

# History and Geography

## Geography and Weather

Thurston County is located in Western Washington at the terminus of Puget Sound. It is the 32nd largest county in the state, with a total land mass of 736 square miles. Approximately 86 percent of the land area is unincorporated.

The area topography ranges from coastal lowlands to prairie flatlands to the foothills of the Cascades. Glacial activity in the county's geologic past left the land dotted with lakes and ponds. The northernmost boundary of the county is determined by the shoreline of Puget Sound. Inlets exclusive to the County are Budd, Henderson, and Eld Inlets. Budd and Henderson Inlets are separated by Dana Passage. Other inlets form the boundaries between Thurston and adjacent counties. Totten Inlet divides Thurston and Mason Counties, and the Nisqually River separates Thurston from Pierce County.

The northwest and southeast corners of the County are marked by peaks ranging from 1,700 to 3,000 feet in elevation. Once thought to be the highest in the county, Larch Mountain and Capitol Peak, both over 2,650 feet, reign over the 92,000 acre Capitol State Forest west of Olympia. United States Geological Survey (U.S.G.S.) surveyors recently discovered the highest point in the County is actually in the extreme southeast corner near Alder Lake. Standing at 2,922 feet, Quiemuth Peak was named in 1993 by the Thurston County Historic Commission and Nisqually Tribe to honor the Nisqually Indian chief.

Thurston County has a marine type climate with mild temperatures year-round. In the warmest months, the average high temperature ranges between 70 and 80 degrees. In the winter months, high temperatures usually hover around 45 degrees. Like most of western Washington, Thurston County's weather is characterized by sunny summers and wet winters.

Contrary to popular perception, however, Olympia's 51 inches of average annual rainfall is much less than New Orleans' 67 inches, Atlanta's 63 inches, and even Houston's 53 inches. What sets the Northwest apart and creates our soggy reputation is the tendency for rainfall to be spread out over a large number of days. Precipitation in Thurston County tends to be measured in tenths of an inch. With about

A Thurston County vicinity map is provided at the end of this chapter.

**Table I-1** shows the distribution of land area within Thurston County.

**Map 1** shows the geography of Thurston County.

**Table I-3** summarizes the weather patterns in Thurston County.

52 clear days out of every 365, Thurston County residents live under some form of cloud cover 86 percent of the year, with more than a trace of rain falling on almost half of the days of the year.

## History

### Native American Tribes with Traditional Lands within Thurston County

Salish Indian groups from the tribes now known as Nisqually, Squaxin, and Chehalis gathered shellfish and frequented the inlets and prairies of Puget Sound for centuries before Euro-American exploration and settlement. The rivers of the County were long-established sites for salmon harvesting, the prairies were popular hunting and plant harvesting sites, and the beaches were replete with shellfish, harvested by native peoples.

### Chehalis

Historically, the Chehalis Indian people occupied a large area within the Chehalis River watershed, stretching from the foothills of the Cascade Mountains to the Pacific Ocean in Southwest Washington. The Chehalis people have lived on a reservation within the Chehalis watershed since the 1850s, though important historic and archaeological sites are scattered throughout the Tribe's aboriginal area. "Chehalis" is a collective name for several Salishan tribes that lived on the Chehalis River and its affluent, and on Grays Harbor. Two principal groups of the ancestors of the present Chehalis Confederated Tribe were the Salish peoples of the Lower Chehalis, who relied on sea resources, and the Upper Chehalis who had a river-based economy.

The Chehalis did not sign a treaty but by executive order in 1864 land was set aside for a Chehalis Reservation. The Confederated Tribes of the Chehalis Reservation was formed and approved by the federal government in 1939 and its constitution was amended in 1973. The reservation is situated approximately 26 miles southwest of Olympia. Thurston and Grays Harbor Counties bisect the reservation's 4,215-acre boundaries. About 800 acres of the reservation are within Thurston County boundaries.

2000 Census figures show a Chehalis Reservation population of 691 persons, with 41 percent of the population under the age of 18 years. This is an increase in total population of 41 percent over the 1990 Census. The 2009 tribal enrollment is 828. The service population

For more information on The Confederated Tribes of the Chehalis, visit [www.chehalis-tribe.org](http://www.chehalis-tribe.org).

(enrolled and non-enrolled Indians living on and near the reservation is 3,453 persons.

