

TappsWise

A Social Marketing Approach to Help Prevent Harmful Algae Blooms

Puyallup Watershed Symposium
Tina Friedrich, Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department
Dec. 11, 2019



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Overview

Role of Health Department

Social Marketing

TappsWise



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What is the Problem?

Worldwide, harmful algae blooms seem to be increasing.

Possible causes:

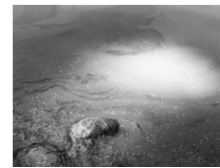
- Elevated nutrient levels, especially nitrogen and phosphorus.
- Rising temperatures.
- Changes in water chemistry such as pH, turbidity.



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Why, as a Health Department, do we care?

Toxic algae blooms impact public health.



- Toxins can make people sick.
 - Children very vulnerable.
- Toxins can kill pets.



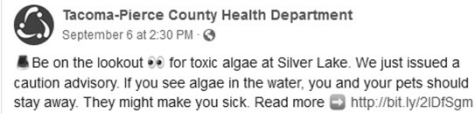
Photo by John Price on Unsplash



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Traditional Role of Health Department

- Monitor lakes.
- Send samples to lab for toxin levels.
- Issue public health advisories.
 - Emails.
 - Info on TPCHD’s website.
 - Info on TPCHD’s social media sites.



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Non-Traditional Role of Health Department: Preventing Toxic Algae Booms

- Algae need light, warm temperatures and nutrients to thrive.
- Lake residents influence how many nutrients enter the lake.
- How to change behavior? Education?
 - Studies have shown that education alone has little effect on behavior.
 - Education campaigns don’t address barriers to behavior change.



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Social Marketing

Social Marketing uses marketing techniques to create behavior change that benefits the targeted individuals and society.

- Choose Behavior
(KISS Keep It Simple and Singular)
- Identify Barriers and Benefits
- Develop strategy by choosing tools



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Lake Tapps

- 4.5 sq miles, 45 miles shoreline
- White River water gets diverted into it.
- Flow through lake decreased since ownership change.
 - No flushing out
 - what goes into the lake, stays in the lake
- Lake closure due to toxic algae in 2016.



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Choose Behavior



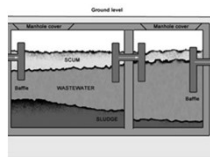
Problem:

Residential nutrient pollution causes declining water quality in lakes.

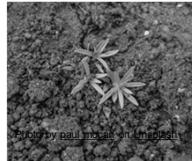
Sources of nutrients:



Fertilizers



Septic Systems



Soil erosion



Pet waste



Choose Behavior



- Reduce fertilizer use (organic and/or slow release preferred).
- Maintain septic systems.
- Fix eroding driveways, yards and parking areas.
- Scoop pet waste.
- Keep or create natural shoreline vegetation.



Barriers



Fertilizer Use

- Knowledge
 - Natural yard care and lawn care workshops.
- Availability of “lake-friendly” yard care products.
 - List of slow-release fertilizers and where to get them.
- Cost of “lake-friendly” yard care products.
 - Discount program.



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Barriers



Septic System Maintenance

- Knowledge
 - Septic care workshops.
 - Septic care reminders.
- Cost of septic inspection
 - Discount program.



TappsWise Septic Social
 Saturday, June 8, 2019
 10 a.m.–12 p.m.

Join your neighbors and find out what's below the lid.

Keep Lake Tapps clean, keep your family healthy, and save money.

Hands-on experience and real-life examples.

- Learn basic troubleshooting tips and do's and don'ts.
- Get all your septic system questions answered.




2019 Summer Tapps
 Hwy 6, Lake Tapps



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Choose Tools

Voluntary Commitment



Let's work together to keep Lake Tapps Clean and Healthy!

TappsWise Checklist

By taking these voluntary actions, you can protect the health of Lake Tapps and have your property TappsWise certified.

Lawns & Yards

- Use only slow release or organic fertilizers and no weed and feed. If you do use a pesticide, use only spot on products. If using yard care professionals, ensure they follow these practices. *By initialing, I agree to perform this practice:* _____
- Attend a FREE natural yard care workshop. *Date attended:* _____
- Scoop pet poop, bag it, and dispose in the garbage. *By initialing, I agree to perform this practice:* _____
- Cover bare soils with mulch or plants.
- Fix eroding areas in yard, driveways, and parking areas.

Septic Systems (not required if connected to sanitary sewer)

- Have inspection by licensed professional within past three years. *Date inspected:* _____
- Have inspection at least every three years (system type determines frequency). *By initialing, I agree to perform this practice:* _____
- Attend a FREE septic care workshop. *Date attended:* _____

Healthy Shoreline Checklist (shoreline properties can also obtain a "healthy shore" certification.)

- Maintain existing natural shorelines (non-lawn vegetation).
- Re-establish shoreline vegetation by replacing some lawn with other plants such as shrubs, perennials, and trees.



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Choose Tools

Prompts

- Septic care reminders
- Pet waste postcards



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Choose Tools



Incentives

- Septic Incentive
- Fertilizer Discount Program

TappsWise Septic Care Incentive Program

Save up to \$450 on your next septic inspection, riser installation or pumping.

Follow these steps to participate in the septic care incentive program:
1. Choose a certified septic system service provider from the attached list. We recommend you compare costs of several service companies.

2. Schedule your service. Tell the service provider you are participating in TappsWise Septic Care Incentive Program.

3. Fill in your information below. When the service provider arrives at your home, give them this form to receive:
✓ \$125 off a routine inspection (required to receive other discounts below)
✓ \$125 off riser installation (inspection required first)
✓ \$200 off tank(s) pumping (inspection required first)



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Choose Tools

Change of Social Norms

- Yard signs

Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department's Healthy Lake Program in partnership with Cascade Water Alliance

253.798.2856
TappsWise@tpchd.org



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So far:

- Great participation in natural yard care workshops.
- Less interest in septic workshops.
- Few properties certified. Biggest barrier is fertilizer use.

In future:

- Provide more support to residents to help switch to slow-release fertilizers.
- Promote program through direct mail and community events.



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In future:

- Cascade Water Alliance has started regular water quality monitoring.
- TPCHD will continue TappsWise.
- TPCHD will continue to monitor for toxic algae.
- Survey to determine if behaviors have changed.



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Questions?

Tina Friedrich
Environmental Health Specialist
Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department
tfriedrich@tpchd.org
(253) 882-7109

