



FINAL REPORT to the WA State Recreation and Conservation Office

Lake Union Water Safety Program

Project #22-1772 - *Seaplane Advisory Buoys*

Project Duration: May 2022 – June 30, 2023

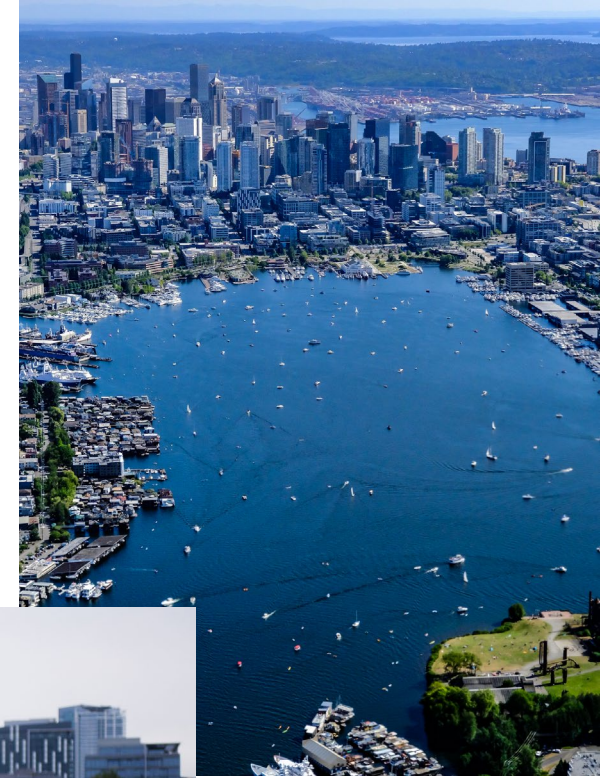
Submitted: June 15, 2023

REVISED June 29, 2023

***Added SHP incident info pg 2, updated RBAW OneDrive link
for campaign materials pg 12***



#MindTheZone



Executive Summary

The Recreational Boating Association (RBAW) is extremely proud of the success of the #MindTheZone campaign, and the Positive and Measurable behavior changes demonstrated by Lake Union water users

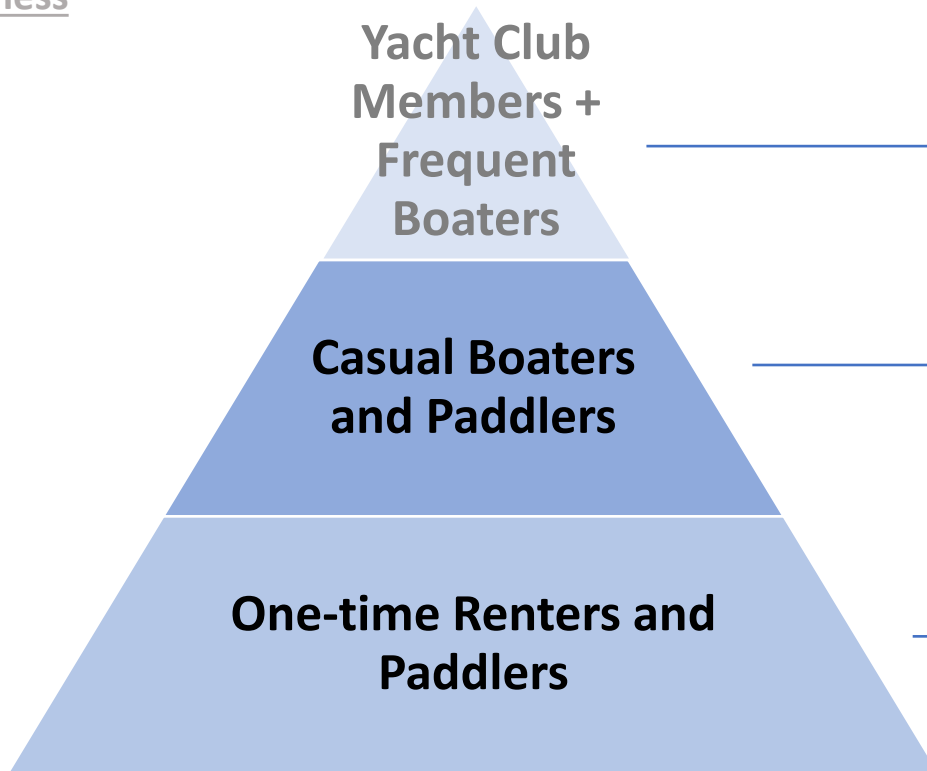
- In a mere 10 weeks from contract award, the **#MindTheZone** campaign significantly raised awareness and spurred positive behavioral changes by many Lake Union users in summer 2022 (June – September)
- In its inaugural summer (2022), Seaplane companies Kenmore Air and Harbor Air reported demonstrable changes in lake user behavior, pilots reporting seeing east/west movement of users when buoys are flashing, resulting in **only 1 SHP reported conflict** and zero diverted flights
- The spirit of the campaign . . . *We all share Lake Union, Be Aware, Be Courteous, Be Safe.* . . . set the right tone and was embraced by the overwhelming majority of water users
- Conservatively, this campaign reached well over **2.3M individuals** in the 13 months of this contract via many levers – including, media sources, direct education and outreach, visibility of lakeside signage at businesses and watercraft launch sites.
- Summer 2023 outreach is well underway with great local business engagement, traditional media exposure, and growing social media views and impressions

