

Pilot Station

People and Place

Location

Pilot Station is situated on the northwest bank of the Yukon River, on the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta. It is 11 miles east of Saint Mary’s and 26 miles west of Marshall. It is in the Wade Hampton Census area and makes up 1.7 square miles of land and 0.6 square miles of water.

Demographic Profile

Pilot Station had a total of 550 inhabitants in 2000. The population was definitely skewed toward males, which made up 55.8% of the population. The population of Pilot Station has changed quite a bit since 1880; however, since about 1960 it continued to rise steadily up to 2000. According to the 2000 Census, the racial composition of Pilot Station was as follows: 96.9% American Indian and Alaska Native, 2.4% White, and 0.7% two or more races. A total of 97.6% of the population recognized themselves as all or part Alaska Native or American Indian. There were no residents of Hispanic ethnicity. The median age in the community was 19.5 years, considerably younger than the U.S. national median of 35.3 years. Pilot Station had a total of 126 housing units in 2000; however, 17 were vacant, three due to seasonal use. No one in the community lived in group quarters at the time of the Census. Of the population age 25 years and over about 51.3% had graduated from high school or gone on to higher schooling and about 9.6% had obtained a bachelor’s degree or higher. Approximately 28.1% had completed less than 9th grade.

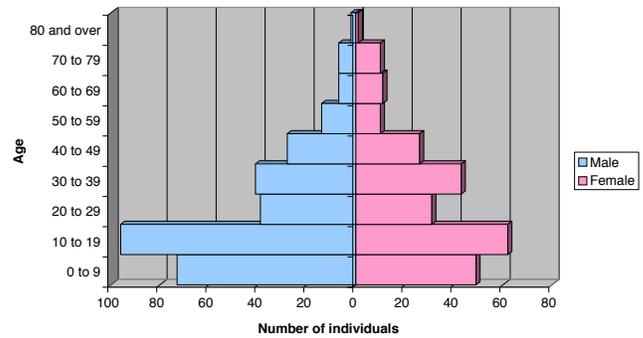
History

According to the National Park Service, the Arctic Small Tool Tradition, “one of the most distinctive and widespread Arctic cultural traditions appeared around 4000 BP.” Some investigators feel that the Arctic Small Tool tradition “marks the arrival of the ancestral Eskimo cultures” to the Arctic area (National Park Service 2003).

Historically, the Native Eskimo people present in the area of Pilot Station have been the Yup’ik peoples. Because “southwestern Alaska lacked significant amounts of any of the commercially valuable resources that first drew non-Natives to other parts of the state,” the Native people of the southwest region did not

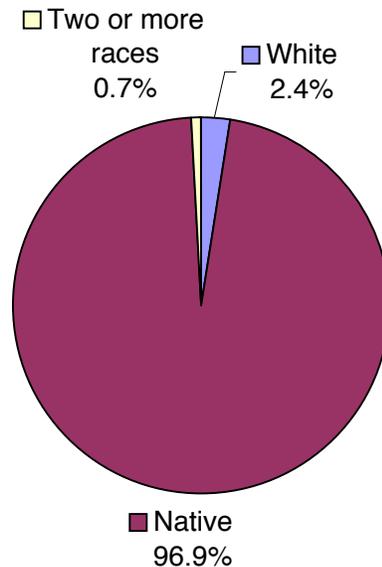
**2000 Population Structure
Pilot Station**

Data source: US Census



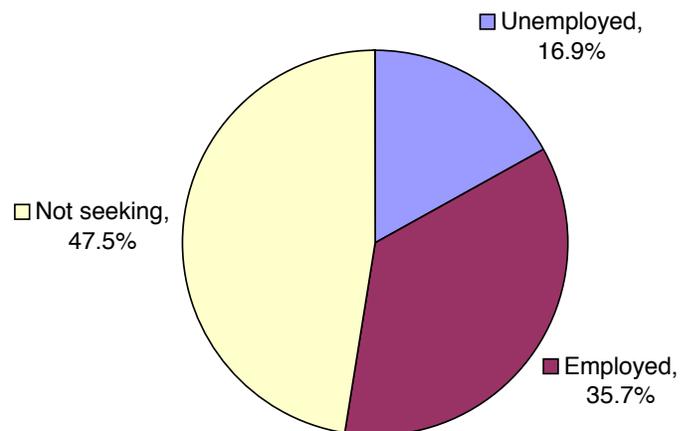
**2000 Racial Structure
Pilot Station**

Data source: US Census



**2000 Employment Structure
Pilot Station**

Data source: US Census



experience continual contact with the outside world until missionaries settled in the area beginning in the mid-1800's; initially with the Russian Orthodox, subsequently by the Moravians, and finally by the Jesuits (Fienup-Riordan 2000: 115).

