

KEY NOTES

NEWS FROM
THE PERDIDO KEY ASSOCIATION



March 2018

2018 PKA Annual Membership Meeting

The Perdido Key Association held its 2018 Annual Membership Meeting on Saturday, February 24, 2018 at the Eden Condominium on Perdido Key. Featured speaker Steve Hays, President of Visit Pensacola, discussed the many tourist marketing initiatives made by his organization and indicated that successful tourism promotion required evaluating and effectively using data on visitor preferences and activities. He noted that Perdido Key should strive for a high quality visitor experience and not necessarily for increasing the number of tourists. With new air routes and greater recognition of the Pensacola area's many attractions, the future of tourism in the region seemed bright.

District 2 Commissioner Doug Underhill followed and addressed several issues affecting Perdido Key, such as the Helipad - back in operation; Perdido Key Multi-Use Path - design work in progress and construction to begin in the months ahead; Pensacola Pass Inlet Management Plan - study approved by the Board of County Commissioners that should lead to a process where sand dredged from Pensacola Pass would be deposited on the Perdido Key Area of the Gulf Islands National Seashore and be available for migration to the rest of Perdido Key; Perdido Key Dune Restoration Project - sea oat and other plantings should begin in a few weeks; and, underground utilities on Perdido Key - likely only through MSBU (Municipal Service Benefit Unit) funding.

The speakers' presentations and responses to questions were much appreciated by the audience. PKA president Charles Krupnick then reported on PKA initiatives during 2017, including International Coastal Cleanup Day and World Oceans Day events at Perdido Key State Park and the Association's funding of upgrade to three "interpretive wayside panels" at the Perdido Key Area of the Gulf Islands National Seashore. An unapproved version of the meeting minutes will be posted in the Archive page of the Perdido Key Association website in the near future.

Offshore Drilling Comment Period to Expire March 9

If you would like to comment on the US Department of the Interior plans to expand offshore drilling on the Atlantic, Pacific, and Gulf coasts of the United States, you should do so within the next few days - the comment period expires on **March 9, 2018**.

Although currently excluding Florida from offshore drilling plans, the policy has not been finalized and will likely face significant challenges. Comments can be made by mail, labeled "Comments for the 2019-2024 Draft Proposed National Oil and Gas Leasing Program" and sent to Ms. Kelly Hammerle, Chief, National Oil and Gas Leasing Program Development and Coordination Branch, Leasing Division, Office of Strategic Resources, Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (VAM-LS), [45600 Woodland Road, Sterling, VA 20166-9216](#). Comments can also be made online through the Regulations.gov web portal at <http://www.regulations.gov>. Under the Search tab in the space provided, type in Docket ID:BOEM-2017-0074 and submit your comments. (Drawn from federalregister.gov)

Year Round Daylight Saving Time?

The bill called the "Sunshine Protection Act" moving through the Florida legislature proposes that Florida shift to Daylight Saving Time year round instead of for only a portion of the year. Previously, the bill also called for shifting Northwest Florida from the Central to Eastern Time Zone, but the proposal was removed from the bill apparently because of opposition from Northwest Florida elected officials. A shift to year round Daylight Saving time will require a change in federal law to be implemented. For more on this issues, see the article "Senate scraps moving Panhandle to Eastern time zone" by Jim Turner of the News Service of Florida in the Pensacola News Journal at <https://www.pnj.com/story/news/2018/02/12/senate-scraps-moving-panhandle-eastern-time-zone/331486002/>.

Private Property Rights and Customary Use

Legislation moving through the Florida House and Senate could impact Perdido Key property owners and residents. House Bill 631 (2018) and Senate Bill 804 (2018) could affect the issues of "private property" and "customary use." Customary use can be an issue in dry sand areas that have "historically" been used for beach access by the general public or a specific group, but are privately owned. It has been contentious in some Florida locations such as Walton County. Both bills appear to strengthen private property rights and, in the House bill, would prevent local governments from taking action to alter the State's interpretation of the balance between private property rights and customary use. Some are concerned that the customary use criteria could be applied to Perdido Key where parking on private property near beaches is sometimes tolerated by the owners.

