

KEY NOTES

NEWS FROM
THE PERDIDO KEY ASSOCIATION



February 2019

2019 PKA Annual Membership Meeting

All PKA members are invited to attend the 2019 Perdido Key Association (PKA) Annual Membership Meeting to be held from 10 AM until Noon on Saturday, February 23, 2019 at the Eden Condominium, 16281 Perdido Key Drive, Pensacola, FL, 32507. We are pleased to announce that Doug Underhill, the District 2 Escambia County Commissioner, will be the featured speaker and will certainly address issues relevant to the Perdido Key Area. You may have already received by mail the package of information about the meeting. As the meeting announcement in the package indicates, if you plan to attend the meeting, please let PKA know by e-mail; if you are unable to attend, please complete and mail-in the included proxy form. It would also be a good time to renew your PKA membership using the form in the package. This should be a great meeting and we hope to see you there!

Governor DeSantis and Florida's Water Policy

In the wake of last year's devastating blue-green algae and red algae blooms in Florida's waterways and along its coastline, newly elected Governor Ron DeSantis began his administration with calls for major changes to the state's water management policies. These include \$2.5 billion over the next four years for Everglades restoration and protection of water resources; establishment of a Blue-Green Algae Taskforce; instruction to the South Florida Water Management District to start the next phase of the Everglades Agricultural Area Storage Reservoir Project design; creation of the Office of Environmental Accountability and Transparency; and, appointment of a Chief Science Officer. He also called for the resignation of the directors of the South Florida water management district, a body criticized by environmental groups for its November 2018 vote awarding an eight-year extension to the sugar industry for use of Everglades's wetlands. For more on these issues, see the Florida Governor website entry "Governor Ron DeSantis Announces Major Water Policy Reforms" at <https://flgov.com/2019/01/10/governor-ron-desantis-announces-major-water-policy-reforms/> and *The Guardian* January 23, 2019 article "Florida: Republican 'green governor' seeks to reverse predecessor's legacy" by Richard Luscombe at

<https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2019/jan/23/florida-governor-ron-desantis-water-reservoir-environment>.

Hurricane Devastated Base Recovering

Most units at Tyndall Air Force Base between Panama City and Mexico Beach have returned to operation, though many structures still need to be rebuilt and others likely demolished. According to the December 5, 2018 *Panama City News Herald* article “Tyndall Air Force Base resuming operations after Hurricane Michael” by Collin Breaux, about 90% of hurricane related debris has been removed, 50% of the facilities can be rebuilt, and perhaps 20% considered for demolition. The article is available at <https://www.newsherald.com/news/20181205/tyndall-air-force-base-resuming-operations-after-hurricane-michael>; see also the January 13, 2019 *US News and World Report* article “Officials: Tyndall Air Force Base recovering after hurricane” at <https://www.usnews.com/news/best-states/florida/articles/2019-01-13/officials-florida-air-base-recovering-after-hurricane>.

Senator Rubio Proposes Extending Drilling Moratorium

Florida’s US Senator Marco Rubio introduced legislation to extend the moratorium on energy exploration in the eastern Gulf of Mexico set to expire in 2022. The new legislation would extend the ban until 2027 and also allow Florida to “receive a share of the oil and gas leasing revenue from other areas of the Gulf,” arguing that it “would give Florida a new source of funding and recognize that as long as our shores shoulder some of the risk, it's only fair that Floridians share in some of the benefit.” For more on this issue, see the January 5, 2019 *Pensacola News Journal* article “Marco Rubio introduces bill to extend moratorium on drilling in Gulf of Mexico” by Melissa Nelson Gabriel at <https://www.pnj.com/story/news/local/pensacola/beaches/2019/01/05/marco-rubio-introduces-bill-extend-moratorium-drilling-gulf-mexico/2483573002/>.

Proposed Changes to PEDC

The Pensacola-Escambia Promotion and Development Commission (PEDC) oversees publicly funded development projects, along with FloridaWest. On January 28, 2019, local representatives to the Florida legislature voted two to one in favor of sending a proposal to the legislature that – along with other changes – would “end the requirement that members of the commission must be registered to vote in Escambia County.” “Instead, the law would require that members be a resident, a property owner or the owner of a business in the county.” District 2 Commissioner Underhill spoke against the measure at the meeting and has opposed it previously in other venues, noting that with current PEDC chairman Lewis Bear (who is not an Escambia County resident though he has business and property interests in the County) PEDC should comply with current law instead of changing the rules. At the January 28 meeting, he expressed overall opposition to “the PEDC and other tax-funded economic development organizations.” District 1 Commissioner Bergosh spoke in favor of the measure and the PEDC, noting that “Economic development does work.” “It's all over the country. It brings results, even here in Escambia County.” For more on this issue, see the January 29, 2019 *Pensacola News Journal* article “Escambia County lawmakers divided over changes to Economic Development Commission” by Jim Little at

<https://www.pnj.com/story/news/politics/2019/01/29/escambia-county-lawmakers-divided-over-economic-development-commission/2709028002/>.

