KITSAP PUBLIC
HEALTH DISTRICT

Creating a

Plain Language Public Health Agency

Tad Sooter
Communications Manager

Plain language is language your audience will understand the first time they read or hear it.

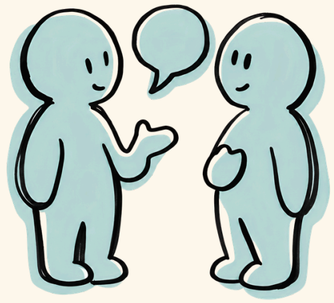
In this presentation

- Why plain language?
- Teaching plain language
- Celebrating plain language success
- Take plain language home with you

GUESS THE ACRONYM!

Plain language is a bridge





Effective Communication



Trust

Language Access

Accessibility



Efficiency


Training Outline
1 Plain language prep
2 Writing in plain language
3 Organizing & formatting
KITSAP PUBLIC HEALTH DISTRICT
KitsapPublicHealth.org

Plain language prep

 What is your objective?

 Who is your audience?

Plain language principles

- Write directly to your audience
- Use everyday words they will understand
- Be concise

Use active voice: “who —> does —> what”

Active voice is: Clear, direct, and transparent.

Swimming beaches are sampled for bacteria...



We sample swimming beaches for bacteria.

Use “we” and “you”

Individuals who need assistance locating their immunization records can contact Kitsap Public Health District…

We can help **you** find your immunization records. Call us…

Avoid (or define) technical terms, acronyms, and jargon

*we inspect **WRFs*** → *we inspect Water Recreation Facilities (WRFs), such as pools and spas*

Avoid redundant descriptors

“our office is currently closed”

“we are actively troubleshooting the issue”

“we follow all applicable laws”

Avoid wordy phrases

"in order to"	→	*"to"*
"in an effort to"	→	*"to"*
"make use of"	→	*"use"*
"at this point in time"	→	*"now"*
"are in the process of"	→	*"are"*
"in close proximity to"	→	*"near"*

Use the simplest word

proceed → *go*

obtain → *get*

utilize → *use*

initiate → *start*

Unecessary words add up!

In an effort to improve performance, we are currently in the process of conducting a thorough analysis of all relevant data from the study.

24 words
annoying to read!

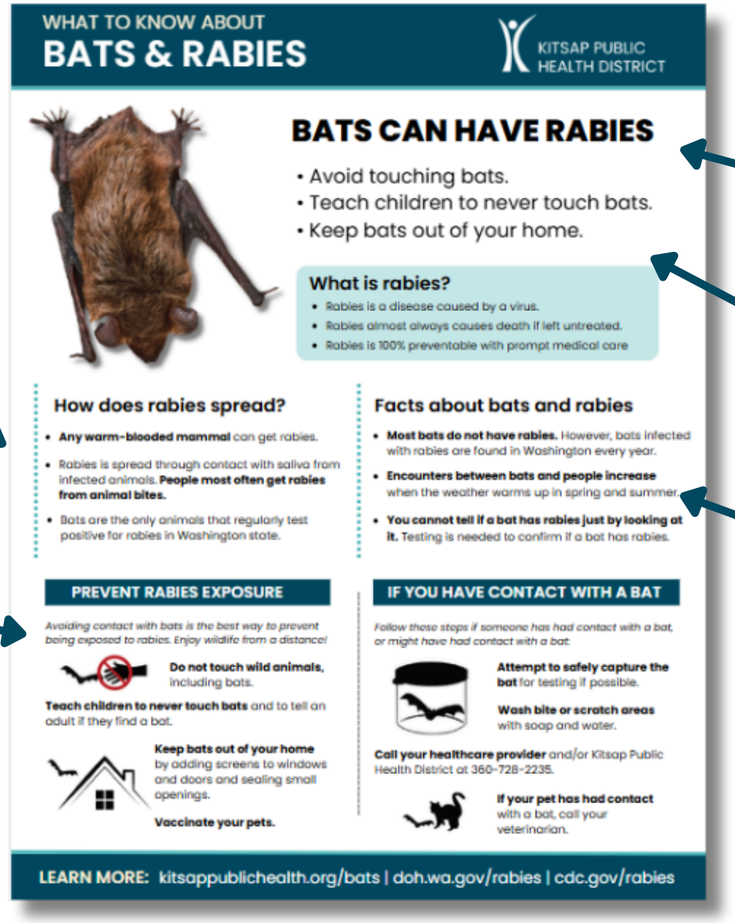
To improve performance, we are analyzing data from the study.

