

# KEY NOTES

NEWS FROM  
THE PERDIDO KEY ASSOCIATION



## October 2018

### Beach Access Decision Likely – What Do You Think?

The immediate fate of the 4-acre beachfront property just east of the Crab Trap Restaurant on Perdido Key Drive is likely to be decided at a forthcoming meeting of the Escambia County Board of County Commissioners. The parcel has been the source of substantial debate among District 2 Commissioner candidates as detailed in the August 2, 2018 *Pensacola News Journal* article “Perdido Key beach mouse or parking lot” by Melissa Nelson Gabriel available at <https://www.pnj.com/story/news/local/pensacola/beaches/2018/08/02/perdido-key-beach-mouse-parking-lot-escambia-commissioner-candidates-underhill-mcmillan/872655002/> as well as through public comment and discussion by current Commissioners at their August 16, 2018 meeting. At that meeting (minutes available at <http://www.escambiaclerk.com/BMPDF/20180816.pdf>), Commissioners directed County staff “to bring back an assessment of the property, two conceptual designs, and a path forward for consideration.” As detailed in the September 25, 2018 *Pensacola News Journal* article “Three options under consideration for Perdido Key beach access” by Jim Little at <https://www.pnj.com/story/news/2018/09/25/perdido-key-beach-access-escambia-county-considers-three-options/1412852002/>, County Commissioner Chairman Jeff Bergosh informed the *Journal* that County staff were working on at least three options: two County submitted alternatives, one for 24 parking spaces at \$224,000 and another for 39 spaces at \$194,000, plus a citizen-submitted alternative calling for 56 spaces, but with no cost estimate and requiring construction of a retaining wall. As cited in the article, County environmental programs manager Tim Day noted that the proposals were “conceptual” and that the final design was dependent on Commissioner decisions.

Creating new public beach access will be a significant change to Perdido Key about which many Perdido Key owners and residents will have opinion. You can express those opinions to Commissioners at any time in writing and other communication means; the Escambia County Board of County Commissioners is expected to discuss the issue at its October 9 Committee of the Whole Meeting, with further discussion and public comment welcome at its October 18 Regular Meeting.

### **A Terrific Perdido Key State Park Cleanup!**

International Coastal Cleanup Day on Saturday, September 15, 2018 saw clear and very hot weather at Perdido Key State Park, but this did not deter the 60 or so volunteers who showed up to ensure Perdido Key beaches retained their remarkable beauty and healthy environment for people and wildlife. The cleanup was sponsored by the Perdido Key Association, Friends of Pensacola State Parks, and Florida State Parks and covered all Perdido Key beaches (except the National Seashore) plus a portion of the Old River waterfront that was cleaned by kayak. Over half of the volunteers were students and science professors from the Tuskegee Institute who made the four hour trip from Tuskegee, Alabama for the event. Many thanks to all who helped!

### **Perdido Key Shared-Use Path Update**

Slow but steady progress is being made toward realization of the Perdido Key Shared-Use bicycle and pedestrian path along the north side of Perdido Key Drive. In a recent change, the eight foot wide concrete path will be entirely at ground level, including through Perdido Key State Park, with no boardwalks except in areas where dunes would be impacted. The west portion of the path (from the Alabama state line to the west end of Perdido Key State Park) is fully funded for planning/engineering and construction; planning/engineering will be completed in November 2018 with construction scheduled for Fiscal Year 2021. The east portion (from the west end of Perdido Key State Park to Gongora Drive) is fully funded for planning/engineering that is scheduled for completion in July 2019. FDOT has not currently funded construction of the path, though a \$960,000 RESTORE (BP penalty) grant has been awarded for the project and the County is working to obtain remaining funds through grants and other sources. FDOT's current planning level construction cost estimate for the path is \$4.5 million.

### **Florida Constitution Amendments on November Ballot**

The November 6, 2018 General Election is fast approaching and Floridians will make a number of important choices, including the fate of 13 proposed Constitutional Amendments. The document "2018 Constitutional Amendments" at <https://www.lwvfl.org/amendments/> created by the League of Women Voters of Florida (the local chapter of which co-sponsored the well-attended District 2 candidate forum on July 18, 2018) explains the content of the proposed Amendments and indicates the

League's position on each. As a 501(c)(3) organization, PKA does not take positions on political issues and is providing the League document as an information resource.

