

# ISLAND COUNTY, WASHINGTON

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**ISLAND COUNTY** is a unique area, well known for its exceptional quality of life. Island residents and tourists alike marvel at the fantastic views of the snow-covered Cascade and Olympic mountains as they relax in this pastoral setting. The islands comprising Island County are Whidbey, Camano, Ben Ure, Smith, Deception, Strawberry, Baby, Minor and Kalamut.

The two settled islands, Whidbey and Camano, are favorite destinations for weekend visitors with easy access via State Route 20 over Deception Pass, State Route 532 to Camano, and the State Ferry System routes accessed off-island at Mukilteo and Port Townsend.

Whidbey Island is the longest island in the contiguous United States - 45 miles long with 148 miles of shoreline. Camano is 16 miles long and has 52 miles of shoreline. Whidbey Island is located 27 miles north of Seattle and 50 miles south of the Canadian border. Island County has a total land area of 208 square miles (Whidbey—168 sq mi; Camano—40 sq mi).

European settlements were first established in the early 1850's in the Penn Cove-Coupeville area. The rich history of this area has been preserved through the establishment of the Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve. The small communities that were established along these sheltered shorelines in the 1850's are today highly regarded as locations for permanent homes and summer residences as well as small but successful businesses.

## Location



## Basics

Island County has four geographic areas with a total population of 81,100:

- North Whidbey
- Central Whidbey
- South Whidbey
- Camano Island

There are three incorporated cities on Whidbey Island:

- Oak Harbor
- Coupeville
- Langley

Camano has no incorporated cities, but is located near Stanwood in Snohomish County.

### Local Government

Island County is part of the 2nd Congressional District and the 10th state Legislative District. Coupeville is the county seat and is located on Whidbey Island.

Three County Commissioners, representing the three unincorporated districts, govern the county. The three cities are governed by elected mayors and city councils.

### Geography

The terrain of Island County is generally rolling with elevations from sea level to 580 feet.

More than 50% of the land area is undeveloped and features trees, prairie areas of agricultural lands, marshes, open bays and a generally rural environment.

### Climate

Island County enjoys the moderating effects of water and sheltering mountains to provide a mild, temperate climate. Camano Island and especially Whidbey Island benefit from the Olympic Mountains' "rain shadow" effect. Rainfall averages from about 35" per year in South Whidbey and South Camano to less than 18" on Central Whidbey. This contrasts with the yearly average rainfall of approximately 40" in Everett & Seattle, Washington.

Average temperatures range from a January minimum of 34 degrees to August maximum of 72 degrees. Relative humidity normally runs from 40% to 90%.

The growing season lasts 180-220 days. Freezes are usually light and do not continue past February.

Island County's mild but relatively dry climate has served to attract a large number of retirees. They especially appreciate the mild, short winters and cool, comfortable summers.

## Island Transportation

### BUS SERVICE

Island County provides fare-free bus service throughout the County, on Whidbey Island from Deception Pass to Clinton, and to the ferries at Clinton-Mukilteo and Keystone-Port Townsend. Bus service is also available on Camano Island, connecting to Stanwood.

Island Transit: (360) 678-7771  
[www.islandtransit.org](http://www.islandtransit.org)

### FERRY SERVICE

Whidbey has two State Ferry runs; Clinton to Mukilteo and Keystone to Port Townsend. Generally, the Clinton—Mukilteo ferry runs each half hour, while the Keystone—Port Townsend ferry runs every 90 minutes, with summer service provided every 45 minutes.

Washington State Ferries: (800) 843-3779  
[www.wsdot.wa.gov/ferries](http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/ferries)

### AIRLINES

Kenmore Air Express provides charter service on request.

Kenmore Air: (800) 435-9524  
[www.KenmoreAir.com](http://www.KenmoreAir.com)

### STATE HIGHWAYS

Connections to the state highway system and I-5 corridor for both populated islands are via bridges and state highways. State Route 20 and SR 525 are the main routes through Whidbey Island and SR 532 is the main route on Camano Island.