10 words
easy to read!

Reader-friendly formatting

Short sentences

Short paragraphs



WHAT TO KNOW ABOUT
BATS & RABIES

KITSAP PUBLIC HEALTH DISTRICT

BATS CAN HAVE RABIES

- Avoid touching bats.
- Teach children to never touch bats.
- Keep bats out of your home.

What is rabies?

- Rabies is a disease caused by a virus.
- Rabies almost always causes death if left untreated.
- Rabies is 100% preventable with prompt medical care

How does rabies spread?

- **Any warm-blooded mammal** can get rabies.
- Rabies is spread through contact with saliva from infected animals. **People most often get rabies from animal bites.**
- Bats are the only animals that regularly test positive for rabies in Washington state.

Facts about bats and rabies

- **Most bats do not have rabies.** However, bats infected with rabies are found in Washington every year.
- **Encounters between bats and people increase** when the weather warms up in spring and summer.
- **You cannot tell if a bat has rabies just by looking at it.** Testing is needed to confirm if a bat has rabies.

PREVENT RABIES EXPOSURE

Avoiding contact with bats is the best way to prevent being exposed to rabies. Enjoy wildlife from a distance!

Do not touch wild animals, including bats.

Teach children to never touch bats and to tell an adult if they find a bat.

Keep bats out of your home by adding screens to windows and doors and sealing small openings.

Vaccinate your pets.

IF YOU HAVE CONTACT WITH A BAT

Follow these steps if someone has had contact with a bat, or might have had contact with a bat.

Attempt to safely capture the bat for testing if possible.

Wash bite or scratch areas with soap and water.

Call your healthcare provider and/or Kitsap Public Health District at 360-728-2235.

If your pet has had contact with a bat, call your veterinarian.

