



LOWELL JOHNSON PARK
OLD SWIMMING HOLE

SPECIAL PUBLIC MEETING
Wed, July 31st @ 7pm
AIHS Archival Building

Purpose of Meeting

- Offer insight into current status of the park and what we've learned since the 2022 meeting
- Explain options and known constraints
- Solicit ideas and input from the community for paths forward

In no way are we saying that visitors to the island are unwelcome, but what has kept this park manageable is that

OUR COMMUNITY FELT
ACCOUNTABLE TO ONE
ANOTHER AND THAT KEPT BAD
BEHAVIOR LARGELY IN CHECK

Without organic community influence, unpleasant incidents increase and strain our ability to control the park, ensure safety, and keep this a special place for islanders.

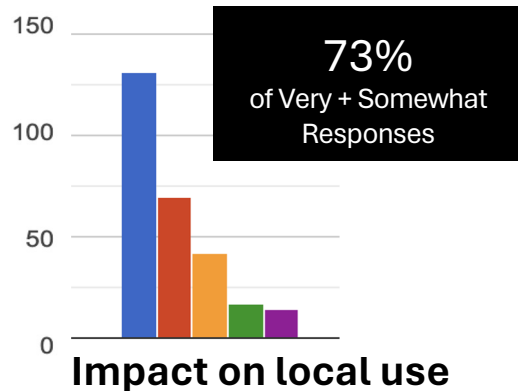
3 Goals As We Consider Changes

1. Ensure this park is enjoyed by those who live on the island and their guests
2. Maintain adequate control of the park, given our constraints
3. Ensure the safety of all who come to the park

Local Use of the Park

2020 SURVEY RESULT

How concerned are you about:



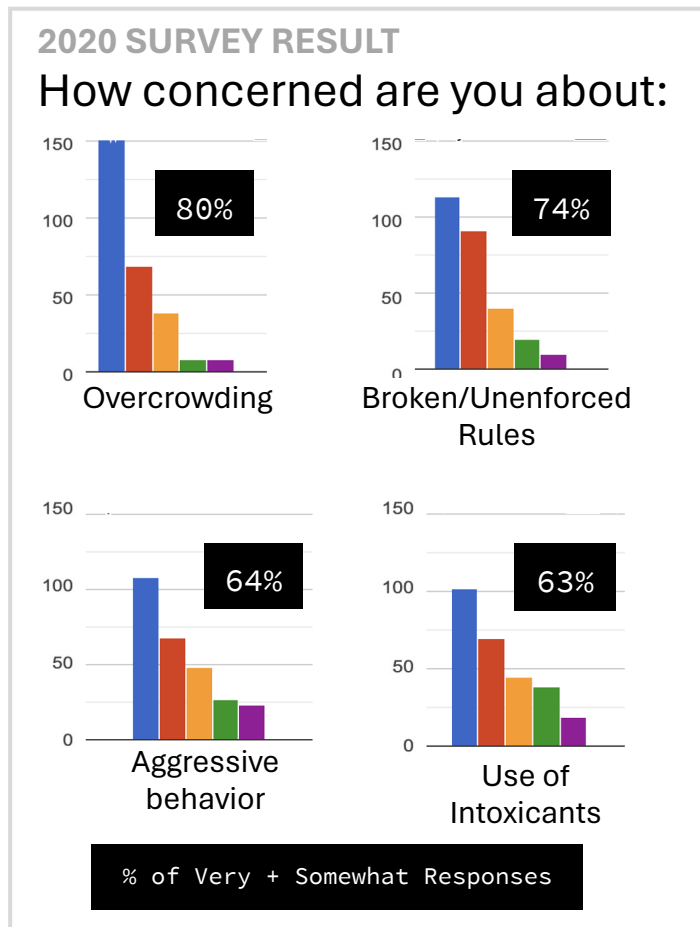
TODAY

How has attendance of islanders changed since then?

Average % of Park Attendees		
	LIVE HERE	VISITOR
2021	31%	69%
2022	39%	61%
2023	34%	66%
2024 (through 7/21)	25%	75%

The park is down to 25% of attendees living / owning property here.

Control Concerns



TODAY

How have we tried to gain control?

	Action	Effect	Cost
2021	Security Guard	Good	\$6,650
2022	Security Guard	Left end of July	\$4,800
2023	Camp Host	Great	\$8,500 for RV site
2024 (through 7/21)	Camp Host	Left ½ Way Through	\$2,000 <small>(\$5,000 if we get a host to finish the season)</small>

GOOD NEWS:

With a presence at the park, we have turned away or asked rule-breakers to leave and seen a general uptick in compliance from attendees.

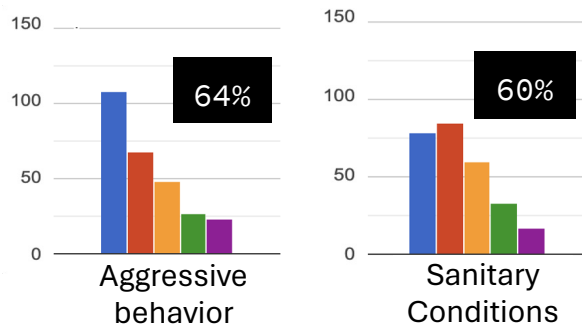
BAD NEWS:

It has proven difficult to recruit & retain a presence for the season.

Safety

2020 SURVEY RESULT

How concerned are you about:



% of Very + Somewhat Responses

No questions were asked about water safety

TODAY

What safety concerns have we had since then?

