



SKAGIT WATERSHED COUNCIL

Skagit County Opinions on

SALMON RECOVERY ISSUES

May 2005



ELWAY RESEARCH, INC.



SKAGIT WATERSHED COUNCIL

Skagit County Opinions on

SALMON RECOVERY ISSUES

May 2005

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Introduction	1
Methods.....	3
Respondent Profile	4
2. Key Findings	5
3. Summary	10
What do Residents Value About Skagit Co?.....	10
Growth, Land Use Concerns Dominate	12
Land Use: Right or Wrong Direction.....	13
Environmental Indicators	15
Meeting the Challenges.....	16
Willingness to Take Part	17
Leadership & Responsibility.....	18
4. Discussion	20
5. Charts of Major Findings	23
6. Appendix	42
Questionnaire with Topline Data	
Crosstabulation Tables	



SKAGIT WATERSHED COUNCIL

Skagit County Opinions on

SALMON RECOVERY ISSUES

May 2005

INTRODUCTION

As part of its on-going effort to engage the public in the issue of salmon recovery, the Skagit Watershed Council (SWC) commissioned this sample survey of Skagit County residents.

The primary objective of the survey was to help the Council develop effective strategies to communicate with the public about salmon recovery. Recognizing that communication is a two-way process, the first order of business was to understand current public thinking about issues broadly related to salmon recovery in the Skagit River system.

By developing a picture of residents' understanding of the issues, including the context in which those issues are considered, the Council will be in a better position to effectively engage county residents in a constructive conversation about SWC goals, objectives and initiatives.

Specifically, the survey sought to assess resident thinking about:

1. The quality of life in Skagit County - what people value about living here;
2. Trends in quality of life, land use, recreation and environmental issues;
3. Environmental indicators – that is, what do people use as their personal yardstick for the quality of the local environment;
4. The debate in the county over land use for agriculture, recreation, housing, commercial development, and wildlife and salmon habitat;
5. Willingness to participate in activities designed to restore salmon habitat;
6. Leadership for the future of the county.

The survey consisted of interviews with 478 heads of household in the county.

The sample was drawn from the list of registered voters in Skagit County for two reasons: 1) it was believed that registered voter households were more likely to be attentive to public issues and more likely to engage in the public discussion of the issue; and 2) drawing the sample from the registered voter list ensured that the respondents were residents of the county.

Once the household was contacted, we interviewed the male or female head of household. Thus, the individual respondent was not necessarily a registered voter, but at least one person in the household was a voter.

The survey was designed and administered by Elway Research, Inc. The questionnaire was designed in close collaboration with The Skagit Watershed Council. Drafts of questionnaire went through several reviews by the Council and were approved by them.

This report organizes the survey findings and analysis in order of the research questions listed above. The narrative interpretation of findings is followed by annotated charts of the pertinent survey results. A complete set of crosstabulation tables is presented in the appendix.

METHODS

SAMPLE:	478 adult residents of Skagit County.
TECHNIQUE:	Telephone Survey
FIELD DATES:	April 21 st - 27 th , 2005
MARGIN OF ERROR:	±4.5% at the 95% confidence interval. That is, in theory, had all Skagit County heads of household been interviewed, there is a 95% chance the results would be within ±4.5% of the results in this survey.
SAMPLE FRAME:	Households within Skagit County where at least one member of the household is registered to vote. Respondents were not necessarily registered voters.
DATA COLLECTION:	Calls were made during weekday evenings and weekend days. All interviews were conducted by trained, professional interviewers under supervision at a central location. Up to four attempts were made to contact a head of household at each number in the sample before a substitute number was called. Each questionnaire was checked and edited for completeness, and a percentage of each interviewer's calls was re-called for verification.

It must be kept in mind that survey research cannot predict the future. Although great care and the most rigorous methods available were employed in the design, execution and analysis of this survey, these results can be interpreted only as representing the answers given by these respondents to these questions at the time they were interviewed.

RESPONDENT PROFILE

In interpreting these findings, it is important to keep in mind the characteristics of the people actually interviewed. This table presents a demographic profile of the 478 respondents in the survey.

This sample was drawn from the list of registered voters in Skagit County. As the table below indicates, the age profile of the electorate is substantially different from the age profile of the population at large.

This sample was statistically weighted to accurately reflect the age distribution of registered voters. The table below indicates the age distribution of the adult (18+) population in the county, the estimated age distribution of registered voters, the proportion of each category in the original sample, and the statistical weights used to bring the proportions into alignment.

SAMPLE WEIGHTING BY AGE CATEGORY

AGE CATEGORY	% OF ADULT POPULATION	% OF VOTERS	ORIGINAL SAMPLE	WEIGHT
18-35	26%	8%	8%	0.950
26-50	31%	28%	20%	1.425
51-64	22%	33%	33%	0.915
65+	20%	31%	36%	0.865

The statistical “weights” indicated in the table above were applied to respondents interviewed for this survey. For example, the answers given by a respondent between the ages of 26-50 were multiplied by the weight factor of 1.425 so as to proportionally represent the answers of people in that age category in the electorate.

The table on the following page displays the demographic profile of the respondents to this survey, as adjusted by these statistical weights.

Demographic Profile of Respondents

Note: Here and throughout this report, percentages may not add to 100%, due to rounding.

GENDER:	47% Male
	53% Female
AGE:	8% 18-35
	27% 36-50
	32% 51-64
	30% 65+
COMMUNITY	33% Mt. Vernon
	23% Anacortes
	16% Sedro Woolley
	9% Upriver / East of I-5
	9% On the Flats / West of I-5
	2% Darrington
	2% Reservation
7% NA	
HOUSEHOLD:	19% Single, No Children at Home
	47% Couple, No Children at Home
	5% Single, Children at Home
	27% Couple, Children at Home
EMPLOYMENT	17% Self Employed or Business Owner
	21% Private Business
	15% Public Sector
	7% Not Employed
	39% Retired
EMPLOYMENT SECTOR:	4% Agriculture / Forestry
	5% Fishing
	22% Construction / Manufacturing
	12% Transportation/Comm/Utilities
	10% Wholesale / Retail Trade
	34% Business or Professional Services
12% Other	
TIE TO AGRICULTURE:	36% Family Tie to Agriculture
PLACE OF EMPLOYMENT:	40% Skagit County
	12% Outside Skagit County
	48% Not Employed
PROPERTY IN SKAGIT CO:	72% None Other Than Home
	12% 1-5 Acres
	12% 5 or More Acres
INDIAN TRIBE MEMBER	3% Member
ENVIRONMENTALIST:	24% Yes, Active
	30% Yes, Passive
INCOME:	13% \$25,000 or Less
	23% \$25 to \$50,000
	18% \$50 to \$75,000
	16% Over \$75,000
	30% No Answer

KEY FINDINGS

QUALITY OF LIFE

- ◆ **Residents place high value on rural, natural atmosphere**
 - 8 in 10 value the scenic beauty of Skagit County “very much”;
 - 7 in 10 value the rural, small town atmosphere;
 - 7 in 10 value living close to nature “very much” and;
 - 6+ in 10 value outdoor recreation opportunities.

- ◆ **Split on Farmland, Habitat, Forest land**
 - 50% said there is “too little” farmland;
 - 47% said there is “too much” or “right amount”.

 - 43% said too little wildlife habitat;
 - 48% said too much or right amount.

 - 43% said too little forest land;
 - 48% said too much or right amount.

ENVIRONMENTAL INDICATORS

- ◆ **Pluralities rate all 7 indicators offered as “very useful” measures of environmental quality:**
 - Scenic Beauty (74%);
 - Number of Swans, Eagles (60%);
 - Health of Puget Sound (59%);
 - Health of Skagit River (57%);
 - Number of Salmon in Rivers (52%);
 - Changes in Land Use (47%);
 - Number of People Living Here (44%).

CHANGES / TRENDS

- ◆ **Growth, sprawl dominates challenges to things people care about. 48% volunteer growth in open-ended question**

- ◆ **Too Much Development:**
 - 6 in 10 respondents said there is “too much” new housing in the county.

- 5 in 10 said there is “too much” commercial development.
- 37% said there is “too little” commercial development
- ◆ **5 in 10 said developers are only meeting demand**
 - 4 in 10 disagreed
- ◆ **Most think the county is making progress on:**
 - Outdoor Recreational Opportunities (69%)
 - Overall Quality of Life (66%)
 - Local Economy (58%)
- ◆ **Most think the county is losing ground on:**
 - Farmland Preservation (55%)
 - Salmon runs (54%)
- ◆ **Respondents split on whether Skagit County is “losing ground” or “making progress” on wildlife habitats, health of local rivers**
- ◆ **2 in 3 respondents say the trend is heading in the *Right* Direction on parks, trails and open space**
- ◆ **The trends are heading in the *Wrong* Direction on**
 - Farmland (57%)
 - New Housing (59%)
 - Timberland (48%)
- ◆ **Equal numbers said Right Direction / Wrong Direction for:**
 - Commercial Development
 - Fish & Wildlife Habitat
- ◆ **6 in 10 said loss of Skagit farmland and timberland is inevitable in the long run**
- ◆ **5 in 10 said that loss of wildlife and fish species is inevitable in the long run**
 - 4 in 10 disagreed

MEETING THE CHALLENGES

- ◆ **8 in 10 strongly agree “there are ways to restore salmon habitat that do not take away farmland and forest land”.**
- ◆ **Nearly 9 in 10 agree that unless all those involved cooperate, “the conditions for farming and wildlife will get worse.”**

- 7 in 10 said cooperation on river use is “simply not realistic”
- ◆ **Most willing to sacrifice to “help preserve fish and wildlife”**
 - 7 in 10 respondents would be “willing to pay a dollar or two per month in property taxes.”
 - 6+ in 10 are willing to allow restrictions on personal land use
- ◆ **About 3 in 10 respondents would take an active part to make the following projects happen:**
 - Planting along stream banks to provide shade and prevent erosion
 - Projects to restore salmon runs
 - Removal of invasive plants
 - Programs to protect farmland
- ◆ **An additional 53% to 61% support these programs but likely would not take an active part in them.**

LEADERSHIP & RESPONSIBILITY

- ◆ **7+ in 10 indicated that everyone has at least some responsibility to determine the future of Skagit County.**
- ◆ **8 in 10 said people just like themselves have responsibility.**
- ◆ **6+ in 10 said local government bears *most* responsibility for Skagit County’s future.**

SUMMARY

WHAT DO RESIDENTS VALUE ABOUT SKAGIT CO?