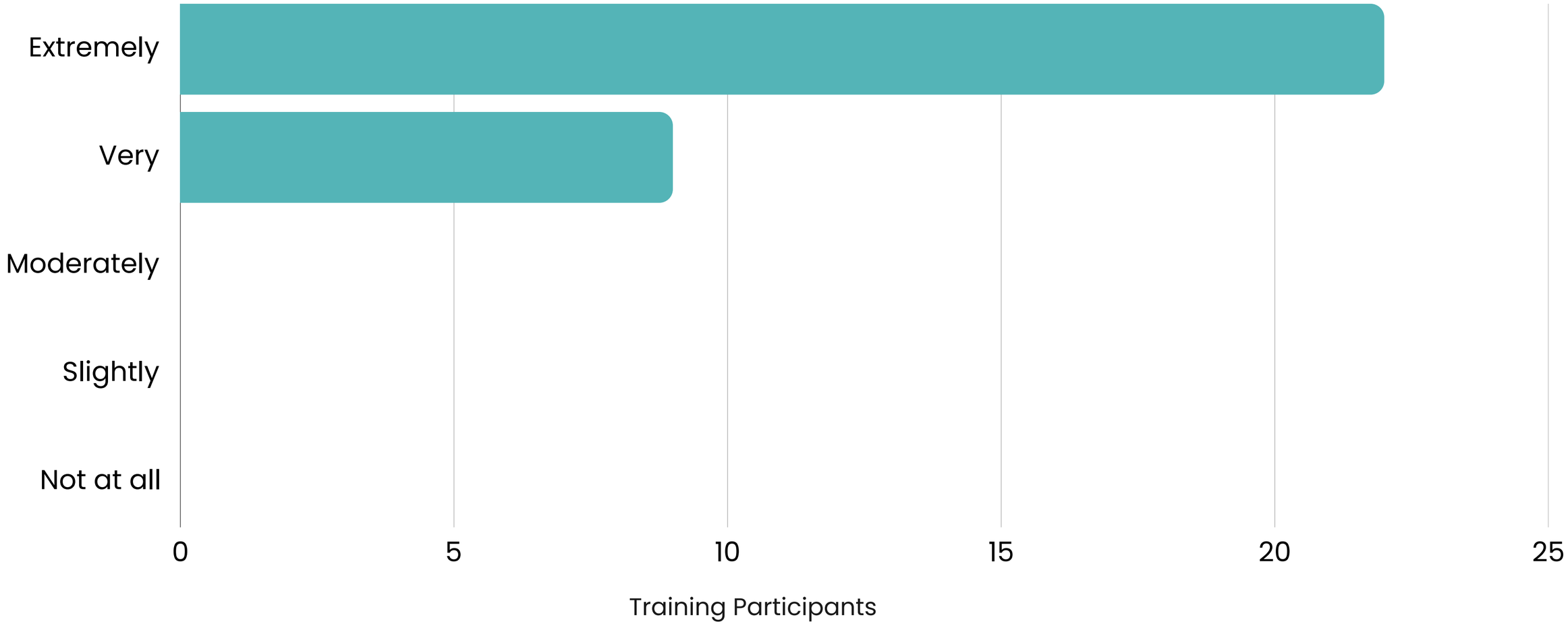
LEARN MORE: kitsappublichealth.org/bats | doh.wa.gov/rabies | cdc.gov/rabies

Put the most important information **first**

Have a call to action!

Bullet points & lists

Was training content relevant/practical?



