

PROTECTING BIODIVERSITY AND HELPING TO ATTRACT NEW JOBS

CASCADE-SISKIYOU NATIONAL MONUMENT

Designated: 2000
Location: Southwestern Oregon, southeast of Ashland
Size: 53,000 acres (Metro/commutershed, 4.74 percent of county land base)
Counties: Jackson County



When President Clinton signed the proclamation that made Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument part of the National Landscape Conservation System on June 9, 2000, he made it clear that preserving biodiversity was the primary motivation for protecting this area. Clinton referred to this area as “a biological crossroads—the interface of the Cascade, Klamath, and Siskiyou ecoregions in an area of unique geology, biology, climate, and topography,” and noted that “the Monument is home to a spectacular variety of rare and beautiful species of plants and animals, whose survival in this region depends upon its continued ecological integrity.” The threatened Northern Spotted Owl, indigenous trout species, over 100 species of butterflies, and 300 other animal species make their homes here.



Cascade-Siskiyou lies entirely within rapidly growing Jackson County. Ashland (population 19,522 in 2000), which is about 10 miles from the Monument, is the nearest city, and Medford (population 63,154) lies 12 miles further up the road. The Mt. Ashland Ski Area, within the Klamath National Forest, lies immediately west. The small towns of Pinehurst and Siskiyou, Oregon and Hilt, California lie within a few miles of the Monument. Cascade-Siskiyou is unusual in that there are approximately 32,000 acres of privately owned land interspersed in a checkerboard pattern within the 53,000-acre Monument. This has led to conflicts between cattle ranchers and logging interests versus recreational users, hunters, and conservationists.

Before and After Designation

Table 1 summarizes changes in four key socioeconomic indicators in Jackson County. It shows considerable growth in total personal income and total employment, and lesser rates of increase in population and per capita personal income from 1980-2000.

TABLE 1 Socioeconomic indicators in Jackson County, Oregon

	1980	2000 (year designated)	2002	% Change 1980 - 2002	% Change 2000 - 2002
Personal income (millions)	2,930	3,757	5,020	71	34
Population	132,929	159,054	186,650	40	17
Per capita personal income	22,044	23,624	26,896	22	14
Total employment	58,793	81,298	106,355	81	31

Figure 1 shows that population continued to grow at about the same rate since designation in 2000, although growth in total personal income and total employment appears to have slowed a bit, and per capita personal income has leveled off.