Skagit County residents place a high value on the rural atmosphere and natural landscape that surrounds them. Asked to rate how much they “personally value” each of nine aspects of life in Skagit County, respondents put the natural beauty of the area, and the opportunity to experience nature, at the top of the list.

Ranked in order of the proportion of respondents who said they valued it “very much,” the nine attributes were:

1. The scenic beauty of the area (84% valued that “very much”);
2. The rural, small town atmosphere (72%)
3. Living close to nature (69%);
4. Having outdoor recreational opportunities (64%);
5. Living close to family (57%);
6. Living close to Puget Sound (56%);
7. The quality and amount of farmland (56%);
8. Living close to the rivers (35%);
9. Business or job opportunities (30%).

On average, respondents rated 5 attributes as “very valuable.” Majorities rated each of the 9 as “very” or “somewhat” valuable. Clearly these are widely shared values for the most part.

While many of these attributes are related, they are not identical. Statistical correlation measures the ability to predict the rating of one of these attributes by knowing the rating of another. With nine attributes, there are 36 matched pairs. For 27 of the pairs the correlations were statistically significant ($p < .05$) although none of the correlations was particularly strong. This leads to the conclusion that the attributes measure different aspects of Skagit Valley life. Even though seven of the 10 described some feature of the physical environment, they are not equally valued by the same people.

The table below indicates the proportion of respondents who rated both items in each pair as “very valuable.” For only 10 of the 36 pairs was there a majority who valued both attributes “very much.”

**MATCHED PAIRS OF ATTRIBUTES:
PERCENT WHO SAID BOTH “VERY VALUABLE”**

	FAMILY	REC	RURAL	FARM	RIVER	BEAUTY	NATURE	SOUND	JOBS
FAMILY		41%	43%	34%	22%	50%	42%	34%	19%
REC	41%		52%	41%	27%	58%	52%	44%	21%
RURAL	43%	52%		48%	30%	67%	57%	46%	22%
FARM	34%	41%	48%		25%	52%	47%	38%	19%
RIVER	22%	27%	30%	25%		34%	30%	25%	14%
BEAUTY	50%	58%	67%	52%	34%		66%	54%	26%
NATURE	42%	52%	57%	47%	30%	66%		50%	22%
SOUND	34%	44%	46%	38%	25%	54%	50%		17%
JOBS	19%	21%	22%	19%	14%	26%	22%	17%	

For example, of those respondents who said that they valued living close to family “very much” (column 1) 41% also said they valued the outdoor recreation opportunities “very much”; only 19% said they also valued the job opportunities in the county “very much.”

This analysis has potentially significant implications for this study. Note that among those who value the river “very much,” no majority values any of the other indicators “very much.” Valuing the river does not appear to be related to other values, and vice versa.

The implication is that those who most value living by the rivers are among the least likely to share other values of their Skagit County neighbors. Farmland, which shares a majority only with scenic beauty, was in a similar position.

This is all relative, of course, and must be considered in light of the earlier finding that sizable majorities value all nine attributes at least somewhat. The distinction is worth keeping in mind, however, precisely because there appears on the surface to be so much unanimity.

GROWTH, LAND USE CONCERNS DOMINATE

Several items were included to assess how respondents saw things changing in the Skagit Valley area. These included both open-ended questions and lists of features of specific interest to the Skagit Watershed Council.

Greatest Challenges Facing the Area

Asked what they saw as “the greatest challenges to things you care about most” in the Skagit Valley area, respondents volunteered a list of more than 50 items.

Growth dominated their concerns. About 2 in 3 of all respondents volunteered something related to growth (49%) or loss of land (17%).

Just 3% mentioned anything to do with the rivers, waterways or salmon.

Land Use: Progress or Regress

Respondents were asked whether they thought the area is “making progress or losing ground” in a number of areas related to the quality of life and land use. Of the eight areas listed, majorities thought progress was being made on three:

1. Outdoor recreation opportunities (69%);
2. The overall quality of life (66%); and
3. The local economy (58%).

Majorities thought the area was losing ground on two areas:

4. Farmland preservation (55%); and
5. Salmon runs (54%).

And were evenly divided on the remaining three:

6. Wildlife habitat (46% progress; 45% losing ground);
7. The health of local rivers (38%; 44%)
8. Cooperation between various interests in the county (35%; 41%).

It is notable that 22% of respondents did not know whether progress was being made or not with regard to salmon runs; and 18% had no opinion about the local rivers. Next to “cooperation between interests,” these were the highest proportions of “no opinion” on the list – indicating that for about 1 in 5 county residents, the issue of salmon and the river is not on their radar screen at all.

LAND USE: RIGHT OR WRONG DIRECTION?

Results from a pair of items about land use patterns in the county illustrate the divisions on this issue. Respondents were asked whether Skagit County had “too much, too little or about the right amount” of six types of land use. They were then asked whether “the trends today are heading in the right direction or the wrong direction” for each of the six.

For only one category of land use did a majority say the county was going

in the right direction: “parks, trails and open space,” which was also the category with the largest proportion of respondents saying that the county currently had “about the right amount”

Majorities said the trend was in the wrong direction for two categories – new housing and farmland – while respondents were evenly divided about the trends for commercial development, fish and wildlife habitat, and timberland.

LAND USE: CURRENT PATTERNS AND PERCEIVED TRENDS

CATEGORY	CURRENT AMOUNT			TREND DIRECTION	
	TOO MUCH	RIGHT AMT	NOT ENOUGH	RIGHT	WRONG
New Housing	59%	29%	9%	32%	59%
Commercial Development	48%	37%	11%	42%	44%
Parks, Trails Open Space	10%	60%	28%	64%	30%
Habitat	7%	41%	43%	42%	45%
Timberland	6%	42%	43%	36%	48%
Farmland	6%	41%	50%	34%	57%

Looking at respondents’ assessment of the current situation combined with their view of the trends further indicates how closely divided county residents are over these questions of competing land use patterns.

New Housing

The increase in residential development was not seen as a positive by most respondents:

- 59% said there was too much new housing in the county, and
- 59% said the trend is heading in the wrong direction.

Taken together

- 46% said both that there was too much new housing and it was headed in the wrong direction.

Commercial Development

Commercial development was viewed somewhat more favorably than residential development. Perceptions of both the current situation and the trend divided the respondents:

- 48% said there was too much, and
- 48% said there was too little (11%) or the right amount (37%);
- 42% said the trend was in the right direction; and
- 44% said it was in the wrong direction.

At the extremes:

29% said there was both too much commercial development and the trend was in the wrong direction, while

29% said there was not enough or the right amount and the trend was in the right direction.

Habitat for Fish & Wildlife

The question of fish and wildlife habitat resulted in the closest division among the six categories:

43% said there was not enough habitat, while

48% said there was the right amount (41%) or too much (7%).

Looking to the future:

42% said the trend was in the right direction, and

45% said it was in the wrong direction.

Overall:

32% said there was not enough habitat and the trend was in the wrong direction, while

31% said there was the right amount or too much and the trend was in the right direction.

Timberland

The pattern for current timberland was almost identical to that of habitat:

43% said there was not enough timberland, while

48% said there was the right amount (42%) or too much (6%).

Respondents saw the trends for timberland as slightly less favorable than those for habitat:

36% said the trends were in the right direction, while

48% said timberland was headed in the wrong direction.

Taken together:

33% said there was not enough timberland and the trend was in the wrong direction, while

29% said there was the right amount or too much and the trend was in the right direction.

Farmland

The perceptions for farmland tilted toward growing scarcity:

50% said there was not enough farmland in the county, while

47% said there was the right amount (41%) or too much (6%). But

57% said the trends for farmland were in the wrong direction, vs.

34% who said the trends were headed in the right direction.

Taken together:

39% said there was not enough farmland and the trend was in the wrong direction, while

27% said there was the right amount or too much and the trend was in the right direction.

Parks, Trails & Open Space

48% said there was the right amount of parks, trails and open space and the trend was in the right direction.

This was computed from a combination of:

60% who said there was the right amount, and

64% who said the trend was in the right direction.

ENVIRONMENTAL INDICATORS

The quality of the environment is at the top of the list of things Skagitonians value about living here. How do they assess the quality of the environment? One of objectives of this study was to learn what indicators local residents use to tell them the condition of the environment.

A total of seven potential indicators were presented to survey respondents; they were asked to rate each as “very useful, somewhat useful or not useful as an indicator of environmental quality.”

The scenic beauty of the area easily topped the list of indicators. In order of the proportion of respondents who said they were “very useful” to them, the indicators were:

1. The scenic beauty of the area (74%);
2. The number or certain birds, like eagles and trumpeter swans (60%);
3. The health of Puget Sound (59%);
4. The health of the Skagit River (57%);
5. The number of salmon in the rivers (52%);
6. Changes in the amount of land being used for various purposes, like homes, farms or wildlife habitat (47%); and
7. The number of people living in the area (44%).

