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NONPROFIT UPDATE:

LAKESAFE INITIATIVE

One Evening at the Lake Changed Everything
How LakeSafe Confluence 2026 turned community intention into public commitment - and what is happening at Lake Sammamish right now.

By Mudra Machewad
Photos provided by Mudra Machewad

In King County, open water accounts for more than half of all drowning deaths - over 190 preventable losses in seven years. More than 27 lives every year. This summer, the work LakeSafe began at Confluence 2026 is more urgent than ever.

On the evening of May 15, 2026, nineteen partner organizations, four elected officials, public health experts, emergency responders, and twenty-five youth volunteers gathered at Lake Sammamish State Park - not to respond to a tragedy, but to prevent one.

LakeSafe Confluence 2026 was the first-ever community water safety convening of its kind in the region. Every conversation and every commitment that evening was directed toward a single shared goal: making this summer safer than the one before it.

Founder Mudra Machewad has been asking since September 2025: How can we help prevent tragedies before they happen? Nine months of groundwork - partnership meetings, community activations, civic presentations, and the patient work of building trust across organizations that don't always sit in the same room - became visible on May 15.

"No drownings is possible and absolutely the target"

- Rep. Janice Zahn, WA State House, District 41, at LakeSafe Confluence 2026

Rep. Janice Zahn was one of four elected officials who came to the lake to speak and publicly commit to action - alongside Councilmember Sarah Perry of the King County Council, Kelly Jiang as Deputy Council President of the City of Issaquah, and Deputy Mayor Debbie Treen of the City of Sammamish, who said without notes: "I hope someday our emergency responders will not have to make a run to the lake to save somebody."

Three official proclamations were delivered. The City of Issaquah, the City of Sammamish, and King County formally declared May 18-24 as Lake Safety Awareness Week - a first for this region. The evening closed with twenty-five youth volunteers performing "Before the Water," an original spoken piece about prevention and community responsibility.

Voices from the Evening

"Wear the life jacket. Because we want you coming home. At the end of the day, it's up to us."

Councilmember Sarah Perry King County Council, District 3

"In 2008 to 2011, King County went three consecutive years without a single child drowning. We know what is possible."

Tony Gomez, R.S. King County Public Health - retired June 2026 after 42 years

"Our job is to pull down that financial barrier. Free swim lessons for every child who needs it - even adults. Please reach out to the Y."

Kelly Martin Branch Executive, Sammamish Community YMCA

"This is probably all of your park as much as it is our park."

Kevin Goodrich Northwest Region Manager, Washington State Parks

What Was Committed

Fifteen-plus organizations stood at the microphone. Washington State Parks committed to improving signage as a core LakeSafe partner. The YMCA of Greater Seattle committed $30,000 and free swim lessons for every child who needs them. Eastside Fire and Rescue offered their public educator to any community group that calls. The Sammamish Chamber, Sammamish Rotary, Kiwanis Club, U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary, Issaquah Police, King County Public Health, and Seattle Children's Hospital all named specific summer actions.

"You know what's not

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cool even more than a life jacket? Drowning. So wear it. Because we want you coming home."

Councilmember Sarah Perry, King County Council, District 3

What Is Happening Right Now

Confluence was the starting point. The accountability is showing up all summer long. July-August - Issaquah Concerts on the Green: LakeSafe safety station reaching thousands of families every weekend.

Every peak weekend through August - Lake Sammamish On-Site Activations: Washington State Parks, Eastside Fire and Rescue, and King County Public Health at the lake every major weekend this summer.

"I believe leadership begins with service," says Mudra. "Confluence was proof that when a community decides to show up, something real is possible. The work doesn't stop when the event ends. It shows up every weekend at the lake." Because when it comes to water safety, small actions - taken at the right time - can make all the difference.

Every Lake. Every Life.

Learn more: https://lakesafeinitiative.org | Full Confluence 2026 recap: lakesafeinitiative.org/lakesafe-confluence-2026/

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