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PROGRESS REPORT: ☐

FINAL REPORT ☒

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MyCoast App Marketing Campaign

Final Report

September 2019

Prepared by EnviroIssues



Overview

The MyCoast app marketing campaign ran from May through September 2019, focusing on engaging priority audiences using digital tactics, traditional media ad buys, and physical collateral, in addition to leveraging project partner networks through a partner toolkit. The campaign targeted residents and visitors of Snohomish County, but was designed to be transferable and scalable to other coastal counties, MRCs, and conservation partners across Washington state. Digital ads were the primary focus of the strategy, with traditional media ads and physical collateral to reach beach goers and water users who may not be as digitally engaged. The marketing approach, goals and tactics are outlined in full in the Marketing Plan.

This final report includes a summary of the implementation of the marketing plan, including goals and outcomes, final results from the digital tactics and traditional media, physical collateral, marketing campaign costs, adjustments made based on interim user metrics and lessons learned, and the webinar. All final materials and native design document files can be found on this [DropBox site](#).

Summary of goals and outcomes

All goals were met after completing three ad runs, including:

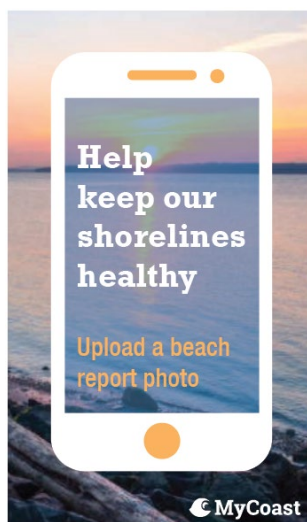
- Creating awareness about the MyCoast smartphone app among Snohomish County residents with nearly 300,000 impressions (how many times the ad was seen)
- Bringing understanding to county residents about their role in marine conservation, particularly those that are not otherwise engaged in marine stewardship with more than 1,800 clicks/taps (number of people who saw the ad and followed the link)
- Engaging those familiar with the coastal environment to report marine conditions with 354 user logins since our campaign began (how many times the app was engaged with)
- Increasing app installation and use/user retention during the period of performance:
 - 144 new users **from Snohomish County** with the goal of 100 new users by campaign completion
 - 391 new reports **within Snohomish County** with the goal of 200 new reports by campaign completion

Digital tactics and traditional media

The Marketing Plan outlined two digital ad runs around major holidays. Following the completion of A/B testing on Instagram and in-app ads, we expanded our digital tactics to include Facebook to capture more users with the preferred creative concept, which we developed into multiple-sized ads. Concepts A and B are included to the right; we ultimately used Concept B for our marketing materials following A/B testing.

The initial ad run cost less than anticipated, so we used the remaining funds to complete a third ad run around Labor Day. After analyzing the results from the previous two ad runs, we modified our tactics and only used Facebook for the third run, since it produced the highest click-through rate.

Concept A



Concept B



In total we completed three ad runs, using the following tactics. We used app push notifications throughout to remind current app users to submit reports.

Ad run	Dates	Tactics
A/B testing	May 26 – June 8, 2019 (Memorial Day weekend)	Instagram, in-app ads
Ad run #2	June 23 – July 11 (Fourth of July weekend)	Instagram, in-app ads, Facebook
Ad run #3	Aug. 13 – Sept. 2 (Labor Day weekend)	Facebook
Push notifications	May 24, June 21, July 4, July 27, July 31, Aug. 15	

Total key performance indicators for the combined ad runs are outlined in the table below, including app activity. App activity and reports include data beyond the end of the final campaign to account for the conversion attribution window of 30 days (i.e., folks that saw the ad, but waited to act).

Platform	Key Performance Indicator (KPI)	KPI #	Initial assessment based on industry standards
Facebook	Impressions	192,933	
	Click-through-rate	1.91%	Well above average (more than double expectations for government promotions)
	Clicks/Taps	1,510	
Instagram	Impressions	59,935	
	Click-through-rate	0.21%	Poor
	Clicks/Taps	125	
In-app ads	Impressions	46,183	
	Click-through-rate	0.43%	Slightly below average
	Clicks/Taps	198	
App activity	New WA-based sign-ups	144	
	Reports from new users	391	
	WA-based logins	354	

A detailed list of reports by type is also included below:

Report type	Total reports	Snohomish County reports
Take A Beach Photo	151 reports	27 reports
Creosote	345 reports	39 reports
Large Marine Debris	49 reports	6 reports
Storm Surge	1 report	--
Abandoned Boats	17 reports	8 reports
TOTAL	563 reports (391 from new users)	80 reports

Overall, the ads have reached 299,051 impressions and 1,833 link clicks, resulting in 144 new app users, 391 reports from those new users, and 354 app login-ins. Analytics on government marketing campaigns are hard to come by, but the click-through rate on Facebook of 1.91% is more than double than what we'd expect from a campaign of this type. In addition, during the A/B testing, the click-through-rate for in-app ads for Concept B was more than double the first quarter average across the board. Based on EnviroIssues' experience working with

government clients on other social media and marketing campaigns, this campaign was successful at reaching a broad audience and eliciting clicks, downloads and reports.

To accompany digital ads, we also used traditional media. Since campaign launch, we ran the following digital and print ads:

- Everett Herald:
 - Online: June 23 – July 6
 - Print: Aug. 4 - 10
- Snohomish County Tribune print/online: June 30 – July 6
- Beacons Online: July 21 – Aug. 17
- North County Outlook: July 21 – Aug. 24
- Snohomish County Tribune: Aug. 11-17

Physical collateral

We developed a poster and an outreach rack card to reach beach goers and water users who may not be as digitally engaged. EnviroIssues conducted email and phone outreach to local agencies, jurisdictions, businesses and community organizations to coordinate distribution of posters and rack cards. We distributed:

- 50 posters to 3 municipalities
- 4,000 rack cards to 19 organizations, including 3,000 to Washington State Ferries

Marketing campaign costs

Overall, we spent approximately \$30,000 on designing and implementing the campaign. The table below outlines the direct advertising costs by tactic:

Tactic	Cost
Facebook	\$2,493.17
Instagram	\$528.53
In-app ads	\$349.34
Push notifications	\$0.00
Traditional media print and online ads	\$2,376.76
Rack card printing and mailing	\$413.00
Poster printing and mailing	\$175.00
TOTAL	\$6,335.80

Lessons learned

Throughout the marketing campaign, we evaluated the effectiveness of the ads and made interim changes as needed. Those changes included:

- **Utilizing leftover funds for a third ad run.** The A/B testing cost less than expected, so we repurposed that funding to conduct a third ad run around Labor Day. This allowed us to more than double our impressions and meet our goals.

- **Adjusting outreach methods to achieve high impact results.** During the first A/B testing ad run, we used only Instagram and in-app ads, because Instagram is cheaper than Facebook. Once we had selected a concept, we incorporated Facebook into the strategy. After analyzing the results, we used only Facebook for the third ad run because it yielded the highest results and ultimately resulted in a well-above average click-through rate.

After completing the marketing campaign, we considered lessons learned and how other organizations might make adjustments to this strategy for future campaigns. A few key lessons were:

- **Modifying the strategy for distributing physical collateral to maximize coordination, information sharing, willingness to host materials and budget.** We contacted more than 45 organizations to ask them if they would be willing to carry the rack cards. Many organizations did not respond at all or had a difficult time understanding the purpose or benefit of carrying the rack card. This coordination involved a heavy time and budget investment that only resulted in 17 organizations carrying the card. In the future, it may be more effective to:
 - Offer an incentive to organizations for carrying the card. This tactic would be an expense, but may be a draw for smaller organizations and open the door for further conversation about the app.
 - Visit organizations in-person to share information about the app and hand deliver the materials. This tactic eliminates the need to coordinate mailing and provides a more direct opportunity to talk with the right person and get their questions answered, hopefully resulting in a greater number of organizations being willing to carry the cards.
- **Adjusting collateral types to meet organizational needs.** We had originally planned to develop yard signs and hoped that municipalities would be willing to put them out on their beaches and at parks. Municipalities decided that they did not want to host yard signs, but were willing to put up posters. This flexibility allowed us to meet our goal of having materials in these areas, while also meeting organizational needs.
- **Considering user comments on photos in Concept B.** We received some negative comments about the images in Concept B on our Facebook ads, with some folks noting the images did not show sea change, but rather just the tide. We chose these specific photos for the ad campaign because we wanted to be sure to use a beach location that was available on the app and showed the same point at different times. We did not have many photo options at that point and these photos met the criteria. However, future marketing campaigns may want to consider using Concept A or modifying Concept B with newer photos that show greater change. Both Concept A and Concept B are included in the partner toolkit Dropbox folder.
- **Incorporating digital retargeting to capture potential new users while they are at the beach.** We may have been able to increase the number of reports and new user sign-ups by focusing our advertising to people while they were at the beach. Many people may have seen the posters or newspaper ads, but didn't take the extra step to look up and download the app. Using digital retargeting to draw a "fence" around local beaches would send ads directly to phones while folks were at the beach. Digital engagement specialists recommend a minimum budget of \$2,500 for digital retargeting, with \$5,000 being most effective. While our marketing budget was \$7,000, we diversified our ad types to reach a broader audience, but a marketing campaign with a higher budget could effectively incorporate these ad strategies. We also consciously decided not to use digital retargeting since folks in the targeted area cannot opt in or out of the ads.

