

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 > 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

Vital Sign Reporter

Kenna Kuhn, Puget Sound Partnership
kenna.kuhn@psp.wa.gov

Last Updated

12/19/2024

KEY VITAL SIGN MESSAGES

- A collaboration of federal, state, and local governments, tribes, local recovery groups, nonprofits, and the private sector worked together to develop an [Implementation Strategy](#) of the best approaches to achieve recovery targets for Puget Sound land development and cover.
- The Implementation Strategy identifies key strategies to redirect development pressure and reduce conversion of ecologically important lands, while supporting working lands, and protecting and restoring natural and vegetated areas.
- Central urban centers such as Seattle, Bellevue and Tacoma are experiencing rapid growth. According to the Department of Commerce, as of 2017, less than 10% of growth in the Puget Sound region occurred in rural areas over the past few years. However, as growth continues to increase, there are indications of growing development pressure in rural areas close to urban growth boundaries.

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 OR CONTACT: vitalsigns@psp.wa.gov