**Coastal Region**

**Physical Features**

The Washington Coast lies along the western coastline of the United States. This region is only 40 to 70 miles wide, making it long and very narrow. Because of all the rain, there is heavy vegetation near the coast. The Olympic Mountains tower nearly 8,000 feet over the Coastal Region in dome-like structures. The Willapa Hills, with elevations from 1,000 to 3,000 feet, form a ridge from the Chehalis River Valley to the Columbia River. The Pacific Ocean provides the western boundary of the Coastal Region.

**Climate and Natural Resources** 

Washington’s Coastal Region is divided into two climate regions, the low-lying coast and the coastal mountains. Rainfall varies in these two climate regions, which receive from 40 inches along the coast to 150 inches of rain per year in the Olympic Mountains. The incredible rainfall in the mountains makes this part of the Coastal Region the wettest region in the United States! All over the Coastal Region, the summers are cool and dry. Winters on the coast are mild and gray. In the mountains heavy snowfall is common, ranging from 10-30 inches in the lower elevations to as much as 500 inches at the highest elevations! The Coastal Region relies heavily on the ocean for harbors, transportation, food, and tourism. One result of the region’s mild, rainy climate is an abundant variety of plant and animal life. Timber is also an important resource of the Coastal Region.

**Industry**

Local economies in the Coastal Region are often based around tourism, including outdoor recreation sports of sport fishing, kayaking, and canoeing the abundant waters, as well as hunting in its forests for elk, moose, and other large mammals. Fishing is the major industry, and the day’s seafood catch can be shipped from harbors in the Coastal Region.

**Native American Tribes** 

Two tribes occupy the Coastal Region today: the Makah and the Quinault. The Makah Nation Reservation is on the Olympic Peninsula and includes the town of Neah Bay. The sea has always been a large part of the Makah’s livelihood, from fishing to whaling to seal fur trading. The Quinault Nation consists of the Quinault and Queets tribes, along with descendants of five other coastal tribes: the Quileute, Hoh, Chehalis, Chinook, and Cowlitz. They call themselves Canoe People or people of the cedar tree, which supplies the wood for their canoes. Today 60% of the reservation population lives in Taholah, at the mouth of the Quinault River.



**Major Cities and Landmarks**

There are no large cities in the Coastal Region; however, there are many small communities around the inlets of the coast. Some, like Long Beach and Ocean Shores, are popular tourist centers. Others, such as Neah Bay, are centers of population for Native Americans. Two landmarks of the Coastal Region are the Strait of Juan de Fuca and Cape Disappointment.