"They all shared that they've been thinking differently as they've drafted written materials"

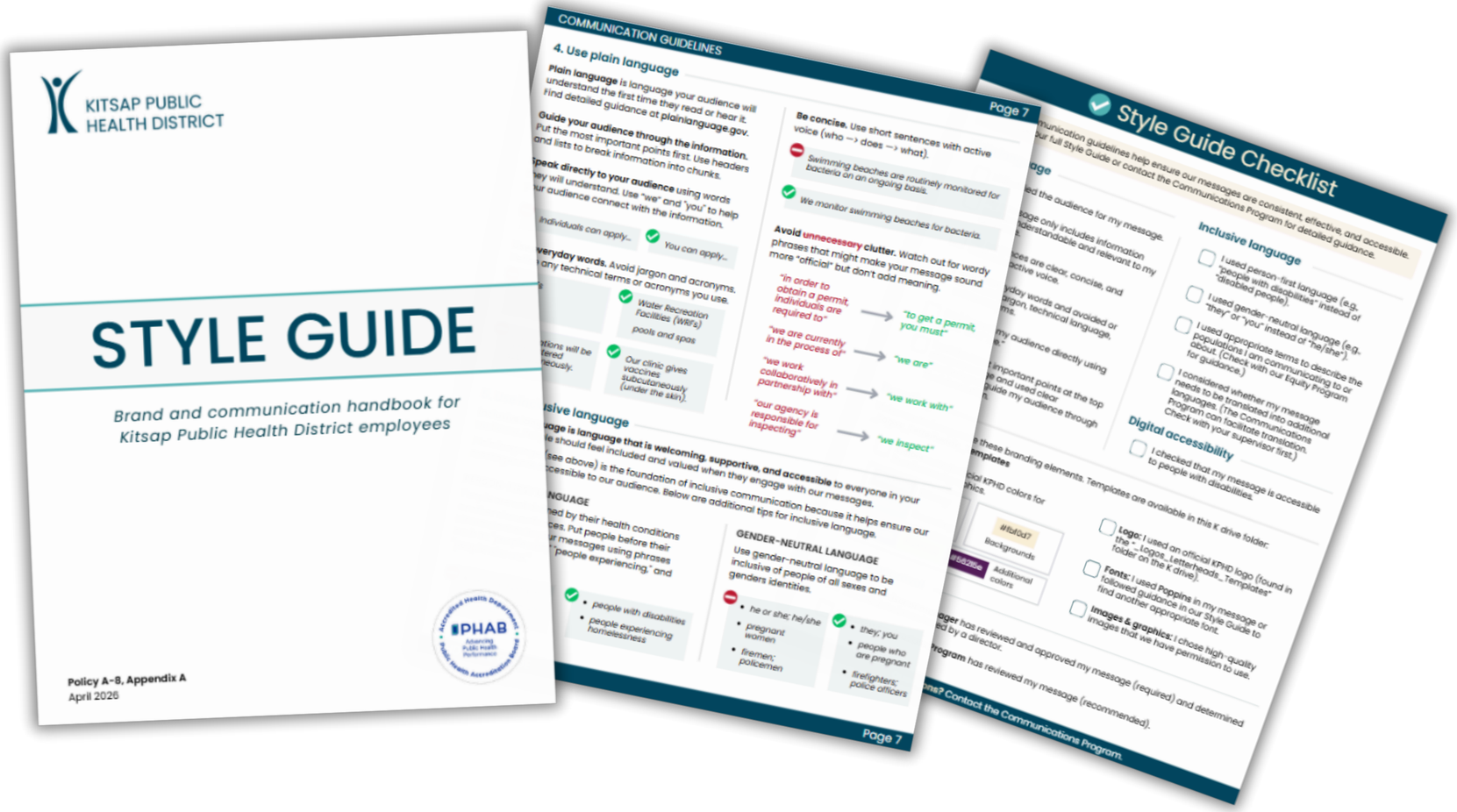
"Well done. Something to pay attention to when communicating either in writing or in conversation."

