

GEOGRAPHY AND POPULATION

Kitsap County is located between the urban areas of Seattle and Tacoma and the wilderness of the Olympic Mountains. It is bounded by Hood Canal on the west, Admiralty Inlet on the north, Puget Sound on the east, and Mason and Pierce Counties to the south. Its landmass totals 393 square miles, ranking thirty-sixth in area among Washington counties. Kitsap County has 228 miles of salt-water frontage -more than any other county in Washington. Most of the land area consists of remnants of a glacial drift plain.

The surface is composed generally of low rolling hills separated by valleys and bays. The land rises from sea level to maximum altitudes of 400 to 600 feet, except for the Green Mountain and Gold Mountain west of Bremerton. These hills, composed of volcanic rocks, cover about twenty square miles and rise to a maximum altitude of 1,761 feet.

KITSAP CITIES

City of Bremerton, the most populated city in Kitsap County, is the site of the area's single largest employer, the Puget Sound Naval Shipyard.

City of Port Orchard, across Sinclair Inlet from Bremerton, is the county seat.

City of Poulsbo, on the northern shore of Liberty Bay, is known as Little Norway because of its many residents of Norwegian descent.

City of Bainbridge Island encompasses the entire island since 1990 when citizens voted to annex the unincorporated portions into the City of Winslow, then changed the city's name. Bainbridge Island is just minutes away from Seattle through one of the most heavily-traveled state ferry runs.

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URBAN COMMUNITIES

Aside from cities, there are numerous unincorporated communities in Kitsap County. One such community is Port Gamble, a former mill town, located on the shores of Hood Canal in North Kitsap. This picturesque community is restored as a national historic site to commemorate the northwest's age of lumber mills.

Moving south, the shore-side community of Kingston has experienced recent growing pains due to its convenient ferry link to Edmonds, making living and working in Kingston a great lifestyle option. Continuing south, the Suquamish Tribal lands are home to the treasured Old Man House. This heritage site is thought to be the largest primitive wooden building built on the North American continent.

Keyport, south of Poulsbo, is home to small farms and to the Naval Undersea Warfare Center. In the center of the county, Silverdale serves as a major commercial driver for the area. This community is often assumed to be an incorporated city, but incorporation was last rejected in 1999.

On the southern end of Kitsap, **Manchester** and **Southworth** enjoy connection by ferry to Vashon Island and West Seattle. Olalla meets the northern boundary of Pierce County and the City of Gig Harbor.

KITSAP COUNTY WASHINGTON

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Although the economy remains heavily dependent on various naval installations, Kitsap County shares in the population and economic growth occurring in the Puget Sound region. Estimates for 2002 rank the county sixth in population (234,700 residents) and second in population density (597 persons per square mile) behind only King County.

COUNTY MAP

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