## Chambers of Commerce

- Greater Oak Harbor** .....(360) 675-3755  
[www.oakharborchamber.org](http://www.oakharborchamber.org)
- Central Whidbey** .....(360) 678-5434  
[www.centralwhidbeychamber.com](http://www.centralwhidbeychamber.com)
- Freeland**.....(360) 331-1980  
[www.freeland-wa.org](http://www.freeland-wa.org)
- Langley South Whidbey**.....(360) 221-6765  
[www.visitlangley.com](http://www.visitlangley.com)
- Clinton** .....(360) 331-3929  
[www.clintonchamberofcommerce.org](http://www.clintonchamberofcommerce.org)
- Camano**.....(360) 629-7136  
[www.camanoisland.org](http://www.camanoisland.org)
- Tourism Information**.....(888) 747-7777  
[www.whidbeycamanoislands.com](http://www.whidbeycamanoislands.com)

## Government

### Island County:

- North & Central Whidbey ..(360) 678-5111
- South Whidbey .....(360) 321-5111
- Camano .....(360) 387-3443

- City of Oak Harbor** .....(360) 279-4500
- Town of Coupeville**.....(360) 678-4461
- City of Langley**.....(360) 221-4246

### Port Districts:

- South Whidbey Island.....(360) 331-5494
- Coupeville .....(360) 678-5020

## Recreational Facilities

Island County features exceptional recreation opportunities. Boating, fishing, biking, bird watching, clamming, golfing and hiking are especially popular with residents and tourists alike. The County enjoys abundant wildlife and has developed a county-wide system of trails for hiking, biking, and equestrian use. Organized sports activities are offered by the county's recreation districts and cover a wide gamut of team and individual sports.

### STATE PARKS

#### Whidbey Island:

- Deception Pass State Park
- Joseph Whidbey State Park
- Fort Ebey State Park
- Fort Casey State Park
- Keystone Underwater State Park
- South Whidbey State Park

#### Camano Island

- Camano State Park
- Cama Beach State Park

### COUNTY PARKS

#### Whidbey Island:

- Ala Spit
- Dan Porter Memorial Park
- Dave Mackie County Park
- Deer Lake Park
- Double Bluff Park
- Freeland Park
- Island County Fairgrounds
- Rhododendron Park

#### Camano Island

- Cavalero Beach Park

### CITY PARKS

There are fourteen city parks in Oak Harbor, two in Coupeville and two in Langley. For more information, contact the city or chamber.

### PRIVATE GARDENS / PARKS

[open to the public]

#### Whidbey Island:

- Meerkerk Rhododendron Gardens - Greenbank
- Maxwelton Valley Gardens - Clinton
- Cultus Bay Gardens - Clinton
- Sassafras Farm - Greenbank
- Hummingbird Farm - Oak Harbor

### Port Facilities

- Clinton Fishing Pier, Clinton
- Possession Beach Salt Water Park, Clinton (park & boat launch)
- Coupeville Historic Wharf, Coupeville (transient moorage, fuel dock, deli)

### Golf Courses Open to the Public

- Lam's Links - North Whidbey
- Gallery Golf Course - Oak Harbor
- Whidbey Golf & Country Club (open 1 pm)
- Holmes Harbor Golf Course - Freeland
- Island Greens - Clinton
- Camaloch Golf Course - Camano Island

### Marinas

- Cornet Bay Marina - North Whidbey
- Oak Harbor Marina - Oak Harbor
- Langley Marina - Langley

### RV / Camping

- North Whidbey RV Park - North Whidbey
- Sunrise Resorts - North Whidbey
- Deception Pass State Park - North Whidbey
- Fort Casey State Park - Central Whidbey
- Rhododendron County Park - Central Whidbey
- South Whidbey State Park - South Whidbey
- Camano State Park - Camano Island

## Lodging & Facilities

### Lodging

An abundance of lodging and RV/camping choices are available along with facilities for events or meetings. Contact our chambers of commerce or the tourism information line.

### Conference & Meeting Facilities

#### North Whidbey (Oak Harbor):

- Best Western.....(360) 679-4567
- Candlewood Suites .....(360) 279-2222
- Coachman Inn .....(360) 675-0727
- Imperial at Kasteel.....(360) 279-8899
- Oak Harbor Yacht Club .....(360) 675-1314

#### Central Whidbey (Coupeville & Greenbank)

- Captain Whidbey Inn .....(360) 678-4097
- Casey Conference Ctr .....(866) 661-6604  
(non-profits only - owned by Seattle Pacific University)

#### South Whidbey (Freeland, Langley & Clinton)

- Saratoga Inn.....(866) 749-5565
- Inn At Langley .....(360) 221-3033
- Chinook Learning Ctr .....(360) 341-3404
- Marsh House (retreats) .....(360) 579-8861

#### Camano Island

- Camano Country Club.....(360) 387-1655
- Camano Yacht Club .....(360) 387-3737
- Camano Community Ctr.....(360) 387-0222

## Historical Sites / Museums

### Historical sites include:

- Deception Pass
- Coupeville Waterfront
- Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve
- Fort Casey
- Admiralty Head Lighthouse
- Fort Ebey
- Sunnyside Cemetery

### Museum locations:

- Island County Historical Museum - Coupeville
- South Whidbey Museum - Langley

## Art Galleries & Theatres

Movie theatres are located in Oak Harbor, at NAS Whidbey and in Langley. There are also live theatres in Oak Harbor and Langley.

