

PUGET SOUND VITAL SIGNS

VITAL Sign SENSE OF PLACE

Sense of place is the extent to which people identify with and feel positively attached to a specific place. The Sense of Place Vital Sign tells us about peoples' emotional connection to Puget Sound and the benefits they experience from being in nature. Several studies have shown that a strong sense of place contributes to human wellbeing and a desire to protect the natural environment.



Sense of Place Vital Sign

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
- Stewardship & Motivating Action
- Strategic Leadership & Collaboration

Vital Sign Reporter

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VITAL SIGN > INDICATOR	PROGRESS	STATUS
Sense of Place		
Overall life satisfaction	NO TREND	NO TARGET
Psychological Wellbeing Index	NO TREND	NO TARGET
Sense of Place Index	NO TREND	NO TARGET

KEY VITAL SIGN MESSAGES

- Puget Sound residents have a strong **sense of place**, **regularly spend time outdoors**, and are largely **satisfied with their lives**.
- Puget Sound residents have a strong sense of pride and identity associated with nature.
- Puget Sound residents spend time outdoors to reduce stress and to experience inspiration.
- Between 2018 and 2022, Puget Sound residents' sense of place of the natural environment did not change.
- Residents' strong connections to nature partly stem from cultural and outdoor activities. For example, residents develop connections to nature through **shellfish harvesting**.
- Puget Sound newcomers and long-term residents share a strong connection to the region's natural environment.
- Residents also feel attached to the region's **shorelines**.
- People with a strong sense of place are likely to be environmental stewards and support pro-environmental plans and policies.
- Sense of place reflects residents' different and shared emotions, memories, values, identities, and actions associated with the natural environment.

- Puget Sound residents' life satisfaction is generally consistent across counties and is slightly higher than other regions of the United States, according to the [World Happiness Report](#).

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](#)
- [Relationship between shoreline armor and sense of place](#)
- [Whose Puget Sound? Examining Place Attachment, Residency, and Stewardship in the Puget Sound Region](#). Trimbach et al. 2020
- [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 OR CONTACT: vitalsigns@psp.wa.gov