Gilliam County, Oregon

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Coordinates: 45.38°N 120.21°W

Gilliam County is one of the 36 counties in the U.S. state of Oregon. As of the 2010 census, the population was 1,871,[1] making it the third-least populous county in Oregon. The county seat is Condon.[2] The county was established in 1885 and is named for Cornelius Gilliam,[3] who commanded the forces of the provisional government of Oregon after the Whitman Massacre.

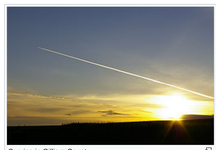
Gilliam County
U.S. county

Gilliam County Courthouse in Condon

Location within the U.S. state of Oregon

Oregon's location within the U.S.
Coordinates: 45°23'N 120°13'W

Country	United States
State	Oregon
Founded	February 25, 1885
Seat	Condon
Largest city	Condon
Area	
• **Total**	1,223 sq mi (3,170 km²)
• **Land**	1,205 sq mi (3,120 km²)
• **Water**	18 sq mi (50 km²) 1.5%%
Population (2010)	
• **Total**	1,871
• **Estimate** (2019)	1,912
• **Density**	1.6/sq mi (0.6/km²)
Congressional district	2nd
Website	www.co.gilliam.or.us



Sunrise in Gilliam County

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History [edit]

Old grain elevator in Gwendolen, in Gilliam County.

The Oregon Legislative Assembly created Gilliam County on February 25, 1885, from the eastern third of Wasco County after residents complained that they were too far from their county seat in The Dalles. The first Gilliam county seat was at Alkali, now Arlington. The question of a permanent county seat was placed on general election ballots in 1886, 1888, and again in 1890, when voters chose to move the county seat to Condon, known to early settlers as "Summit Springs." Once the question of the location of the county seat was settled, voters in Gilliam County proved reluctant to provide a courthouse in Condon. The county government operated out of a two-room house until 1903, when the county court appropriated money to construct a courthouse. This courthouse burned down in 1954 and was replaced the following year with the current courthouse.

The Shepherds Flat Wind Farm, an 845 megawatt (MW) wind farm, began construction near Arlington in 2009, shortly after approval by state regulators. The wind farm was being built by Caithness Energy using General Electric (GE) 2.5 MW wind turbines, and it will supply electricity to Southern California Edison. In April, 2011, Google announced they had invested $100 million in the project. The wind farm was estimated to have an economic impact of $16 million annually for Oregon.

Geography [edit]

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the county has a total area of 1,223 square miles (3,170 km²), of which 1,205 square miles (3,120 km²) is land and 18 square miles (47 km²) (1.5%) is water.[4]

Adjacent counties [edit]

- Klickitat County, Washington - north
- Morrow County - east
- Wheeler County - south
- Wasco County - southwest
- Sherman County - west

Demographics [edit]

2000 census [edit]

As of the census[10] of 2000, there were 1,915 people, 819 households, and 543 families living in the county. The population density was 2 people per square mile (1/km²). There were 1,043 housing units at an average density of 1 per square mile (0/km²). The racial makeup of the county was 96.76% White, 0.16% Black or African American, 0.84% Native American, 0.16% Asian, 1.15% from other races, and 0.94% from two or more races. 1.83% of the population were Hispanic or Latino of any race. 18.2% were of German, 18.1% American, 12.6% English, 12.5% Irish and 5.3% Scottish ancestry.

There were 819 households, out of which 27.60% had children under the age of 18 living with them, 57.90% were married couples living together, 5.90% had a female householder with no husband present, and 33.60% were non-families. 29.50% of all households were made up of individuals, and 12.10% had someone living alone who was 65 years of age or older. The average household size was 2.31 and the average family size was 2.85.

In the county, the population was spread out, with 23.20% under the age of 18, 5.40% from 18 to 24, 25.60% from 25 to 44, 26.70% from 45 to 64, and 19.10% who were 65 years of age or older. The median age was 43 years. For every 100 females there were 102.20 males. For every 100 females age 18 and over, there were 96.30 males.

The median income for a household in the county was $33,611, and the median income for a family was $41,477. Males had a median income of $30,915 versus $20,852 for females. The per capita income for the county was $17,659. About 6.70% of families and 9.10% of the population were below the poverty line, including 11.00% of those under age 18 and 6.60% of those age 65 or over.