Art Galleries abound on Whidbey and Camano, especially in Langley, Coupeville, and Camano. You can request a complete listing from the local chambers of commerce or visit the tourism website.

## EMPLOYMENT & LABOR

Number of Licensed Active Businesses ..... c. 6,000<sup>1</sup>  
 Number of Businesses with Employees ..... 1,800<sup>2</sup>  
 Avg Number of Employees per Business ..... 8<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In the 2002 US Economic Census, 3,250 workers were self-employed, non-incorporated business owners.

<sup>2</sup> Only 7% of Island County businesses have more than 20 employees; 70% of the businesses employ 4 or less.

U.S. Naval Air Station Whidbey Island, located in Oak Harbor, is the dominant employer in the county. Its total annual payroll of approximately \$425 million includes the salaries of 7,600 military employees and 2,400 civilian employees (including contractors). Other major employers\* include:

Whidbey General Hospital	Safeway
Oak Harbor School District	Careage of Whidbey
Whidbey Island Bank	Whidbey Telecom
Island County	Home Depot
Skagit Valley College Whidbey Campus	Island Transit
Navy Exchange	Coupeville School District
Wal★Mart	Payless Food
Nichols Brothers Boat Builders Inc.	Chugach Industries
South Whidbey School District	Regency on Whidbey
Upchurch Scientific, a Unit of IDEX Corp	K-Mart
Waste Management	Albertson's
City of Oak Harbor	Red Apple Markets

\*with over 40 employees and in order of employee size from largest

## Average Annual Wages Per Worker

(COVERED EMPLOYMENT 2008)

WA State ESD, LMEA

Type of Industry	State	Island Co.	Average Employed In Island County
Ag, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting	\$ 23652	\$ 25,124	138
Construction	51,026	35,184	855
Manufacturing	62,942	43,475	571
Retail trade	29,355	24,026	2183
Transportation and Warehousing	46,465	35,546	164
Information	105,718	56,902	200
Finance and Insurance	71,307	43,885	349
Real estate and Rental and Leasing	37,257	23,729	209
Professional and Technical Svcs	71,818	44,241	527
Administrative and Waste Svcs	39,559	32,799	572
Educational Services	34,486	34,260	245
Health Care and Social Assistance	43,557	26,638	1441
Arts, Ent, & Recreation	25,513	15,730	335
Accommodation and Food Services	17,061	13,715	1668
Other services, ex. Public Admin	24,879	17,565	723
Total Government (non-military)	57,240	54,426	1,285
<b>Average TOTALS</b>	<b>\$ 46,364</b>	<b>\$ 32,953</b>	

### Island County Employment Average by Zip Code

Area	# Employed	# Firms
Oak Harbor	5,661	797
Coupeville	1,115	211
Freeland	1,386	189
Langley	1,236	220
Clinton	628	168
Camano Island	775	232

### Labor Force

Avg Size = 33,250 (non-military)  
 Unemployment Rate = 9.6%  
 (avg rate Jan-May 2010)  
 Unemployment Rate = 7.6%  
 (avg rate, 2 years, 06/08-05/10)  
 Minimum Wage in Washington  
 \$8.55 per hour (as of 01/09)

## REAL ESTATE

Housing*		Land*	
County Avg .....	\$305,573	County Avg .....	\$89,292
North Whidbey .....	\$251,091	North Whidbey .....	\$63,250
Central Whidbey .....	\$266,542	Central Whidbey .....	\$43,333
South Whidbey .....	\$377,387	South Whidbey .....	\$93,110
Camano Island .....	\$331,573	Camano Island .....	\$125,857

\*Housing includes both existing and new construction and is an average from 2008 real estate sales. Land is platted lots at median price. Source: Gregor M. Strohm, ASA

## COMMERCIAL

Although hard to document, commercial rates for existing new construction for office and retail locations have been averaging at \$1.50 per square foot. A 700 sq ft office would equate to around \$1,050 rate per month without a triple net clause.

