

# KEY NOTES

NEWS FROM  
THE PERDIDO KEY ASSOCIATION



## June 2020

### **Perdido Key Reopened**

Perdido Key has reopened and local residents and out-of-town visitors can again enjoy the sun, sand, and surf of our beautiful island. Key decisions in the process were made in mid-May that allowed vacation rentals to reopen in Northwest Florida (with conditions) and hence the rental units on Perdido Key. While it was good to have the beaches open and economy coming back, the enormous influx of people who came to Perdido Key was not without problems. Owners of private property were sometimes confronted with unpleasant intrusions by beachgoers and many vehicles were parked along Perdido Key Drive and in vacant private lots – leading to beach access across private property and vulnerable dunes. Escambia County responded quickly to these challenges with new signs at the three County public beach access locations informing beachgoers of public/private beach boundaries and with additional signs posted along Perdido Key Drive emphasizing the prohibition against parking on the roadway – with the threat of being towed. Hopefully these measures will help address some of the coming challenges of the 2020 vacation season.

### **Workshop on Perdido Key Drive/Johnson Beach Road Intersection**

A public workshop will be held on Thursday, June 11 from 5:30 PM to 7 PM at the Lost Key Golf Club, 625 Lost Key Drive concerning possible safety and traffic flow improvements at the Perdido Key Drive/Johnson Beach Road intersection. With several large condominiums in the area and Perdido Key Area of the Gulf Islands National Seashore access, summer traffic can lead to significant backups on Johnson Beach Road and make left turns from Johnson Beach Road onto Perdido Key Drive hazardous and at times almost impossible. A fatality unfortunately occurred near the intersection in 2016. With the Perdido Key Multi-Use Path to be constructed on the north side of Perdido Key Drive, risks at the intersection may increase. The workshop will have a formal presentation, project boards with traffic change alternatives, and an opportunity for public comments. Options at the

intersection could include a traffic signal or roundabout. More information about the workshop can be found at <https://myescambia.com/news/news-article/2020/05/27/perdido-key-drive-at-johnson-beach-road-intersection-project-public-workshop-set-for-june-11> and from Escambia County Community and Media Relations at 850 595-1647 and [cmr@myescambia.com](mailto:cmr@myescambia.com).

### **World Oceans Day 2020**

World Oceans Day (WOD) is celebrated every year on June 8. As coordinated worldwide by The Ocean Project, “World Oceans Day is a global day of ocean celebration and collaboration for a better future.” A healthy ocean is critical to our survival, providing most of the oxygen we breath, helping to feed us, regulating our climate, cleaning the water we drink, providing a “pharmacopoeia of medicines,” and *limitless inspiration*. (Drawn from <https://sevenseasmedia.org/resources-for-world-oceans-day/>) For 2020, a WOD goal is to call on “world leaders to protect 30% of our blue planet by 2030. This critical need is called 30x30. By safeguarding at least 30% of our ocean through a network of highly protected areas we can help ensure a healthy home for all!” (From The Ocean Project website at <https://worldoceansday.org/>).

The Perdido Key Association (PKA), Friends of Pensacola State Parks, and Pensacola area State Parks have sponsored World Oceans Day events at Perdido Key State Park since 2017, but for 2020 are holding it digitally because of the current COVID-19 pandemic. Information and activities on ocean related topics will be posted on the News page of the Perdido Key Association website at <https://www.perdidokeyassociation.org> from June 1 through June 8, with a new presentation posted each day. WOD activities will include a contest for the best original ocean-themed photo with the winner awarded a \$50 gift certificate from a Perdido Key retailer.

### **Progress on the Perdido Key Multi-Use Path**

On April 2, 2020 the Escambia County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) approved Design Assignment Agreements that allow Escambia County to complete design and permitting of the west portion of the Perdido Key Multi-Use Path; on May 7, 2020 it approved using funds leftover from the Perdido Key crosswalk upgrades project to complete a \$28,384 payment for Design/Engineering contracts that will free \$1.76 million of state funds for construction of the west portion on July 1, 2020. In February the BOCC had given its final approval to Amendment #1 to the RESTORE Act Direct Component Multi-Year Implementation Plan raising funding for the east portion from \$960,000 to \$4.5 million, which should be sufficient to complete the project. Final approval by the US Treasury is still required and may be received by July 1, 2020. Various administrative and contracting processes must be completed before construction of the Path can begin, but should occur before the end of 2020 for the west portion and sometime in 2021 for the east portion.

### **Innerarity Point Park Open**

The new Innerarity Point Park near Hub Stacey's off Innerarity Point Road has opened. A formal opening ceremony will follow at a later time. The park is a terrific facility for the Perdido area with play equipment for children, pleasant paths for adults, and a great boardwalk on the Intracoastal Waterway. For more on the project, see the Visit Pensacola article "Innerarity Point Park" at <https://www.visitpensacola.com/listing/innerarity-point-park/3266/>.