## **Hurricane Season Continues**

Following its earlier brush with Subtropical Storm Alberto, the Pensacola area received strong winds and heavy rains from Hurricane Gordon in early-September 2018 but escaped widespread wind damage or flooding. Tragically, a young child was killed when a tree toppled onto the trailer where she was staying. On September 14 Hurricane Florence's eye made landfall in North Carolina, but the storm continued to pound the region with heavy rains for several more days creating a terrible situation in large portions of the North and South Carolina. The region continues to feel the effects of flooding, debris removal needs, and swarms of aggressive mosquitoes. As of late-September 2018, at least 48 people had lost their lives to Florence-related events. For more on the hurricane, see *CBS News* September 27, 2018 online article "A bad science fiction movie: Large, aggressive mosquitoes swarm N.C. city after Florence" at <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/hurricane-florence-aftermath-north-carolina-flooding-large-aggressive-mosquitoes-2018-09-27/>. The 2018 hurricane season will not end until November 30.

## **Oil Drilling and Oil Spills**

The Sierra Club and other environmental protection groups are suing the Federal Government for the planned lease sale for oil and gas development of most of the available acreage in the Gulf of Mexico, excluding portions subject to Congressional Memorandum (essentially the Florida continental shelf). The suit argues that offshore drilling will occur without "fully analyzing the risks to people, wildlife, and the environment." For more on this issue, see the Sierra Club July 17, 2018 press release "Lawsuit Challenges Trump Administration's Expansion of Gulf of Mexico Drilling" at <https://www.sierraclub.org/press-releases/2018/07/lawsuit-challenges-trump-administration-s-expansion-gulf-mexico-drilling>. In a separate offshore oil drilling issue, US government lawyers have filed a case involving Taylor Energy Co. and a drilling platform destroyed by Hurricane Ivan in 2004. The court filing argues that leakage from site wells is much greater than previously reported, in the range of 10,000 to 30,000 gallons per day and getting worse. For more on this issue, see *AP News* September 17, 2018 article "Federal lawyers: 2004 Gulf oil leak spills far more than thought" by Jeff Amy and Michael Kunzelman at <https://apnews.com/520007a93c824aa883f2e153093902d1>.

As a result of the Deepwater Horizon disaster, the University of New Orleans and Owens Coastal Consultants are monitoring the frequency that oil residue is appearing on the Gulf of Mexico shoreline. They have an ongoing project on Dauphin Island and are interesting in beginning one on Perdido Key. Four or five volunteers are needed for what is described as a "very low tech" procedure to measure/sample a number of sites at several week intervals. If interested, please contact PKA president Charles Krupnick at [charles.krupnick@gmail.com](mailto:charles.krupnick@gmail.com).

## October Calendar

Oct 03-06: Alabama Coastal BirdFest in Spanish Fort  
Oct 06: Paws in the Park at Big Lagoon State Park  
Oct 06: Peanut Festival at Gabbert Farms south of Jay, FL  
Oct 11: Science Hour "Reporting Invasive and Endangered Species" at Escambia County Central Office Complex  
Oct 11: Kevin Hart at the Pensacola Bay Center  
Oct 11-14: Annual National Shrimp Festival in Gulf Shores  
Oct 12-14: Pensacola Greek Festival at Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church  
Oct 13: Bridge to Bridge 5K Race at Wayside Park, Pensacola  
Oct 13: Opening Night Pensacola Symphony Orchestra  
Oct 17, 20: "Who Haunts the Fort Tour" at Ft. Morgan  
Oct 18-28: Pensacola Interstate Fair at Pensacola Interstate Fairgrounds  
Oct 19-21: Kona North American Championship (windsurfing) at Pensacola Yacht Club  
Oct 20: PKA Cleanup of Rt. 98 between Dog Track Road and Trout Road  
Oct 20, 26: Ice Flyers at Pensacola Bay Center  
Oct 26: Beach-O-Ween at Pensacola Beach Boardwalk  
Oct 27: Annual Festival of the Arts in Destin at Mattie Kelly Arts Center  
Oct 27: Elberta Sausage Festival in Elberta

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