**Sound Behavior Index**

**Social Capital Index**

Summary

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**Sound Behavior Index**

Many of our common day-to-day behaviors and practices seem benign on their own, but, when multiplied by 4.5 million residents, their cumulative effects can harm Puget Sound. Reversing this trend - fostering beneficial behaviors and reducing detrimental ones - is a crucial step in Puget Sound’s recovery.

The Sound Behavior Index will track selected practices that can affect water quality and aquatic habitat. The index is based on a survey conducted every two years among a scientifically selected sample of Puget Sound residents. It asks them about specific, measurable, repetitive behaviors on their own properties.

The index does not attempt to include all environmental behaviors, but focuses on those proven to affect aquatic health: toxins, bacterial contamination, vegetation management, animal waste management, and septic system function.

The index distills the region’s environmental performance into a single score, which can be tracked across time. By measuring long-term shifts in behaviors and practices across the Puget Sound region, the index gives policy makers a tool to set priorities for regional and local programs.

**Social Capital Index**

The Social Capital Index measures how connected people are to each other across the 12-county Puget Sound Region.

Social capital generally refers to the levels of trust and community engagement that enable people to accomplish tasks. It can be measured and correlated to social indicators such as educational achievement, crime, economic prosperity, longevity, and health, and to a society’s ability to solve complex problems – including environmental ones. This makes social capital a key part of the social infrastructure we need to recover and maintain Puget Sound’s health.

Social capital is found in a variety of places and forms. It includes community, professional, religious, and recreational organizations and appears in formal and informal social settings. A specific use of social capital is found in the networks that have been created to address Puget Sound issues, including the Puget Sound Partnership’s ECO-Net communications network, the STORM coalition of municipalities, and the nonprofit environmental caucus.

Social capital forms a context for our collective decisions. It also largely defines how we, as individuals, learn and understand new information.

The Puget Sound Social Capital Index (SBI) is a locally adapted version of a social capital index developed at Harvard University’s Kennedy School of Government. The Kennedy School index grew out of the school’s Saguaro Seminar, a project focused on increasing civic engagement in America. The structure of the Puget Sound Social Capital Index will allow us to compare Puget Sound values with nationwide data from the Kennedy School, Pennsylvania State University, and the U.S. Census.