The Chehalis tribal governing body is the General Council, and is comprised of all enrolled members 18 years of age and older. The Council meets twice annually, and may also convene special meetings. The Business Committee, a five-member body elected to the specific office by the General Council for two-year terms, oversees tribal administration and business. The Business Committee is composed of the Tribal Chairman, Vice Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer, and Fifth Council Member.

Traditionally, the Chehalis people made their living in forestry, fishing, and hunting. Today, government services and tribal food and entertainment enterprises are the primary sources of employment on the reservation. Community services operated by the Chehalis tribal government include the Chehalis Tribal Wellness Clinic; Head Start and Early Head Start; Youth Center; Public Safety Facility including law enforcement, corrections, tribal court; child and family services; natural resources and the Chehalis Tribal Housing Authority.

### **Nisqually**

The Nisqually are descendants of the Southern Coast Salish who lived in the woodlands and prairies within the Nisqually River Basin, encompassing 2.3 million acres between Mt. Rainier and Puget Sound. The oldest known village is over 5,000 years old. Their name comes from “squalli,” the grasses that grew in the lowland prairies, and they were the “Squalli-absch,” “people of the grass country and the river.”

The Nisqually Indian Tribe was a signatory to the Treaty of Medicine Creek signed on December 26, 1854 and were assigned to a 160-acre reservation away from the Nisqually River. The Indian War of 1855-56 resulted in an Executive Order on January 20, 1857 that established a more suitable 5,000-acre reservation along the Nisqually River.

The reservation was divided into allotments in the 1880s, with each tribal family receiving a parcel of 60-150 acres to be developed for farming. In 1918, Pierce County condemned over two-thirds of the Tribe’s reservation lands (3,300 acres) and transferred it to the War Department when Fort Lewis was established. Tribal families were dispersed over the remaining portion of the reservation or to other reservations around the area. A tribal land acquisition program has restored over 1,600 acres to tribal ownership since 1975.

For more information on the Nisqually Indian Tribe, visit [www.nisqually-nsn.gov](http://www.nisqually-nsn.gov).

Concurrent with the Tribe's community development effort over the past 25 years, there has been a sustained increase in both the reservation and tribal service populations. This increase has been due to both natural increase, as well as the repatriation of tribal families into the area as housing, employment opportunities, and social and health programs have become available on the reservation. In 1970, the on-reservation Indian population was only 19 persons. By 2004, this figure had grown to over 500. A corresponding increase in the tribal "service population" (on and off the reservation) from 126 to 6,685 took place from 1970 through 2008.

The Nisqually Tribe adopted its constitution in 1946, and amended it in 1994. A seven-member elected Tribal Council handles the Tribe's governmental decision-making, with an appointed Administrator handling day-to-day oversight. The highest-level governing body is comprised of the Nisqually General Council, made up of all Tribal members 18 years of age and older, and meets semi-annually.

Today total Tribal enrollment is 675 members, with approximately 500 members living on the Nisqually reservation and nearby trust lands. The Census 2000 total population for the Nisqually reservation is 599, including non-tribal residents. The Tribe employs approximately 225 people in tribal government and community services, and total employment has reached approximately 900, with 675 employed at the Red Wind Casino, expanded in December 2004.

The Tribe is the primary caretaker of the Nisqually River fisheries resources and maintains two fish hatcheries, on Clear and Kalama Creeks. Tribal enterprises include the Red Wind Casino and a service station/convenience store. The Health Clinic offers primary care, dentistry, mental health, social services, substance abuse, a community health representative, WIC, elder, and emergency medical services programs. Other Tribal programs include Law Enforcement, Library, Youth Center, Day Care Center, Head Start, and an Education Department that coordinates education activities on the reservation and on-reservation college programs offered by The Evergreen State College and Grays Harbor Community College.

## Squaxin Island

The Squaxin Island Tribe members are the descendants of the maritime people who historically lived along the shores and watersheds of South Puget Sound, including parts of what is now Thurston County. Because of their strong cultural connection with the water, they are also known as the People of the Water. Squaxin Island, four and a half miles long and a half mile wide, is centered near the entrances to the seven inlets of southern Puget Sound. The Squaxin Island Reservation was established under the Treaty of Medicine Creek in 1854. The Squaxin ancestors were confined to the Island during the Indian War of 1856-57. After the war, the island's population dwindled as people left to take up permanent residence near their original homes. Although there are no year-round residents on Squaxin Island today, it continues to be regularly used by tribal members for fishing, hunting, shellfish gathering, camping, and other activities.

