

# KEY NOTES

NEWS FROM  
THE PERDIDO KEY ASSOCIATION



## August 2018

### District Two Candidate Debates

Commissioner Doug Underhill and Alan McMillan, the two candidates competing to be the Republican nominee for Escambia County Commissioner from District 2 (which includes Perdido Key), have met in several debates and forums over the past few weeks. Their July 9, 2018 debate at the downtown Pensacola library was attended by over 200 people and covered many District 2 issues, with some particularly relevant to Perdido Key. For more on that debate, see the *Pensacola News Journal* July 10, 2018 article “Doug Underhill and Alan McMillan face off in Republican candidate forum” by Jim Little at <https://www.pnj.com/story/news/politics/2018/07/10/doug-underhill-and-alan-mcmillan-face-off-republican-candidate-forum/767812002/>. The two candidates, along with Democratic candidate Scott Trotter, also participated in a well attended forum organized by the Perdido Key Chamber of Commerce and the League of Women’s Voters at the Jim C. Bailey Middle School on July 18, 2018. Many issues relevant to Perdido Key and the Perdido Area were discussed, such as law enforcement presence, quality of schools, road and bridge safety, beach access, the Habitat Conservation Plan, underground utilities, and the Perdido Key Master Plan. The event provided the Perdido Area public with an excellent opportunity to hear from the candidates and also emphasize some of the concerns of Perdido Key Area owners and residents.

### Rogue PKA Facebook Page

As reported in the PKA July 20, 2018 e-mail Blast to members, a Facebook page created several years ago for the Perdido Key Association but no longer under the control of the PKA Board of Directors endorsed one of the candidates for Escambia County District 2 Commissioner. As a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, the Perdido Key Association is prohibited from endorsing political candidates. The legitimate PKA Facebook page is available at <https://www.facebook.com/PKA.org/> and can be access

through the PKA website at <https://perdidokeyassociation.org/>. The PKA Board is making substantial efforts to correct this problem.

## **Beach Access a Political Issue**

Beach access is a concern for many Florida beach communities, including Perdido Key and Pensacola Beach, as well as for visitors to the state who want to enjoy Gulf of Mexico and Atlantic Ocean beaches. Problems have developed because a growing number of people going to beaches, private ownership of about 60% of Florida beachfront property, and insufficient public beach access and parking. A Florida law passed in March 2018 stated that local governments could not grant beach access to the public using the “customary use” argument, as was implemented by Walton County several months ago. The law is discussed in *Pensacola News Journal* March 28, 2018 article “Scott signs law affecting public access to many private beaches” by Thaddeus Mast at <https://www.pnj.com/story/news/2018/03/28/scott-signs-bill-affecting-public-access-many-private-beaches/467746002/>. Florida Governor Rick Scott’s office followed with a clarification discussed in the WEAR transcript titled “Florida Governor issues executive order clearing up beach access confusion” by Hannah Mackenzie at <http://weartv.com/news/local/gov-scott-issues-executive-order-clearing-up-beach-access-confusion>. US Senator Bill Nelson, the Democratic candidate competing against Governor Scott for the Senate in the November general election, urged Governor Scott to hold a special legislative session to repeal the law. For more on this issue, see *Pensacola News Journal* July 28, 2018 article “Nelson wants repeal of beach access law” by Melissa Nelson Gabriel at <http://pensacolanejournal.fl.newsmemory.com/publink.php?shareid=30999e5fb>.

## **Shared-Use Path**

The May 24, 2018 FDOT presentation at the Perdido Key Community Center on progress toward the Perdido Key Shared-Use Path indicated that design and engineering work was still in progress and that completion of the path was still a number of years away. Further information on the path was provided at a Science Hour presentation at the Escambia County Central Office Complex on July 12, 2018 that covered the RESTORE (BP penalty) grant program. The western portion of the Shared-Use Path from the Alabama border to Perdido Key State Park is being funded by FDOT while another mile can be constructed with the US Treasury-approved Escambia County request for \$960,000 of RESTORE funding. Funds for the remaining portion of the path will have to come from other sources – perhaps including the Florida Sun Trails program.

## **Dana Pagador Leads the Perdido Key Chamber**

Jo Ann Slaydon has stepped down from her leadership position with the Perdido Key Chamber of Commerce. Dana Pagador, the former Assistant Director, has been named the new President of the Chamber. Ms. Slaydon will remain active in the Chamber as a director through her consulting firm Slaydon Consultants. PKA became a member of the Perdido Key Chamber of Commerce in 2017 and has worked closely with Ms.

Slayton and Ms. Pagador. We look forward to a continued and productive relationship with the Chamber.

## **Toxic Danger on South Gulf Beaches**

The blue-green algae (cyanobacteria) and the red tide organism (*karenia brevis*) are taking a toll on Gulf Coast wildlife from Sarasota to Naples. The outbreak of blue-green algae began in Lake Okeechobee and spread to Gulf of Mexico waters. The red tide bloom in the region has grown and killed large numbers of sea birds, fish, and numerous sea turtles, while also causing a noxious odor along beaches in the region. Authorities note that dead creatures on the beaches are only a small fraction of the total casualties since most sink to the bottom of the Gulf of Mexico. A hazard advisory was issued for humans who have respiratory issues. For more on the current problems, see the *Orlando Sentinel* July 10, 2018 article “Blue-green algae, red tide soil beaches, threaten Florida tourism” by Jennifer Kay (*Associated Press*) at <http://www.orlandosentinel.com/business/os-florida-algae-bloom-20180710-story.html>; for more on blue-green algae, see *The Conversation* July 19, 2016 article “Why toxic algae blooms like Florida’s are so dangerous to people and wildlife” by Ernst B. Peebles at <http://theconversation.com/why-toxic-algae-blooms-like-floridas-are-so-dangerous-to-people-and-wildlife-61973>.

