The Sound Stewardship Vital Sign tells us 1) about the effectiveness of our management actions related to human behaviors that can affect the health of Puget Sound and 2) the degree to which engagement in stewardship contributes to people’s wellbeing. The myriad problems Puget Sound faces all have one common denominator: human practices and behaviors. Many common day-to-day household behaviors seem benign on their own, but when multiplied by 4.5 million residents their cumulative effect can significantly harm environmental health. Small behavioral changes, on the part of individuals, can negate those impacts. Likewise, when people participate collectively in actions to improve environmental health, their actions can be equally significant. Although people pose the greatest threats to the natural environment of Puget Sound, engagement of citizens in protection and restoration efforts offers the greatest opportunities for recovering Puget Sound.

**Related Strategies**
- Awareness of Effects of Climate Change
- Climate Adaptation & Resilience
- Education Partnerships
- Funding
- Outdoor Recreation & Stewardship
- Place Attachment
- Research & Monitoring
- Stewardship & Motivating Action
- Strategic Leadership & Collaboration

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**Key Vital Sign Messages**

- Over half of Puget Sound residents engage at least monthly in stewardship practices that they feel benefit the environment or are needed by their community.

- Those who engage in stewardship are just as likely to be new residents as long-term residents.

- Residential behaviors that improve Puget Sound health are on the rise since 2012. The 2019 Sound Behavior Index reached its highest value: 1.1. This was the first time the index was above the baseline established in 2012.

- Compared to other parts of the country, Puget Sound residents generally exhibit behaviors that are more environmentally friendly.

- Participating in environmental stewardship activities strengthens the extent to which people identify with and feel positively attached to a specific place.

- Many organizations and agencies provide meaningful stewardship opportunities that improve Puget Sound health, including community science programs, community-based habitat restoration, and shoreline conservation at home.
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

- People and Puget Sound
- Evaluating the Health of Puget Sound: Human Wellbeing
- Social Science Research and Efforts
- Explore articles related to human quality of life in the Encyclopedia of Puget Sound
- Whose Puget Sound? Examining Place Attachment, Residency, and Stewardship in the Puget Sound Region. Trimbach et al. 2020

Contributing Partners

- Oregon State University
- Puget Sound Partnership

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE VITAL SIGNS VISIT: vitalsigns.pugetsoundinfo.wa.gov OR CONTACT: vitalsigns@psp.wa.gov