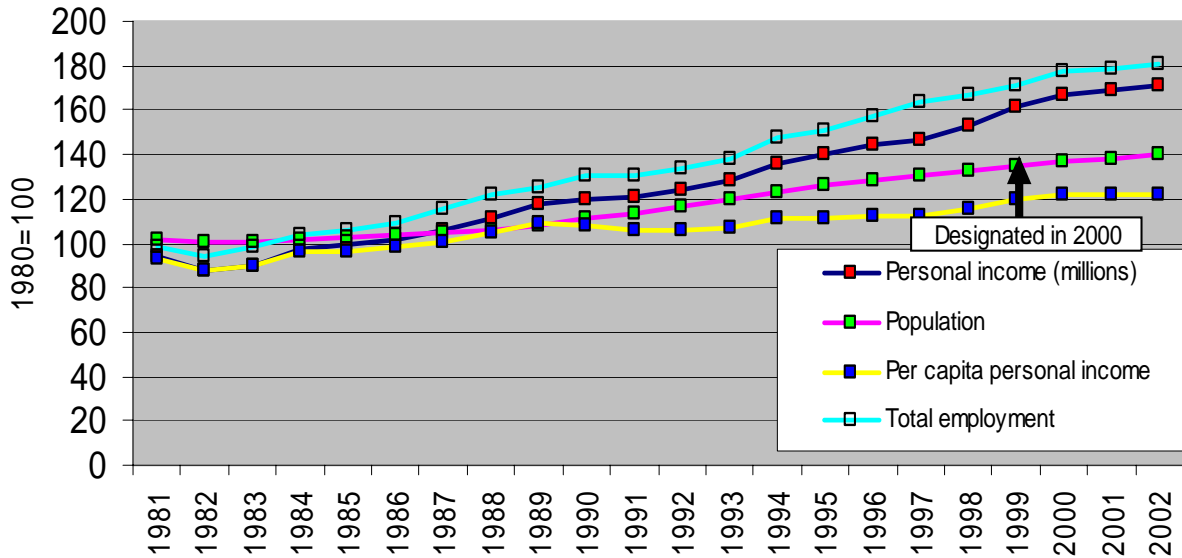


FIGURE 1. Growth of key economic indicators in Jackson County, Oregon

Economic Change in Jackson County

Overall, Jackson County’s economy is doing better than that of the median U.S. county. Jackson County has a more diverse (less specialized) economy than the median U.S. county, and it has a slightly higher percentage of non-labor income, both of which may help buffer against economic fluctuations and increase stability. The average Jackson County resident is both older and better educated than the average U.S. resident.

What factors make Jackson County a desirable place to live and help make it more prosperous than many U.S. counties? The county has several factors that were identified in the original *Prosperity* reports as correlating positively with growth in personal income:

- Jobs in producer services (see below)
- A ski resort
- A highly educated workforce
- Employment in the arts, entertainment, and food services
- An airport
- Protected and unprotected public lands (including Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument)
- Mountains

A few negative indicators emerge amid Jackson County’s generally positive economic picture. The county has a slightly higher unemployment rate than the U.S. mean, which could indicate that some residents are having difficulty finding a place in the changing economy; although the ratio of rich to poor households indicates that there are fewer poor families in comparison to wealthy ones than in most U.S. counties.

Another issue that is common to counties experiencing rapid growth and economic success is that affordable housing is becoming more difficult for the average family to find. Housing prices have risen more rapidly than household incomes. Although a household earning the median income can still afford the median home price, housing is becoming less affordable for many.

Since Cascade-Siskiyou was designated recently, not enough data is available to truly determine the Monument’s impact on the local economy. However, we can examine data from 2001 and 2002 to better understand where the economy may be headed, and explore the effects that Cascade-Siskiyou might have.

Figure 2 shows how employment trends in the county have changed over the past three decades. The vast majority of new jobs have been in the Services and Professional sector, with other sectors such as Government, Manufacturing (which includes forest product processing), Agriculture, and Mining showing little change. Construction has increased slightly.

Similar changes in personal income have occurred, with one notable addition: Non-Labor income (i.e., income from investments, retirement, and similar sources) has been the most important source of personal income in Jackson County since the early 1980s, as Figure 3 shows.

Given the dramatic increase in both employment and income in the Services and Professional sector, this category bears further exploration to really understand how the economy has changed. The category “Services and Professional” is so broad that it does not tell us much about the *quality* of growth in this sector; that is, are the jobs being generated low-wage and low-skilled jobs, or are they high-wage and high-skilled?

FIGURE 2. Employment by sector in Jackson County, Oregon

Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis, 2000.

