

Levelock

People and Place

Location

The unincorporated town of Levelock lies on the west bank of the Kvichak River, 10 miles inland from Kvichak Bay. Anchorage is 278 air miles to the northwest. The town is located near the Alagnak Wild and Scenic River Corridor. The community encompasses 14.5 square miles of land but has no jurisdiction over water. The river, which is the main communication channel, is ice-free from June through mid-November.

Demographic Profile

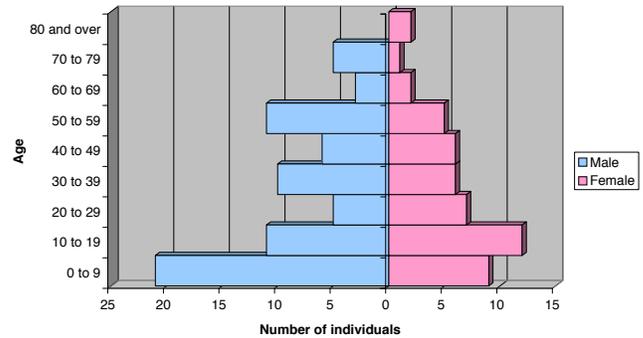
According to the 2000 U.S. Census, Levelock had 122 inhabitants. The town did not appear in the Census records until the 1950s. The numbers were stable until the 80s, but the last twenty years have witnessed significant increases in population. A detailed breakdown of the racial composition of Levelock is as follows: 89.3% Alaska Native or Indian American, 4.9% White, and 5.7% two or more races. A total of 95.1% of the population recognized themselves as all or part Alaska Native or American Indian. Approximately 2.5% of the population is Hispanic. Levelock’s gender breakdown is skewed towards males with 59% male versus 41% female. All residents live in households and there are no communal housing quarters. The population of the community is very young with a median of 27.5 years of age compared to the U.S. median of 35.3 years. A total of 43.4% of the population is under 19 years old, while only a 17.1% is over 55 years old. Of those age 25 years and over in Levelock about 65.6% had graduated from high school or gone on to higher schooling, and 4.9% had obtained a bachelor’s degree or higher. About 34.5% had not graduated from high school.

History

Levelock was historically, and remains, a mixed Alutiiq and Yup’ik village. Although there is no systematic census data from Levelock until the 1950s, 19th century Russian accounts reported the presence of a community known as “Kvichak.” The village is again mentioned by the name of Kvichak in the 1890 census, although the population was not counted. A 1908 survey of Russian missions identified Levelock as “Lovelock’s Mission.” The Bristol Bay area suffered

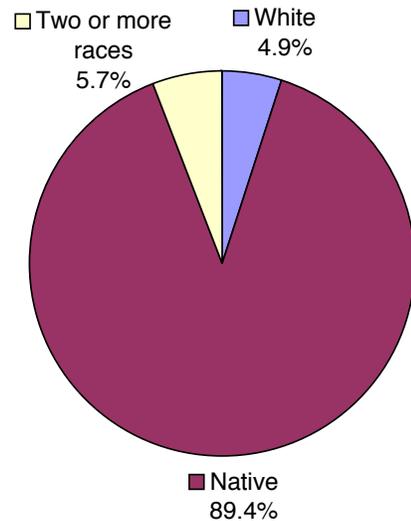
2000 Population Structure Levelock

Data source: US Census



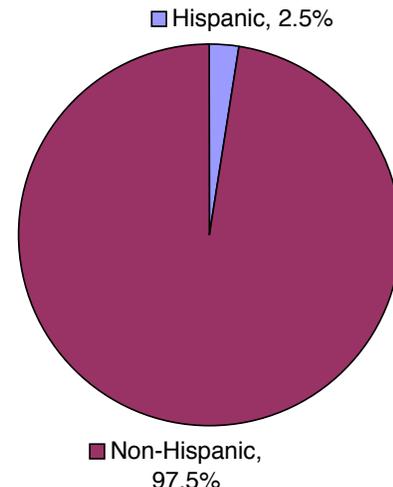
2000 Racial Structure Levelock

Data source: US Census



2000 Hispanic Ethnicity Levelock

Data source: US Census



successive waves of epidemics, in 1837, 1900 and 1918, which had a devastating effect on the communities in the area. Although during these years many communities were abandoned, Levelock survived and succeeded in climbing onto the commercial fisheries golden train.

Koggiung Packers operated a cannery at Levelock in 1925-26 until a fire destroyed the cannery. A second cannery operated from 1928-29. In 1930, the first school was built, and a post office was established in 1939. By this time, families had converted their homes to oil heat. Moose first appeared in the area in the 1930s. During the early 1950s, another cannery was in operation. Commercial fishing and subsistence activities are the main focus of the community.

Infrastructure

Current Economy

Levelock's economy is based around commercial fishing and government jobs. A total of 15 residents hold commercial fishing permits. Subsistence practices are present in the area and play a significant role on the local economy. The community relies upon subsistence activities for a large portion of its diet. Salmon, trout, moose, caribou, and berries are harvested.

The 2000 U.S. Census illustrated an employment structure which shows that 46.6% of the total workforce is employed and 53.4% of the adults are not actively seeking a job. These statistics should be understood in the context of a community completely dominated by a seasonal industry. About 34.2% percent of the workforce is employed by the government. The community shows a low per capita income of \$12,199 and a median household income of \$31,667. A very high 24.6% of the population lives below the line of poverty.

