

KEY NOTES

NEWS FROM
THE PERDIDO KEY ASSOCIATION



September 2019

Yes – It's Hurricane Season

With Hurricane Dorian closing in on Florida's east coast and our neighbors in Panama City, Mexico Beach and elsewhere still recovering from Hurricane Michael, no reminder is necessary of the dangers of hurricane season and the need for adequate preparations. The latest NOAA predictions call for an "above normal" hurricane season (June 1–November 30) with 10 to 17 named storms and five to nine hurricanes, with two to four becoming major. As last year's experience with Michael demonstrated, hurricanes off the Gulf Coast can strengthen rapidly and leave little time to react. One resource for preparing is the May 17, 2019 "Panhandle Outdoors" article "Preparing for Hurricane Seasons – Ten Tips to protect your home and family" by Carrie Stevenson. For predictions on the current hurricane season, see the August 8, 2019 *Treasure Coast Newspapers* article "NOAA updates projections, saying "above normal" season could see 5-9 hurricanes, 2-4 of them major" by Corey Arwood at <https://www.tcpalm.com/story/weather/hurricanes/2019/08/08/hurricane-season-noaa-upgrades-2019-projections-above-normal-5-9-hurricanes/1953432001/>. *The Pensacola News Journal* is offering free access to updates on Dorian at https://www.pnj.com/?utm_source=pnj-Storm%20Watch&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=narrative&utm_term=article_bod y.

Road Swap Decision Soon

The proposed change to Perdido Key Drive from State of Florida to Escambia County control is expected to be decided at the September 5, 2019 Escambia County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) meeting in downtown Pensacola. Beulah Road, currently a County road in the rapidly developing northwest Escambia County area near the Navy Federal Credit Union complex, would pass to State control if the proposal is approved. Those in favor of the swap argue it would allow more rapid implementation of

safety measures along Perdido Key Drive, such as crosswalks, traffic signals, and speed limits and perhaps also facilitate progress toward fulfillment of the Perdido Key Master Plan. Others have concerns such as the County's ability to maintain Perdido Key Drive properly. Citizens may express their opinions at the September 5 BOCC meeting.

International Coastal Cleanup Day Saturday September 21, 2019

The Perdido Key Association, Friends of Pensacola State Parks, and the Florida State Parks are hosting a cleanup of Perdido Key beaches and the Old River waterfront from 8 AM until Noon on Saturday, September 21, 2019. Volunteers for this International Coastal Cleanup Day event can meet at the West Use Area of Perdido Key State Park to pick up material and receive beach cleanup assignments. Please come and help keep our beaches among the most beautiful in the world!

Songwriters at Sunset Benefit Concert Friday September 6, 2019

The producers of the Frank Brown Songwriters festival and the Perdido Key Chamber of Commerce are sponsoring the first "Songwriters at Sunset" at the Lost Key Beach Club (14395 Perdido Key Drive). Featured artists are Jon Nite, Jimmy Robbins and JT Harding with food and open bar included in the ticket purchase. Proceeds from the benefit go to the Frank Brown International Songwriters Festival Foundation and the Perdido Key Chamber of Commerce Foundation. For more on the event, go to <https://www.sunny1057.com/event/songwriters-at-sunset-benefit-perdido-key/>.

Flora-Bama Traffic

As all Perdido Key residents are aware, traffic can back up in the vicinity of the Flora-Bama in part because of pedestrians crossing Perdido Key Drive to go from one part of the complex to another. A significant traffic improvement will be the installation of a full traffic signal at or near the current crosswalk at the Flora-Bama. It will have a Green pedestrian walk indication for pedestrians to cross Perdido Key Dr; vehicular traffic will be halted with a Red indication on the signal when pedestrians are allowed to cross. When vehicles get the green indication, pedestrians will have a Red Hand (Don't Walk) indication. The project will include minor access modifications to the Flora-Bama property and removal of the traffic signal currently installed just over the state line in Alabama. Construction should begin in Sept 2019 and will hopefully improve both safety and traffic flow at that location.

Upgrades of Big Lagoon and Galvez Landing Boat Ramps

The Big Lagoon State Park boat ramp is closed for 9-10 months of renovation. With funding provided as a result of the BP oil spill, the slip will be substantially upgraded during the closure.

The Galvez Landing boat ramp off Innerarity Point Road will be renovated in 2020. According to Robert Turpin, manager for the Escambia County Marine Resources Division, the boat ramp will provide "longer parking and better turning radii" so that

parking and launching will be easier and safer. According to Mr. Turpin, public input regarding the project can still be made, with the next Marine Advisory Meeting 5:30 PM, Monday, September 9, 2019 at the Escambia County Central Office Complex. For more on this issue, see the August 26, 2019 *Pensacola News Journal* article “Galvez Landing boat ramp awaits changes” by Jim Little at <https://www.pnj.com/story/news/2019/08/26/upgrades-planned-galvez-landing-boat-ramp-2020/2095461001/>.

Endangered Species Act Endangered?

