

# PUGET SOUND VITAL SIGNS

## INDICATOR PERCENT OF EMPLOYMENT IN NATURAL RESOURCE INDUSTRIES

This indicator compares employment and wages in natural resource industries, including fishing, shellfish aquaculture, agriculture, timber, and recreation and tourism, to the county totals in the region. The original indicator sought to examine the output of natural resource industries in Puget Sound relative to the total economic output. In the absence of GDP data, employment and wage data are presented to show how natural resource industries are supporting jobs and livelihoods in the region.

**Indicator Progress**



**Target Status**



**Target**

No targets are currently set for this indicator.

**Data Source**

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Economics: National Ocean Watch; Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW); Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) Regional Data: Local Area Personal Income and Employment; Headwaters Economics: Economic Profile System (HW EPS), County Business Patterns, Washington State Department of Natural Resources (WADNR), Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA)

**Indicator Lead**

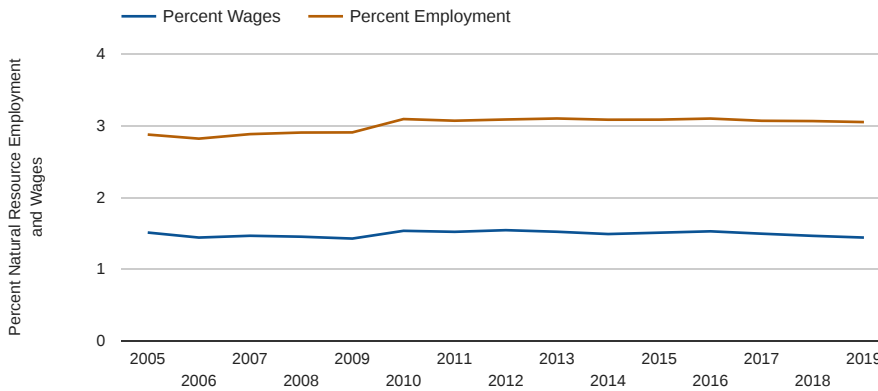
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**Last Updated**

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### Percent of employment in natural resource industries

By: Percentage of Employment and Wages in Natural Resource Industries



Percentage of employment (number of jobs) and percentage of wages in natural resources-based industries out of all industries across the Puget Sound region. Natural resource industries include: aquaculture, agriculture, timber, fishing, and recreation and tourism.

## Key Vital Sign Indicator Results

- Puget Sound natural resource industry employment as a percentage of total employment (across all counties and industries in the Puget Sound region), has remained fairly consistent between 2.8 and 3.1%, indicating no trend for the region overall (there was a noticeable increase in this percentage in 2010).
- Puget Sound natural resource industry wages as a percentage of total wages across all counties and industries in the Puget Sound region was on average 1.45% from 2005 to 2009 before slightly increasing to an average of 1.50% for 2010 through 2019. This indicator has also remained more or less consistent since 2010.
- Overall, the slight increases for the region (starting in 2010) are largely driven by growth in the recreation and tourism sector, but may also be due to industry recovery from the economic recession and growth in the aquaculture industry. In comparison, employment in the timber industry has held steady in recent years while fishing employment has been on a downward trend.
- There are differences among counties for natural resource industry employment as a percentage of total employment across all industries, ranging between a little over 1 and 3% in Thurston, King, and Snohomish counties, to over 14% in San Juan County (view [map](#) for details).
- There are similar differences between counties related to natural resource industry wages as a percentage of total wages across all industries, ranging from approximately 1% each in Thurston, King, and Snohomish counties to over 18% in San Juan County.
- Natural resource industries tend to be a higher percentage of wage and employment in smaller, more rural counties, and counties that have historically relied on the recreation, timber, and agriculture industries.
- Natural resource industry wages as a percent of total wages in Puget Sound tend to be lower than employment when compared to total employment. This implies that natural resource industry jobs are still lower paying relative to other sectors.
- Reporting employment and wage data instead of GDP data shifts the focus more directly toward people and how these industries support jobs and livelihoods in the Puget Sound region. Obtaining GDP data at the time of this indicator update at the desired scale was not feasible, so the percent of employment and wages in natural resource industries out of all industries was identified as a relevant substitute indicator. It should tell a similar story to GDP data that natural resource industries are a relatively small, but consistent, portion of the overall Puget Sound regional economy and that the contribution of these industries varies by county.

## CONTRIBUTING PARTNERS



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