### **New Visit Pensacola President and CEO**

Darien Schaefer has assumed duties as Visit Pensacola's new President and CEO. He comes to the position from three years as CEO at Visit Big Bear in Big Bear Lake, California and has over 20 years of destination marketing experience, including CEO of VISIT Lake Geneva and Executive Director of the Wausau/Central Wisconsin CVB and Sports Authority. For more information, see the March 11, 2020 *Pensacola News Journal* article "Visit Pensacola switches direction for next president, tap Darien Schaefer after first choice drops out" by Madison Arnold at <https://www.pnj.com/story/news/2020/03/10/visit-pensacola-hire-darien-schaefer-ceo-after-first-choice-drops-out/5014841002/>.

### **Manatee Sightings**

Manatees continue to be seen in Big Lagoon and nearby waters, including one near NAS Pensacola in late April. With the apparent increase in manatee population in the Perdido Key area, extra care in boating may be appropriate to avoid injuring these gentle giants. Precautions can be found in the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission's "A boater's guide to Living with Florida Manatee" at <https://myfwc.com/media/7327/boaters-guide-living-manatees.pdf>.

### **Florida 2020 Lionfish Challenge**

The annual Lionfish Challenge is underway and will run until September 7, 2020. Hosted by the Reef Rangers of the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission and open to recreational and commercial participants, the event features prizes for the most lionfish caught along with other challenges and activities. Winners will be announced at the Lionfish Removal and Awareness Festival in Destin, September 11-13, 2020. For more on the event, see the May 21, 2020 *Pensacola News Journal* article "2020 Lionfish Challenge kicks off Friday; winners to be announce in September in Destin" by Jake Newby at <https://www.pnj.com/story/news/2020/05/21/floridas-2020-lionfish-challenge-kicks-off-friday/5227629002/>.

### **Navarre Beach Fishing Pier Reopens/Gulf State Park Pier Closes**

The 1,545 foot Navarre Beach Fishing Pier reopened in mid-May 2020 following a \$1.2 million dollar upgrade that installed weather-resistant planks. The new decking

should make it easier for people to pull their fishing carts to favorite fishing spots and for those with wheelchairs to move around the pier. For more on the issue, see the May 18, 2020 *NWFDailyNews.com* article “Navarre Beach Fishing Pier debuts new \$1.2 million deck makeover just in time for spring” by Annie Banks at <https://www.nwfdailynews.com/news/20200518/navarre-beach-fishing-pier-debuts-new-12-million-deck-makeover-just-in-time-for-spring-photos>. The Gulf State Park Pier was recently closed for a \$2.4 million modernization and will reopen in mid-July 2020. For more on the issue, see the May 20, 2020 *Mullet Wrapper* article “Gulf State Park Pier closed until mid-July” at <https://mulletwrapper.net/gulf-state-park-pier-closed-until-mid-july/>.

### **Alabama Red Snapper Season**

Those hoping to catch red snapper from federally-permitted, for-hire vessels can enjoy the 62 day season beginning on June 1, 2020. The red snapper season for private recreational anglers opened on May 22 and will end July 19. For more on red snapper fishing, see the May 14, 2020 Gulf Shores and Orange Beach Tourism article “Red Snapper opens to Recreational Anglers on May 22” at <https://www.gulfshores.com/blog/red-snapper-opens-for-recreational-anglers-on-may-22/> and *Outdoor Alabama* May 15, 2020 press release.

### **Pensacola Pass Inlet Plan and Beach Mouse Films**

Escambia County has released two short films of likely interest to PKA members and Perdido Key property owners. One discusses the Pensacola Pass Inlet Management Plan (<https://youtu.be/pBLc9Aj9vY4>) and how it is expected to improve beach erosion conditions on Perdido Key. The east portion of Perdido Key remains critically eroded; seasonal erosion has been substantial along beaches just west of the Perdido Key Area of the Gulf Islands National Seashore so there is considerable interest in mitigation. The second film tells the story of the Perdido Key beach mouse and a good bit about Perdido Key as well ([Watch "Little Beach Mouse of the South"](#)). The film is almost a half hour long but well worth viewing.

### **June Calendar**

Jun 02-05,09,16-17,23-24,30: Blue Angels practice at NAS  
Jun 02-08: World Oceans Day online activities, PKA website  
Jun 04-07: “Rock of Ages” at Pensacola Little Theater  
Jun 05: Crawfish Cook-off in Fairhope  
Jun 06: Pensacola Beach Junior Lifeguard Tryouts  
Jun 06,07 (e.g.): Dancin’ in the Streets at The Wharf on Friday and Saturday nights  
Jun 06-10,25-29: Blue Wahoos at Blue Wahoo Stadium  
Jun 08: World Oceans Day at Dauphin Island Sea Lab  
June 11: Elite Summer Classic II Horse Show 7750 Mobile Highway  
Jun 11: Public Workshop on Perdido Key Drive/Johnson Beach intersection at Lost Key Golf Club

Jun 12-14: Pensacola Crawfish Festival (tentative date, location TBD)  
Jun 20: Alabama Blueberry Festival in Brewton  
Jun 20: Living History Crew Drill aboard USS Alabama and USS Drum  
Jun 21: Jaripeo Bull Riding and Family Outing at 7750 Mobile Highway  
Jun 27: Charity Golf Tournament for Lone Survivor Foundation at One Club Golf Shores  
Jun 27-28: June Jubilee Horse Show at 7750 Mobile Highway

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