## Island County's Workforce Commuting Destinations

County	Number
Island .....	22,103
Snohomish .....	5,022
King .....	2,152
Skagit .....	2,094
Whatcom .....	211
Kitsap .....	81

## TAXES

Island County Retail Sales Tax Rate = 8.7%  
 Property Tax Rate\*: \$6.14 to \$8.18 per \$1000 of assessed valuation  
 Unemployment Rates = www.workforceexplorer.com/  
 Industrial Insurance Rates = www.lni.wa.gov  
 Business & Occupation Tax: www.dor.wa.gov/  
 No State Personal Income Tax

\* Source: www.islandcounty.net/assessor/

## Total Taxable Retail Sales

[for county & 3 incorporated cities]

2003 .....	\$615,830,000
2004 .....	685,995,984
2005 .....	767,731,151
2006 .....	829,841,269
2007 .....	884,268,864
2008 .....	790,870,084
2009 .....	745,578,288

## Per Capita Personal Income

2006 2008\*

U.S. ....	\$36,714	\$45,716
WA State .....	\$38,639	\$47,202
Island County ..	\$33,928	\$39,795

\*BEA, 08/2010

## Median Household Income 2009

Washington State ....	\$52,413
Island County .....	\$50,435

## POPULATION

	2000*	2010**
<b>Total Island County</b> .....	<b>71,558</b>	<b>81,100</b>
Island County (unincorporated) .....	54,675	
Oak Harbor (incorporated) .....	19,795	23,420
Coupeville (incorporated) .....	1,723	1,890
Langley (incorporated) .....	959	1,115
Total Camano (unincorporated) .....	13,347	14,900

## DEMOGRAPHICS

### Median Age

Island County .....	39.0
North Whidbey (uninc.) .....	33.4
Oak Harbor .....	28.3
Central Whidbey (uninc.) .....	45.8
Coupeville .....	43.4
South Whidbey (uninc.) .....	44.7
Langley .....	48.7
Camano Island (uninc.) .....	42.6

### Population Growth

1980s Average = 3.6% per year  
 1990s Average = 1.9% per year  
 2000s Average = 1.3% per year

## Educational Attainment

High School Graduate - 93.8%  
 Bachelor's Degree or higher - 18.2%  
 Professional Degree - 10.8%

### Occupation

% of Population

Military .....	9.8%
Retail Trade .....	4.6%
State & Local Government .....	4.2%
Local Government .....	3.7%
Construction .....	3.4%
Real Estate .....	3.1%

### Class of Worker

% of Population

Non-Farm .....	45.8%
Private wage & salary workers .....	31.1%
Government workers .....	15.6%
Self-employed workers .....	15.3%

\* US Census Count 2000

\*\* WA State OFM, 04/01/10

**Utilities**

**ELECTRICITY**

Whidbey Island: **Puget Sound Energy**  
(888) 225-5773 [www.pse.com](http://www.pse.com)

Camano Island: **Snohomish County PUD**  
(877) 783-1000 [www.snopud.com](http://www.snopud.com)

**NATURAL GAS**

Oak Harbor: **Cascade Natural Gas**  
(360) 675-6641 [www.cngc.com](http://www.cngc.com)

**TELECOMMUNICATIONS**

Digital and fiber optic services [ISDN] are offered throughout most of the County.

**Verizon Northwest:** 800-483-1000  
[www.verizon.com](http://www.verizon.com)

Camano Island, North & Central Whidbey

**Whidbey Telecom:** (360) 321-1122  
(South Whidbey) [www.whidbeytel.com](http://www.whidbeytel.com)

**WATER & SEWAGE**

City operated water & sewage systems in:

Oak Harbor: (360) 279-4750

Coupeville: (360) 678-4461, ext 6

Langley: (360) 221-4246, ext 13

Public Water Districts operate in Freeland, Clinton and parts of Camano Island.

There are also a number of privately owned water systems in the county. Private Sewage Systems are at Penn Cove, near Coupeville and Holmes Harbor in Freeland.

**SOLID WASTE**

Service is provided by each of the incorporated cities to its residents.

Island Disposal serves unincorporated Whidbey Island with Stanwood/Camano Disposal serving Camano Island.

**Island Disposal:** (360) 678-5701

**Stanwood Camano Disposal:** (800) 592-9995

**Health Care**

Whidbey Island is served by the Whidbey Island Public Hospital District and NAS Whidbey. Whidbey General Hospital, located in Coupeville, has 51 beds and 24 hour emergency room, plus community clinics in Oak Harbor and Clinton. Three paramedic ambulances serve the island from Island County Emergency Services. Medical and emergency facilities are available to active/retired military personnel at Naval Air Station Whidbey Island.

Camano Island is served by Skagit Valley Hospital in Mt. Vernon and Arlington Hospital in Snohomish County.

Doctors/1,000 population: 1.3

Trauma Centers:

Level 3 - Whidbey General, Coupeville

Level 1 - Harborview, Seattle

[1.5 hours drive, 20 minutes air evac.]

