

KEY NOTES

NEWS FROM
THE PERDIDO KEY ASSOCIATION



July 2017 Key Notes

News from the Perdido Key Association

Perdido Key Issues

A Chance to be Heard on the Perdido Key Multi-Use Path!

The Perdido Key Multi-Use Path and Perdido Key Gulf of Mexico Public Access are two of the ten projects included in a draft plan for Escambia County's first direct request for RESTORE Act funds, i.e., funds from BP fines and penalties. Public comments on the proposals will be accepted up to **July 19, 2017**, after which the RESTORE Staff will review and incorporate "meaningful comments" into the RESTORE Act Multi-Year Implementation Plan (MYIP). Submitting comments is easy; just fill in the appropriate sections of the questionnaire at <https://myescambia.com/our-services/natural-resources-management/restore/multi-year-implementation-plan/multi-year-implementation-plan-project-feedback>. You can also comment by email to restore@myescambia.com; by regular mail to "Attention - Escambia County Natural Resources Management, RESTORE, 221 Palafox Place, Pensacola, FL 32502"; or, by phone at [850 595-0820](tel:8505950820).

In the 2015 Perdido Key Property Owner Survey, 77.4% of those responding believed that Perdido Key needed a separate off-road bicycle/pedestrian path. The Perdido Key Association has strongly advocated the construction of a multi-use path parallel to but separate from Perdido Key Drive from the Theo Barrs Bridge to the Alabama border in written documents and testimony before various government agencies. With the support of Escambia County officials, including District 2 Commissioner Doug Underhill, the path is well on its way to becoming a reality. But a significant funding gap remains: funding for "design and engineering" has been allocated or planned for the entire path, but funding for "construction" has only been assigned for the portion of the path from the Alabama border to the Perdido Key State Park entrance. That is, there is no funding currently planned for construction from the Perdido Key State Park entrance to Gongora Drive (i.e., the Theo Barrs Bridge). The \$960,000 requested under the RESTORE program would help construct this portion of the path. The Perdido Key Gulf of Mexico Public Access project included in the Draft MYIP Plan would provide \$147,600 to plan and design beach access improvements on the Key, including dune crossovers, habitat protection and better access for those with disabilities, and is certainly worthy of support as well.

"Congress passed the RESTORE Act to ensure all fees and fines BP paid the federal government for the 2010 oil spill would go to help the Gulf coast region," according to the June 8, 2017 Pensacola News Journal article "Escambia County wants comments on RESTORE Act Projects" by Jim Little. The article is available at <http://www.pnj.com/story/news/2017/06/07/escambia-county-wants-comments-restore-act-projects/370944001/> and the "Draft RESTORE Act Multiyear Implementation Plan" is available at https://myescambia.com/docs/default-source/default-document-library/20170525_myip_finaldraft.pdf?sfvrsn=452b406d_0.

An Enjoyable World Oceans Day Event

Gorgeous weather favored the PKA co-sponsored World Oceans Day Event on Saturday June 10, 2017 at Perdido Key State Park. Many families learned more about our endangered oceans from the several exhibits on display, including information on plastic pollution, the lionfish threat, shore bird and nesting turtle precautions, and invasive plant species. The event also featured a beach cleanup and children's sand sculpture competition and was highlighted by a visit from Maverick (the Ice Flyers mascot), enormous colorful kites flying overhead, and a wonderful stopover by a screech owl from the Wildlife Sanctuary of Northwest Florida. Co-sponsored by the Friends of Pensacola State Parks and Florida State Park Rangers, the event was enjoyable for all and well covered by WEAR Channel 3 and the Pensacola News Journal (article at <http://www.pnj.com/picture-gallery/news/2017/06/10/world-oceans-day-celebration-at-perdido-key-state-park/102706700/>).

Big Lagoon Summer Concert Series

The Amphitheatre at Big Lagoon State Park is hosting a summer concert series. Grayson Capps appeared on June 3, 2017, but you can still catch performances by Sugarcane Jane on July 1 and Willie Sugarcapps on August 5. Tickets are \$15, rain or shine, with a cash bar available. The proceeds benefit the Friends of Pensacola State Parks - a Community Support Organization that helps to maintain and improve Perdido-area state parks.

Red Snapper Season Extended

Following negotiations between the federal government's Department of Commerce (which oversees federal fisheries) and the fishery managers of five states, the federal red snapper season has been extended beyond the three day period originally established. As reported in the article "Deal expanding recreational red snapper season panned by environmentalists, charter industry" by Ledyard King and Chris Phillips on June 15, 2017 in the USA Today Network: "The new rule will re-open the 2017 Federal recreational season for red snapper by private anglers on Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays from June 16, 2017, through Labor Day, September 4, 2017. No fishing will be permitted Monday through Thursday with the exception of July 3, July 4, and September 4. Correspondingly, the five Gulf States will align the red snapper season in their waters with the federal water season for the rest of the summer." For more on the issues, go to <http://www.pnj.com/story/sports/outdoors/fishing/2017/06/15/deal-expanding-recreational-red-snapper-season-panned-environmentalists-charter-industry/401025001/>.