Those most likely to use the health of the Skagit River as a “very useful” indicator were:

- Active environmentalists (73%);
- Those who value living by the river (67%);
- Baby boomers (66%);

- \$50,000+ annual income (64%).

Those most likely to use the number of salmon in the river as a “very useful” indicator were:

- Active environmentalists (69%);
- Public sector employees (66%);
- Ages 18-35 (62%);
- Those who value living by Puget Sound (61%);
- Those who value living by nature (60%);
- White-collar employees (59%);
- Those who value living by the river (59%);
- Those who value outdoor recreation (59%).

MEETING THE CHALLENGES

After being asked to describe the land use and environmental situation, respondents were asked about ways to resolve the problem. They were read a series of statements about the on-going debate and asked the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with each one. The results indicate a mixture of hope and resignation, plus a willingness to keep trying in the face of forces seen as inevitable.

The complexity of respondents’ picture of the situation is evident at the top of the list:

86% of respondents agreed that “unless farmers, tribes, county commissioners and environmentalists cooperate, the conditions of farming and wildlife will get worse.” But then,

71% agreed that “It is a worthy goal, but it is simply not realistic to think that farmers, loggers, commissioners, tribes and environmentalists will ever agree on how the land and rivers should be used.”

On the actual solution, other paradoxes:

82% agreed that “there are ways to restore salmon habitat that do not take away from farm land and forest land.” But then,

61% agreed that “in the long run, loss of farmland and timber land in the Skagit is inevitable.” And

52% agreed that “in the long run, loss of wildlife and fish species in the Skagit is inevitable.”

Further, even though 6 in 10 said there was too much development,

52% agreed that “developers are only meeting the demand, building what and where people want them to.”

Finally, most respondents were willing to take part in the solutions, even though they were skeptical about their own efficacy:

68% said they “would be willing to pay a dollar or two a month in property taxes to help preserve fish and wildlife here for future generations.” And

66% were “willing to allow restrictions on how and what I can do on my land to help preserve fish and wildlife here for future generations.” However,

67% agreed that “it doesn’t matter what people like me think, other people in the county are going to make the decisions anyway.”

WILLINGNESS TO TAKE PART

An important objective of this study was to gauge the willingness of Skagit County residents to engage in the issue of salmon restoration and to take part in helping to bring about solutions.

Respondents were presented a list of seven “initiatives and activities” and asked if they were likely to: 1) Take an active part to help make that happen; 2) Support it, but not take an active part; 3) Oppose it; or 4) Take an active part to keep that from happening.

The list contained items of varying specificity and scope, from “programs to protect farmland” to “planting along stream banks” to “moving back dikes.” Because of this, the “willingness to take part measure” is probably variable as well. It should be read as more an indication of strong support and a willingness to learn more, than an actual offer to volunteer.

For example, taking part in stream side planting is quite different than taking part in moving dikes. And willingness to take part in “programs to protect farmland” will likely depend on the particulars of those “programs.”

That said, the survey found Skagitonians quite supportive of each activity; there was little opposition and at least 2 in 3 said they supported each initiative listed. In fact

46% of respondents supported all 7 initiatives and

71% supported 6 of the 7.

Not surprisingly, respondents were somewhat more reluctant to “take an active part” in these activities, but even here the numbers are impressive:

55% said they were willing to take part in at least 1 of the 7 activities;

At least 1 in 5 was willing to take part in each of the activities;
 Respondents were willing to take part in an average of 2 of the 7.

The initiatives are displayed in the table below

SUPPORT FOR SALMON RECOVERY INITIATIVES

INITIATIVE	ACTIVE	SUPPORT	TOTAL
Planting along stream banks to provide shade and prevent erosion	30%	54%	84%
Projects to restore salmon runs	29%	55%	84%
Removal of intensive plants that increase rapidly and choke out native vegetation	29%	53%	82%
Programs to protect farmland	28%	61%	89%
A program to bring farmers and salmon advocates together to work on solutions	26%	64%	90%
A program to engage the whole community in salmon recovery planning	24%	58%	82%
Moving back dikes to improve flood control and restore the Skagit River	19%	47%	66%

Even discounting the difference between answering a survey question and actually behaving in the specified way, the number of respondents who said they were willing to take an active part were impressive.

LEADERSHIP & RESPONSIBILITY

The final section of the interview asked respondents to indicate whom they thought “has responsibility to determine the future of the county.” A list of seven organizations and types of people was read; respondents indicated whether each had “most of the responsibility, some, little or no responsibility” to determine the future of the county.

Substantial majorities assigned more than a little responsibility to each of the seven categories: at least 7 in 10 said that each of the entities listed has some responsibility. The most responsibility by far was placed on local government:

63% said that local government has “most” of the responsibility, and
 94% said it had most or some.

Local government was followed, in order by:

- Farmers and other large landowners
91% (37% most + 54% some)
- People like me
81% (39% most + 42% some);
- State Government
82% (30% most + 52% some);
- Environmental organizations
75% (25% most + 50% some);
- Local businesses
74% (19% most + 55% some);
- Local Indian tribes
69% (19% most + 50% some).

The finding that 81% said that “people like me” have *some* responsibility and 39% said that “people like me” have *most* of the responsibility reinforces the finding in the previous section that Skagit County citizens are willing to take part in efforts to resolve these issues.

DISCUSSION

A primary purpose of this research was to determine the extent to which Skagit County residents were willing to endorse or take part in actions to preserve salmon habitat in the Skagit River system.

In order for citizens to respond to calls for action, three elements must be present and lined up:

1. They must recognize that there is a problem. If they are to respond to a call to action, they must define the problem in roughly the same way as those trying to organize the action.
2. They must understand the solutions being proposed and agree that they will solve, or at least address, the problem as they define it.
3. They must understand what they are being asked to do and agree that in so doing, they will put in place a solution that addresses the problem as they define it.

For those who advocate on behalf of salmon habitat, there is hope and challenges at each stage of this model.

Recognition / Definition of the problem

The problem most residents see is “growth,” which tends to be defined by them as the loss of farmland and forest land to development. The issue of salmon habitat is on the radar screen, but is less prominent than loss of farmland, perhaps because habitat is not as visible to everyday observation.

Most respondents said they use the health of Puget Sound and the Rivers, as well as the number of salmon in the rivers, as indicators of the environmental quality of the area. Most also said the county is losing ground on salmon habitat. However, respondents were equally split over whether the county was headed in the right direction or the wrong direction on fish and wildlife habitat. And half said that the loss of fish and wildlife species is inevitable in the long run.

Thus, while most respondents are aware that salmon habitat is being lost and there are fewer fish in the rivers, there remains some ambiguity about the nature of the problem and its implications.

Viability of Proposed Solutions

The survey findings indicate a high degree of optimism. Most respondents appeared to be of a mind that “if there is a will, there is a way” to restore salmon runs. Eight in 10 respondents (at least wanted to) believe that there are ways to restore salmon runs that do not take away from farm and forest land. Strong majorities of respondents favored every one of seven “initiatives and activities” to help restore salmon runs in the Skagit.

Two dimensions of addressing the problem were explored in this survey: technical (the “way”) and political (the “will”). While there was great hope expressed for the technical, there was doubt with regard to the political.

If “political” is defined as communal, there was strong support: at least 8 in 10 supported “programs to engage the whole community in salmon recovery planning” and programs to “bring farmers and salmon advocates together to work on solutions” and undefined “projects” to restore salmon runs and to protect farmland.

If “political” is defined as leadership and power structure, respondents were far less sanguine. Seven in 10 said it was unrealistic to think that the interest groups involved in these issues “will every agree on how the land and rivers should be used.” And two-thirds agreed that it did not matter what people like themselves thought because “other people in the county are going to make the decisions anyway.”

For the most part, lay citizens do not have the expertise to judge the scientific or technical solutions to the complex problem of salmon habitat restoration. But they are the best judge of the political solutions. At this time, they have more faith in the technical solutions. To rephrase the current belief more precisely, “if there *were* a will, there *would be* a way.”

Willingness to Take Action

Significant numbers of respondents were willing to participate in helping to solve the problems of loss of farmland and habitat. Perhaps more significantly, eight in 10 said they had some responsibility to help solve the problems.

As clear as Skagitonians are on the chief threat to the quality of life they value (growth), they are unclear on ways to meet that threat. They want to believe that there are ways to resolve the land use debate, but they do not see a clear path to resolution. Their ideas about resolving the issues are complex and paradoxical. Wishful thinking about solutions is tempered by long experience with seemingly inflexible positions on intractable issues.

A hopeful interpretation of these apparently contradictory findings is that most Skagit County residents see the goal of saving the landscape they treasure as worthy enough to try solutions even though they see the odds

as stacked against them – both from the inevitable march of progress and the lack of cooperation among the players who will really make the decisions. The goal is worth the effort.

Sustainable solutions require community consensus. What these survey results indicate most is deep and wide latent support for addressing the issues in a way that includes the whole community. These respondents believe that all the parties, not least themselves, have a role to play. The support is latent rather than actual because no such program is seen by these respondents. They are not being asked to make any effort.

Skagitonians will respond to leadership that clarifies the nature of the salmon habitat problem, demonstrates its links to recognized, well-defined problems – namely growth – and includes the whole community in an effort to forge a consensus solution.