[www.whidbeygen.org](http://www.whidbeygen.org) (360) 678-5151

**Schools / Education**

**North Whidbey:**

**Oak Harbor School District #201**  
(360) 679-5800  
[www.ohsd.net](http://www.ohsd.net)

Elementary (5); Middle (2); High School (1)

**Central Whidbey:**

**Coupeville School District #204**  
(360) 678-4522  
[coupeville.k12.wa.us](http://coupeville.k12.wa.us)

Elementary (1); Middle (1); High School (1)

**South Whidbey:**

**South Whidbey School District #206**  
(360) 221-6100  
[www.sw.wednet.edu/](http://www.sw.wednet.edu/)

Elementary (2); Middle (1); High School (1)

**Camano Island:**

**Stanwood-Camano School District #401**  
629-1200  
[www.stanwood.wednet.edu](http://www.stanwood.wednet.edu)

Elementary (2); Middle & High School students attend school in Stanwood.

**PRIVATE SCHOOLS**

Oak Harbor Christian School PS-8, Oak Harbor  
(360) 675-2831

Langley Christian School K-12, Langley  
(360) 221-0919

Whidbey Island Waldorf School PS-8, Clinton  
(360) 341-5686

Lighthouse Christian Academy 1-12, Oak Harbor  
(360) 679-3158

Montessori K-4, Oak Harbor  
(360) 675-4165

Oak Harbor Seventh Day Adventist 1-8  
(360) 675-4412

Wellington Day School K-8, Clinton  
(360) 341-1252

Homeschoolers of Whidbey:  
(360) 679-2441

**COLLEGES**

**Skagit Valley College**  
(360) 675-6656  
[www.skagit.edu](http://www.skagit.edu)

Skagit Valley College provides an Associate Degree program transferable to a 4-year institution and occupational/work place training. Based in Mt. Vernon with a Whidbey Island Campus in Oak Harbor and in Clinton.

**Brandman—Chapman University**

(360) 679-2515

[www.brandman.edu/whidbeyisland/](http://www.brandman.edu/whidbeyisland/)

Located at the Naval Air Station, Chapman offers 4-year degree programs in Business Administration, Computer Science & Information Systems, Social Sciences, Psychology, and Criminal Justice as well as graduate degree programs for Human Resources and Organizational Leadership.

**Embry Riddle Aeronautical University**

(360) 279-0959

[worldwide.erau.edu/campuses-online/whidbey-island.html](http://worldwide.erau.edu/campuses-online/whidbey-island.html)

Located at the Naval Air Station, Embry offers 2 & 4-year degree programs in aeronautics Aviation, Business Administration Management, Technical Operations; Masters of Aeronautics Science.

**Washington State University**

(509) 335-3557

[online.wsu.edu/](http://online.wsu.edu/)

Continuing Education and a number of degree and certificate programs are offered by WSU through their Extended Degree Programs. Courses are delivered via internet, video, video conferencing, and correspondence.

**General Transportation Information**

**FREIGHT & TRANSPORTATION**

Free scheduled passenger bus service is provided throughout all of Whidbey Island and parts of Camano Island by Island Transit.

Nearest interstate: I-5 ..... distance: 39 miles

Next nearest interstate: I-90 ... distance: 90 miles

Nearest US Highway: 99 ..... distance: 40 miles

Major freight carriers: Oak Harbor Freight Lines, Dudley Freight, Consolidated Freight Ways, Viking Freight, Yellow Freight System, UPS, FedEx, Emery, RPS.

**WATER TRANSPORTATION**

**Washington State Ferries**

Average daily count 2009

Clinton - Mukilteo Ferry	Keystone - Port Townsend Ferry
5,966 vehicles	633 vehicles
11,037 total riders	1,444 total riders

*Clinton -Mukilteo ferry route is 3<sup>rd</sup> highest in usage*

**ROADS & HIGHWAYS \***

average number of vehicles per day

SR 20 N of Oak Harbor..... 15,000

SR 20 Coupeville ..... 10,000

SR 525 Freeland..... 12,000

SR 525 Clinton..... 11,000

SR 532 Camano Island..... 17,000

\* traffic counts made during spring summer traffic approx 20% greater

**COMMERCIAL AIRPORTS**

Wes Lupien Air Field, Oak Harbor

Runway - 3,200 ft

Temporarily suspended air service

Whidbey Air Park, Langley

Runway - 2,400 ft

No scheduled air service

Camano Air Park, Camano Island

Runway - 1,750

No scheduled air service