"Humor made this so fun."

"This was a very thorough and engaging training."

"Very engaging training. Loved the hands on activities."

Supporting plain language



Celebrating success!

Website rebuild:

KITSAP PUBLIC HEALTH DISTRICT

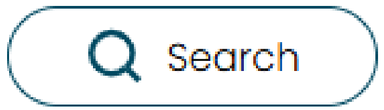
HOME ABOUT CONTACT NEWS/MEDIA CAREERS

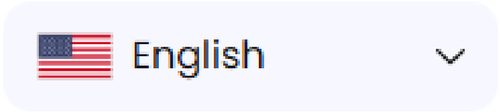
COMMUNITY HEALTH | ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH | FOOD SAFETY | INFORMATION & DATA









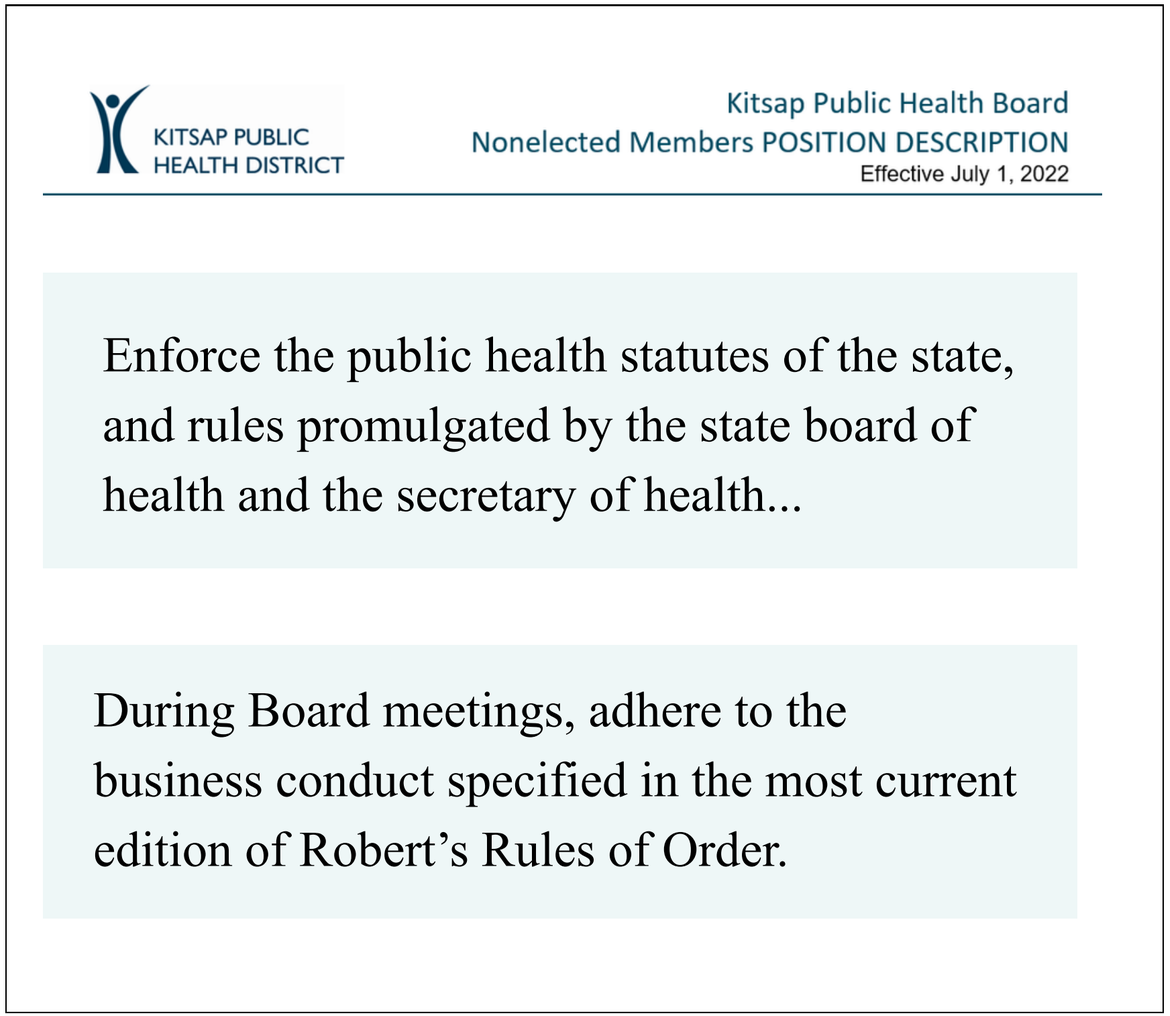




Services Health Topics Programs About Us

Celebrating success!

Health Board docs:



KITSAP PUBLIC HEALTH DISTRICT

Kitsap Public Health Board
Nonelected Members POSITION DESCRIPTION
Effective July 1, 2022

Enforce the public health statutes of the state, and rules promulgated by the state board of health and the secretary of health...

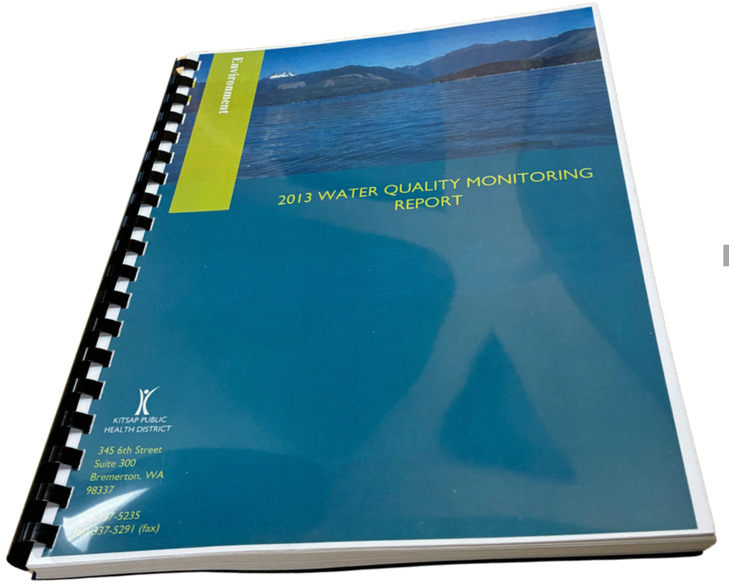
During Board meetings, adhere to the business conduct specified in the most current edition of Robert's Rules of Order.