Project Focus: Create Awareness and Understanding of the Seaplane Advisory Buoys for all Lake Union Users (on-shore only)

Likely Awareness
of buoys:

Higher

Lower



Key Connection Point:

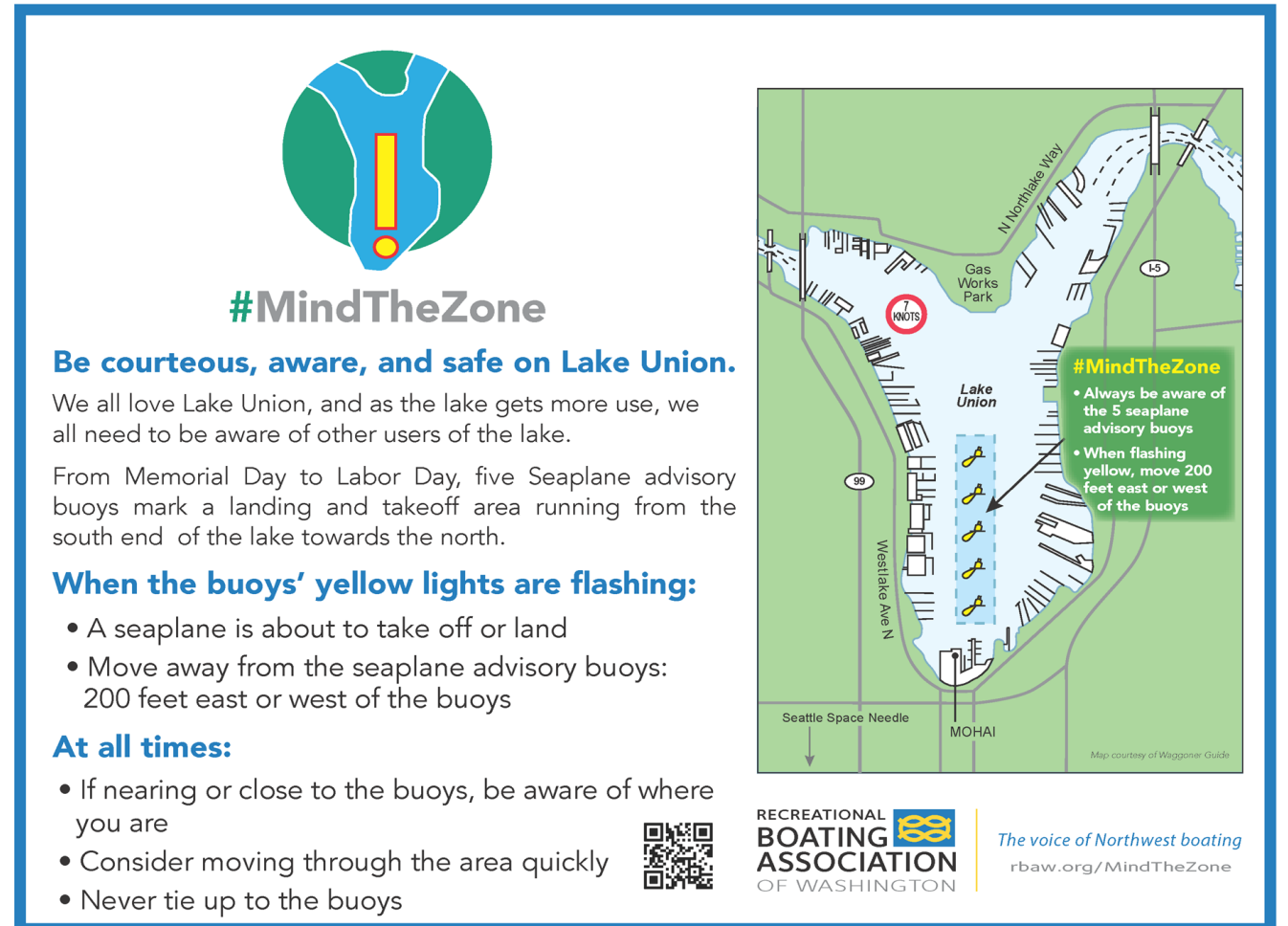
Newsletters, Club Social Media, Signage at docks, Marine Trade magazines and Publications: Likely advocates

