Edna Bay

People and Place

Location

The community of Edna Bay lies near the southern end of Kosciusko Island, northwest of Prince of Wales Island, in Southeast Alaska. It lies 90 miles northwest of Ketchikan. The area encompasses 56.0 square miles of land and 2.8 square miles of water.

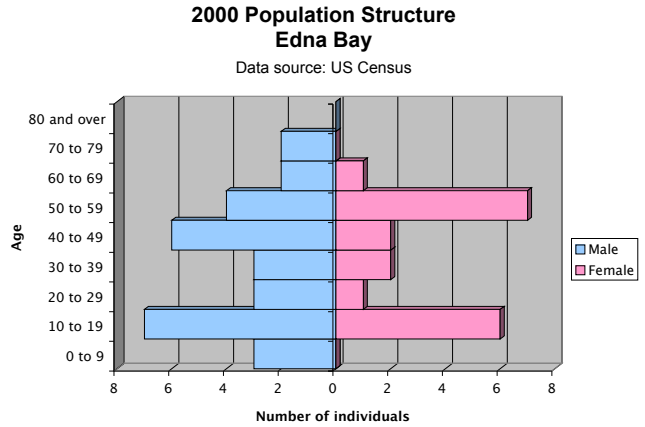
Demographic Profile

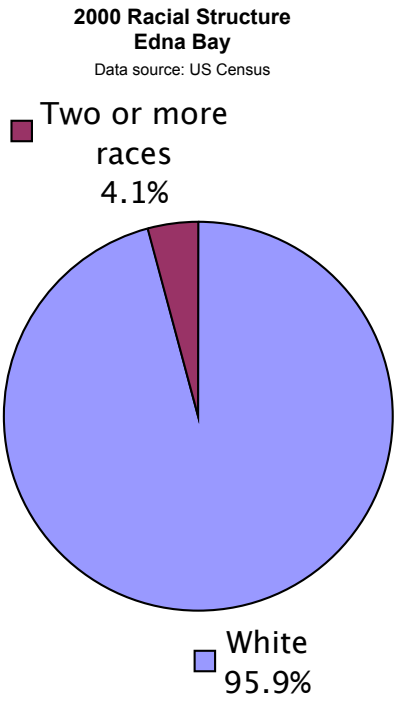
According to the 2000 U.S. Census, the village had 49 inhabitants. Edna Bay was not showing signs of growth and the present population may even be in decline. The community was predominantly White (95.9%), and the remaining 4.1% of its residents identified themselves as more than one racial group. A total of 4.1% of the population recognized themselves as all or part Alaska Native or American Indian. The whole community lived in households, nobody was living in group quarters, and there were some vacant houses that were used seasonally.

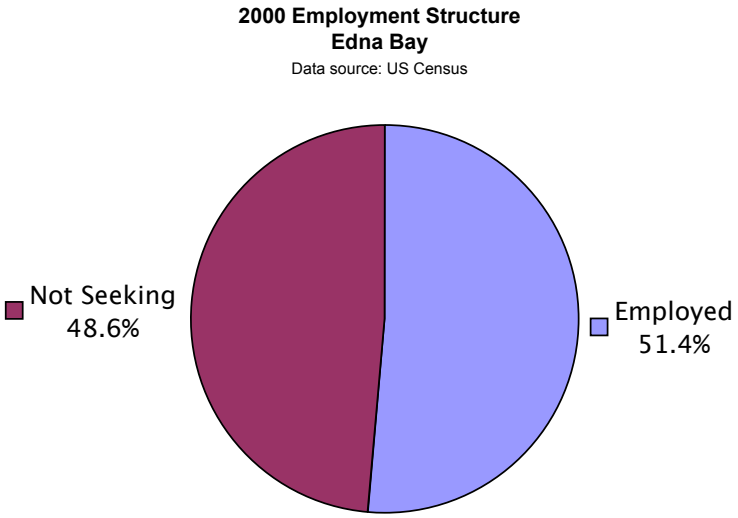
The gender ratio in the community was extremely unbalanced with the male population at 61.1% and the female population at 38.8%. The median age (36.8 years) was similar to the national median (35.3 years). The bulk of its population, 32.7%, was between 45 and 54 years of age and 18.4% between 10 and 14 year of age. Of the adult population age 25 and over, 100% had graduated from high school or gone on to further schooling, and 36.4% of the population had a bachelor's degree or higher in 2000.

History

Although Edna Bay does not appear in any census until the 1950s, there are previous historical accounts. Edna Bay was named by the U.S. Coast & Geodetic Survey in 1904. Prince of Wales Island is in the middle of the transition area between Haida and Tlingit cultural areas. Historically, these two Native American groups have occupied the island. The Haida, who were the most numerous at the time, were connected fairly early to the 18th century fur trade. The first settlers and missionaries who arrived to the area at the end of the 19th century encountered an almost unpopulated island with remnant Native communities devastated by smallpox and measles. Haida and Tlingit populations are still present in many communities on the Island. A small fishing community emerged from a State-







owned land disposal sale. The original post office was established in 1943, but was transferred to Ketchikan in 1960.