For more information on the Squaxin Island Tribe, visit [www.squaxinland.org](http://www.squaxinland.org).

Tribal headquarters are now located in Kamilche, in Mason County, between Little Skookum and Totten Inlets. Hundreds of acres of land were purchased and a thriving community has been established there. Today the Tribe numbers 1,016 enrolled members. The Tribe is governed by a seven-member council, elected by the General Council of all members, which oversees all branches of Tribal government and enterprise. Tribal Council meetings are held at least twice a month, and are open to all enrolled Tribal members. Tribal enterprises include the Little Creek Casino and Hotel, Salish Seafoods, Harstine Oyster Company, Kamilche Trading Post, Business Development Center (BDC) and Skookum Creek Tobacco Company. Tribal departments include Community Development, Cultural Resources, Health & Human Services, Human Resources, Information Systems, Tu Ha' Buts Learning Center, Legal, Natural Resources, Planning, and Public Safety. Tribal Transportation provides scheduled bus service linking the reservation to connections with Mason Transit and Grays Harbor Transit service.

In 2001, a Cultural Resources department was formed. Working under an agreement with South Puget Sound Community College and the State Historic Preservation Office, one of the department's projects has been the partial excavation of an extensive tribal village site in Mud Bay, estimated to be approximately 500 years old. In 2001, dedication ceremonies were held for the newly constructed Squaxin Island Museum Library and Research Center (MLRC), which provides a variety of cultural and educational programs and events, and where

artifacts from the ancient village site at Mud Bay are on exhibit. The facility includes a library, archives, research center, cultural and historical exhibits, collection care and storage areas, classrooms, and museum store.

### **European American Settlement**

The first Euro-Americans to come to Thurston County were part of the British Vancouver Expedition under the command of Captain George Vancouver. Lt. Peter Puget, a member of the Vancouver Expedition and Captain George Vancouver explored the southernmost tip of Puget Sound in 1792. They returned to the mother ship *The Discovery* disappointed that they had not found the Northwest Passage. In 1824, another British expedition left Fort Astoria to explore the territory between the Columbia and the Fraser River. James McMillan led the party up the Chehalis River to the Black River. From there they followed the Indian portage routes through Black Lake to Tumwater and then to Eld Inlet.

The first non-Native American settlers were the Hudson's Bay Company. They began their northwest operations in 1824, and in 1829 moved their primary headquarters to a location near the Columbia River at Ft. Vancouver. The Hudson's Bay Company established several large farming areas in Thurston County including areas near Hawk's (Tyrell's) Prairie, near Yelm and at Tenalquot near Rainier. The company's primary operations were Ft. Nisqually, near present day Northwest Landing, and a large farm just east of the Nisqually River in present day Pierce County.

In 1841, American Lt. Commander Charles Wilkes and his party of explorers were the first Americans to explore the region. His expedition mapped and named landmarks throughout the region. Members of his expedition lent their names to Budd, Totten, Henderson, and Eld Inlets of Puget Sound in Thurston County. Wilkes traveled by water and also overland, probably following pre-established Indian and Hudson's Bay trails.

The first permanent non-Native American settlers settled in Thurston County in 1845. Part of an overland train from Missouri, the Simmons/Bush Party determined to go northward from their wintering-over place on the Columbia at Washougal that year. They selected a site at the falls of the Deschutes near Puget Sound at what is now Tumwater, thus creating the first permanent American settlement on Puget Sound and in Thurston County in 1845. Seven others and their families who

were with the party settled within a radius of six miles on the prairies around Tumwater. During 1846-47 they set up a gristmill and sawmill at the site utilizing the water power of the falls at Tumwater.

The Simmons/Bush party opened a flood-tide of settlement in the county and succeeding years brought more and more settlers taking claims on the natural prairies and riverine areas around the county. The prairies had been periodically burned off by Indians to keep open land for camas and other root foodstuffs. The Skookumchuck River, Nisqually River, Scatter Creek, Black River, Deschutes River, and Chehalis River all drew the early American settlers to their fertile banks.

American settlers also took advantage of the federal Donation Land Claim law, which granted tracts of land up to 640 acres to those staking claim before 1850, and somewhat less acreage to those arriving between 1850 and 1855.