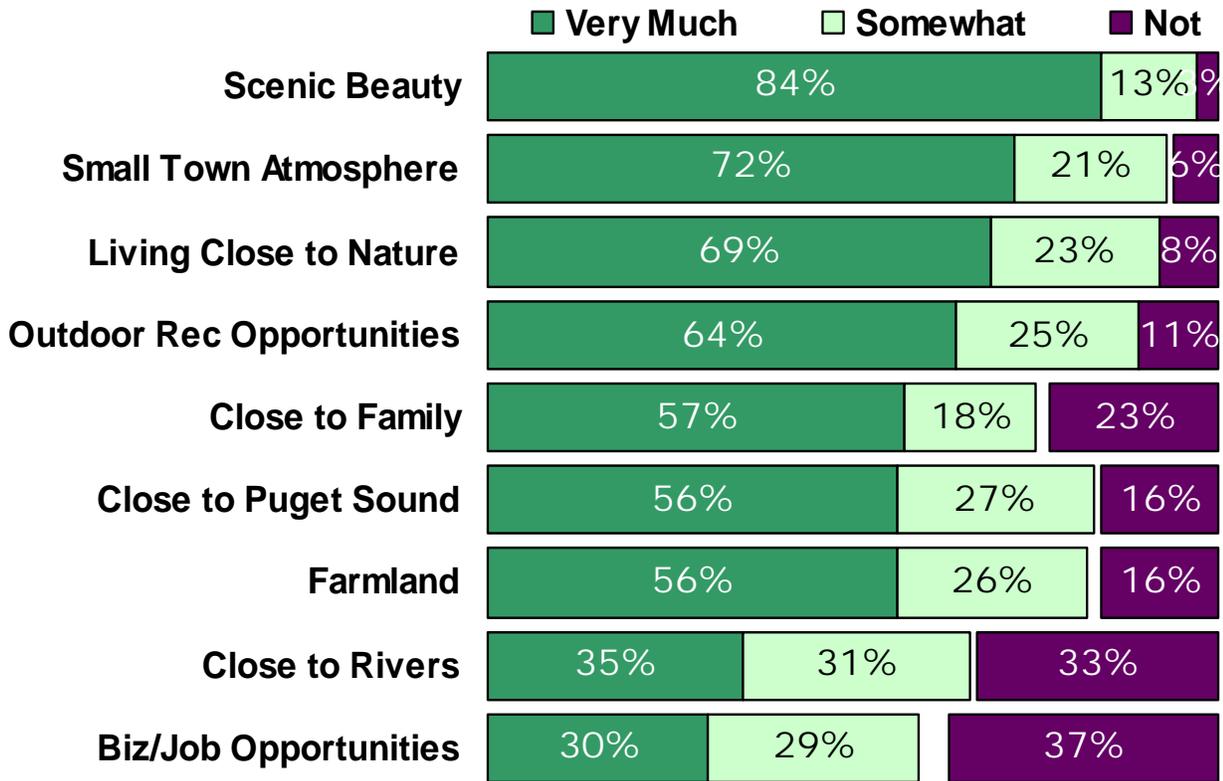


DIVIDER PAGE GOES HERE

Residents Value Scenic Beauty, Rural, Natural Environment

Q4: There are many reasons why people live where they do. There are things people like about where they live and things they wish were better. As I read the following list, tell me whether each item is something you personally value Very Much about living here, Value Somewhat, or Not So Much. The first one is...

Value About Living Here



Who is Most Likely to Value Which Aspects of Skagit Life?

Q4: There are many reasons why people live where they do. There are things people like about where they live and things they wish were better. As I read the following list, tell me whether each item is something you personally value Very Much about living here, Value Somewhat, or Not So Much. The first one is...

Most Likely to “Very Much” Value

Scenic Beauty (84%):

- Owners of more than 5 acres of land (95%);
- Flats residents (90%);
- Couples with children at home (90%);
- Ages 51-64 (90%).

Rural Atmosphere (72%):

- Flats residents (85%);
- Upriver residents (81%);
- Owners of more than one acre of land (81%);
- \$75,000+ annual income (80%);
- White collar employees (79%).

Living by Nature (69%):

- Active environmentalists (81%);
- Upriver residents (79%);
- Public sector employees (79%);
- 5-10 years in the county (76%).

Outdoor Recreation (64%):

- Those who work outside Skagit County (80%);
- Public sector employees (78%);
- \$75,000+ annual income (73%);
- Owners of 1-5 acres of land (72%);
- Ages 18-35 (72%);
- Couples with children at home (72%).

Living by Family (57%):

- Owners of more than 5 acres of land (74%);
- Flats residents (66%);
- Those who work outside Skagit County (64%);
- Women (64%).

Living by Puget Sound (56%):

- Anacortes residents (67%);
- Ages 65+ (63%);
- Couples without children at home (63%).

Farmland (56%):

- Flats residents (77%);
- Owners of more than 5 acres of land (71%);
- Active environmentalists (66%);
- Those living in unincorporated areas (66%);
- Public sector employees (63%);
- Women (63%);
- Ages 65+ (63%).

Living by Rivers (35%):

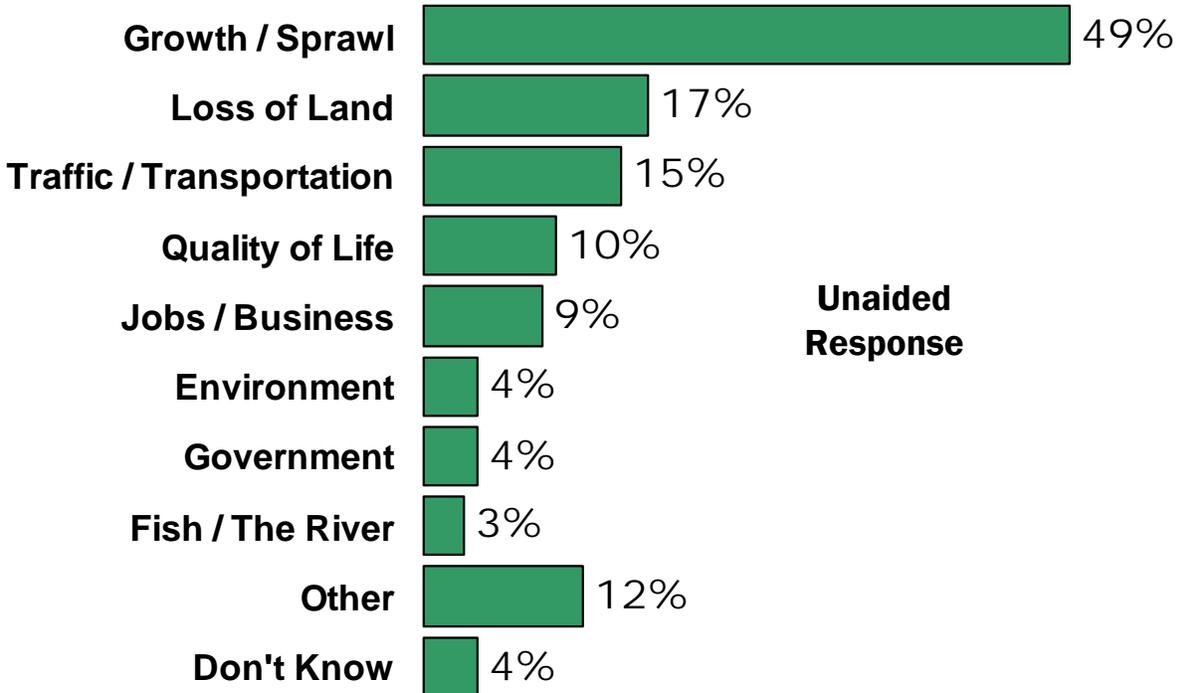
- Owners of more than 5 acres of land (49%);
- \$50-75,000 annual income (45%);
- Upriver residents (41%);
- Less than 5 years in the county (41%);
- Those with ties to agriculture (41%).

Job Opportunities (30%):

- Those who work inside Skagit County (41%);
- White collar employees (40%);
- Ages 36-50 (40%);
- Couples with children (40%);
- Public sector employees (39%);
- Owners of 1-5 acres of land (39%).

Q5: As you think about the next 5 or 10 years the Skagit Valley area, what do you see as the greatest challenges to things you care most about?

Greatest Challenge to Things You Care About



Likely to say “Growth/Sprawl”:

- Those working outside Skagit County
- \$75,000+ annual income
- Baby boomers
- Public sector employees
- Active environmentalists

Likely to say “Loss of Land”:

- Owners of more than 5 acres of land

Likely to say “Traffic/Transportation”:

- \$25-50,000 annual income

Likely to say “Jobs/Business”:

- Couples with children at home

Likely to say “Environment”:

- Ages 18-35
- Owners of 1-5 acres of land

Growth Presents Greatest Challenges to the County

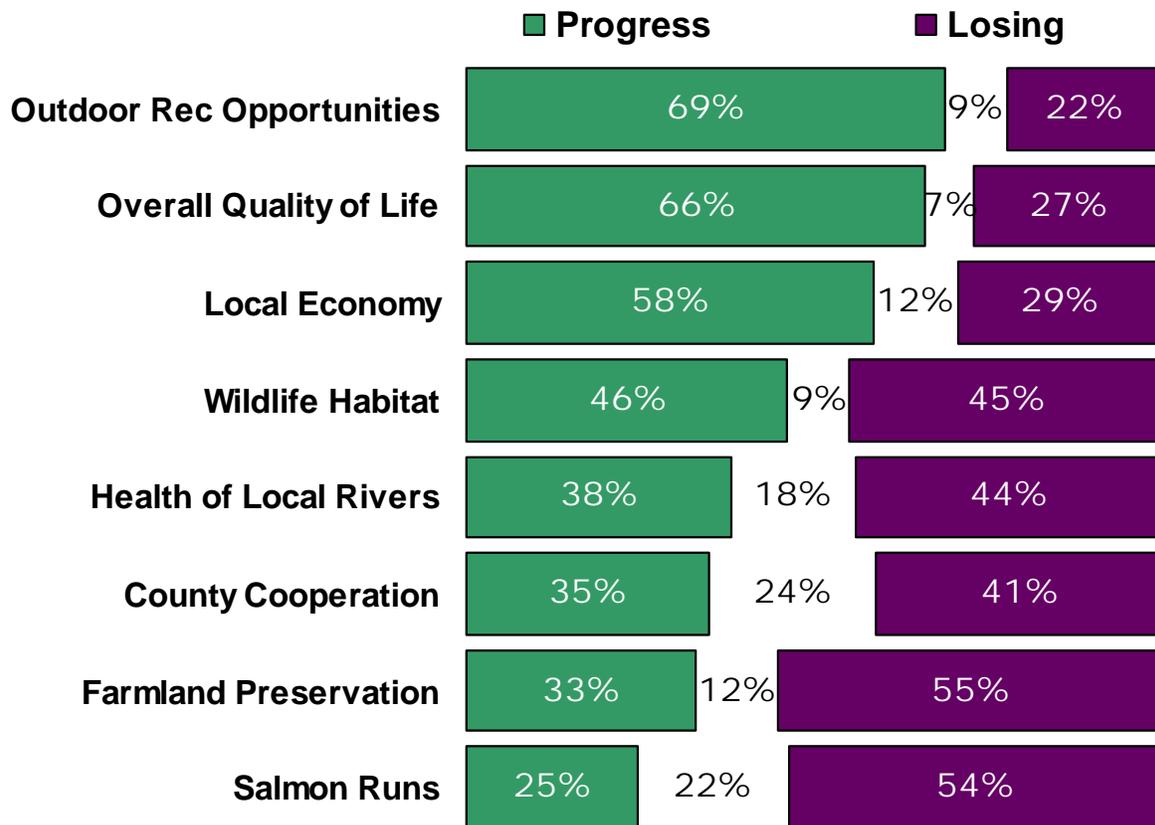
As you think about the next 5 or 10 years the Skagit Valley area, what do you see as the greatest challenges to things you care most about?

49%	GROWTH / SPRAWL	
	19%	Population Growth
	13	Growth / Development
	13	Growing Too Fast
	3	Sprawl
17%	LOSS OF LAND	
	13	Loss of Farmland
	3	Lack of Forest Land
	1	Loss of Open Space
15%	TRAFFIC / TRANSPORTATION	
	12	Traffic
	2	Roads / Freeways
10%	QUALITY OF LIFE	
	3	Lose the Atmosphere Here
	3	Housing Affordability
	1	Quality of Life
9%	JOBS / BUSINESS	
	5	Lack of Jobs
	2	Losing Small Businesses
	2	Retail Expansion
4%	ENVIRONMENT	
	2	Environment
	2	Pollution / Air and Water Quality
	1	Natural Resources
4%	GOVERNMENT	
	3	Politicians / Leaders
3%	FISH / THE RIVER	
	2	Flooding
	1	Fishing / Salmon
12%	OTHER	
	3	Taxes
	2	Crime
	2	Education
	1	Health / Medical Care
	4	Other
4%	DON'T KNOW / NOTHING	

Skagit Losing Ground on Farmland and Salmon

Q6: As you think about Skagit County, do you think the area is making progress or losing ground in the following areas:

Is County Making Progress or Losing Ground in [*]



Who Sees Progress, Loss?

Q6: As you think about Skagit County, do you think the area is making progress or losing ground in the following areas:

Most Likely to Say

MAKING PROGRESS IN:

Outdoor Rec. (69%):

- Anacortes residents (80%);
- White collar employees (79%).

Quality of Life (66%):

- Those working outside Skagit County (77%);
- Passive environmentalists (74%);
- Upriver residents (73%).

Local Economy (58%):

- Those working outside Skagit County (69%);
- Flats residents (68%);
- 5-10 years in the county (66%).

Wildlife Habitat (46%):

- Those working outside Skagit County (59%);
- Upriver residents (56%);
- Owners of 1-5 acres of land (55%);
- Non-environmentalists (52%).

River Health (38%):

- Owners of more than 1 acre of land (51%);
- Upriver residents (48%);
- Flats residents (45%);
- Those with ties to agriculture (45%);
- \$75,000+ annual income (45%).

County Cooperation (35%):

- Upriver residents (42%);
- Active environmentalists (41%).

Farmland Preservation (33%):

- Owners of more than 1 acre of land (43%);
- Flats residents (40%).

Salmon Runs (25%):

- Upriver residents (38%);
- Owners of more than 1 acre of land (37%);
- Public sector employees (35%).

LOOSING GROUND IN:

Outdoor Rec. (22%):

- Sedro Woolley residents (31%);
- Blue collar employees (29%).

Local Economy (29%):

- Sedro Woolley residents (42%);
- Blue collar employees (40%);
- Owners of more than 5 acres of land (37%);
- \$25,000 or less annual income (36%).

Wildlife Habitat (45%):

- Active environmentalists (58%);
- Blue collar employees (53%);
- Public sector employees (52%).

River Health (44%):

- White collar employees (58%);
- Active environmentalists (50%).

County Cooperation (41%):

- Blue collar employees (57%).

Farmland Preservation (55%):

- White collar employees (67%);
- Public sector employees (64%);
- Those working in Skagit County (63%);
- \$50-75,000 annual income (63%);
- Sedro Woolley residents (62%);
- 5-10 years in the county (61%);
- Active environmentalists (61%).

Salmon Runs (54%):

- Sedro Woolley residents (64%);
- Active environmentalists (62%).

Who Most Likely to See “Too Much,” “Too Little”

Q7: As you know, there are different ways land is used in the Skagit Valley. In general terms, there are four competing uses for land. They are:

1) Agriculture; 2) Development for Housing and Businesses; 3) Timber Land; and 4) Habitat for Fish and Wildlife.

In your personal opinion, in Skagit County today would you say there is too much _____, not enough? Or is there about the right amount?:

Most Likely to Say

TOO MUCH

New Housing (59%):

- Baby boomers (68%);
- Those who value living by Puget Sound highly (67%);
- Anacortes residents (65%).

Development (48%):

- Those who value living by the river highly (55%).

RIGHT AMOUNT

Parks and Trails (60%):

- Flats residents (69%);
- Anacortes residents (67%).

TOO LITTLE

Habitat (43%):

- Active environmentalists (64%);
- Ages 18-35 (62%);
- White collar employees (58%);
- \$50-75,000 annual income (54%);
- Those who see salmon as an indicator of environmental quality (54%);
- Those who see river health as an indicator of environmental quality (52%).

Timber Land (43%):

- Active environmentalists (58%).

Farmland (50%):

- Sedro Woolley residents (69%);
- White collar employees (67%);
- Upriver residents (58%);
- Public sector employees (58%);
- Owners of 1-5 acres of land (57%);
- Active environmentalists (57%);
- Baby boomers (57%);
- Those who value farmland highly (57%).

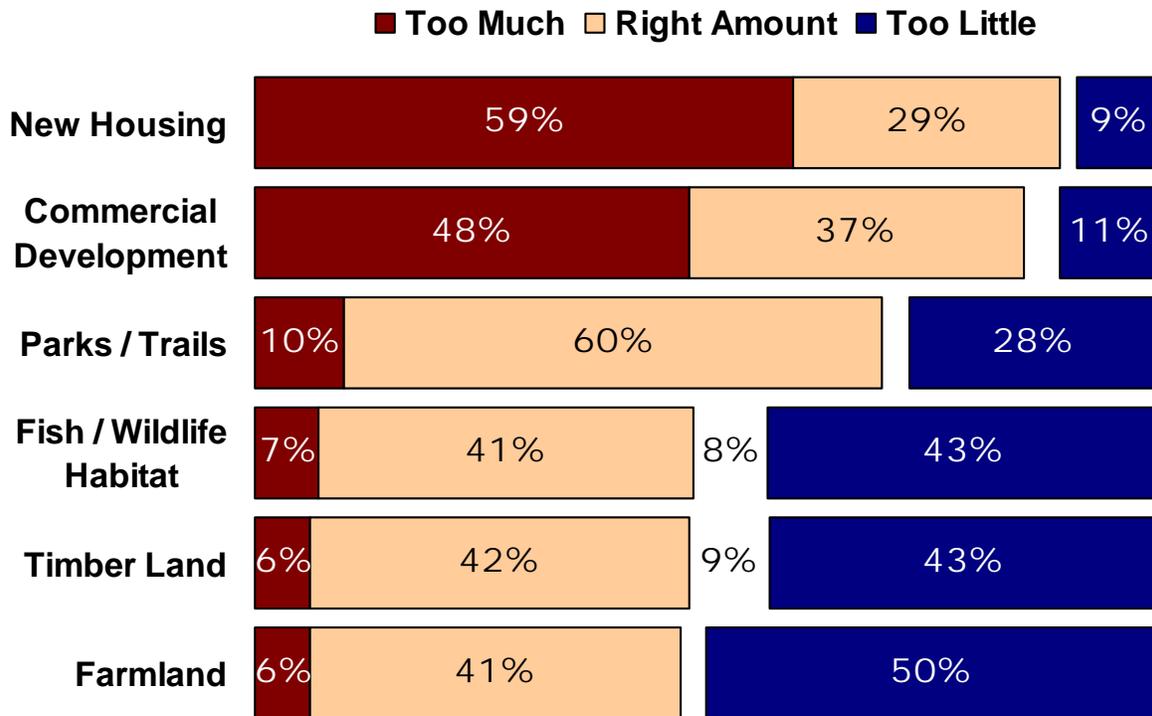
Too Much Housing, Development Split on Habitat, Farmland

Q7: As you know, there are different ways land is used in the Skagit Valley. In general terms, there are four competing uses for land. They are:

1) Agriculture; 2) Development for Housing and Businesses; 3) Timber Land; and 4) Habitat for Fish and Wildlife.