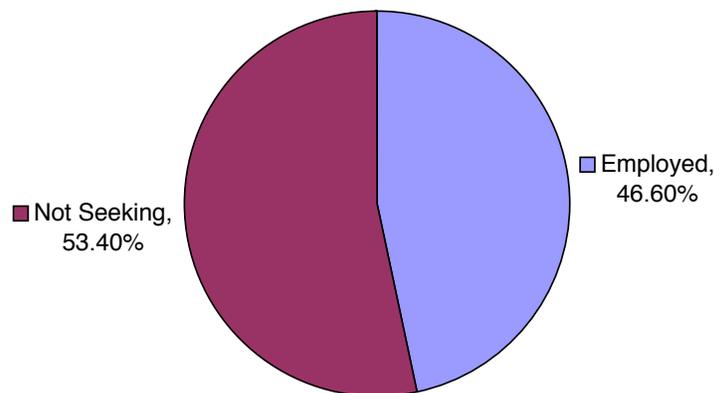
An important part of the workforce travels to Naknek to fish or work in the canneries during the summer season. The increasing appeal for tourism has helped to consolidate a modest but gradually growing accommodation sector.

Governance

Levelock is an unincorporated town located in the Lake and Peninsula Borough. It belongs to the Bristol Bay Native Corporation. The local Native corporation is Levelock Natives Limited which manages approximately 96,800 acres of land while the authorized traditional entity, recognized by the BIA is

**2000 Employment Structure
Levelock**

Data source: US Census



the Levelock Village Council.

This community is also part of the Bristol Bay Economic Development Corporation (BBEDC) and therefore receives community development quotas (CDQ) from this organization. This community further benefits from a regional nonprofit organization: the Bristol Bay Native Association.

The closest regional offices of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) are in Dillingham and King Salmon. Kodiak and Homer have the nearest NMFS offices although Anchorage is also a potential accessible office for the people of this area. Anchorage and Kodiak have the closest Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services (BCIS) office.

Facilities

Levelock is mainly accessible by air and water. In winter, when the river freezes and the winds are too strong for river access, some trails to surrounding villages are used. There are two airstrips that receive scheduled and chartered flights (King Air and Peninsula Air). The price of a roundtrip ticket by plane from the community to Anchorage, with a connection in King Salmon, in early September of 2003 was \$492. The harbor has a 110 foot dock and a beach with an unloading area. The village has a natural harbor with one accessible dock.

Levelock School has 3 teachers and 17 students of all ages. Health care in the community is provided by the Pilot Point Health Clinic or, as alternatively, by the Levelock First Responders. The community has a public

security service (State VPSO). Although Levelock has the Levelock Electric Cooperative, 95.5% of the household use kerosene or fuel to generate power. Water is provided by wells on an individual basis and there is no central sewage system.

Involvement in North Pacific Fisheries

Commercial Fishing

Levelock is not a typical Alaskan fishing community due to its geographic location. The town lies at the shore of the Kvichak River, ten miles upstream from its mouth. Although Levelock is not a coastal community, it is still a community intimately involved with the fishing industry. According to official records from 2000 Levelock had 15 commercial permit holders, with a total of 16 commercial fishing permits. A total of 21 individuals were registered as crewmen and there were 6 owners of salmon vessels, but no federal fisheries vessel owners resident in the community. The Levelock fleet was involved, in one way or another, in the following Alaskan fisheries: herring, other groundfish, and salmon.

Commercial fishing permits are issued with specification to species, vessels size, gear type, and fishing grounds. The salmon fleet was, by far, the main part of Levelock's commercial fisheries. It accounted for 14 permits (10 fished): eight permits were issued for drift gillnet in the Bristol Bay area (seven fished), and six permits were issued for set gillnet in the Bristol Bay area (three fished). The other groundfish industry had one issued permit for a hand troll vessel with statewide range which was not fished. The remaining fishery in Levelock was herring: one permit (issued and fished) for herring roe with gillnet in Bristol Bay.

Although Levelock had a fishing fleet, there was no real landing of fish due to the absence of a large processing plant in that locality. This lack pushes the vessels of this community to deliver somewhere else in Bristol Bay.

The Lake and Peninsula Borough, where Levelock is located, received an allocation of \$442,002 in federal salmon disaster funds to compensate for loses due to salmon prices plummeting and \$29,832 to reduce the impact of Steller sea lion protective regulations. The BBEDC also received \$75,026 for this reason. The

funds, allocated in 2003 for the case of the salmon disaster fund and in 2002 for the Steller sea lion case, were added to the general budget of the borough or the CDQ, helped to compensate for the decline of income from fish taxes and to relieve the budgetary tensions of the institutions of the area.

Sport Fishing

In 2000, this community did not issue sport fishing licenses. The area, though, is visited by numerous outsiders who obtain their permits elsewhere. In 2002, the village had no registered sport fishing businesses.

Subsistence Fishing

In the survey conducted on behalf of ADF&G in 1992, Levelock demonstrated the significance of subsistence practices for most Alaskan communities. All households participated in the use of harvested resources. In relation to the main marine resources: 93% of the households used subsistence salmon, 90% other types of fish (herring, smelt, flounder, sole, blackfish, burbot, char, grayling, pike, sucker, trout, and white fish), 46.7% marine mammals, and 3.3% marine invertebrates. The results reflect that the inhabitants of the community harvested 884 lbs per person that year. These statistics emphasize the importance of subsistence fishing, hunting, and gathering for these communities. The relative importance of each resource to the total harvest can be understood from this compositional breakdown: salmon 53%, other fish 7.5%, land mammals 30.9%, marine mammals 5.7%, birds and eggs 1.3%, marine invertebrates 0.07%, and vegetation 1.6%.

Most of these subsistence practices are focused on fish: in 1999 Levelock had 5 Alaska salmon household subsistence permits: the catch was mainly sockeye with 1500 units. In addition, the inhabitants of this community (rural residents or members of an Alaska Native tribe) are eligible to harvest subsistence halibut by holding Subsistence Halibut Registration Certificates (SHARCs). 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.