

Census results for the Shuswap Watershed region -

Information from: <http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2011/dp-pd/prof/search-recherche/lst/page.cfm?Lang=E&GeoCode=59&TABID=1&G=1&Geo1=PR&Code1=10&Geo2=0&Code2=0>)

Overall, the CSRD population grew by .7 percent from 2005 to 2011 (note that the overall BC population grew 7 percent). But that growth largely occurred in Salmon Arm, as there was substantial population reductions in the rural areas. Here are the specifics:

Salmon Arm – plus 9.1 percent (16205 to 17683)

Chase – plus 3.6 percent (2409 to 2495)

Enderby plus 3.7 percent (2828 to 2932)

Sicamous minus 8.8 percent (2676 to 2441)

CSRD

Area C – minus .4 percent (7695 – 7662), (Blind Bay, Sunnybrae, Tappen)

Area D – plus 3.8 percent (3899 – 4047), (Falkland, Salmon River, Deep Creek)

Area E – minus 12.6 percent (1528 – 1335), (Malakwa, Mara Lake)

Area F – minus 13.3 percent (2731 – 2368), (North Shuswap)

RDNO (North Okanagan)

Area F – minus 3.7 percent (4,091 – 3938), (S. Mara Lake, and Shuswap River area including most of Mabel Lake)

Area D – plus .4 percent (2,837 – 2,848), Lumby and N. Okg. forest land)

Area E – plus .5 percent (934 – 939), (Cherryville, and forest land)

Secwepemc First Nations:

Neskonlith (east of Chase)
plus 15 percent, 206 to 237

Sahhalkum 4 (Adams Lake, north of Chase)
plus 3.2 percent, 310 to 320

Quaaout 1 (Little Shuswap Lake)
plus 25.8 percent, 186 to 234

Enderby 2 (Splatsin – formerly Spallumcheen)
plus 10.5 percent, 353 to 390

Switsemaliph (Adams Lake reserve lands near Salmon Arm)
minus .8 percent 130 to 129

Switsemaliph 3 (Neskonlith reserve lands near Salmon Arm)
plus 42.9 percent , 63 to 90

Discussion:

What can be gleaned from this data? Well, specifics are not yet available and when the data is online, there will not be many details as the federal government recently cut the long form Census.

Here in the North Shuswap, environmentalists have been accused of threatening the economy and lowering the population by our opposition to irresponsible growth. Yet the truth is that growth here and in Sicamous in terms of new condos and other recreational properties has been explosive over the last 6 years. Yet the result has been a sharp reduction in population. This is because recreational development does not result in full-time employment and a year-round population. Instead, the result has been a sharp reduction in population where recreational growth has been the greatest. What is to blame for this trend? Obviously the economy has not been conducive to promote growth in rural areas where full time jobs are scarce. The forestry economy has collapsed, in part because of low demand and low prices for lumber. But another major factor is technology, as more timber and lumber is now produced with fewer jobs. Witness the Adams Lake Sawmill, where half the work crew now produces nearly double the lumber output, after the modernization.

Another trend appears to be that seniors are moving to communities like Salmon Arm, rather than to rural and semi-rural areas, as there are more services available in these communities. We know this is the case, as the school population has been steadily declining in Salmon Arm, even though the population has increased significantly. Can we expect any changes to these trends? Hardly, despite approvals of new housing developments. Families are simply not moving into rural areas where there is no work and where the lack of high-speed internet restricts home-based businesses. More seniors are likely to move to the communities as other retirement areas such as Kelowna are becoming overcrowded and thus less desirable. Chase is becoming more of a bedroom community for Kamloops, in part because of the highway improvements. As is Enderby becoming more of a bedroom community for Vernon. And until the economy improves and/or we see new industries set up, we cannot expect an increase in the number of new families anywhere in the Shuswap. And there is no economic data that supports the notion that adding more big box stores (i.e. the dumb centre) would help significantly increase the population!