Infrastructure

Current Economy

As in many other cases around Prince of Wales Island, the economy of this very small community revolves around logging and fishing. Edna Bay has a local sawmill but the community's reliance on the fishing industry is strong. In 2000, 13 residents held 49 commercial fishing permits and there was a seasonal fish buyer post located in the bay during the summer months.

The employment structure of the community shows that 51.4% of the total potential labor force was employed at the time of 2000 census. Surprisingly, none of the potential labor force was unemployed and 48.6% of the adult workforce was not searching for employment in 2000. In 2000, the average per capita income in Edna Bay was $58,967 and the median household income was $44,583. In this community 23.1% of the population lived below the poverty level.

Governance

Edna Bay is an unincorporated community not organized under any borough. Instead, the village has organized the Edna Bay Community Association, a non-profit community association devoted to local development. The regional Native corporation of the area, with its headquarters in Juneau, is the SeaAlaska Native Corporation. The closest Alaska Department of Fish andGame (ADF&G) offices are in Craig, Wrangell, Petersburg, and Ketchikan. The Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services (BCIS) office is in Ketchikan and the nearest National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) office is in Petersburg.

Facilities

Edna Bay can be reached by both air and sea. The community is connected to Craig, Ketchikan, and Petersburg by floatplane. These planes provide transportation and cargo to the community. Edna Bay is not connected to Prince of Wales Island's road system. A dock and harbor with breakwater are available. Basic health care is provided by the Edna Bay Health Clinic. Alternative medical attention is provided by the Edna Bay Emergency Medical Service (EMS) and Prince of Wales Island EMS/Ambulance. The town does not have centralized water and sewer systems. Edna Bay has neither its own school nor a police department. The town offers a few lodges as accommodation for visitors.

Involvement with North Pacific Fisheries

Commercial Fishing

Although Edna Bay is a very small community, it is significantly involved in the North Pacific fisheries. In 2000, 13 members of the community were holding 28 commercial fishing permits, 13 of which were fished that year. The village also had six owners of vessels engaged in federal fisheries and five owners of salmon fishing boats. In addition, there were eight residents registered as crewmen.

Halibut: Seven permits to catch halibut were issued in 2000, five of which were used that year. Four of these permits were for longliners under 60 feet (three fished) and three permits issued for longliners over 60 feet (two fished). All the halibut permits had statewide range.

Salmon: The bulk of Edna Bay's permits were devoted to the salmon fisheries. The village had 14 permits in 2000 with five fished. Eight statewide permits were issued for hand trollers (one fished) and six statewide permits for power gurdy troll (four fished).

Other Groundfish: Three statewide permits were issued for other groundfish: two for miscellaneous saltwater finfish (one fished) and one permit for a longliner over 60 feet (not fished).

Other Shellfish: Three permits were issued to catch shrimp with pot gear in the southeast (one fished).
Sablefish: One issued and fished permit for a long-liner over 60 feet in southern Southeast Alaska.
In Edna Bay there are no processing facilities. No landings were recorded because the fleet delivers to other harbors in the area.

Sport Fishing

In 2000, Edna Bay sold 11 sport fishing licenses of which 8 were bought by Alaskan residents. This small number of licenses does not preclude the possibility that the area could be visited by numerous non-residents getting their licenses there or elsewhere.

Local residents mostly rely on subsistence fisheries for consumption. In 2002 the village had no sport fishing guide businesses.

Subsistence Fishing

In 1987, the ADF&G conducted a survey to demonstrate the significance of subsistence practices for traditional Alaskan communities. All households participated in the use of harvested resources. In relation to marine resources, 100% of households used subsistence salmon, 100% used other types fish (herring, cod, flounder, greenling, halibut, perch, rockfish, sable fish, char, and trout), 0% used marine mammals, and 50% used marine invertebrates. The results reflected that the inhabitants of the community were harvesting 383.5 lbs per person per year. The per capita daily harvest of wild foods was 1.3 lbs. These statistics emphasize the importance of subsistence fishing, hunting and gathering for these communities. In order to understand the relative importance of each resource we broke down the composition of the harvest: salmon 14.25%, other fish 48.5%, land mammals 23.39%, marine mammals 0%, birds and eggs 0.1%, marine invertebrates 4.3%, and vegetation 9.46%.

In 1999, Edna Bay had two salmon household subsistence permits that accounted only for a handful of sockeye salmon. In addition, the inhabitants of this community (rural residents or members of an Alaska Native tribe) who hold a valid Subsistence Halibut Registration Certificate (SHARC) issued by NMFS are eligible to harvest subsistence halibut. These allocations are based on recognized customary and traditional uses of halibut. Regulations to implement subsistence halibut fishing were published in the Federal Register in April 2003 and became effective May 2003.