2010 census [edit]

As of the 2010 United States Census, there were 1,871 people, 864 households, and 508 families living in the county.[11] The population density was 1.6 inhabitants per square mile (0.62/km²). There were 1,156 housing units at an average density of 1.0 per square mile (0.39/km²).[12] The racial makeup of the county was 95.2% white, 1.0% American Indian, 0.7% Pacific islander, 0.2% Asian, 0.2% black or African American, 1.4% from other races, and 1.4% from two or more races. Those of Hispanic or Latino origin made up 4.7% of the population.[11] In terms of ancestry, 28.4% were German, 18.5% were English, 15.5% were Irish, and 8.3% were American.[13]

Of the 864 households, 22.5% had children under the age of 18 living with them, 48.4% were married couples living together, 6.4% had a female householder with no husband present, 41.2% were non-families, and 35.6% of all households were made up of individuals. The average household size was 2.14 and the average family size was 2.74. The median age was 49.7 years.[11]

The median income for a household in the county was $42,148 and the median income for a family was $52,885. Males had a median income of $34,340 versus $35,962 for females. The per capita income for the county was $25,559. About 9.8% of families and 10.6% of the population were below the poverty line, including 18.3% of those under age 18 and 10.8% of those age 65 or over.[14]

Historical population

Census	Pop.	%±
1890	3,600	—
1900	3,201	−11.1%
1910	3,701	15.6%
1920	3,960	7.0%
1930	3,467	−12.4%
1940	2,844	−18.0%
1950	2,817	−0.9%
1960	3,069	8.9%
1970	2,342	−23.7%
1980	2,057	−12.2%
1990	1,717	−16.5%
2000	1,915	11.5%
2010	1,871	−2.3%
2019 (est.)	1,912[5]	2.2%

U.S. Decennial Census[6]
1790-1960[7] 1900-1990[8]
1990-2000[9] 2010-2019[4]

Communities [edit]

Cities [edit]

- Arlington
- Condon (county seat)
- Lonerock

Unincorporated communities [edit]

- Blalock
- Clem
- Gwendolen
- Mayville
- Mikkalo
- Olex
- Rock Creek
- Thirtymile

Government and infrastructure [edit]

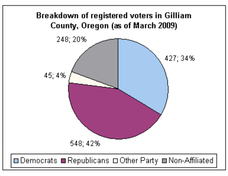
The Northern Oregon Regional Corrections Facility (Norcor), a short-term jail, serves Gilliam, Hood River, Sherman, and Wasco counties.[15]

Politics [edit]

Though Gilliam County is located in central Oregon, politically it falls in line with the eastern side of the state. The majority of registered voters who are part of a political party in Gilliam County, as well as most counties in eastern Oregon, are members of the Republican Party.[16] In the 2008 presidential election, 58.36% of Gilliam County voters voted for Republican John McCain, while 38.74% voted for Democrat Barack Obama and 2.88% of voters either voted for a Third Party candidate or wrote in a candidate.[citation needed] These numbers show a small but clear shift towards the Democratic candidate when compared to the 2004 presidential election, in which 66.3% of Gilliam Country voters voted for George W. Bush, while 32.5% voted for John Kerry, and 1.2% of voters either voted for a third party candidate or wrote in a candidate.[17]

Despite its Republican lean, Gilliam County has been willing to vote for Democrats at the state level; for example, Senator Ron Wyden won the county in the 1998, 2004, 2010, and 2016 elections.

Presidential elections results [show]



Economy [edit]

The view westward of a wheat field off Highway 19.

Gilliam County is in the heart of the Columbia River Plateau wheat-growing region. The economy is based on agriculture, and wheat, barley and beef cattle are the principal products. Properties are large, with an average farm size of about 4,200 acres (17 km²).

The largest individual employers in the county are two subsidiaries of Waste Management Inc., Chemical Waste Management of the Northwest and Oregon Waste Systems, Inc., who run two regional waste disposal landfills. By levying a fee of $1 a ton, Gilliam County receives enough money to pay the first $500 of the property tax bills of its inhabitants, an amount that covers the full tax bill for almost half of the county inhabitants, as well as funding other county projects.

Hunting, fishing and tourism are secondary industries. Transportation also contributes to the local economy; two major rivers, the John Day and Columbia, cross the area east-to-west, as does Interstate 84. Oregon Route 19 connects the county's major cities north-to-south and provides access to the John Day Valley.

See also [edit]

- National Register of Historic Places listings in Gilliam County, Oregon

Oregon portal

References [edit]

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17. ^ "Gilliam County, Oregon". City-Data.Com. Retrieved April 21, 2009.
18. ^ Leip, David. "Dave Leip's Atlas of U.S. Presidential Elections". *uselectionatlas.org*. Retrieved April 11, 2018.

Further reading [edit]

- Turnbull, George S. (1939). "Gilliam County". *History of Oregon Newspapers*. Binfords & Mort.

External links [edit]

- Entry for Gilliam County in the *Oregon Blue Book*

Places adjacent to Gilliam County, Oregon [show]

v • t • e **Municipalities and communities of Gilliam County, Oregon, United States** [show]

v • t • e **State of Oregon** [show]

Authority control ISNI: 0000 0004 0448 2828 • VIAF: 148973041 • WorldCat Identities: lccn-n84098182

Categories: Oregon counties | Gilliam County, Oregon | 1885 establishments in Oregon | Populated places established in 1885

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