On January 12, 1852 Thurston County was created in the then Oregon Territory, and in November 1853 Washington became a separate territory, and Olympia was designated as the temporary (made permanent in 1855) capital. Thurston County, originally to be called Simmons County, in honor of Tumwater-area pioneer Michael Simmons, was named for Samuel Thurston when it was founded in 1852. Samuel Thurston was the first delegate to Congress from the Oregon Territory. He died in 1851 while on his way home from the nation's capital.

In the winter of 1854, newly appointed Territorial Governor Isaac Stevens negotiated his first treaty in the territory for removal of the Indians to reservations, clearing the title to land for new settlers. This Medicine Creek Council was held just north of what is now Interstate 5 on the Nisqually Delta in December, 1854. The Nisqually, Squaxin Island, Muckleshoot and Puyallup peoples signed the Medicine Creek Treaty, ceding their rights to 2.5 million acres of Western Washington tribal lands in exchange for the guarantee of reservation lands and hunting and fishing rights. The Confederated Tribes of the Chehalis have never signed a treaty with the United States and were awarded reservation lands in 1864 by Executive Order.

The actions of the treaty, coupled with increased settlement brought Native Americans and settlers into conflict, resulting in the Puget Sound Indian War of 1855-56. Settlers gathered in blockhouses,

pioneer log fortifications that became small towns during the period. Farming and development were at a standstill until the conclusion of the war in later 1856.

Early on, County settlers formed their own schools. Some of the earliest schools in the territory were located in Thurston County. Michael T. Simmons in 1849 was named the first postmaster at Nisqually (later moved to Olympia). Post offices were located at Jamestown in 1859, and at Coal Bank, later known as Tenino, in 1860.

Olympia was the prominent town on the Sound for many years into the 1860s as the territorial capital city. Olympia was also the location of the first newspaper of the territory and designated as the Port of Entry for Puget Sound by the U.S. Custom's Service from 1851 to 1854.

The 1870s were the era of the railroad. The Northern Pacific Railroad reached Tenino in 1872, then known as Coal Bank, and made that town the hub of activity for southern Thurston County. The town of Tenino was platted in 1873. By the 1870s, Tumwater had developed rapidly along the falls of the Deschutes River where many manufacturers were located, earning it the title of "Lowell of the Pacific." But both Olympia and Tumwater were by-passed by the mainline of the Northern Pacific Railroad.

That same year three settlers, William Buckley, Samuel Colter and J. B. David, selected a site for a railroad depot and christened it BUCODA after their own names. The railroad also ran through Yelm in 1873 and new stores and businesses sprung up along the tracks. Developers were hoping for a railroad out to Puget on Johnson Point in 1870 when the townsite was first platted.

In 1879 the first territorial prison opened at Bucoda. In that same year, Thomas Rutledge applied for a post office and moved a large mounting rock into his front yard. Rutledge received the post office but was denied the name "The Rock" for the location and instead designated the area "Little Rock."

By the 1880s logging and industry increased throughout the county and new areas of settlement opened up. By 1889, 40 logging camps operated around Thurston County. New mills and settlers were at South Union, Independence and Bucoda. In southeast Thurston County, logging was underway at Lake Lawrence in 1892 and at the Shore Shingle Mill nearby. Loggers were also active around Summit Lake during the period.

The Nisqually area was known as Maxfield during that period after the McConnell's who operated a hotel there. By 1887 the prison closed at Bucoda but in that same year Northwestern Coal Mine began operation at Bucoda and in 1888 a mill was operating. In Tenino, the sandstone quarrying industry began in the 1880s and Tenino was in full swing by the decade of the 1890s.

With the advent of Washington Statehood in 1889, numbers of Thurston County communities were platted and began to be served by railroads, inevitably bringing development. Rochester was platted in 1890 by John L. Nye and Fred Sarjent. Sam Woodruff platted Gate in 1890 and also in that year, Fred and George Stocking platted the town of Grand Mound.

The town of Littlerock was also platted in the 1890s. The Tacoma, Olympia and Grays Harbor railroad came through the town in 1890 and a store and hotel were built to accommodate the traffic. With the coming of the railroad through Nisqually in 1891, it too was platted as a townsite. Although there were scattered settlers already in the area, a group of developers from Binghamton, New York platted the town of Rainier in 1891 with big hopes for new development which fizzled but the town retains its New York-inspired street names. Olympia retained its title as capital of the new state and instituted wide-ranging improvements such as street cars, electricity, and new stone and brick business blocks.