Notes on the Environment

Two Manatees Die in Regional Waters - Manatees have been seen in Northwest Florida waters in recent months. According to Sea Grant representative Rick O'Connor: "These once rare animals in the panhandle are now being found year round, and sometimes in groups." Unfortunately, two dead manatees were discovered in recent weeks, one in Okaloosa County and the other in Escambia County - probably victims of recent cold weather. The presence of manatee in our region warrants additional caution by all who use the same waterways as these gentle giants. For more on this issue, see Rick O'Connor's article "Two Manatees in Two Weeks" in the University of Florida IFAS Extension newsletter Panhandle Outdoors at <http://nwdistrict.ifas.ufl.edu/nat/>.

Invasive Species Awareness Week - National Invasive Species Awareness Week is from February 26 until March 2, 2018. A featured species is the tree privet, a small tree belonging to the olive family that is listed as a Florida Exotic Pest Plant Council Category 1 invader, meaning it can displace local species. For more on the tree privet, go to the Erik Lovstrand article in the University of Florida IFAS Extension website at <http://nwdistrict.ifas.ufl.edu/nat/2018/02/26/tree-privet-ligustrum-lucidum/>.

Trash in the Deepest Ocean - Plastic particles have been detected in some of the deepest fish of the ocean. Though the fish live in deep water, they migrate to the surface at night to feed where they probably ingest the microplastic particles floating near the surface. For more on this issue, see the USA Today article "Our trash is harming the deepest fish in the ocean" by Doyle Rice at <https://www.usatoday.com/story/tech/science/2018/02/21/ocean-pollution-plastic-found-73-percent-deepwater-fish-north-atlantic/359174002/>.

Dune Restoration

The County's dune replanting initiative is using \$500,000 of BP money to plant sea oats and other plants along Perdido Key beaches. The project has over 87% approval from beachfront property owners. The plants are being prepared by a vendor and should be planted in Perdido Key dunes beginning in the next few weeks. If you or your organizations have not signed on to the project, you can still do so by contacting Tim Day or Matt Posner at the Escambia County offices.

March Calendar

Mar 1: Hootenanny at the Flora-Bama

Mar 1, 3: Tree Pruning and Grafting Clinic, From the Ground Up Community Garden, downtown Pensacola

Mar 1-31: Spring Bird Migration, Dauphin Island

Mar 2-4: Diamond International Round Robin Tournament (college baseball), Blue Wahoos Stadium

Mar 2-5: Discover the Nina and the Pinta at The Wharf

Mar 2, 3, 16, 17, 30, 31: Pensacola Ice Flyers at Pensacola Bay Center

Mar 3: Gulf Coast Renaissance Fair and Pirate Festival, Santa Rosa County Fair, Milton
Mar 8: Science Hour on Seagrass Habitats, Escambia County Central Office Complex
Mar 10-11: Orange Beach Festival of Art
Mar 16-18: Fairhope Annual Arts and Crafts Festival
Mar 17: St. Patrick's Day events, various locations
Mar 22-25: Festival of Flowers, Mobile and Bellingrath Gardens
March 23-26: The Wharf Boat and Yacht Show
Mar 24: Beach Run/Walk for Americas Warriors at the Flora-Bama
Mar 28: Sea Turtle Presentation, Visit Pensacola, [1401 E. Gregory Street, Pensacola](http://www.visitpensacola.com)

Blue Angels practice on Tuesdays and Wednesdays, NAS Pensacola, beginning March 20-21.

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

www.visitpensacola.com/
<http://mygulfcoastchamber.com/>
www.visitperdido.com/
www.mulletwrapper.com
[www.myescambia.com\](http://www.myescambia.com)
www.emeraldcoastfl.com/
<http://alabama.travel/festivals-and-events>
www.cityofmobile.org/calendar/

Perdido Key Association Board of Directors