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Launching through the Surf Traveling Exhibit Panel 07: Pacific City Dories

Tyrone Marshall  
Linfield College

Brenda DeVore Marshall  
Linfield College

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From the earliest settlers to today’s fisherfolk and women, adaptability and innovation have molded the lives of the Pacific City fishers and their boats. The dories of Pacific City have evolved from the double-ender boats rowed on the Nestucca River and later into the ocean to the motorized and technologically advanced square-stern dories of today. The images in these panels reflect some of the innovations in the evolution of the PC dory.

What is a dory? The answer is not simple. Since dory builders and fishers adapt the boats for local conditions and their individual styles, many versions of the dory—coastal, PC or Kiwanda Dory—evolved from the New England Swanseaport, Banks, Gloucester, and other North Atlantic dories. In the 1920s and early 1930s, the standard dories of Pacific City were planked double-enders powered by oars with a compass for navigation. With the addition of gas motors to the fleet in the mid-1930s, small box wells were added to 18- to 24-foot planked double-enders to accommodate the engines. In 1947, the first tiller-type poles were added to commercial boats. In the mid-1960s, the first plywood dories appeared and tilt wells were added eliminating the process of stitching and detaching the motor inside the hull. Cotton hand lines with small lead weights replaced hand-held rods and reels, which had been banned for commercial fishing. By the late 1960s and early 1970s, square sterns began to replace double-enders and rowing during launching and landing was replaced by engine power. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, fiberglassing of wooden dories and molded fiberglass boats appeared. Consoles were added, providing space for electronic gear and a helm for steering. Hand-crank gurdies with wire and packed lines replaced hand-held rods and reels, which had been banned for commercial fishing. By the late 1960s and early 1970s, square-stern dories have evolved from the double-enders and rowing during launching and landing was replaced by engine power. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, fiberglassing of wooden dories and molded fiberglass boats appeared. Consoles were added, providing space for electronic gear and a helm for steering. Hand-crank gurdies with wire and packed lines replaced hand-held rods and reels, which had been banned for commercial fishing. By the late 1960s and early 1970s, square-stern dories were replaced by hydraulic systems. From the LC to sail phones and from LORAN to GPS systems, PC fishers continue to incorporate new technologies and innovative designs in their dories.

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