With the coming of statehood for Washington in 1889, provisions were made to enable the purchase of tidelands for oyster production. As early as 1853, settlers began appreciating the qualities of the oyster. Indians often sold oysters to settlers and by 1868 a brisk trade with San Francisco in Olympia oysters was under way. Beginning about 1890 the native population of bivalves was augmented through oyster cultivation. Oyster boats and rafts for harvesting and washing became common. In 1900 oystermen began damming the natural tidelands to create more, extensive beds for oyster cultures. The high point of oyster production occurred in the 1920s. Eventually, native stocks were depleted by pollution from nearby pulp mills and Japanese Pacific oysters were later introduced.

In 1891 Woodland officially became known as Lacey and in 1893 construction began on the first buildings of St. Martin's College in that locale. The school officially opened in 1895.

The first years of the 20th century were an era of continued

development throughout the county. The Bordeaux Brothers built the Mumby Mill at Bordeaux in the Black Hills in 1902. The Mud Bay Logging Company also commenced logging after 1900 in the Black Hills. The post office at Delphi was established in 1900, with the influx of Mud Bay loggers. At Independence, the Finnish and Swedish Lutheran residents each built Evangelical churches, the Swedish in 1902, and the Finnish in 1909. With the coming of the Union Pacific and Milwaukee railroads in 1908 a depot went up. The site became known as Helsing Junction named for the homeland of many residents at Helsinki.

By 1900 Rochester was a boomtown with a hotel, stores, and a livery stable located along railroad tracks. In 1907 the Maytown Mill began operations springing up in an area that railroad men were unsure was going to become a town. According to some accounts, this is how the area got its name, a “maybe town”.

After a fire in 1902, the Mutual Lumber Company was re-built and resumed full operations. In 1907 the Washington Union Coal Co. a subsidiary of Union Pacific Railroad opened up its mining operations at Tono (a shorthand name for “Ton of Coal”).

Tenino incorporated in 1906 and was equipped with modern telephone and electrical utilities. The retail section of the town burned in 1906 and was rebuilt with sandstone buildings to illustrate the uses of the Tenino sandstone.

The townsite of Boston Harbor was developed in 1907.

In 1907 the Milwaukee Road Railroad extended its rails from Tacoma through McKenna to Maytown and Centralia, and later south to Grays Harbor. As it progressed timberlands were tapped and every small town along its tracks boasted a mill or logging operation. The Point Defiance Line of the Northern Pacific Railroad line cut across the County in 1916. In the 1920s a new logging area opened up at Vail in the south County and a new rail line from the Vail operations to Henderson Inlet was built.

Along with lumber mills came the threat of fires. Yelm, Rochester, Bucoda, Rainier, and Gate all suffered major fires. Communities rebuilt and new mills took the place of the earlier facilities, which were often where the fires originated.

Although the inlets of Puget Sound had long been popular summer camping sites, new roads and automobile travel opened up the areas to permanent homes. At Butler Cove, prestigious homes were built in the 1920s in conjunction with the golf course and country club. The 1920s were also a period of expansion around the lakes of the County as automobile travel increased mobility and brought residents to local resorts.

Community groups formed in many areas of the County including Rignall Hall at Hunter's Point, the Friendly Grove Community, and at Freedom Hall (later Spurgeon Creek Grange). Many of the granges in the County were built during the 1920s including the Prosperity, Skookumchuck, and Violet Prairie buildings, and still others took over schoolhouses as the districts were consolidated.

At Gull Harbor, German immigrants settled to work in the area. At the Sunnybay Plantation near Gull Harbor, the Olympia Cannery, located on the Olympia waterfront, developed a fruit ranch. In Grand Mound and Rochester the strawberry fields were creating a brisk business during the 1920s as well.

The state established Primary State Highways starting in 1913. The concrete Pacific Highway (State Route 1), which began at the Canadian border and extended through Thurston County on its way to the Oregon border, was completed in 1922. The Olympic Highway (Olympia-Port Angeles-Olympia), later State Highway 9, was designated as a primary highway in 1919. Tenino was on the main auto route transforming the town into a service stop with lunch counters, auto dealers, and service stations.