How Big is Florida?

According to estimates by the US Census Bureau, as of July 2018 Florida had about 21.3 million residents – up from 18.8 million in the 2010 census. Florida is the third largest state in the country by population, widening its lead over New York's 19.54 million but well behind California's 39.56 million and Texas' 28.7 million. Texas had the largest numerical gain from 2017 to 2018 with 379,128 people with Florida second at 322,513. Further information is available in the December 22, 2018 *Ocala StarBanner* article "Florida population climbs to 21.3 million" by Jim Saunders at <https://www.ocala.com/news/20181219/florida-population-climbs-to-213m>.

Enter the Modern Fish Act

President Trump signed the so-called Modern Fish Act into law on New Year's Eve 2018 after it unanimously passed the US Senate and was approved 350 to 11 by the US House of Representatives. Proponents of the law believe it will boost the recreational fishing industry in a number of ways, such as encouraging regional fishery management councils to help update policies for Gulf of Mexico anglers and providing data from fisherman to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to "improve timeliness and accuracy." The final version of the law is viewed by some as a compromise from original proposals that were opposed by conservationists and some commercial fishing interests for reasons such as creating uncertainties in catch limits and confusing the authority of state and federal agencies. According to the Marine Fish Conservation Network "the Magnuson-Stevens Act, the federal standards that govern US fisheries at large," must still be reauthorized by Congress. For more on this issue, see the January 13, 2019 *Tampa Bay Times* article "Recreational fishing rules to be overhauled under new federal law" by Patrick Whittle of the *Associated Press* at <https://www.tampabay.com/environment/recreational-fishing-rules-to-be-overhauled-under-new-law-20190113/>.

Changes on River Road

The wooden bridge on River Road about a quarter mile from Perdido Key Drive that crosses a small creek leading to the Old River has been replaced. Over the past several months, a number of repairs were needed because of rotting boards. Further down River Road, the River Road Dog Park on the Old River was also refurbished. The children's play equipment was removed and the park reconfigured with separate areas for small dogs and large dogs, along with an additional fenced area for access to the shoreline.

Shoreline Profile Volunteer Program Moving Forward

The "Shoreline Monitoring Citizen Science Program" on Perdido Key, part of research to be conducted by the University of New Orleans, has had sufficient volunteers to conduct the program – many thanks - though having a couple more join in would be great. The program involves taking periodic profiles of several portions of Perdido Key's beaches to determine the "seasonal beach and sediment dynamics" so researchers and officials

can be better prepared for oil spills in the future. We anticipate a training session provided by University of New Orleans researchers within the next month or so with sampling to commence shortly thereafter. If interested, please contact Charles Krupnick at charles.krupnick@gmail.com.

More on 16400 Perdido Key Drive Public Beach Access

At its November 14, 2018 meeting, the Escambia County Board of Adjustment approved the Escambia County staff request to allow a variance for recreational use on the zoning of the currently vacant property at 16400 Perdido Key Drive “to construct a public beach access point on the subject parcel.” This could lead to creation of a number of parking spaces and other modifications to facilitate public access. The owners association of the Seafarer Condominium adjacent to the property, however, has asked the Escambia County Circuit Court to reverse the decision arguing that the County did not meet all the requirements necessary for the ruling – including “the habitat conservation required for the site.” The legal action is discussed in the January 3, 2019 *Pensacola News Journal* article “Perdido Key condo owners take Escambia County to court over beach access” by Jim Little at <https://www.pnj.com/story/news/2019/01/03/perdido-key-beach-access-condo-owners-take-escambia-county-court/2463317002/>.

PKA Website

The Perdido Key Association website that was hacked in mid-December 2018 should be safe for all users, thanks to the efforts of PKA’s webmaster.

February Calendar

Feb 01: Gulf Coast Comedy Fest in Downtown OWA
Feb 01,09,15,16,17: Pensacola Ice Flyers at Pensacola Bay Center
Feb 02: Super Chili Cook Off at Flora-Bama
Feb 07: Science Hour on Urban Coyote Populations at Escambia County Central Office Complex
Feb 08: Museum Plaza Grand Opening in Downtown Pensacola
Feb 09: Regional Roundup of electronics/hazardous waste collection at Pensacola High School
Feb 09: Pirates of Lost Treasure (PLT) Mardi Gras Flotilla from Sunset Grill to Flora-Bama
Feb 10: James Taylor and Bonnie Raitt at Pensacola Bay Center
Feb 14: Valentine’s Day at area restaurants, including Snowbird Roost at Skopelo’s
Feb 15-17: AKC Agility Trials at the Escambia County Equestrian Center
Feb 15-24: Pinta and Nina replicas of Columbus’ ships at The Wharf
Feb 16: Sweetheart 5K and Sea Turtle Half Marathon at The Hangout
Feb 22-24: Pensacon 2019 at Pensacola Bay Center
Feb 23: Orange Beach Seafood Festival and Car Show at The Wharf
Feb 28: Snowbird Hootenanny at Flora-Bama

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