In your personal opinion, in Skagit County today would you say there is too much _____, not enough? Or is there about the right amount?:

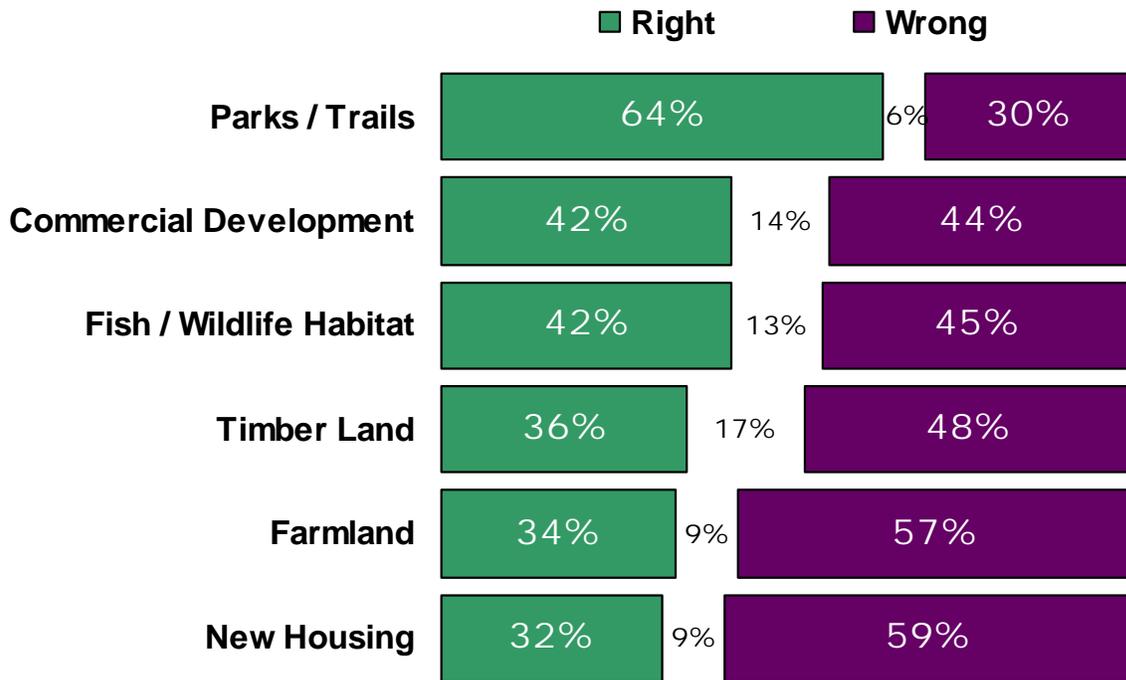
Does Skagit County Have Too Much or Too Little [*]



Looking to the Future: Land Use Trends in Skagit County

Q8: Thinking about the future of Skagit County, as you see it, are the trends today heading in the right direction or the wrong direction for...

County Headed in the Right/Wrong Direction for [*]



Q8: Thinking about the future of Skagit County, as you see it, are the trends today heading in the right direction or the wrong direction for...

Most Likely to Say

RIGHT DIRECTION

Parks and Trails (64%):

- Ages 18-35 (72%);
- Flats residents (70%).

Commercial Development (42%):

- Upriver residents (53%);
- \$25,000 or less annual income (51%);
- Couples with children at home (51%);
- Those who value jobs highly (48%);
- Those who see the population as an indicator of environmental quality (48%).

Habitat (42%):

- Owners of 1-5 acres of land (54%);
- Those working outside Skagit County (51%).

Timber Land (36%):

- Owners of more than 1 acre of land (52%);
- \$75,000+ annual income (44%);
- Those who value jobs highly (44%);
- Those with ties to agriculture (43%);
- Men (43%).

Farmland (34%):

- Owners of more than 1 acre of land (42%);
- Flats residents (40%).

New Housing (32%):

- Owners of 1-5 acres of land (49%);
- Those who value jobs highly (38%).

WRONG DIRECTION

Parks and Trails (30%):

- Upriver residents (40%);
- Owners of more than 5 acres of land (37%);
- White collar employees (37%).

Commercial Development (44%):

- Less than 5 years in the county (59%);
- Those working outside Skagit County (56%);
- Owners of more than 5 acres of land (54%);
- Active environmentalists (53%);
- \$50-75,000 annual income (52%).

Habitat (45%):

- Active environmentalists (60%);
- White collar employees (58%);
- \$50-75,000 annual income (55%);
- Baby boomers (55%);
- Flats residents (54%);
- Those who see the # of salmon as an indicator of environmental quality (54%).

Timber Land (48%):

- White collar employees (58%);
- Active environmentalists (57%);
- Ages 36-50 (55%);
- Single people without children (55%);
- Upriver residents (54%).

Farmland (57%):

- Sedro Woolley residents (75%);
- White collar employees (69%);
- Active environmentalists (65%);
- Upriver residents (64%).

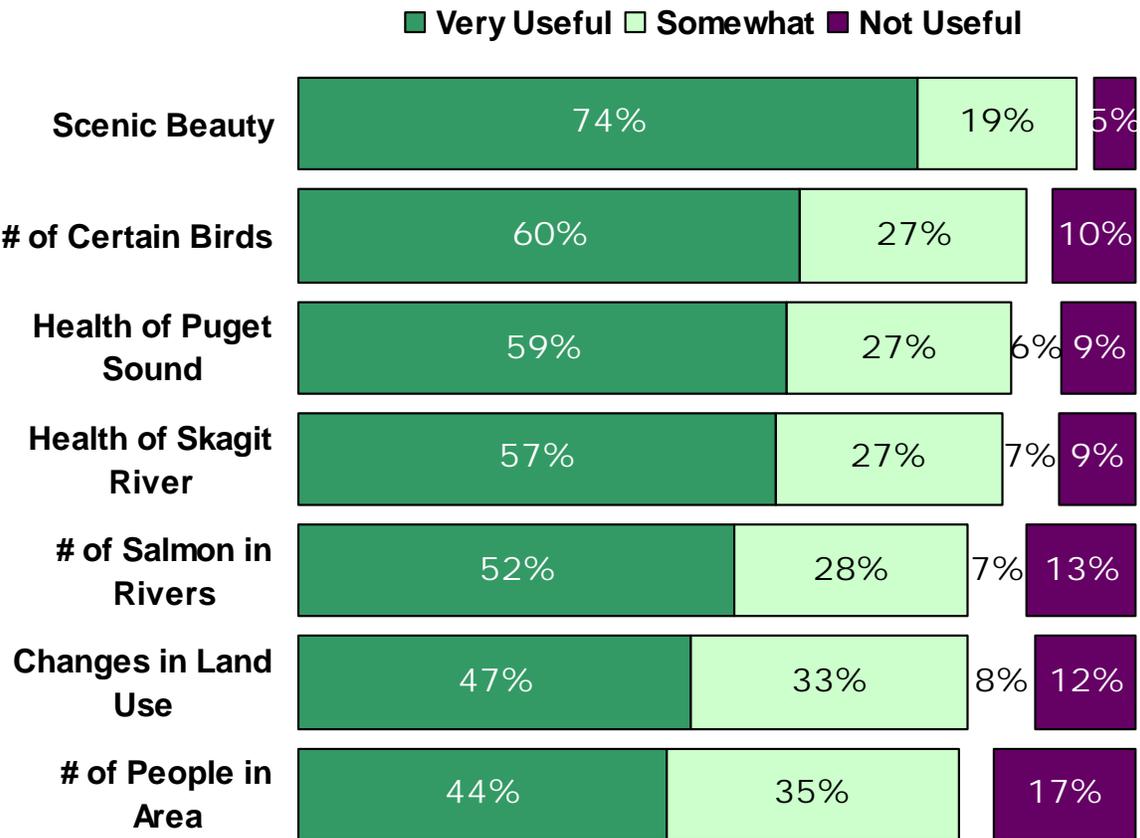
New Housing (59%):

- Owners of more than 5 acres of land (68%);
- Those who value the health of the river highly (66%).

Environmental Quality Indicators

Q9: Next I am going to read a list of some of the things that some people have said they use as a sign of the quality of the environment in the area. As I read each one, tell me whether you personally think about that as a yardstick for the quality of the environment. Tell me whether that is Very Useful to you, Somewhat Useful, or Not Useful to you as a indicator of environmental quality.

Usefulness of Environmental Health Indicators



Q9: Next I am going to read a list of some of the things that some people have said they use as a sign of the quality of the environment in the area. As I read each one, tell me whether you personally think about that as a yardstick for the quality of the environment. Tell me whether that is Very Useful to you, Somewhat Useful, or Not Useful to you as an indicator of environmental quality.

Most Likely to Rate Indicator as “Very Useful”

Scenic Beauty (74%):

Those who value:

- Living by nature (83%);
- Living by the river (83%);
- Farmland (82%).

of Birds (60%):

- Active environmentalists (69%);
- Those who value living by the river (69%);
- Those who value living by nature (68%);
- Those who value living by Puget Sound (68%);
- Baby boomers (67%);
- Those who value outdoor recreation (67%).