Social Media, Signage at key access/launch points, fuel dock staff, boat rental/share businesses, paddling organizations

Employees of Lake Union watercraft rental businesses/boat share, etc. that educate customers before putting them on the water

Execution Plan: Use Traditional Media, Social Media & an Outreach Campaign to Significantly Raise Awareness & Educate on the Advisory Buoys

- Created campaign materials - Logo, hashtag, videos, awareness map, web-landing page, and promotional/educational materials
- Launched targeted social media campaign on Instagram, Facebook and YouTube to expand awareness and connect with younger demographic in Seattle and surrounding areas
- Leveraged RBAW connections with marine trades and boating clubs, used local/regional broadcast, and print media to raise awareness
- Outreach and education to Lake Union businesses who put people on the water
- Signage at launch and access points around the lake so messaging is top of mind before entering the water



#MindTheZone

Be courteous, aware, and safe on Lake Union.

We all love Lake Union, and as the lake gets more use, we all need to be aware of other users of the lake.

From Memorial Day to Labor Day, five Seaplane advisory buoys mark a landing and takeoff area running from the south end of the lake towards the north.

When the buoys' yellow lights are flashing:

- A seaplane is about to take off or land
- Move away from the seaplane advisory buoys: 200 feet east or west of the buoys

At all times:

- If nearing or close to the buoys, be aware of where you are
- Consider moving through the area quickly
- Never tie up to the buoys

#MindTheZone

- Always be aware of the 5 seaplane advisory buoys
- When flashing yellow, move 200 feet east or west of the buoys

RECREATIONAL BOATING ASSOCIATION OF WASHINGTON

The voice of Northwest boating
rbaw.org/MindTheZone

Levers to Broadly Reach Lake Union Users – and Impact

The primary age-range target was best reached via social media – both for education messages and curating a community of #MindTheZone followers and advocates.