- **Coordinating more directly with Blue Urchin.** Blue Urchin, the app designers, hold many of the detailed metrics about app use. In the future, we would recommend coordinating with them directly to understand exactly which ads and tactics led to the most new users and reports. This would help us understand which channels were most effective in terms of downloads, not just clicks, and funds could be redirected accordingly.
- **Reserving funds for a short campaign to deploy around an unexpected event.** In a future campaign, reserving funds to deploy a short campaign around an unexpected event could increase the number of new sign-ups and reports. Users would be most likely to submit a report around a big event, like a storm, so deploying ads around that time increases the likelihood of capturing their attention. In addition, new users may be more likely to sign up if they've recently heard about the app somewhere else, such as a news story. We already had ads running when a news story came out mentioning the ad.

We also conducted a one-hour lessons learned webinar with partner agencies and key stakeholders on Sept. 24. In that webinar, we shared some details about the app, provided an overview of the marketing campaign, discussed some of these lessons learned and provided tips for future marketing campaigns. There were **30 attendees** and their questions and comments focused on the following topics. Answers are outlined below as well.

- **How can users access the photos collected via the app?** All photos are available on mycoast.org/wa. Scroll down to the report section you'd like to see and select "View All." Reports are also now searchable by county, under the "Search All Reports" function in the top navigation.
- **I work with private landowners on Puget Sound on shoreline stewardship, including monitoring their own beaches with photos over time. Is this a user group you are interested in engaging, or is your focus only on public beaches? How can private beaches be added for King Tides and Storm Surge reports?** The Take A Beach Photo report is only designed for public beaches. We would not want to add private beaches because it might inadvertently cause the public to visit private property. However, other app reports, like King Tides, Storm Surge and Creosote can be taken from anywhere, including private beaches. Creosote reports from private beaches are of special interest.
- **Is there a plan to add offshore wave buoy data information to the Take a Beach Photo report?** There is not a plan to add these buoy data at this time. The data are sparse. For further questions, connect with Eric Grossman, U.S. Geological Survey.
- **Are there plans to make an "add your beach" submission form or button to the Take a Beach Photo reports? Or some other way that people can connect with you to add beaches not listed (e.g., Pacific Coast beaches).** There is not currently a plan to add a button or submission form, but you can contact Sasha Horst, Northwest Straits Commission, to request that a beach be added.
- **Can users opt in or out of digital retargeting?** Users cannot opt in or out of digital retargeting if they have a mobile device, as it works by accessing the location data through their mobile phone. However, ads only appear in places where folks would already see ads. We did not use digital retargeting for this campaign. The attendee also commented that this tactic could deter many folks from engaging with the app.
- **Is there a current research goal attached to the "Take A Beach Photo" reporting? Or is it a general data collection for future use / generally engaging people on the beach?** There is not a specific research goal associated with the Take a Beach Photo report. It is a general data collection for future use to capture things such as erosion, sea level rise, oil spills or other disasters. It is also a great tool with an easy-to-use function that would appeal to many "citizen scientists."

Finally, several attendees provided praise for the app and the marketing campaign and thanked the team for sharing the information.