## **Possible New Tenant for the Port of Pensacola**

The future of the Port of Pensacola has been a matter of substantial discussion for a number of years. With the decline in energy prices, the port is no longer used frequently by drilling support vessels and has recently been operating at a loss. This has led to consideration of changing the port’s historic commercial shipping role to other functions such as recreational boating and/or residential/entertainment/commercial activity. Utah-based Incoa Performance Minerals LLC recently proposed leasing port Warehouses 9 and 10 as material storage facilities. Calcium carbonate from the Dominican Republic would be brought into the port by ship, moved to the warehouses to be processed and then shipped from Pensacola by road and rail. The arrangement would create at least 77 new jobs, could make the port solvent and attract more business for the other available areas of the port. Company representatives state that the process will be entirely enclosed so that dust would not escape to the environment. Critics argue that processing bulk minerals is not the high tech future envisioned for Pensacola and the additional traffic in the downtown area (an estimated truck every 20 minutes and 12 rail cars a day) might endanger proposals for a marine research facility and the structure of historic sites in the area. For more on the issue, see *Pensacola News Journal* July 28, 2018 article “Incoa wants Port of Pensacola lease approved in 2 weeks: IHMC, UWF say hold on” by Jim Little at <https://www.pnj.com/story/news/2018/07/28/port-pensacola-lease-incoa-wants-quick-ok-uwf-ihmc-say-hold/849313002/> and *WUWF* July 24, 2018 story “City to Open Negotiations with Potential Port Tenant” by Dave Dunwoody at <http://www.wuwf.org/post/city-open-negotiations-potential-port-tenant>.

## Living Shorelines

Faced with erosion on their waterfront property owners can erect a seawall of some sort (concrete, riprap, etc.) or pursue a “living shoreline.” Using “marsh seedlings and bags of oyster shells,” one owner reported after a few years that “crabs and snails crawl among the oysters and grasses” while “fish school in it when the tide is up”; moreover, “sand is being trapped in the yard when storms and floods hit instead of being washed away.” For more on living shorelines, see the *Pensacola News Journal* July 15, 2018 article “Living Shorelines Rise in popularity among Northwest Florida homeowners” by John Upton at <https://www.pnj.com/story/news/2018/07/15/living-shorelines-popularity-florida-seawall-natural-alternative/779088002/>.

## Fishing

The Magnuson-Stevens Act was enacted in 1976 to sustain fishery resources for the long term, among other goals. The US Senate and House of Representatives have bills moving forward that could change the Act in ways causing concern within some groups. As cited in the *Pensacola News Journal* June 29, 2018 article “Congress is considering big changes to longstanding fisheries regulator act” by Melissa Nelson Gabriel at <https://www.pnj.com/story/news/2018/06/29/big-changes-proposed-federal-fish-management/736405002/>, changes could “allow regional fishery management councils to change catch limits for specific fish based on changes in the ecosystem and the economic needs of fishing communities.” Opponents fear a revised law could lead to overfishing and a move away from “science-based fisheries management.” In other fishing news, Alabama closed its 28 day red snapper season early because of more anglers and bigger fish. For more on the Alabama fishing season, see *Outdoor Alabama Weekly* July 27, 2018 article “Early Snapper Closure Due to More Anglers, Bigger Fish” by David Rainier at <https://outdooralabama.com/node/2361>. Large females are particularly valuable to a healthy red snapper population because of the enormous number of eggs they produce.

## August Calendar

- Aug 01-06, 14-18, 24-28: Blue Wahoos at Blue Wahoo Stadium
- Aug 03: Demolition Derby et al. at Five Flags Speedway
- Aug 3-5, 10-12: Cinderella – The Musical at Playhouse-in-the Park, Mobile
- Aug 04: Back to School Event at Cordova Mall
- Aug 04: Bushwacker 5K Race to benefit Big Brothers/Big Sisters in Gulf Breeze
- Aug 04: Pelican Paddle canoe, kayak, and paddle-boat races at Weeks Bay, AL
- Aug 07: Coffee with Artist Lyn Gentry at the Perdido Key Visitors Center
- Aug 08: Master Gardener Volunteer Program Open House at Escambia County Extension Office, Cantonment
- Aug 09: Science Hour: “Solar Energy for Homes” at Escambia County Central Office Complex
- Aug 17: Gallery Night in downtown Pensacola

Aug 19: Jaripeo – Mexican bull riding, and food, music at Escambia County Equestrian Center

Aug 25: Keith Urban and Kelsea Balerini at The Amphitheater at The Wharf

Aug 25-26: Coastal Hunter Jumper Association Horse Show at Escambia County Equestrian Center

Aug 30: University of West Florida vs. Carson Newman University – College Football at Blue Wahoos Stadium

Aug 31: Emerald Coast Greek Festival at Emerald Coast Convention Center, Ft. Walton Beach

Blue Angels practice on Tuesdays and Wednesdays, NAS Pensacola  
Bands on the Beach Tuesdays at the Gulfside Pavilion, 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/>

<http://mulletwrapper.net/>

<https://myescambia.com/>

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

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

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

Perdido Key Association Board of Directors