Puget Sound Health (59%):

- Active environmentalists (74%);
- Those who value living by the river (73%);
- \$50,000+ annual income (71%);
- Those who value living by Puget Sound (69%);
- Anacortes residents (69%);
- Those who value living by nature (68%);
- Those who value outdoor recreation (68%);
- Owners of more than 5 acres of land (66%);
- Blue collar employees (66%).

Skagit River Health (57%):

- Active environmentalists (73%);
- Those who value living by the river (67%);
- Baby boomers (66%);
- \$50,000+ annual income (64%).

of Salmon (52%):

- Active environmentalists (69%);
- Public sector employees (66%);
- Ages 18-35 (62%);
- Those who value living by Puget Sound (61%);
- Those who value living by nature (60%);
- White collar employees (59%);
- Those who value living by the river (59%);
- Those who value outdoor recreation (59%).

Land Use Changes (47%):

- Public sector employees (65%);
- Active environmentalists (64%);
- \$50-75,000 annual income (62%);
- Those working inside Skagit County (58%);
- White collar employees (57%);
- Those who value living by the river (55%).

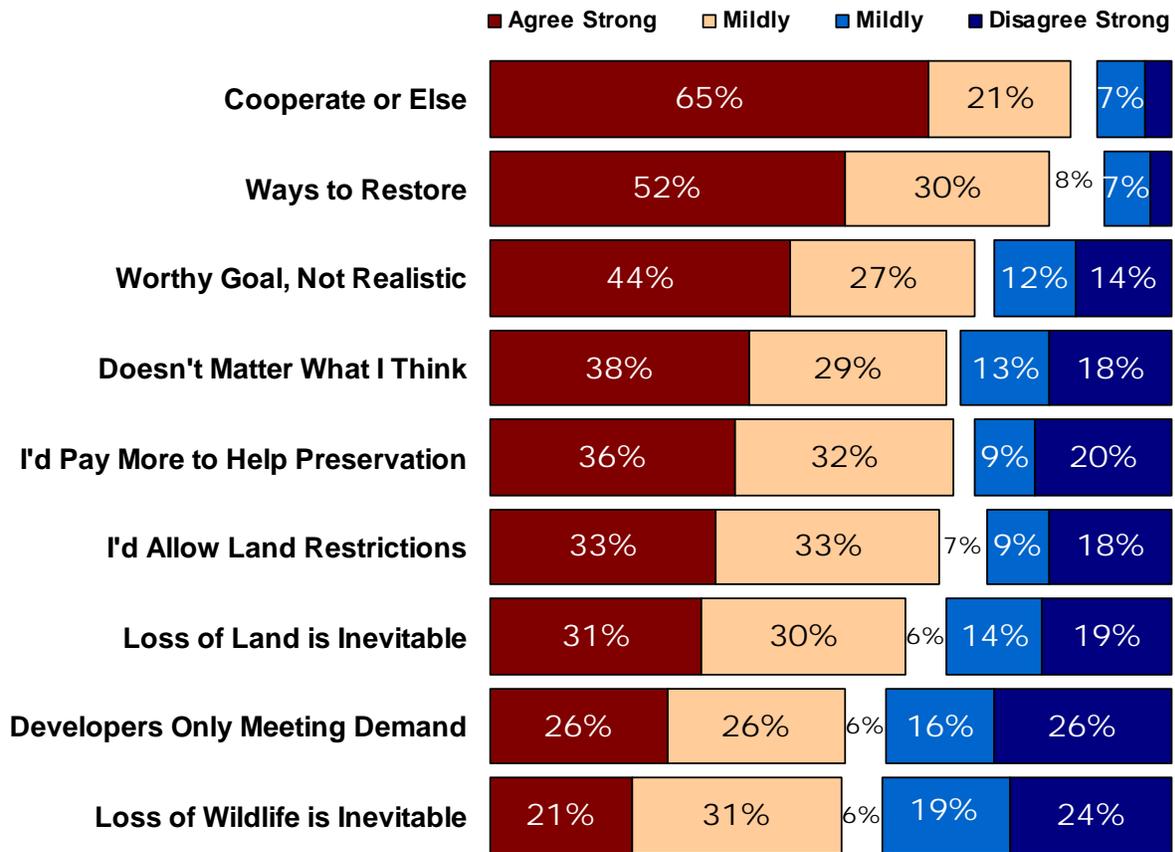
of People (44%):

- White collar employees (60%);
- Owners of 105 acres of land (55%);
- Flats residents (54%);
- Public sector employees (54%);
- Those currently working (52%);
- Anacortes residents (51%);
- 5-10 years in the county (51%);
- Passive environmentalists (51%);
- Couples with children at home (51%).

Cooperation is Needed and Solutions Are Possible

Q10: There seems to be a constant challenge to decide how the land in the Skagit Valley should be used between: commercial and residential development, agriculture, forest land and conservation. The following are some statements about this challenge. As I read each one, tell me whether you Agree Strongly, Agree Mildly, Disagree Mildly or Disagree Strongly. The first one is...

Statements About Problems, Solutions



Q10: There seems to be a constant challenge to decide how the land in the Skagit Valley should be used between: commercial and residential development, agriculture, forest land and conservation. The following are some statements about this challenge.

Most Likely to “Strongly Agree” with Statements

Cooperate or else (65%):

- Public sector employees (73%);
- Active environmentalists (72%);
- \$75,000+ annual income (71%);
- Those who value living by Puget Sound (71%).

There are ways to restore salmon (52%):

- Blue collar employees (67%);
- Owners of more than 1 acre of land (65%);
- Flats residents (64%);
- Sedro Woolley residents (63%);
- Those who value living by the river (61%);
- Those who value jobs (60%);
- Those living in unincorporated areas (58%).

Not a realistic goal (44%):

- Blue collar employees (59%);
- Non-environmentalists (51%);
- \$25,000 or less annual income (51%).

Doesn't matter what I think (38%):

- Upriver residents (57%);
- Blue collar employees (52%);
- Those working outside Skagit County (47%);
- \$25,000 or less annual income (45%);
- Single people without children at home (45%).

I'd pay a dollar or two (36%):

- Active environmentalists (62%);
- 5-10 years in the county (52%);
- \$50,000+ annual income (50%);
- White collar employees (48%);
- Public sector employees (44%);
- Ages 18-35 (44%);
- Those working in Skagit County (42%);
- Those who value living by the river (42%);
- Those who value living by nature (42%).

I'd allow land restrictions (33%):

- Ages 18-35 (49%);
- Active environmentalists (48%);
- Public sector employees (42%);
- Anacortes residents (40%);
- \$50,000+ annual income (40%).

Loss of land is inevitable (31%):

- Owners of more than 5 acres of land (38%);
- Baby boomers (38%);
- Blue collar employees (38%).

Developers meeting demand (26%):

- White collar employees (34%);
- Owners of more than 5 acres of land (33%);
- Couples with children at home (32%).

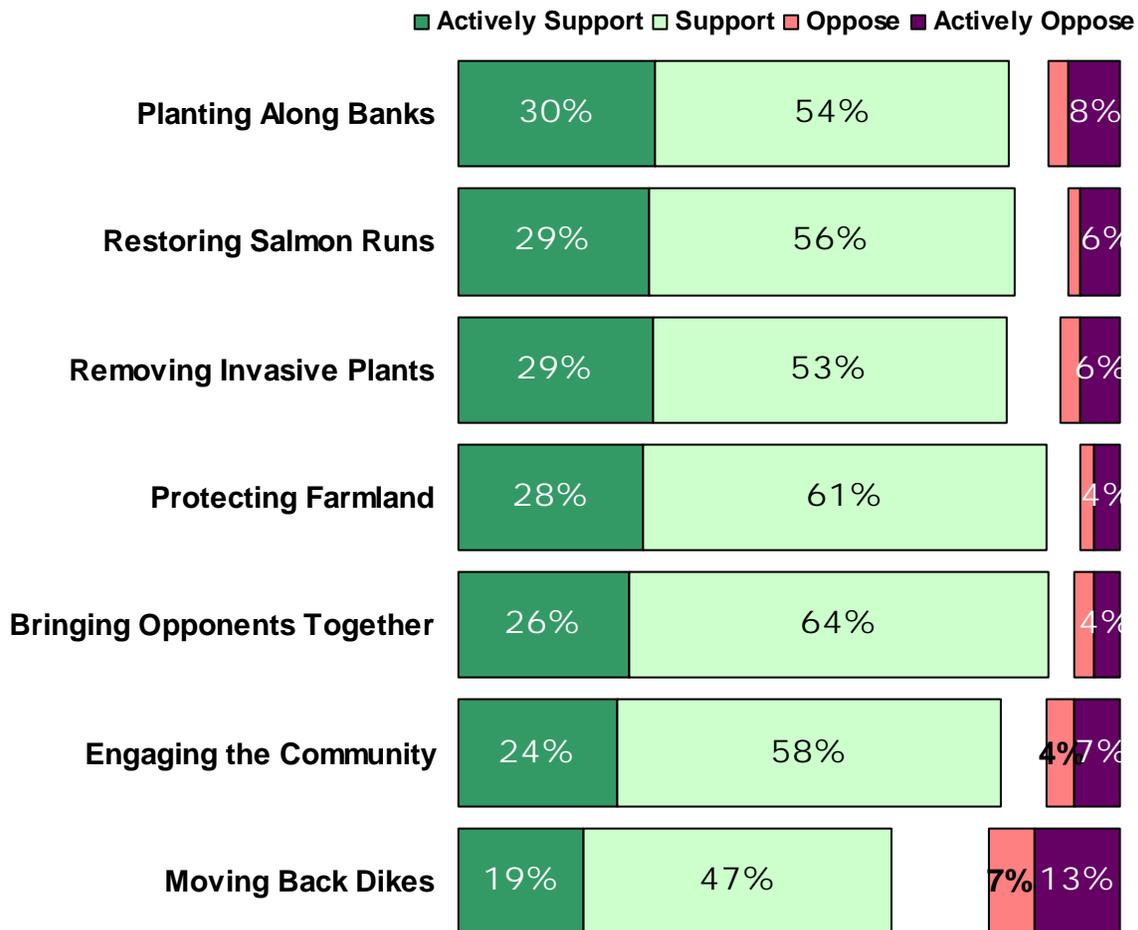
Loss of animals is inevitable (21%):

- Owners of more than 5 acres of land (27%);
- Blue collar employees (28%);
- \$25,000 or less annual income (28%);
- Those who value living by the river (28%).