Final materials

All final materials and native design document files can be found on this [DropBox site](#). The following materials are included on the site:

- Marketing Plan
- Creative brief
- Final press release
- Online, print and social media ads
- Poster
- Rack card
- Partner toolkit
- Partner logos
- Webinar presentation
- Webinar recording

MyCoast App Marketing Campaign

Partner Toolkit

July 2019

Prepared by EnviroIssues



Overview:

In May 2019, Snohomish County Marine Resources Committee (MRC) launched a marketing campaign to promote a smartphone app called MyCoast which allows citizens to share photos documenting shoreline change, pollution, and hazards with resource managers. The goal of the marketing campaign is to build awareness of the app and help county residents and visitors see their role in protecting and preserving Snohomish County beaches. The project is in partnership with the Northwest Straits Initiative, Washington State Department of Natural Resources, U.S. Geological Survey and Washington Sea Grant.

While the campaign is focused on recruiting new app users within Snohomish County, the project team designed the marketing materials so that they are not geographically-specific and rather could be used by partners across Washington state. By sharing these materials and content, we hope to amplify the awareness about the MyCoast app across networks belonging to other MRCs, agencies, and other entities engaged in marine conservation.

In addition to the content below, please see the accompanying files available in the [shared Dropbox folder](#).

Key messages of the campaign:

- The MyCoast app makes it easy to:
 - Contribute to time-lapse photos that track beach change
 - Report other shoreline hazards and conditions, such as creosote logs and pilings, marine debris, abandoned boats, king tides, and storm surges
- Your photos will be shared with state and local managers to help track beach change over time and prioritize marine restoration efforts.
- Using this app is easy, safe, and doesn't require any further follow-up after you've shared your photos.
- With your help, we can make better decisions that help protect and preserve our shoreline!

Email/newsletter blurbs:

Short version

Interested in joining the community of citizen scientists helping to document beach change across Washington state? Using the free mobile app called [MyCoast](#), anyone enjoying the beach or getting out on the water can:

- Contribute to time lapse photos that track beach change
- Report other shoreline hazards and conditions, such as creosote logs, pilings, marine debris, abandoned boats, king tides, and storm surges

Your photos will be shared with state resource managers to help track beach change over time and prioritize marine restoration efforts. With your help, we can make better decisions that help protect and preserve our shoreline! Learn more at mycoast.org/wa and download the MyCoast app to your iPhone or Android via App Store or Google Play.

Long version

Interested in joining the community of citizen scientists helping to document beach change across Washington state? Using the free mobile app called [MyCoast](#), anyone enjoying the beach or getting out on the water can:

- Contribute to time lapse photos that track beach change
- Report other shoreline hazards and conditions, such as creosote pilings, marine debris, abandoned boats, king tides and storm surges

Your photos will be shared with state resource managers at the Washington State Department of Natural Resources to prioritize marine restoration efforts and understand what the future of our coastline might hold under different weather and tidal conditions. Washington is now one of nine states that currently offers the MyCoast platform – and the only one on the West Coast. To date, over 1,000 photo reports from Washington have been submitted.

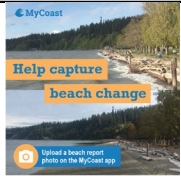
The Snohomish Marine Resources Committee (MRC) is leading Washington state in encouraging app use by county residents to introduce them to marine stewardship. With the start of boating and beach season upon us, the MRC is using a federal grant to roll out an awareness campaign and help county residents and visitors see their role in protecting and preserving our beaches. The project is in partnership with the Northwest Straits Initiative, Washington State Department of Natural Resources, U.S. Geological Survey and Washington Sea Grant. With that marketing campaign underway, the goal now is to help spread the word and engage beach goers across other parts of Washington to get involved in marine stewardship with the MyCoast app.

With your help, we can make better decisions that help protect and preserve our shoreline! Learn more at mycoast.org/wa and download the MyCoast app to your iPhone or Android via App Store or Google Play.

Don't see your beach listed in the app? Contact our team to see if it can be added: MyCoast@nwstraits.org

Social media posts:

See file. Suggested use: Post these on your organization's Instagram or Facebook accounts. If you'd like to come up with your own posts, please feel free to use these posts as a guide!

Platform	Post	Image	Link image to:
Instagram	Share your #beach pics to help us learn how our #coast has changed. Your report is a snapshot in time! #tbt		https://mycoast.org/wa
Facebook	Share your #beach pics to help us learn how our #coast has changed. Your report is a snapshot in time! #tbt		

Rack card:

See file. Suggested use: Distribute these rack cards at events or with venues that agree to host them.

Poster:

See file. Suggested use: Hang the poster at areas of interest like marine beaches and parks (with permission) or on a bulletin board at your organization.

Questions? Please contact:

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