Social Media

- We targeted an audience of **Boaters, Paddlers, Outdoor Enthusiasts, Outdoor Recreation interests** – with specific engagement strategies in the important **18 to 35 age** demographic
- Geographic range was **Bellingham to Olympia & Seattle–Tacoma** DMA to reach new or visiting users
- **~683,440 individual accounts were reached** with educational messages as well as engagement with the #MindTheZone community
 - Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube platforms were used (see page 14 for links)
 - For the #MindTheZone videos, >90% of people who were offered the 15 second video watched in its entirety
- Our Social Media campaign had **>30% local population visibility**
- **>12,000 visits to the [RBAW.org/MindTheZone](https://www.rbaa.org/MindTheZone) web page** to learn more about the campaign



Levers to Broadly Reach Lake Union Users – and Impact

Next to social media, engaging the local Lake Union business community was critical for campaign reach.

Business Outreach

- Our target was Lake Union businesses that **put people on the water** (rent or own, storage) – we worked with management and employees and asked them to educate their customers and spread awareness
 - Broad support was received, and they became advocates for the campaign and staying safe on Lake Union
- **Restaurants, Fuel and Concessions, and Marine product stores** were also included to ensure repeated awareness as people moved around Lake Union
- **>40 businesses** placed signage and/or actively engaged in the #MindTheZone campaign
 - Businesses also shared campaign messages on their social media platforms, increasing campaign reach
 - Freedom Boat Club, the largest boat-share company on Lake Union, had #MindTheZone information added to their maps so all customers could easily see (see attachment A)
 - Seattle Boat Company and Bowriders Grill affixed campaign stickers on to-go bags for customers that arrived by foot and via water to their restaurant and fuel dock.

Levers to Broadly Reach Lake Union Users – and Impact

Where the campaign was primarily focused on outreach when the buoys were in the water during the summer, there were great opportunities to connect with boaters and water-goers in the off-season.

Marine and Trade Shows

- 2023 Seattle Boat Show at Lumen Field – Over **34,000 people attended the show** from Feb 3 – 11, 2023. The booth attendant made over **350 direct connections** with visitors and passers-by, and the visual message of the location of buoys and what to do if they flash was clearly represented in booth signage
- 2023 Spring Boats Afloat Show on Lake Union – Over **2,600 people attended the show** April 27 – 30, 2023 on the shore of Lake Union. #MindTheZone vertical banners were displayed at the show entrance, information bags were prepared for vendors, and campaign branded give-a-ways were provided showing location of the buoys
- 2023 Shilshole Boatfest Marine event – Over **250 people attended the show** on June 3, 2023. Vertical banners were displayed by the Port of Seattle (festival hosts) in their booth and campaign branded promotional items were provided showing location of the buoys

Levers to Broadly Reach Lake Union Users – and Impact

Signage was kept simple and clear – always know where you are when on the water; know the location of the seaplane advisory buoys; and know what to do when they flash

Signage at Lake Union Access & Launch Sites – and shoreside interactions

- Installed signs at **over 18 Seattle City Parks, shoreline launches, and pocket parks** to raise awareness of lake users before entering the water.
- **>200 Shoreside interactions** with #MindTheZone staff member to educate on the seaplane advisory buoys and offer #MindTheZone promotional materials



Levers to Broadly Reach Lake Union Users – and Impact

Where Social Media provided the reach and constant drum-beat of the campaign, broadcast and print media gave the campaign legitimacy as well as visibility to a broader audience that could also become advocates for Lake Union safety.