During the 1910s and 1920s many Swedes and Swede Finns emigrated to the area, working often in the lumber camps but many cleared the cut-over forest lands of the County into productive farmland.

The depression of the 1930s affected the County as it did most of the country. The County did benefit from a number of projects of the Roosevelt administration to promote building and jobs. In Tumwater, the repeal of Prohibition spurred the construction of the new brewery in 1933. A Tenino Bank issued wooden scrip upon its closure in 1932, which became world renowned.

By the 1940s most of the lumber had been cut from the Black Hills and the operations of the Mud Bay Logging and Bordeaux Brothers had left the area. During World War II, several military training areas

were located in the county including at the Olympia Airport, which was a training facility. The 37th Fighter squadron was part of the 55th Fighter Group between July 22, 1942 and August 23, 1943 at the site. The squadron began flying P-43 Lancers and converted to P-38 Lightnings. The squadron had 180 enlisted men and 35 officers based at the airport. After the war, the airport was a surplus site for military aircraft. It was transferred back to the City of Olympia in 1947. Other military groups practiced blowing up bridges by dynamiting the logging trestles in the Capitol Forest, since they were no longer needed for logging. An amphibious landing training site was on Henderson Inlet.

The “Mothball Fleet,” as it was known, anchored off Gull Harbor from March 1946 to June 1972. The ships were used during the Korean War and Suez Crisis. Some of them were used as a storehouse for wheat beginning in 1953 and ending in 1959.

During the 1950s and 1960s, the new interstate highway system was built through the County redirecting traffic away from Nisqually, downtown Olympia, and Tenino. The new roadway also sliced through historic Tumwater, resulting in the razing or moving of most of the town.

During the 1950s, a lawsuit by Olympia business people mandated that the headquarters of state agencies be located in Olympia. This was later interpreted to mean the larger Olympia, Lacey and Tumwater areas. The mandated presence of state agencies in these areas spurred growth in state employment in the county.

During the 1960s, Thurston County became the site of a significant impetus on the part of the treaty tribes to re-assert their fishing rights granted through the Medicine Creek Treaty of 1854. Franks’ Landing near the Nisqually River was the site of national news throughout the era as tribal members asserted their fishing rights. The Boldt Decision by Federal Judge George Boldt, upheld by the U.S. Supreme Court in 1973, guaranteed these rights.

Despite the decline in the traditional industries of logging and quarrying, the area has experienced significant growth. Lacey was incorporated in 1966, the newest town in the County and that same year the first of the area shopping centers, South Sound Center opened there. Newer areas of development include those around the lakes and bay shores where waterfront homes were constructed in such areas as Johnson Point and Cooper Point.

The development of the Evergreen State College in the 1960s encompassed a large area of southern Cooper Point.

Since the mid 1990s Yelm has developed significantly through the influx of population related to the installation of a sewer system.

In 1990, the state instituted the Growth Management Act which mandated established growth areas in the county and appropriate zoning to preserve farmland, mineral land, and forest land in other parts of the county.

As an area of human habitation for thousands of years initially by Salish people and subsequently by the British and Americans, the history of Thurston County reflects its location in the verdant forests and prairies of southwest Washington. Notable for its many Puget Sound inlets, the County has a history centered around development of its natural resources and its title as the seat of state government. The County's many archaeological and historic resources reflect this long era of human interaction with the distinctive qualities of the area. The history of the County is a continuum from the earliest Salish people to the present.

## Historic and Archaeological Preservation

Thurston County's rich legacy of pre-historic and historical cultural resources extends back thousands of years to the earliest habitation of the Coastal Salish people, ancestors of the members of the current Nisqually Tribe, Squaxin Island Tribe, and Confederated Tribes of the Chehalis Reservation.

Related to its long history of human habitation, the County has significant cultural resources that have been documented through historic preservation efforts beginning locally in the 1950s. Historic resources include archaeological sites, historic sites, buildings, cemeteries, objects, and structures ranging from the important Native American village site on Mud Bay to the historic Bush Butternut Tree.

Beginning in the mid 1980s the Washington State Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation undertook a comprehensive survey of historic resources of Thurston County. Additional survey activities have occurred since that time, and in 2003 Thurston Regional Planning Council updated the information, creating an accessible database and map of these resources. The Washington State Office of

**Table I-4** shows identified historic properties in Thurston County as of 2006.

Archaeology and Historic Preservation also maintains a confidential record of known archaeological sites. The Nisqually Tribe, Squaxin Island Tribe, and Confederated Tribes of the Chehalis each have cultural resource staff as well. Not all archaeological properties or sites are published, and knowledge about their location and significance remains a tribal matter.

