

According to the United Nations, "good governance has eight major characteristics. It is participatory, consensus oriented, accountable, transparent, responsive, effective and efficient, equitable and inclusive, and follows the rule of law. It is also responsive to the present and future needs of society." The Good Governance Vital Sign tells us whether people agree with how the environment around them is managed and whether they feel heard in decision-making.



Illabot Creek restoration ribbon-cutting.

### Related Strategies

- Awareness of Effects of Climate Change
- Climate Adaptation & Resilience
- Economic Benefits
- Education Partnerships
- Funding
- Good Governance
- Place Attachment
- Research & Monitoring
- Stewardship & Motivating Action
- Strategic Leadership & Collaboration

| VITAL SIGN > INDICATOR | PROGRESS | STATUS    |
|------------------------|----------|-----------|
| Good Governance        |          |           |
| Good Governance Index  | NO TREND | NO TARGET |

### Vital Sign Reporter

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### Last Updated

09/07/2023

## KEY VITAL SIGN MESSAGES

- Scientists asked Puget Sound residents for their opinions about many aspects of environmental governance in the Puget Sound region. Most people's answers ranged from 'somewhat agree' to 'somewhat disagree' about the seven aspects of good governance, and the average was neutral. Neutrality may mean several things including:
  - Individuals feel some aspects of environmental governance are good and others are bad; therefore, on balance they feel neutral.
  - Individuals feel indifferent about environmental governance.
  - Individuals do not have enough information to create strong opinions.
- Puget Sound residents think of a wide variety of organizations and policy makers at the local, state, tribal, and national level when asked about governance. Examples include Washington State agencies like the Department of Natural Resources, the Department of Ecology, and the Department of Fisheries and Wildlife; Federal agencies like the US EPA and US Forest Service; city and county councils; Indian tribes; Congress; mayors; and even media outlets and nonprofit land trusts.
- How Puget Sound residents feel about environmental governance was about the same across all three surveys conducted between 2018 and 2022. Perceptions about governance are psychological constructs that typically change slowly. Making progress on this Vital Sign would be indicated by more residents over time perceiving the aspects of environmental governance are good.
- Demographic information such as age, race, income, and political ideology explains only very little about opinions about environmental governance.
- Puget Sound residents with a strong [sense of place](#) have more favorable perceptions about environmental governance in Puget Sound. This means that those who feel more strongly connected to Puget Sound tend to trust and feel represented by leaders. Managers and decision makers could focus on fostering people's connections to Puget Sound to improve perceptions about environmental governance.
- The surveys informing the Good Governance Vital Sign were not specific to the Puget Sound Action Agenda or the National Estuary Program; therefore, the Vital Sign offers insight into broader natural resource governance throughout the region.

## 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

- [Measuring spatial associations between environmental health and beliefs about environmental governance](#). Fleming et al. 2022
- 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



TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE VITAL SIGNS VISIT: [vitalsigns.pugetsoundinfo.wa.gov](https://vitalsigns.pugetsoundinfo.wa.gov) OR CONTACT: [vitalsigns@psp.wa.gov](mailto:vitalsigns@psp.wa.gov)