Gulf of Mexico Dead Zone

Each summer, the Gulf of Mexico develops "a region of oxygen-depleted water off the Louisiana and Texas coasts that's harmful to sea life." It is created "by nutrient runoff, mostly from overapplication of fertilizer on farm fields during the spring." This year NOAA predicts the dead zone will be the third-largest on record, "about the size of New Jersey," and could affect shrimp growth and availability. For more on the issue (and the source of the quoted material), see USA Today article "Huge 'dead zone' predicted for Gulf of Mexico this summer" by Doyle Rice at <https://www.usatoday.com/story/weather/2017/06/22/dead-zone-predicted-3rd-largest-record-gulf/420452001/>.

Open House Scheduled at Sacred Heart's New Perdido Medical Park

Workers are putting the final touches on Sacred Heart's new Perdido Medical Park located between Sorrento Road and Gulf Beach Highway (address 13137 Sorrento Road). A "grand opening celebration" is scheduled for Monday, July 24, 2017 from 1:00 to 3:00 PM featuring refreshments and tours of the new facility. The Medical Park will open for patient services on Tuesday, August 1 and, according to a flyer distributed by Sacred Heart, will have "walk-in care, laboratory services, imaging services (X-ray, MRI, CT, mammography, and ultrasound), and outpatient physical and occupational therapy."

OWA Amusement Park to Open in July

Construction of the \$240 million South Baldwin County OWA "amusement and entertainment destination" is proceeding apace, with the amusement park portion set to open in late-July 2017. In addition to the amusement park, the current phase of the project includes a hotel, retail and dining options, and an artificial lake. Plans call for expanding the facility to include a waterpark, additional hotels, a condominium project, and an RV park. For more on Owa, see The Pulse June 11, 2017 article "New Gulf Coast Amusement Park on Track for July Opening" by Derek Cosson at <http://pulsegulfcoast.com/2017/06/foley-amusement-park-on-track-for-july-opening>.

Senior Pass for National Parks to Cost \$80

The cost of a lifetime Senior Pass to US National Parks is currently \$10 for citizens aged 62 and older, but the price will increase to \$80 in the near future. According to the May 17, 2017 article "Time is running out for seniors to get \$10 lifetime pass to national parks" by Weldon B. Johnson in USA Today, Congress approved a fee increase in December 2016 with proceeds to be used to fund "park projects and services." The exact date of the fee increase has not been determined. To view the article, go to <https://www.usatoday.com/story/travel/arizona/road-trips/2017/05/18/national-parks-senior-pass-price-increase/328559001/>

July Calendar

July 1 - Summer Concert Series at Big Lagoon State Park with Sugarcane Jane

July 1-3, 9-17, 25-29 - Blue Wahoos at Blue Wahoos Stadium

July 2 - American Voices: A Patriotic Concert at Holy Spirit Catholic Church

July 2 - Turkey Shoot at Elberta VFW

July 3 - Independence Day Celebration at The Wharf

July 3-4 - Grand Bay Watermelon Festival

July 4 - Shark Adventure Run with Harley Sports at the Flora-Bama

July 4 - Music and Fireworks at Battleship Park, Mobile

July 4 - Independence Day Fireworks at Casino Beach, Seville Square Park, Gulf Shores State Park Fishing Pier, Fairhope and elsewhere

July 8 - Pensacola Beach Air Show with the Blue Angels

July 15 - Running of the Bulls, Seville Square

July 18 - Songwriters Series at The Point Restaurant

July 20-23 - Alabama Deep Sea Fishing Rodeo, Dauphin Island

July 22-23 - Flora-Bama's Gulf Coast Paddle Board Championship

July 28 - Auto Racing, Five Flags Speedway

July 29-30 - Annual Coin and Currency Show, Hadji Temple

Blue Angels practice on Tuesdays and Wednesdays, NAS Pensacola
Bands on the Beach every Tuesday, Pensacola Beach

The following websites provide additional information about events taking place in our great Gulf Coast region:

<https://www.visitpensacola.com/>

<http://mygulfcoastchamber.com/>

<http://www.visitperdido.com/>

www.mulletwrapper.com

www.myescambia.com

<http://www.emeraldcoastfl.com/>

<http://alabama.travel/festivals-and-events>

<http://www.cityofmobile.org/calendar/>

Regards,

Perdido Key Association Board of Directors