

# PUGET SOUND VITAL SIGNS

## VITAL Sign FORESTS AND WETLANDS

Forested lands and wetlands are essential to freshwater quality and the overall health of Puget Sound. Forests and wetlands naturally filter water and help with flood mitigation and water storage. They also provide food and habitat for wildlife and support human health and well-being through recreational opportunities and a natural resource-based industry. The Forests and Wetlands Vital Sign tells us about the extent and condition of these important terrestrial habitats.

As Puget Sound's population grows, so does the need for roads, housing, and commercial development. We must balance development pressure with protection of the important functions provided by forests and wetlands.



Forested lands and development.

### Related Strategies

- Awareness of Effects of Climate Change
- Climate Adaptation & Resilience
- Education Partnerships
- Floodplains & Estuaries
- Freshwater Availability
- Funding
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions & Carbon Sequestration
- Research & Monitoring
- Riparian Areas
- Smart Growth
- Stewardship & Motivating Action
- Stormwater Runoff & Legacy Contamination
- Strategic Leadership & Collaboration
- Working Lands
- Working Lands Runoff

### Vital Sign Reporter

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### Last Updated

05/22/2025

VITAL SIGN > INDICATOR	PROGRESS	STATUS
Forests and Wetlands		
Extent of forest cover in the upper, middle, and lower areas of watersheds	INDICATOR TO BE DEVELOPED	NO TARGET
Forest condition	INDICATOR TO BE DEVELOPED	NO TARGET
Wetlands extent and condition	INDICATOR TO BE DEVELOPED	NO TARGET

## KEY VITAL SIGN MESSAGES

Forests and wetlands sustain resilient and diverse food webs and ecosystems. Terrestrial and aquatic systems benefit from the soil, trees, grasses, natural hydrology, and native habitat of these lands.

- We are currently developing indicators to support this Vital Sign, but no indicators are currently being reported.

## BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

### Implementation Strategy

The Partnership and its affiliated network of researchers works with the three Strategic Initiative Lead Teams on Implementation Strategy development and operationalization. Please read more about these teams and our shared work at <https://pugetsoundestuary.wa.gov/recovering-puget-sound/>

- [Habitat Strategic Initiative](#)
  - [Land Development and Cover Implementation Strategy](#)

### Indicator Targets

- 2020 Ecosystem Recovery Targets
  - [Leadership Council Resolution 2011-21, Adopting a 2020 ecosystem recovery target for land cover](#)
  - [Leadership Council Resolution 2011-22, Adopting a 2020 ecosystem recovery target for land development: avoiding development of ecologically important areas](#)
  - [Leadership Council Resolution 2011-23, Adopting a 2020 ecosystem recovery target for land development: directing growth to urban growth areas](#)
  - [Leadership Council Resolution 2011-24, Adopting a 2020 ecosystem recovery target for land development encouraging compact growth patterns](#)
  - [Setting Targets for Ecosystem Condition and Pressure Reductions](#) (Sep 2011 revised version) Technical Memorandum

## OTHER RESOURCES

- [High Resolution Change Detection](#), Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
- [State of our Watersheds](#) report by the Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission
- [Puget Sound Mapping Project](#), Washington Department of Commerce

## 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)