office, 7600 Sand Point Way NE, Seattle, WA 98115).
14. See note 8.
15. 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.
16. See note 15.
17. See note 15.
18. See note 8.
19. Center for Columbia River History. No date. Boldt Decision. Online at <http://www.ccrh.org/comm/river/legal/boldt.htm> [accessed 31 January 2007].
20. See note 6.
21. See note 3.
22. See note 3.
23. See note 8.
24. See note 1.
25. See note 3.
26. See note 1.
27. J. Sepez. 2002. If middens could talk: Comparing ancient, historic, and contemporary Makah subsistence foraging patterns. Ninth International Conference on Hunting and Gathering Societies. Edinburgh, Scotland. Online at <http://www.abdn.ac.uk/chags9/1sepez.htm> [accessed July 2005].