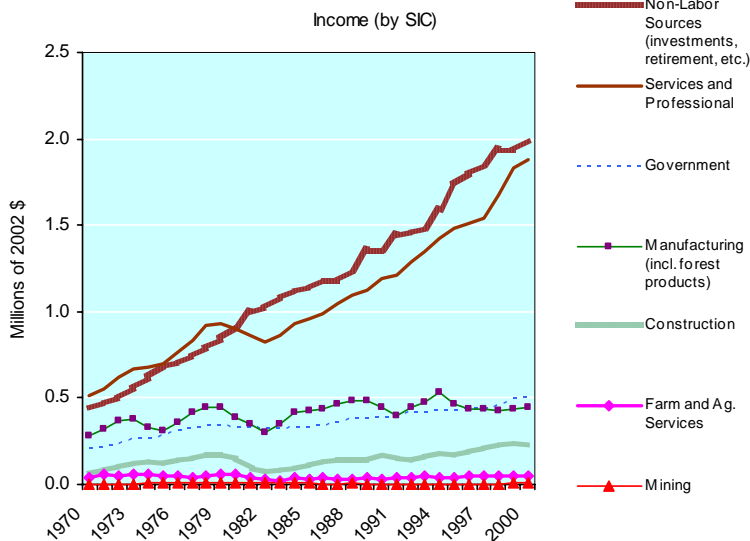
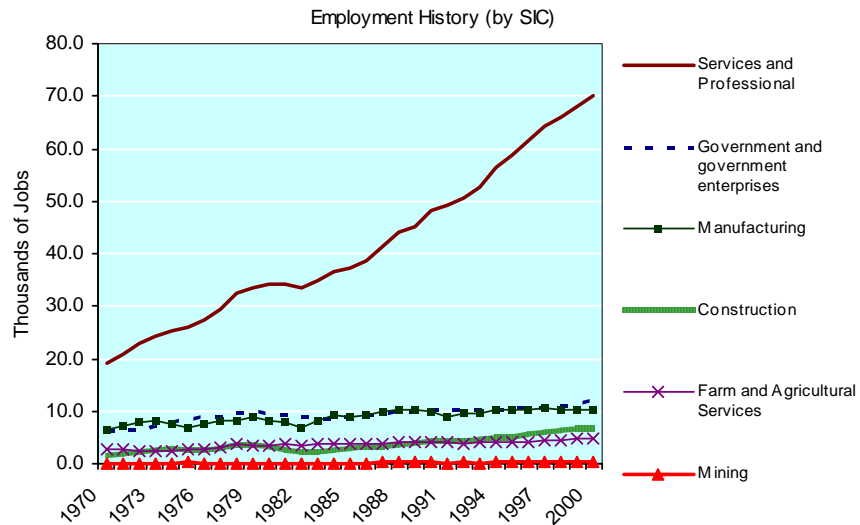


FIGURE 2. Personal income by major sector in Jackson County, Oregon

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis, Regional Economic Information System, 2004.

The Bureau of Economic Analysis, which collects employment data, switched to a more detailed classification system in 2001. Table 2 includes data from the new system that shows where the major increases and declines in jobs have occurred from 2001 to 2002. Within the Services and Professional sector, real estate jobs (which tend to be a high-wage sector) have increased the most, with an additional 880 jobs. Health care and social assistance, a mix of high- and low-wage jobs, increased by 263. Lower-paid service jobs, such as those in accommodation and food services, and arts, entertainment, and recreation, also increased. Employment also increased in two non-services sectors: forestry, fishing, and related activities, and wholesale trade.

A county's ability to attract jobs depends on many factors, such as having good transportation infrastructure and an educated workforce, as well as providing a high quality of life. Increasing numbers of entrepreneurs are realizing that they can work almost anywhere thanks to the internet, rapid shipping to nearly anywhere in the U.S., and affordable and convenient airline connections that allow them to meet with clients in larger cities with relative ease. Because of this, new types of businesses are springing up in some rather unexpected places that happen to appeal to entrepreneurs who are searching for both better business conditions and a higher quality of life. One example of this trend is Dagoba Organic Chocolate, headquartered in Ashland, Oregon, about 10 miles up the road from Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument.

Dagoba was founded by entrepreneur (and official company alchemist) Frederick Schilling in 2001. This truly global business imports organic cacao and other ingredients from organic farms in Central America, Latin America, and the Caribbean to its family owned, renewable energy-powered facility in Ashland. There the ingredients are transformed in small batches into award-winning chocolate delights – some with added local ingredients such as lavender, mint, dried fruits, and nuts – and shipped across the U.S. and beyond to grateful lovers of fine chocolate.