The cities of Olympia, Lacey, Tumwater, Yelm, and Thurston County have established historic preservation programs. Each of these jurisdictions has established a Historic Inventory of properties and Register of Historic Places, as well as procedures for identifying and protecting cultural resources.

Although they do not have historic preservation programs, Bucoda, Rainier, and Tenino have historic resources and provide goals of preserving and protecting historic resources in their comprehensive plans.

Information on State and National Historic Preservation programs is available at [www.dahp.wa.gov](http://www.dahp.wa.gov).

In addition to local historic preservation programs, state and national historic registers also serve to preserve and protect local cultural resources. The Washington Heritage Register (WHR) recognizes historic and cultural properties that are significant to local communities and to the state. The National Register (NR) is a listing of the country's most significant historic properties. Properties nominated to the National Register automatically receive listing in the Washington Heritage Register.

**Table I-1  
Thurston County Land Area, 2009**

Jurisdiction		Land Area <sup>1</sup>		
		Acres	Square Miles	Percent
Bucoda	<b>Total</b>	<b>380</b>	<b>0.6</b>	<b>0.1%</b>
Lacey	City	10,550	16.5	2.2%
	UGA	10,645	16.6	2.3%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>21,195</b>	<b>33.1</b>	<b>4.5%</b>
Olympia	City	11,859	18.5	2.5%
	UGA	4,119	6.4	0.9%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>15,978</b>	<b>25.0</b>	<b>3.4%</b>
Rainier	City	1,105	1.7	0.2%
	UGA	319	0.5	0.1%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>1,424</b>	<b>2.2</b>	<b>0.3%</b>
Tenino	City	924	1.4	0.2%
	UGA	65	0.1	0.0%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>989</b>	<b>1.5</b>	<b>0.2%</b>
Tumwater	City	9,274	14.5	2.0%
	UGA	5,812	9.1	1.2%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>15,086</b>	<b>23.6</b>	<b>3.2%</b>
Yelm	City	3,634	5.7	0.8%
	UGA	2,396	3.8	0.5%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>6,030</b>	<b>9.4</b>	<b>1.3%</b>
Grand Mound UGA	<b>Total</b>	<b>983</b>	<b>1.5</b>	<b>0.2%</b>
<b>Chehalis Reservation<sup>2</sup></b>		<b>833</b>	<b>1.3</b>	<b>0.2%</b>
<b>Nisqually Reservation<sup>2</sup></b>		<b>1,700</b>	<b>2.7</b>	<b>0.4%</b>
<b>Total Cities</b>		<b>37,725</b>	<b>58.9</b>	<b>8.0%</b>
<b>Total UGAs</b>		<b>24,339</b>	<b>38.0</b>	<b>5.2%</b>
<b>Total Reservations<sup>2</sup></b>		<b>2,532</b>	<b>4.0</b>	<b>0.5%</b>
<b>Rural Unincorporated County</b>		<b>406,242</b>	<b>634.8</b>	<b>86.3%</b>
<b>Thurston County Total</b>		<b>470,839</b>	<b>735.7</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Source: TRPC.

Explanation: UGA - Urban Growth Area: Unincorporated area designated to be annexed into city limits to accommodate future urban growth.

<sup>1</sup>Land area includes lakes and other land-locked water bodies.

<sup>2</sup>Data is for Thurston County portion of reservation only.

