



Spring 2022

**MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT**

We live in a wonderful community! I want to express my appreciation to all those who help around the island. Many of us volunteered our time this year trimming, cutting down and removing dangerous trees, cleaning the boat launch, picking up trash, cleaning the roads in the Fall, removing snow and helping with non-resident parking enforcement. The community appreciates each and every one of you. Your work does not go unnoticed.

This year we will be replacing the lock on the gate at South Beach. It's been a few years since this has been done and the lock is beginning to fail. The goal in replacing the lock is to keep off-island residents who have moved away or given their key to off-island residents from using the boat launch. I have been advised that the cost of a new key is \$5 and it's been a past practice to collect this fee from residents who want a new key. The information I originally put out was that the island would provide residents with a key, free of charge. I apologize for providing the incorrect information. The Board informed me we should be charging a fee to offset the cost of the keys and new lock. It may be time to discuss a new locking method like a gate remote. After all, it sure would be nice not to cause traffic congestion while waiting for a resident to manually open the gate.

Last month we finished our emergency slope stabilization/mitigation project at South Beach just in time for our record rains in the Pacific Northwest. Although this is a temporary fix, it is most likely a fix that will last many, many years now having proper drainage and maintenance. The Board approved the expenditure of \$37,688.30 for the emergency fix.

A huge thank you goes to Jeff Davis who given his expertise in this field worked side-by-side with the contractor. This allowed us to save \$12,065.29. We came under budget with the final bill coming in at \$25,623.01. It's because of dedicated volunteers like this that our island is saving money.

The slide above South Beach is a good reminder why maintenance and good drainage on the island is so important. We have many culverts, ditches and catch basins that have been filling with dirt and debris. To help mitigate this issue, I have been regularly scheduling with landscapers to remove the debris from the ditches. You also can help by cleaning out the ditches in front of your house and keeping an eye on drains that overflow. Please do not have your landscapers blow debris from your yards into the ditches as this contributes to blocked culverts and catch basins and in turn becomes someone else's problem.

Volunteers are always needed. If you would like to help, we always welcome volunteers for our Bridge Committee, Recreational Properties Committee, Roads Committee, Security & Safety Committee, Budget Committee, and Nominating Committee. We are seeking nominations this year for two trustee positions, President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer. The election will be held in May. If you are interested in volunteering for one of these positions, please reach out to our island manager and throw your name in the hat.

*(Message from President continued next page.)*



*(Message from President continued.)*

My goals this year are to continue our efforts to beautify our parks by holding community work parties. This is an excellent way to meet your neighbors and how I have made lifelong friends. We will create plans to repair the tennis court fence and possibly resurface the court as well while incorporating lines and nets for pickle ball. Thank you to David Weiss for working with vendors to get bids for this project that will be shared with residents at our annual meeting.

Keep in mind, per the Bylaws, Raft Island Improvement Association was created, "To foster and promote recreational and cultural activities among the residents of Kuhn's Raft Island, Pierce County; to provide for the improvement and beautification of said Raft Island; to own and operate for the use and benefit of the residents of said Raft Island, a playground, recreational areas, and private beaches, and to maintain the private dedicated roads of Raft Island, access roads, and bridge." There is no better time to invest in your community and parks while getting to know your neighbors too.

*RIIA President M. Hurley*



*Photo by Katherine (KdeK) Walsh(#111)*

## **MANAGER**

### **Hello Raft Island Residents**

I hope you are having a good start to 2022! I would like to introduce myself; I am the manager for RIIA. I have been working in the Community Association arena since 2003. I've had the pleasure to speak with most RIIA owners and appreciate the friendly

interactions. I look forward to serving you and the community for years to come. Here are some important & helpful tips:

- Did you know you can set up automatic payments online at [www.hoacommunitysolutions.com](http://www.hoacommunitysolutions.com). Please contact [carolyn@hoacommunitysolutions.com](mailto:carolyn@hoacommunitysolutions.com) for specific account information
- The USPS is struggling to deliver mail in a timely fashion, if you prefer to send in a check, please allow 10 days for delivery. Assessments are due on the 10<sup>th</sup>, late on the 11<sup>th</sup>
- Please update your contact information, including email address. We blast email important community information monthly. *Are you receiving our emails?* If not, please contact us to update your email.
- If you have a renter, please provide their contact information in the event of emergency we can reach the occupant.
- Parking Passes: Each lot is entitled to two (2) parking passes. *Parking passes must be prominently displayed when parked in the common areas. See the Raft Island parking policy for further information.*
- Soon the lock on the South Beach gate will be changed. Each owner, **current in dues**, will be issued one key for \$5. Additional /lost keys will be charged \$25. Please make sure your account is current, if you are not sure please contact [carolyn@hoacommunitysolutions.com](mailto:carolyn@hoacommunitysolutions.com)
- Our industry has a very high email volume. Please allow a 2-business day response time to email. If your request is an emergency and cannot wait, please call 253-985-3812 to speak with the front desk attendant.

Thank you,

*Carolyn Tucker-Community Manager*

## RIIA PARKS

As many of you know who live around Puget Sound, from time to time we have what they call a King Tide, which is known as an unusually high tide. Some folks thought this year the high water was a result of the snowmelt and heavy rains, but that was not the case. We saw flooding in some areas in Western Washington from what is called the Pineapple Express, when we get heavy snow in the mountains, and then the weather warms up and we get heavy rain. A King Tide is a term used to describe an especially high tide event that occurs twice a year. It is caused when there is an alignment of the gravitational pull between the sun and moon. It occurs naturally, regularly and is predictable when the earth comes closest to the sun around the first week of January. It just happened to occur this year coinciding with the snowmelt and heavy rains.



In case you missed it, here is a photo I took from the bridge. There can

be significant damage to waterfront property if the tide also coincides with heavy winds.

Thankfully in January, we didn't have a wind storm at the same time. The wave action was enough to move the walkway and take the ramp off the rails on the float, but nothing significant. However, most of the pea-gravel washed away from under the picnic tables. The boat ramp was covered with about six inches of gravel, plenty of logs and debris washed up on the beach, and a section of our cedar fence was taken out by the water spigot. The excess debris floated up all over the Sound from sticks and logs that are on the part of the beaches that seldom get water.

All that was just a few hours of clean up by Matt and Nichole, Sue and I. Jim Roberts brought down his tractor to take care of the gravel on the boat ramp. Matt, Jeff Davis, and I straightened up the walkway and now everything is back to normal.

Future projects this spring include a possible extension for the small boat storage and replacing the boards on the steel ramp that sits on the floating dock. There are still people on the island who didn't get a spot to put their small boat so we have to do the selection by lottery.

If anyone has suggestions on ideas for improvements to any of our parks let us know and we can see if the idea makes sense and if it is feasible and affordable. We want to continue to make Raft Island the best place to live in Western Washington. Having clean and robust parks is part of that key.

*Mike Neil - Parks*

## RAFT ISLAND TREASURER

We were over on several budget items last fiscal year ending 6/30/2021 mostly due to unforeseen circumstances. The first overage (approximately \$10,700) was due to the slide at South Beach which included mitigation efforts to prevent further sliding and brush cutting to evaluate the hillside. The board also approved installing no wake buoys. The next overage (approximately \$19,000) was for roads. After the slide at south beach we realized that our ditches and culverts around the island needed clearing. We also had one culvert back up and flood another member's property earlier in the winter. Many of you probably enjoyed the repaired dock this summer. We went over approximately \$3,000 for lumber and parts to restore the float. Lastly, we were over approximately \$3,300 for security. Some of that was to repair our security system, some was for various safety signs around the island and the rest was for extra patrols this last summer. The audit for FYE 6/30/2021 is complete and the tax return filed. No significant issues were found. When the audit is finalized, it will be posted on the website.

