

# Coast Range Association Population Study: Rural Western Oregon

A Comparison of 1990 and 2020  
Community Population

Population loss (white areas) or poor growth (light grey) occurred in all of Oregon’s rural areas. Over time, we believe long-term population change reflects local economic vitality. Here’s the map of our research.

Almost all average (dark grey) or strong (black) rural population growth occurred near urban areas, the Willamette Valley or select coastal communities.

Three circled areas with a high percentage of private forests saw population loss or poor population growth. Those areas are Clatsop and Columbia counties, the Hwy 20 corridor between Philomath and Toledo, and Coos County.

Coos County forests are 62% privately owned. If any county should benefit from unrestricted logging it was Coos County. Yet, Coos County had the worst performance for population growth of all western Oregon counties. The county lost population between 1990 and 2020.

The Coast Range Association (CRA) population study is based on a set of rural community boundaries defined for the entire area of the Northwest Forest Plan. See Donoghue, E.M.; Sutton, N.L. 2006. **Community Socioeconomic Information System (CSIS)**. General Technical Report PNW-GTR-672. Portland, OR: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Pacific Northwest Research Station.

The CSIS has socioeconomic data for each community using information from the 1990 and 2000 Census. The Coast Range Association updated each CSIS defined community with data from the 2010 and 2020 U.S. Census. The difficult work of integrating two new Census data sets into the CSIS geospatial boundaries was accomplished by Spencer Zinke - a 2022 graduate from UCLA in Geography. CRA staff then characterized each community’s population change between 1990 and 2020 according to four categories. Those four categories are either population loss or one of three growth categories related to Oregon’s 1990 to 2020 population growth of 49%.

**Categories of Population Change**

**Loss** = An absolute decline in population (<0%)

**Poor Growth** = Half or less of Oregon’s 1990-2020 population growth of 49%. (0% to 24.5%)

**Average Growth** = 24.6% growth to 73.5% growth

**Strong Growth** = >73.6% growth or greater

