PUGET SOUND
VITAL SIGNS

VITAL Sign
CULTURAL WELLBEING

Puget Sound is home to people from diverse cultures, some with long-held connections to the region and others who have arrived more recently. The Cultural Wellbeing Vital Sign tells us whether people feel satisfied with their ability to participate in and maintain cultural traditions. Cultural practices and knowledge systems are shaped by ecosystems and are critical to human wellbeing because they provide a sense of belonging, create the foundation for moral development, and define rules for social interaction. There is no question that many of the cultural traditions held by Puget Sound residents are dependent on the health of Puget Sound ecosystems.



Tribal Canoe Journey. Photo credit: NW Treaty Tribes.

VITAL SIGN > INDICATOR	PROGRESS	STATUS
Cultural Wellbeing		
Participation in cultural practices	NO TREND	

Related Strategies

- Awareness of Effects of Climate Change
- Climate Adaptation & Resilience
- Cultural Practices & Local Foods
- Education Partnerships
- Funding
- Outdoor Recreation & Stewardship
- Place Attachment
- Research & Monitoring
- Salmon Recovery
- Stewardship & Motivating Action
- Strategic Leadership & Collaboration

Vital Sign Reporter

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KEY VITAL SIGN MESSAGES

- Because cultural wellbeing is largely subjective, scientists ask residents about their satisfaction with their engagement in four categories of cultural practices related to the environment. **Puget Sound residents that do engage in cultural practices generally feel satisfied with or neutral on their ability to participate in such practices. However, many people report that they do not engage in cultural activities related to the environment.**
- About 50 percent of people are satisfied with their engagement in cultural practices that they consider to be environmentally oriented social activities (such as environmental clubs, festivals, or outdoor events). **Fewer people are satisfied with their engagement in practices they consider to be Native practices (such as Tribal center events, canoe journey, or potlach ceremony).**
- The act of collecting and preparing local foods supports cultural wellbeing and traditions. Engagement in environmentally-based cultural practices may be related to low frequencies of collecting local foods.
- When asked what types of outdoor practices Puget Sound residents consider to be “cultural”, the majority described outdoor social activities such as community clean ups and festivals as well as stewardship activities such as trail maintenance and sustainable living.
- Satisfaction with cultural practices can influence a person’s Sense of Place. For example, residents develop connections to nature through shellfish harvesting.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

- Leadership Council Resolution 2015-02, Human Health and Quality of Life Vital Signs and Indicators
- Human Wellbeing Vital Signs and Indicators for Puget Sound Recovery (2015), technical report describing the recommended portfolio of Puget Sound Human Health and Quality of Life Vital Signs and indicators

OTHER RESOURCES

- Articles related to quality of life in the Encyclopedia of Puget Sound
- Enhancing the Human Wellbeing Vital Signs through Inclusive Engagement Report, Trimbach et al. 2023.

CONTRIBUTING PARTNERS

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TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE VITAL SIGNS VISIT: **vitalsigns.pugetsoundinfo.wa.gov**