So far this year, our budget is in good shape. We had \$25,623 in added expense this year to fix the slide at south beach. Thankfully we came in under the estimated \$37,000.

*Anne Scea – Treasurer*

## RIIA INVESTMENT COMMITTEE

The Investment Committee meets quarterly and provides recommendations to the Board of Trustees for the Bridge Replacement Fund (BRF), specified General Fund (GF) monies, and the USDA Reserve (a requirement of the 2014 bridge reconstruction financing). Current members are: Monica Butler #101, Brent Ross #79, and Mike Hirko #113. If you are interested in joining this committee, please contact me at 253-686-5288.

### Bridge Replacement Fund (BRF)

At the end of last quarter (December 31, 2021), the total market value of this fund was \$529,837 with a cost basis of \$357,688. This includes a total of \$292,255 in two Vanguard Life Strategy funds (symbols VSCGX and VASGX) to meet USDA Reserve requirements to be held 30 years (2044). The USDA Reserve requirement also calls for a \$2,466 monthly deposit for 10 years (2024) and was \$79,979 ahead of that requirement.

The remaining \$237,781 continues to be invested in Vanguard stock and bond mutual funds; the allocation percentage goals for these funds remain 26% Bonds (VBTLX), 30% Large Capitalization Stocks (VFIAX), 23% Medium and Small Capitalization Stocks (VEXAX), and 21% International Stocks (VWILX). The 10 year Average Annual Return (AAR) for these specific funds was 15.27%.

### General Fund (GF)

At the end of last quarter (December 31, 2021) the General Fund investments totaled \$213,484. This amount is invested in two mutual funds; Vanguard Balanced Index Admiral Shares (VBIAX) and Vanguard Wellesley Income Admiral Shares (VWIAX). These two mutual funds have a cost basis of \$134,939. The 10 year Average Annual Return (AAR) for these funds was 9.29%.

All funds are held by the Vanguard Group.

The RIIA Investment Policy is available for your reading on the RIIA web site.

*Mike Hirko-Chair*



## SECURITY

We live in a great community; however, we are not immune to crime. Given the legislative changes that took effect in Washington State in July 2021, officers' hands are tied in many respects. Word gets around quickly in the "bad guy/bad girl" community and these people are taking advantage of the new situation.

As a result, theft related crimes are rampant in our state, especially in Gig Harbor and surrounding Pierce County. Twice in the last few months we have experienced mail theft on the island as well as the communities around us. Most recently, an unknown person that was driving a stolen vehicle came onto the island around 11:45pm at night and stole from multiple boxes while also breaking into and damaging the larger locking mailboxes. Also, this Fall a utility trailer that contained construction equipment was stolen from a residence on the island. The trailer was later recovered but all items were stolen. Andrea, the island mail person, communicated that numerous residents routinely leave sensitive mail in their boxes. She recommends that mail be retrieved daily or put on hold if absent for long periods of time. Please go to the website, [informeddelivery.usps.com](https://informeddelivery.usps.com), to receive a daily email from the postal service that will display pictures of all mail expected to be delivered to your address for the day.

The increase in lawlessness within our state will not improve until amendments are made to the legislation that is exacerbating this situation. One of the changes made was around vehicle pursuits. Officers can now only pursue vehicles in VERY limited situations. What was once a very rare occurrence, has now led to persons fleeing in vehicles all day/night. An easy example I like to use for education purposes is that if you are speeding and a police officer attempts to pull you over and you decide to speed off and fail to yield, that officer must terminate the pursuit. No more tickets!!!

**(Security continued)**

Vehicle thefts are also at an all-time high. Thieves are getting smart and using key programming machines to steal newer vehicles. Thieves are also more brazen, especially if high on narcotics. This again is firsthand info from our men and women in blue.