The village of Pilot Station was originally called "Ankachak," when it was located one-third of a mile down the river from the village's present site. The village later moved to a site termed "Potiliuk." Nearby the new village site is the location of an old village called Kurgpallermuit, which is a designated historic place, as it was occupied during the bow and arrow wars between the Yukon and Coastal Eskimos. Intermittently, the Chevak and Pilot Station people fought when the coastal people traveled up the Kashunak River according to local legend. In the early 1900s a Russian Orthodox Church was built and today is one of the oldest structures in the area. The village was first noted with the name "Pilot Station" by R.H. Sargent of the U.S. Geological Survey in 1916. The village's name was changed to Pilot Station by local riverboat pilots who used the village as a checkpoint. In 1969 Pilot Station became incorporated as a second-class city.

Infrastructure

Current Economy

In Pilot Station the majority of year-round employment is either with the school or the city government. In 2000 a total of 59 commercial fishing permits were issued to residents of Pilot Station and 69 residents were licensed crew members. Income is supplied as well by trapping and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) fire fighting, but it is also supplemented by subsistence activities. Of those age 16 years and over in the community in 2000 about 35.7% were employed, 16.9% were unemployed, and 47.5% were not in the labor force. Of those who were employed, about 67.9% were classified as government workers. The median annual per capita income was \$7,311 and the median household income was \$31,071 in 2000. About 28.7% of the population was below the poverty level.

Governance

Pilot Station is a second-class city which was incorporated in the year 1969. The city has a Manager form of government which includes a mayor, seven-

person city council, five-person advisory school board, and many municipal employees including three Village Police Officers (VPOs) and one Village Public Safety Officer (VPSO). The city implements a 4% sales tax and has no other taxes. The city is not part of any organized borough. The regional Native corporation for the area is the Calista Corporation and the Native village corporation is Pilot Station, Incorporated. The Village Council and Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) recognized Traditional Council is called the Pilot Station Traditional Council. The nearest Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) office is located in the city of Emmonak, but is a seasonal office which is open from June 1st to August 31st, although an office is available year round in the community of Nome. The closest Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services (BCIS) office is also located in Nome. A National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) field office is located in Bethel and a larger office is located in Anchorage.

Facilities

Pilot Station is accessible for the most part by air and water transport. There is a 2,250 foot gravel airstrip which is owned by the state. The approximate cost to travel by air roundtrip to Anchorage from Pilot Station, via Bethel, is \$503. Bulk supplies and fuel are delivered by barge during the summer. The community is easily reachable by river-going vessels. Inter-village transportation is provided by snowmobiles and skiffs as there are no roads which link Pilot Station to its neighboring communities. There are no hotels in the community or accommodations for visitors. There is one school, Pilot Station School, which teaches grades K-12. In 2000 there were a total of 211 students at the school and 17 teachers. Health care is available at the Pilot Station Health Clinic which is owned by the city and operated by the Yukon-Kuskokwim Health Corporation (YKHC). The clinic however is currently situated in a flood hazard area and is need of being relocated. Police services are supplied by the State VPSO, City VPO, and City Public Safety Facility. The electric utility for the area is AVEC which is operated by REA Co-op and the city with a main power source of diesel. The piped water and sewer system is operated by the city and includes more than half of the community. Currently 27 homes in the community haul well water and use honeybuckets for sewage; however, major improvements are in the works to expand the piped system to include the 27 unserved

homes, the school, city and tribal offices, Head Start, and other community buildings. The school operates its own water treatment system. Refuse collection is the responsibility of the City who also operates the landfill along with C&D.

Involvement in North Pacific Fisheries

Commercial Fishing

A total of 59 commercial fishing permits were issued to residents of Pilot Station in 2000, and of those 56 were fished. There were 69 licensed crew members in the same year. There were no residents who were vessel owners and were involved in either the salmon fishery or the federal fisheries. Of the 59 total commercial permits issued to those from Pilot Station, two were issued for herring roe using gillnets in Norton Sound (none fished). Thirty-nine permits were issued for salmon using set gillnets in the Lower Yukon (38 fished).

No landings of any kind were delivered to Pilot Station in 2000 because no processor was present in the community.

Sport Fishing

There is little evidence of tourists from outside the state or country traveling to Pilot Station for sport fishing. However, in 2000, there were 59 sport fishing licenses sold in the community to Alaska State residents. According to the ADF&G there were no sport fishing businesses listed in Pilot Station in 2002.

Subsistence Fishing

There is little data available regarding subsistence in Pilot Station with regard to specific species harvested and amounts. However, the incomes of residents are supplemented by subsistence activities including the harvesting of salmon, moose, bear, porcupine, and waterfowl. According to the ADF&G's Division of Subsistence it is established that the annual wild food harvest for those in Pilot Station is 713.9 lbs per person. The daily wild food harvest is 1.956 lbs per person. Also according to ADF&G, 95 household permits were issued for subsistence salmon to residents of Pilot Station in the year 1999 for an estimated harvest of 6,241 total salmon. Residents of Pilot Station are not eligible to apply for halibut subsistence certificates.