Strong Support for Actions Many Willing to Actively Help

Q11: I am going to list some initiatives and activities that are going in the Skagit Valley. As I read each one, tell me whether which of the following you are likely to do: 1) Take an Active Part to Help Make That Happen; 2) Support It, But Not Take an Active Part; 3) Take an Active Part to Keep That From Happening; or 4) Oppose It, But Not Take an Active Part. If you have not heard of the activity, just say that. The first one is...

Likely Participation in Salmon Recovery Initiatives



Who Most Willing to Actively Help?

Q11: I am going to list some initiatives and activities that are going in the Skagit Valley. As I read each one, tell me whether which of the following you are likely to do: 1) Take an Active Part to Help Make That Happen; 2) Support It, But Not Take an Active Part; 3) Take an Active Part to Keep That From Happening; or 4) Oppose It, But Not Take an Active Part. If you have not heard of the activity, just say that. The first one is...

Most Likely to Take an Active Part in [*]

Planting along banks (30%):

- Active environmentalists (41%);
- Less than 5 years in the county (40%);
- White collar employees (39%);
- Ages 18-35 (38%);
- Owners of 1-5 acres of land (37%);
- Blue collar employees (37%);
- Those who value jobs (37%).

Restoring salmon runs (29%):

- White collar employees (41%);
- Active environmentalists (40%);
- Owners of 1-5 acres of land (38%);
- Those who value jobs (37%);
- Those who value living by the river (35%);
- Men (35%).

Removing invasive plants (29%):

- Owners of 1-5 acres of land (44%);
- Active environmentalists (39%);
- Blue collar employees (39%);
- Less than 5 years in the county (38%);
- Upriver residents (37%).

Protecting farmland (28%):

- Owners of more than 1 acre of land (40%);
- Active environmentalists (39%);
- Flats residents (38%);
- White collar employees (36%);
- Those who value outdoor recreation (34%);
- Those who value farmland (34%);
- Those who value jobs (34%).

Bringing opponents together (26%):

- Those who value jobs (37%);
- Owners of 1-5 acres of land (34%);
- Active environmentalists (34%);
- Those who value living by the river (32%).

Engaging the community (24%):

- Active environmentalists (33%);
- Those who value living by the river (33%);
- Ages 18-35 (31%);
- Those who value jobs (31%);
- Those who value outdoor recreation (30%).

Moving back dikes (19%):

- Those who value jobs (27%);
- Less than 10 years in the county (26%);
- Ages 18-35 (26%);
- Those who value living by the river (26%).

Who Most Willing to Support (But Not Actively Help)?

Q11: I am going to list some initiatives and activities that are going in the Skagit Valley. As I read each one, tell me whether which of the following you are likely to do: 1) Take an Active Part to Help Make That Happen; 2) Support It, But Not Take an Active Part; 3) Take an Active Part to Keep That From Happening; or 4) Oppose It, But Not Take an Active Part. If you have not heard of the activity, just say that. The first one is...

Most Likely to Support [*]

Planting along banks (54%):

- Ages 65+ (61%);
- Retired people (60%).

Restoring salmon runs (56%):

- Flats residents (65%);
- Passive environmentalists (65%);
- \$25,000 or less annual income (64%);
- Women (61%).

Removing invasive plants (53%):

- Ages 65+ (63%).

Protecting farmland (61%):

- 5-10 years in the county (68%);
- Owners of only their own home lot (68%).

Bringing opponents together (64%):

- \$50-75,000 annual income (71%);
- Women (70%).

Engaging the community (58%):

- Blue collar employees (68%);
- Those with no ties to agriculture (63%).

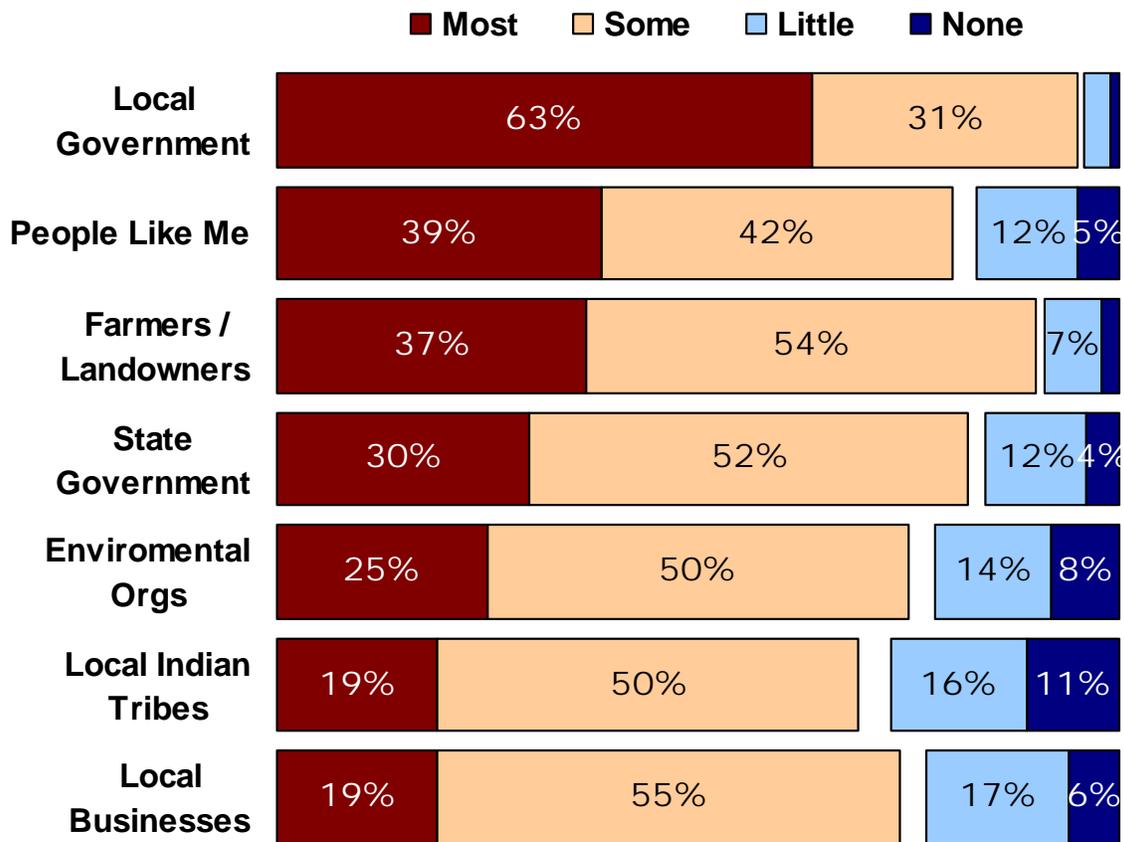
Moving back dikes (47%):

- Ages 18-35 (56%);
- Women (55%);
- Flats residents (55%).

Everyone is Responsible for Skagit's Future

Q12: Thinking now about the kind of place you want Skagit County to be in 10 or 20 years, who has responsibility to determine the future of the County. I am going to list some organizations and people. As I read each one, tell me whether you think that group has Most of the responsibility, Some, Little, or No responsibility. The first one is...

How Much Responsibility Does [*] Have?



Everyone is Responsible for Skagit's Future

Q12: Thinking now about the kind of place you want Skagit County to be in 10 or 20 years, who has responsibility to determine the future of the County. I am going to list some organizations and people. As I read each one, tell me whether you think that group has Most of the responsibility, Some, Little, or No responsibility. The first one is...

Most Likely to Say [*] Has the "Most Responsibility"

Local Government (63%):

- Owners of more than 5 acres of land (80%);
- \$50-75,000 annual income (75%).

People Like Me (39%):

- Those who see the health of Puget Sound as an indicator of environmental quality (48%);
- Those who see the # of birds as an indicator of environmental quality (48%);
- Those who see land use changes as an indicator of environmental quality (47%);
- Those who see the health of the river as an indicator of environmental quality (47%);
- Passive environmentalists (46%)
- Flats residents (45%);
- Owners of more than 5 acres of land (45%);
- Those who see the # of salmon as an indicator of environmental quality (45%).

Farmers/Landowners (37%):

- Those who see river health as an indicator of environmental quality (44%);
- Those who see the # of birds as an indicator of environmental quality (44%);
- Anacortes residents (43%);
- Owners of more than 5 acres of land (43%);
- \$50-75,000 annual income (43%);
- Baby boomers (43%).

State Government (30%):

- White collar employees (39%);
- \$50-75,000 annual income (39%);
- Upriver residents (37%);
- Ages 65+ (36%).

Environmental Organizations (25%):

- Active environmentalists (39%).

Local Indian Tribes (19%):

- Ages 65+ (27%);
- Upriver residents (26%);
- Active environmentalists (26%);
- Single people with no children at home (26%).

Local Businesses (19%):

- Active environmentalists (30%);
- Those who see the # of salmon as an indicator of environmental quality (26%);
- Anacortes residents (25%).