Additionally, ALL drug use is essentially legal. For example, an individual cannot be arrested for the first two drug possession contacts with officers but must instead be given a referral for treatment/services. On the “reported” third contact, an officer “can” arrest for as a misdemeanor. “Reported” meaning contacts must be recorded in the officers reporting system. Keep in mind that police agencies do not share reporting databases. Booking limitations also play a role in who remains in the community to cause chaos. Currently, the Pierce County Jail is only booking for very limited crimes. All of these factors contribute to what you are experiencing today. Officers with years of experience are teaching themselves how to de-police. This is both frustrating and contrary to the old rule of law but is what the citizenry voted for and therefore fulfilled. With the above information in mind, please lock up your vehicles, protect your property and keep a close eye on your community. For further clarification on these legislative changes, please go the Pierce County Gov webpage at, <https://www.piercecountywa.gov/7365/Legislative-Changes>.

Just recently we updated our Island camera system with ultra 4K cameras. Cameras were repositioned and angles were changed to better capture areas. In addition, a license plate camera was configured and positioned to capture both oncoming and outgoing cars. The license plate camera was invaluable as it already captured the plate of the stolen car used for the mail thefts.

Over the summer, the deputy hired for security doubled contacts of non-residents. Over 67 people were asked to leave the island which does not count the cars that came on the island and left upon seeing the deputy. The deputy worked less hours this summer and still managed to contact more people than last year. Trespassing continues to be a problem at South Beach. It is most definitely

occurring. South Beach is a community park paid for by Raft Island residents and accompanied guests, not for the community at-large.

Thank you again to all the volunteers who help sticker cars without parking passes and for those who keep a lookout over our parks and community. The gate exploratory committee is also hard at work, looking into the feasibility, cost, location, and design of a future gate should the community vote for its installation. A vote will not be given until all residents are provided with all the pertinent information needed to make an informed and educated decision.

From **Gig Harbor Fire and Rescue** - “Firefighters are often delayed in responding to emergencies, simply because they cannot find an address. Many homes in our district are at the end of long, rural driveways, some of which lead to many homes. Consider marking your home or driveway with reflective signs that can be seen both day and night. The signs attach to your mailbox or marker/post at the street.” These signs are very helpful as Raft Island is poorly lit and it’s often hard to find houses where there are no numbers or small numbers. See attached link to order a sign for your driveway. <https://www.gigharborfire.org/education-and-events/services-offered/signs/>.

Below I have provided the names of FaceBook groups that I find useful and help keep me connected to the community at large:

***Gig Harbor Police Department  
Pierce County Sheriff’s Department  
Key Peninsula Crime Watch  
PNW Stolen Cars***

If you would like more timely information, please join the **Raft Island Community Connections** FaceBook page where information is shared immediately.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/Raftislandcommunityconnections>

*M. Hurley – Security*



## New/Updated Roadway, Roadside and Ditch Policy Highlights

View full document on the front page of [www.raftisland.org](http://www.raftisland.org)

### Purpose:

The intent of this policy is to provide clear definitions of roadways, roadsides (right-of-way) boundaries and definition of ownership for trees and shrubs along roadways. This policy shall also define ownership and responsibilities for tree and shrub care and removal within and outside roadway and right of way.

1. Road way and roadside defined as right-of-way
  - a. Due to roads not being built per the original plat map, this policy will use the current roadway locations as new reference point and boundaries.
  - b. The roadway boundaries will include width of roadway, and roadside extension defined as RIAA right-of-way which is approximately five (5') from roads edge on both sides of roadway
  - c. The right-of-way shall be used for providing pavement foundation (reducing sloughing of edge), drainage usage and for future public utilities yet to be identified.
2. Both RIIA and Residents shall be responsible for trees and shrubs that reside within their defined property boundaries.
3. All vegetation along the shoulder of the road must not interfere with traffic. If there is a ditch, vegetation will be cut back to the property side of the drainage ditch.