TV Media

- For the 2-summer season's that the campaign was in place - KING5, KOMO, and KSTW interviews **aired on TV and radio 36 times with an estimated 1,252,245 viewers** (see page 14 for links to clips)

Print Media & Newsletter Outreach

- Featured in publications that target Boaters, Yacht Club members and the Marine industry reaching **>306,500 people** via print, website, and online distribution
- Used newsletters and organizations email subscriber distribution lists to reach **>134,100 individuals**

Contracted Scope of Work and Completion Status

- ✓ Provide outreach and education in advance of major holiday weekends and during peak-hour vessel use at key entry points to Lake Union.
- ✓ Hire Campaign Director and Volunteer & Outreach Coordinator
- ✓ Utilize Yacht and Boating Clubs to post signage, include in member newsletters and generally make information available to boaters and vessel operators.
- ✓ Produce advertising and public service materials that can be displayed via social and traditional media outlets.
- ✓ Produce simple charts to help boaters and human-powered vessel operators easily identify and locate key markers such as the Lake Union landing zone and buoys.
- ✓ Produce posters for display at launch points.
- ✓ Produce stickers and give-a-ways for display and distribution at key launch points and around Lake Union.
- ✗ Produce sealed-plastic and waterproof wallet cards with safety information that operators can easily keep with them. **REVISED: We determined that the message is simple enough where an “on person reference” is not needed and most likely would not be retained. Opted for high value promotional materials and increased social media and signage.**
- ✗ **REVISED:** Produce large banners and set up informational booths to help boaters and human vessel-powered operators easily locate volunteers who can provide safety information. **Information booths and/or banners were used at 2023 Seattle Boat Show, 2023 Spring Boats Afloat Show, and 2023 Shilshole Boatfest to communicate campaign messages and raise awareness.**
- ✓ Produce a short safety video that can be shown and handed out to boat and vessel operators and rental companies.
- ✓ Provide detailed information-collection and data reporting system to include number of people contacted, number of days volunteers are made available at key entry points and information booths, number of rental businesses and entry points where volunteers are stationed, and accident and incident counts collected in collaboration with Seattle Harbor Patrol.
- ✓ By June 15, 2023, provide a final report on the uses of the funding, successes and failures of the project, and the information included above.

Campaign Disappointments

There were a few areas that did not garner the desired campaign benefit.

- ❑ **Volunteerism**: We were not successful in staffing a volunteer program for lake-side on shore outreach, the boaters we targeted did not engage. Feedback received was that many were “out boating” for the summer as well as a concern for approaching people
 - Contractors were utilized for on-shore outreach in summer 2022 – and a dedicated outreach coordinator is being used for summer 2023

- ❑ **Anti-Seaplane Sentiment**: There were a handful of businesses and individuals that are not supportive of seaplane operations on Lake Union and did not engage in any campaign outreach or communications to assist the campaign

#MindTheZone Campaign Content

- #MindTheZone Website
 - www.rbaw.org/mindthezone
- [RCO Report – MindTheZone](#) *updated June 29,2023*
 - OneDrive Link for campaign materials
 - Videos and Pictures
 - Campaign Maps
 - Campaign Graphics (web, print, etc.)
 - Pictures of Promotional items
 - Campaign Documents

#MindTheZone - Television and Social Media

Sample stories from inaugural campaign in 2022

48 North Magazine [story](#)

Waggoner Guide [story](#)

Northwest Marine Trade Association (NMTA)

WaterLife [story](#)

Sail-World [story](#)

King 5 [story](#)

KOMO News [story](#)

#MindTheZone in the news - kicking off Summer 2023

Waggoner Guide [story](#) (Apr 2023)

King5 [story](#) (May 2023)

KSTW [story](#) (June 2023)

KOMO [story](#) (June 2023)

NW Yachting [story](#) (June 2023)

National Marine Manufacturers Association (NMMA) [story](#) (June 2023)

Social Media Accounts (these will remain in service for the City of Seattle contract)



Follow [@theRBAW](#)



Follow [MindTheZone](#)



Follow: [Recreational Boating Association of WA: RBAW](#)

Lakeside Signage Examples



Attachment A – Example of Map

The Freedom Boat Club included #MindTheZone info on their maps which are attached to each of their 60 vessels located on Lake Union, Lake Washington and the Elliott Bay area

