

Excursion Inlet

People and Place

Location

Excursion Inlet lies on the west coast of Lynn Canal. It is just east of the mouth of Glacier Bay National Park and is surrounded by the 3-4,000 ft mountains and spectacular glaciers of the park. The area encompasses 56.8 square miles of land and 0.2 square miles of water.

Demographic Profile

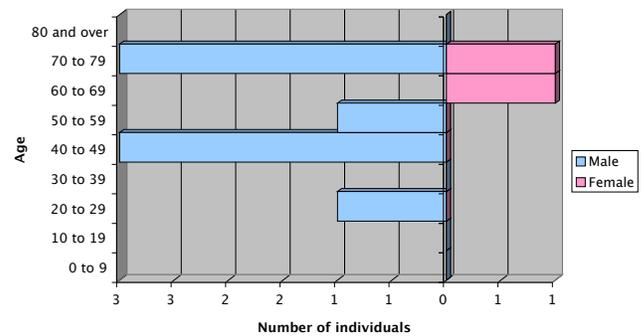
According to the 2000 U. S. Census, the population of Excursion Inlet was 10; however, the Census does not provide historical population numbers. The area has never been heavily populated and it is unlikely that the population ever reached far into the hundreds. It is important to note, however, that this Census data likely does not reflect transient and seasonal workers at the Excursion Inlet fish processing plant. The population was mostly male, with only two females recorded on the 2000 Census, and entirely White. The median age was 60 and no one was recorded by the Census below the age of 25-43 years. There were 85 housing units in Excursion Inlet, of which a large portion, 77, were designated as vacant in 2000.

History

The area around Excursion Inlet was once populated by the Woosh-Kee-Tawn clan of Tlingit Indians. However, due to a devastating flood, the Woosh-Kee-Tawn clan moved away from the inlet. Recent archeological investigations have unearthed burial grounds pre-dating the flood. In 1909 the Inlet was chosen as the site of a cannery which was in operation until 1931. During World War II, the Inlet was used both for cargo storage and for internment of Native Alaskans in the cannery buildings. Subsequent land issues created by this military activity are still in the process of being resolved. For the rest of the 20th century the area was characterized by logging efforts and another cannery. The closure of the Wards Cove cannery in December of 2002 spelled economic ruin for the community, but it is widely hoped that government endeavors to keep the facility running will continue to make the community viable.

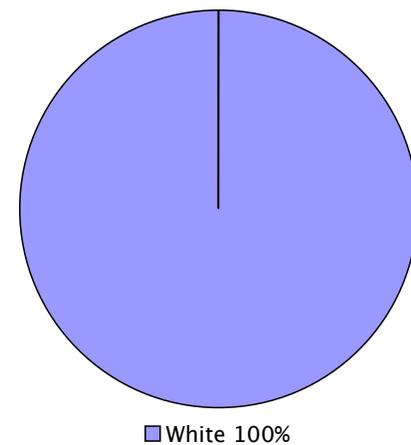
**2000 Population Structure
Excursion Inlet**

Data source: US Census



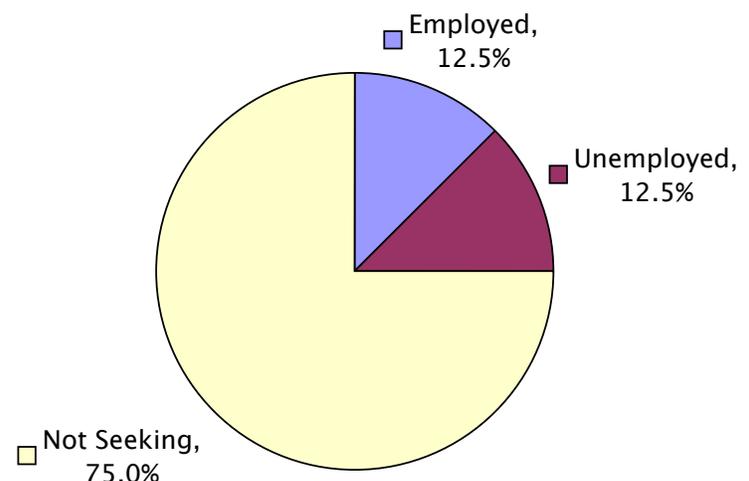
**2000 Racial Structure
Excursion Inlet**

Data source: US Census



**2000 Employment Structure
Excursion Inlet**

Data source: US Census



Infrastructure

Current Economy

The Wards Cove Packing Company located in Excursion Inlet closed in December 2002. The processor had been one of the largest in the United States, employing over 300 people and producing 550,000 cases of canned salmon and 10 million lbs of frozen fish in 2002, and was the mainstay of the community, providing facilities and transport to employees and local residents. Moreover, the closure of the plant at Excursion Inlet also could have left fishing supply and fuel businesses in Juneau and Haines with significantly fewer customers and therefore affect many sectors of northern Southeast's economy. Seattle-based Ocean Beauty Seafoods purchased the Wards Cove facilities in April 2003 and conducted a nearly seamless transfer of the enterprise.

Only two fishing permits were held in Excursion Inlet in 2000, both for the crabbing industry. Few jobs exist in the community outside of the processing industry, which is highly seasonal and employs transient workers. In addition, 50% of the labor force, which is only 25% of the population, is unemployed while 25% of the population is in poverty. The median household income is \$16,250 while the per capita income is \$18,888, according to the 2000 U.S. Census figures.

Governance

Excursion Inlet is an unincorporated area within the Haines Borough of Southeast Alaska. Because of Excursion Inlet's status as an unincorporated city there are no city or borough officials in the city nor are there municipal or borough finances dispersed to the community. Excursion Inlet is not a member of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA). It therefore has no land allotment under the Act, and is not a federally recognized Native village, nor does it have a Native village corporation or belong to a regional Native corporation.

The nearest National Marine Fisheries Service Regional Office is in Juneau, as is the nearest Department of Fish and Game. The nearest Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services is located in Haines.

Facilities

There is no road access to Excursion Inlet. The community is served by the Excursion Inlet seaplane

base which is owned by the State of Alaska. A distance of 1000 feet is provided for seaplanes to land and it is within a mile of the residential area.

All homes lack complete plumbing and no water or sewage facilities are provided to residences. There is no public safety or health provider serving the community and only one business associated with Excursion Inlet catering to tourists.

Involvement in North Pacific Fisheries

Commercial Fishing*

According to the Department of Fish and Game, and reported by the Alaska Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission, two permits were held by two permit holders in Excursion Inlet in 2000, neither of which were fished that year. The permits both pertained to Dungeness crab: 75 pots or 25% of the maximum in Southeast waters. The Ocean Beauty processing plant processes pink and chum salmon, as well as salmon roe, salmon caviar, halibut and sablefish.

Sport Fishing

One business offers accommodations and chartered sport fishing as well as other hunting expeditions and outdoor activities.

Subsistence Fishing

The Alaska Department of Fish and Game has no information on subsistence practices in Excursion Inlet.

* Commercial fishing permit data given here is from the CFEC and is for the communities of Excursion Inlet and Funter Bay combined.