→ Enforce state and local public health laws and regulations.

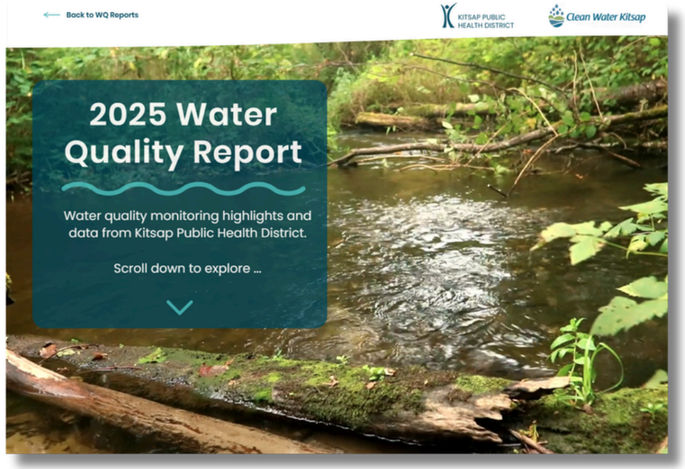
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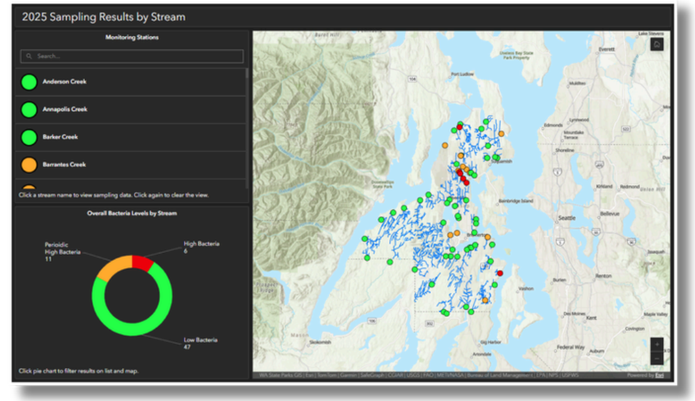
Celebrating success!

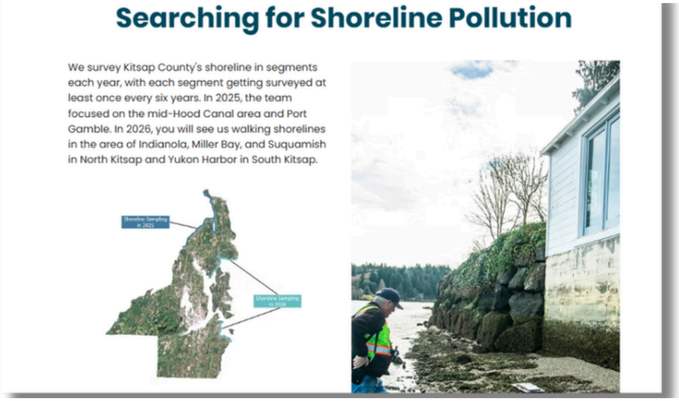
Water Quality Report:











Bring plain language home with you...



Practice plain language

- Apply plain language to emails, conversations, and everyday tasks.
- Find projects that you can apply plain language to. Start small!



Teach plain language

- Share tips and resources with your team or find training opportunities.



Advocate for plain language

- Encourage your organization to adopt plain language in policies, procedures, templates, trainings, and everyday practice.



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THANK YOU!

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