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# swim safe

## Community unites for a Swimsafe summer in 2013

**Lake Tapps WA** – Following a 2012 summer that saw three deaths on Lake Tapps, the surrounding cities, first responders, school districts and Cascade Water Alliance, owner of the lake, came together to take steps to help swimmers and boaters who enjoy recreation on Lake Tapps and other area waterways stay safe this summer in a campaign called Swimsafe. Their efforts paid off – there were no deaths reported this summer season.

“We take safety issues seriously and implemented improvements to our parks including new signage and community outreach to enhance safety as well as improve park users’ experiences” says City of Bonney Lake Mayor Neil Johnson. “Especially gratifying this year was working with seventh grade students from North Tapps Middle School who took water safety on as their own project after tragically losing a friend and fellow student to drowning in 2012.”

The City of Bonney Lake, Pierce County, East Pierce Fire and Rescue, Bonney Lake Police Department, Sumner School District, Dieringer School District and Cascade Water Alliance worked together to take steps to promote a Swimsafe summer. The agencies met regularly to develop strategies and a community education program designed to promote water safety.

“The Lake Tapps community stepped up to bring hope out of tragedy by creating a multi-layer drowning prevention campaign to help swimmers and boaters,” said Jerry Thorson, Chief, East Pierce Fire and Rescue. “Seeing no water related deaths this summer means something is working,” he adds, “but this must be an ongoing campaign for all of us.”

This summer, Bonney Lake police officers conducted safety ramp inspections, patrolled the waters, and provided a water safety course to the kids in the Sumner and Dieringer School Districts. Pierce County has dedicated a memorial to those lost on the lake. And, East Pierce Fire and Rescue stepped up their life jacket loaner program.

Additionally, seventh grade students at North Tapps Middle School explored various measures to improve water safety on Lake Tapps and came up with their own ideas for at Allan Yorke Park, which they presented to Mayor Neil Johnson in April. Mayor Johnson gave the go-ahead to the students and the memorial was dedicated on May 20 and completed in June.

“Our students were moved to act to prevent more deaths on the lake. The memorial serves both to honor those lost and as a reminder that water safety is essential.” said Dieringer School District Superintendent Dr. Judy Neumeier-Martinson. “We’re very proud of the actions the students took to address this serious problem. Their efforts are making a real difference.”

Learn more about Swimsafe programs and promotions by visiting these websites:

City of Bonney Lake:

[www.ci.bonney-ake.wa.us/section\\_community/parks\\_recreation/special\\_events.shtml#swimsafe](http://www.ci.bonney-ake.wa.us/section_community/parks_recreation/special_events.shtml#swimsafe)

Pierce County: <http://www.co.pierce.wa.us/index.aspx?NID=114>

East Pierce Fire and Rescue: [www.eastpiercefire.org](http://www.eastpiercefire.org)

Cascade Water Alliance: [www.cascadewater.org](http://www.cascadewater.org)

Dieringer School District: [www.dieringer.wednet.edu](http://www.dieringer.wednet.edu)

Sumner School District: [www.sumnersd.org](http://www.sumnersd.org)