Originally located in Boulder, Colorado, Schilling became dissatisfied with that area's rising real estate prices and the expense and difficulty he encountered in importing raw materials and exporting finished products. He sought a new location that appealed to him not only for typical business reasons – such as lower costs, an eager workforce, and easier shipping through Portland and via Interstate 5 – but also for quality of life reasons, such as natural amenities similar to those that drew him to Boulder in the first place: nearby skiing and other types of recreational opportunities.

As Schilling says:

Southern Oregon does have similar aspects to Colorado. While the mountains here are not of the magnitude of the Rockies in regards to elevation, they are nonetheless vast enough where one can enter into the woods and valleys and feel as if one has crossed a magical veil that separates human culture and nature's culture. . . . I am first and foremost a spirit that aspires to learn and do right in this world. I am then human of the earth and I must embrace what the earth offers, which I find in nature. I am then social and creative human who enjoys my work and the community I live in. I have found support in this balance in Ashland and my industry. Hey, it's chocolate! What more needs to be said?

The move appears to be helping the company fulfill its mission "to create the world's most exquisite organic chocolate, following the highest ethical and ecological practices." Schilling is able to visit and keep in contact with the cacao producers he works with, has easier access to the outdoor activities he

enjoys, and is surrounded by a beautiful setting. His business provides needed jobs to the local community and provides additional support to the local food co-op. Dagoba Organic Chocolate has grown from two employees in 2001, with Schilling hand-pouring and wrapping every bar for the first eighteen months, to 25 workers today. The company sells a range of products in the U.S., Canada, Japan, South Korea, Australia, and Europe.

Other knowledge-based businesses that could choose to locate just about anywhere are choosing Ashland as well. These include several software design companies, marketing firms, and innovative biomedical product designers. Most of these are smaller businesses, employing fewer than 50 employees, and are more likely to have the flexibility to locate in more rural areas.

Do small businesses really make a difference to a county’s economic health? Figure 4 shows that businesses of fewer than 50 employees have long been the mainstay of the Jackson County economy. In fact, 88 percent of Jackson County businesses had fewer than 20 employees in 2001. Thus a substantial portion of the county’s economic growth in recent years can be attributed to small businesses.

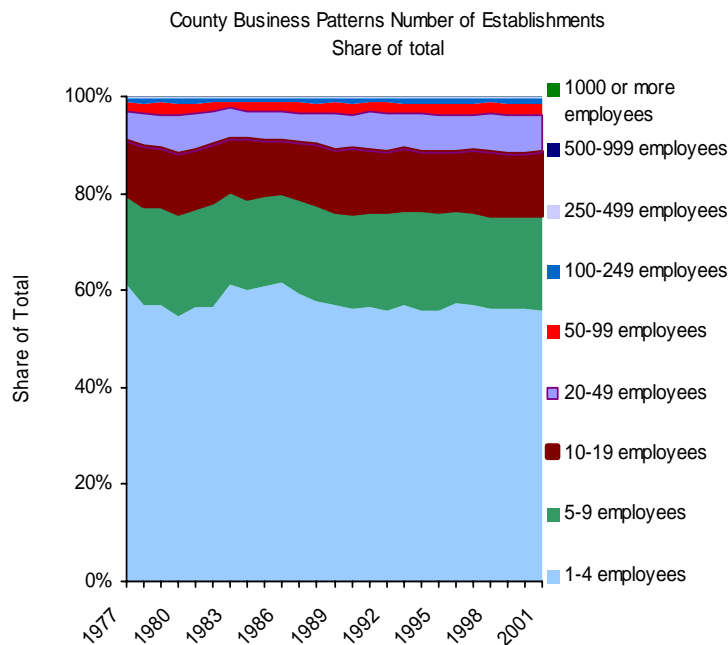


FIGURE 4. Size of businesses in Jackson County, Oregon

Source: Census County Business Patterns.

Conclusion

Jackson County, Oregon is attracting the knowledge-based small businesses that are a key to its economic prosperity in part because of the high quality of life the area offers to employers. Protected public lands, such as the Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument, are key components of that quality of life.