**Table I-2**  
**Annexations by Jurisdiction, 1990/91-2008/09**

Year	Annexation in Square Miles							Total
	Bucoda	Lacey	Olympia	Rainier	Tenino	Tumwater	Yelm	
1990/91	0.000	0.123	0.375	0.000	0.000	0.003	0.020	0.521
1991/92	0.000	0.263	0.014	0.000	0.000	0.018	0.013	0.308
1992/93	0.000	2.211	0.008	0.004	0.000	0.072	0.015	2.310
1993/94	0.000	0.483	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.010	4.034	4.527
1994/95	0.000	0.249	0.008	0.000	0.015	0.064	0.388	0.724
1995/96	0.006	1.891	0.140	0.000	0.000	0.094	0.000	2.131
1996/97	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.020	0.000	0.000	0.010	0.030
1997/98	0.000	0.430	0.120	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.020	0.570
1998/99	0.000	0.123	0.330	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.007	0.460
1999/00	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.010	0.000	-0.002	0.075	0.083
2000/01	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.062	0.022	0.022	0.000	0.106
2001/02	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
2002/03	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.275	0.000	0.275
2003/04	0.000	0.035	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.044	0.000	0.079
2004/05	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.410	0.070	0.480
2005/06	0.000	0.000	0.110	0.000	0.000	0.090	0.020	0.220
2006/07	0.000	0.000	0.500	0.000	0.000	1.060	0.000	1.560
2007/08	0.000	0.160	0.460	0.020	0.000	0.020	0.010	0.670
2008/09	0.000	0.000	0.004	0.062	0.603	2.518	0.020	3.207
<b>Total Miles</b>	<b>0.006</b>	<b>5.933</b>	<b>2.069</b>	<b>0.178</b>	<b>0.640</b>	<b>4.698</b>	<b>4.702</b>	<b>18.261</b>

**Source:** Washington State Office of Financial Management; OFM Forecasting Office, 2008 Population Trends.

**Explanation:** Data as of April 2, previous year through April 1 of recorded year. See Map 3 in Chapter II for annexations.

**Table I-3  
Thurston County Weather**

Month	Average Temperature (Degrees Farenheit)				Precipitation (Inches)		Average Total Snowfall (Inches)
	2008		Normal <sup>1</sup>		2008	Normal <sup>1</sup>	Normal <sup>1</sup>
	High	Low	High	Low			
Jan	43.2	29.1	44.5	31.6	6.7	8.0	7.3
Feb	49.5	32.9	49.2	32.4	4.0	5.7	3.7
Mar	49.9	32.2	53.3	33.8	4.8	5.1	1.9
Apr	54.3	34.0	59.0	36.5	2.3	3.3	0.1
May	64.8	44.3	65.8	41.6	0.5	2.0	0.0
Jun	67.9	45.2	71.0	46.7	1.4	1.5	0.0
Jul	76.5	48.7	77.1	49.5	0.4	0.7	0.0
Aug	75.8	52.1	77.1	49.5	1.9	1.2	0.0
Sep	72.0	45.1	71.6	45.2	0.3	2.0	0.0
Oct	59.0	40.1	60.5	39.7	3.4	4.7	0.0
Nov	53.6	39.3	50.5	35.6	9.4	8.2	1.3
Dec	40.7	29.4	44.8	32.7	5.1	8.2	3.9
<b>Average</b>	<b>58.9</b>	<b>39.4</b>	<b>60.4</b>	<b>39.6</b>			
<b>Total</b>					<b>40.2</b>	<b>50.6</b>	<b>18.2</b>

**Source:** National Weather Service, Olympia Weather Station ([www.wrcc.dri.edu](http://www.wrcc.dri.edu)).

**Explanation:** <sup>1</sup>“Normal” is the statistical average of data from June 1, 1948 to June 30, 2008. The Centralia Weather Station was used for the 2007 Profile, as data from the Olympia Weather Station, the station normally used for Thurston County weather data, was unavailable. This explains the changes in temperature, precipitation, and snowfall that are reflected in the tables from the 2007 and 2008 Profiles.

**Table I-4**  
**Identified Historic Properties in Thurston County, July 2006**

Jurisdiction	Historic Register			Survey/ Inventory	Total <sup>1</sup>
	National	State	Local		
Bucoda	1	1	0	3	3
Lacey	2	4	5	241	242
Olympia	26	35	213	557	562
Rainier	1	2	0	2	3
Tenino	3	4	0	25	27
Tumwater	7	7	15	179	179
Yelm	0	0	6	170	170
Thurston County (uninc.)	17	21	43	131	133
<b>Thurston County Total<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>57</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>282</b>	<b>1,308</b>	<b>1,319</b>

**Source:** Thurston County's historic properties inventory database (designed by the Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation; data entered by TRPC).

**Explanations:** Historic properties include buildings, structures, objects, sites, and districts. This table does not include archaeological resources, nor does it reflect tribal cultural resources.

<sup>1</sup>The total number of properties does not equal the sum of the jurisdictions because some properties are listed on more than one register.