## Ditches

1. RIIA shall require any resident who would like to cover a trench to adhere to the following process including notifying the Board of their intent.
  - a. Engage civil engineer to develop engineered plans, includes drawings and specifications
    - i. Note design to show how the water will be managed and how roadways are not impacted
  - b. Present request and stamped engineering documents to Board for approval
  - c. Owner must hire qualified contractor to perform work
  - d. Once work has been completed, notify RIIA road committee in which they will review and sign-off on work.
  - e. If there are issues with work or water management due to workmanship, the Resident will be required to repair at their expense

### Paving RIIA Right-of-Way

Drainage is very important and we cannot have members paving over what used to be drainage soil.

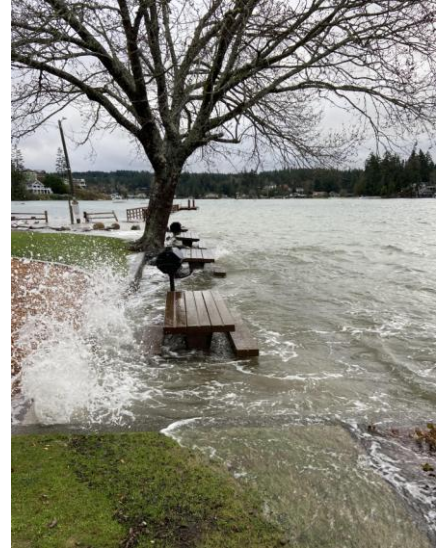
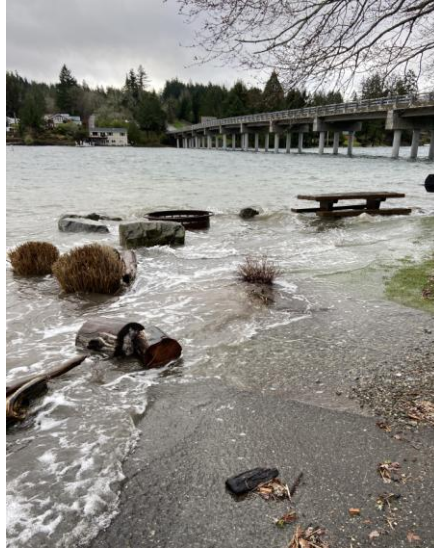
Therefore the following applies:

1. Only driveways may be paved up to the roadway. No other paving along property areas adjacent to the roadside shall be allowed.
2. No paving along the roadside shall be allowed as this is part of the RIIA right-of-way.

## Work Crews



## King Tide



## Enjoying Our Island



## Island Officers and Trustees

President	M. Hurley (#182)
Vice President	Charlotte Crain (#8)
Treasurer	Anne Scea (#192)
Secretary	RJ West (#70)
Trustee	Bonnie Rees (#197)
Trustee	Mike Hirko (#113)
Trustee	Tom Phillips (#205)
Trustee	David Weiss (#232)
Trustee	Carrie Fort (#256)
Trustee	Kari Figueira (#274)

### Investment Committee

Mike Hirko / Chair (#113)  
Monica Butler (#101)  
Brent Ross (#79)

### Bridge Committee

Open position

### Volunteer Committee

Open position

### Parks and Recreation Committee

Mike Neil, Chair (#2)

### Security Committee

M. Hurley, Chair (#182)  
Mike Neil, Chair (#2)

### Roads Committee

Open Position

### Emergency Preparedness Committee

Kari Figueira (#274)

Carolyn Tucker~ **RIIA Community Manager**

Phone 253-320-7614

Billie Jean Hirko (#113) ~ **Newsletter Editor**

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*Please email BJ any photos or news articles you would like considered for our Island publication*



[www.raftisland.org](http://www.raftisland.org)

**Don't forget to check our website frequently for updates on all things concerning our Island**