	Incidents
2021	Threatening behavior, overcrowding
2022	Threatening behavior, overcrowding, Drowning death of 14 yr old boy
2023	Threatening behavior, overcrowding
2024 (through 7/21)	Threatening behavior, overcrowding, Drowning death of 15 yr old boy

AIPRD has been reviewing water safety guidelines and is making the following changes:

Added a life jacket loaner station

Installing buoys to mark the depth change from 4 feet to deeper water

Setting up life saving equipment near the water for emergency use.

Adding a sign with water safety stats and tips

Options for the Future

What suggestions have we tried or considered?

1. “Enforce the Rules”
2. “Hire Security”
3. “Charge an Entrance Fee”
4. “Privatize the Park”
5. “Hire Lifeguards”

First, Our Constraints

- NOT part of Pierce County Parks, so no access to external resources
- Independently funded ONLY by property taxes from Anderson Island
- Our budgets are SMALL...
just a fraction of other park districts, even places like Vashon
- The entire park system is run by 5 elected UNPAID volunteer commissioners and a paid maintenance contractor
- AIPRD has NO STAFF...
and changing that will take a significant amount of time, money & resources.

“Enforce the Rules”

LAW ENFORCEMENT SUPPORT

As a municipal corporation, the Washington RCWs state our enforcement arm is our most local law enforcement. However, we all know that Pierce County Sheriffs don't patrol here.

While technically **it's a misdemeanor to break park rules**, enforcing that is not an option.

ENFORCEMENT BY COMMISSIONERS

Our board members dedicate an immense amount of time doing the business of running the parks. Asking them to be present or on-call to dispatch issues isn't a fair request.

AIPRD continues to seek enforcement support, but this is an island-wide problem.

“Hire Security”

SECURITY SERVICE

We hired a service to this in 2021 & 2022 but the security company stipulated that we were responsible for finding an islander willing to take that security role. The company would not supply a guard who commuted to the island. Our first year worked well but we could not retain personnel in the second year.

CAMP HOST

In 2023 & 2024, we shifted to using a camp host as a steady presence at the park. This was a great solution, as the mere presence of friendly hosts who had to enforce The Rules greatly reduced incidents. In 2024, we struggled to attract a host and offered a \$1,000/mo stipend. However, this year’s host resigned for personal reasons at the end of July.

AIPRD will continue to pursue engaging a Camp Host annually, and consider a security service as a backup, but we are at the mercy of willing workers.

“Charge an Entrance Fee”

INITIAL IDEAS

This option is one we continue to explore. AIPRD commissioners agree that we would want island property owners to have free access to this resource, so implementing this would involve a park pass system.

LONG ROAD AHEAD

Because staffing is an issue, we are exploring a keycard-based entry system, but even that doesn't solve the challenge of managing that system (distribution, verification, replacement, etc). The system would also need to be capable of issuing Day Passes for visitors. We have only scratched the surface of this path forward and it will entail a high level of administrative and financial commitment, including an extensive public input period to discuss the plan and implementation.

AIPRD will take next steps to define this path forward, including the cost. Our best estimates currently put this at \$150,000-\$500,000 in capital investment & personnel costs.

“Privatize the Park”

In our due diligence, we will consult with the AIPRD legal counsel on whether this is a viable path forward and explore this option to the fullest. As we understand it, it’s a big gray space with potential for lawsuits. It’s highly likely that the advice we will receive is to make it a fee-based park to err on the side of caution and limit liability. Additionally, we know this was a controversial choice among many of our constituents.

AIPRD doesn’t expect to be able to restrict this park to only property owners.

“Hire Lifeguards”

CHALLENGES TO HIRING

For the same reason we couldn't easily hire security, we also face steep administrative and financial barriers to hiring lifeguards. Staffing lifeguards consistently throughout the summer would be challenging – we have a very small pool of people to hire from and commuting from the mainland is impractical for many reasons. We have not yet explored whether there are services that provide lifeguards, but if they exist, it's likely to be as difficult or more difficult than hiring a security service.

LIABILITY

The choice to hire lifeguards also drastically increases our liability should something happen, which is one reason most public natural water recreation places do not employ lifeguards.

AIPRD does not see hiring lifeguards as a feasible option for the future.

Options for No Park Supervisor

If we cannot sustain a camp host or security service, what could we do?

1. Close the Park

- Lock gates, put out signs, send out press releases and comms to wider communities

2. Close the Park Fri-Sun

- Reduce attendance by closing on days most prone to issues and crowds
- Same process as #1

3. Leave Park Open

- Minimal supervision
- Accept our limited enforcement ability
- Consider a close option if issues escalate

TAKE A QUICK SURVEY TO
GIVE US YOUR INPUT ON
THIS QUESTION

<https://forms.gle/BjCDcdX9EEumMAxm8>

Additional Documents

- AIPRD Public Records Section including:
<https://andersonislandparks.org/public-records> (scroll to the bottom)
 - 2020 Swimming Hole Park Use Survey Results
 - Swimming Hole FAQs from 2022
 - Summary of Special Meeting from 2022
- Swimming Hole Attendance Data for
 - 2021 – https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1QVQuLKz-RoWqzh6dk_YPmYRLQ0rOx2h2PqC6XFK8YNg/edit?usp=share_link
 - 2022 – https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1dDwqysYAjOh3xMef_TNd3laiDbZyUoSWrtYbbu6bip8/edit?usp=sharing
 - 2023 – <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1rrYu4m835gNgtG5m5qdFfslDXNBVWbzuFFXE2K20AAk/edit?usp=sharing>
 - 2024 – https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/e/2PACX-1vTIM47XJ1yaXFv5AjWWouXbtcMUyqbWgQdvtcT3OFkdAXInp1DH6WSPk2ZvGkh2FVe_XPgVJqHwdiEB/pubhtml?gid=0&single=true