New rules for enforcement of the 1973 Endangered Species Act will “for the first time allow economic factors to be considered when weighing what protections should be provided to vulnerable species.” US Department of the Interior Secretary David Bernhardt stated the changes would “ensure more resources can go where they will do the most good: on the ground conservation.” Critics say the changes will “speed up the extinction of many species and was done just to allow industries to expand onto land required for ecological diversity.” With the endangered Perdido Key beach mouse a development consideration on Perdido Key, implementation of the new rules should be followed closely. See the August 12, 2019 *BBC* article “Environmentalists warn Trump ‘weakening’ endangered species protections” at https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-49323321?fbclid=IwAR1qOSJdQcGIS23dkG9C9Uzqq-1K0o2dOGCy0JhP3_07U9c9vGbZzwRH_i0&ocid=socialflow_facebook and “Mice and Rats” by George Harrison of Defenders of Wildlife for more on the Perdido Key beach mouse and other endangered species at <https://defenders.org/wildlife/mice-and-rats>.

Nutria and Beach Vitex

Nutria are large rodents introduced into the United States from South America for their fur. In the wild, they can severely damage marsh areas as experienced in Louisiana and elsewhere. Nutria have been identified on Perdido Key with a large dead one found near the Theo Baars Bridge earlier this year. If you spot nutria, please contact Rick O’Connor, Escambia County’s Sea Grant Representative, at roc1@ufl.edu. For more on this issue, see the June 28, 2019 IFAS Extension article “Dealing with Nutria” by Rick O’Connor at <http://nwdistrict.ifas.ufl.edu/nat/2019/06/28/dealing-with-nutria/>.

As mentioned in earlier “Key Notes,” beach vitex is an invasive plant that can displace native vegetation such as sea oats. It has been identified on River Road and reduced twice through volunteer efforts, though more work remains to eradicate it completely from the property. Beach vitex can be identified by its attractive purple flowers which may be in bloom now. For more information, see the June 18, 2019 IFAS Extension article “Getting Rid of Beach Vitex” by Rick O’Connor at <http://nwdistrict.ifas.ufl.edu/nat/2019/06/18/getting-rid-of-beach-vitex/>.

Turtle Management at Condominiums

Because of rapid turnover during the summer season, many visitors to Perdido Key are likely to be uninformed about sea turtle regulations and nesting habits. One condominium is bridging the knowledge gap with the following procedures:

1. Beach information sheets and discussions about the turtle regulations are provided with every parking pass
2. Turtle watch signage is posted on bulletin boards, elevators and beach entrances
3. A hired beach service patrols the beach every night to remove personal items left on the beach
4. When a turtle nest will soon hatch, "Lights Out" is posted on bulletin boards, elevators, and beach entrances

Flora-Bama Sues over Reality Show

MGFB Properties, the owner of the Flora--Bama, has filed a lawsuit against Viacom, MTV and 495 Productions "alleging the MTV reality show 'Floribama Shore' infringed on the bar and restaurant's trademark name." The show premiered in November 2017 despite a ceased and desist order filed by MGFB. For more on the issue, see the *Pensacola News Journal* August 7, 2019 article "Flora-Bama bar sues MTV over 'Floribama Shore' reality show" by Annie Blanks at <https://www.pnj.com/story/news/2019/08/07/flora-bama-sues-mtv-over-floribama-shore-reality-show/1946560001/>.

More Construction on Perdido Key

Substantial construction on Perdido Key includes more duplex and sixplex homes at the Lost Key Golf & Beach Club. Construction has also begun on single family homes off River Road along Gardenglen Drive to the dead end of Semmes Road. This will fill in one of the remaining tracts of land between Lost Key and River Road. The Surf Style store being built across Perdido Key Drive from the Eden Condominium is now open.

September is Childhood Cancer Awareness Month

Events supporting Childhood Cancer Awareness Month include a September 09 Candlelight Vigil at Studer Family Children's Hospital at Sacred Heart, September 18 Rally at Zaxby's, September 24 Dine to Donate at Texas Roadhouse, and September 29 Carnival for the Cure at Community Maritime Park.

September Calendar

Sep 01 – Greek Festival Emerald Coast Convention Center Okaloosa Island

Sep 01-02 – Labor Day celebration at OWA

Sep 05-07 – Bulls on the Beach at the Flora-Bama

Sep 06 – Songwriters at Sunset at Lost Key Beach Club

Sep 07 – BonFest Japan-style festival at Booker T. Washington High School

Sep 07 – Brett Robinson Alabama Coastal Triathlon at The Hangout in Gulf Shores

Sep 14 – Pensacola's Finest 5K at Seville Square

Sep 14 – National Estuaries Day celebrated at the Dauphin Island Sea Lab

Sep 19 – David Flaherty Off Tour at the Saenger Theater
Sep 20 – Flicks on the Field at Pensacola Greyhound Track
Sep 27 – Vettes on the Beach at Pensacola Beach
Sep 27 – Pensacola Seafood Festival at Seville Square Park
Sep 28-29 – Jubilee Festival in Daphne
Sep 30 – Alabama Gulf Coast Zoo to close at 4 PM for move to new site, opening TBD

Blue Angels practice on Tuesdays and Wednesdays at NAS Pensacola
Bands on the Beach on Tuesdays at Gulfside Pavilion Pensacola Beach
The following websites provide additional information about Gulf Coast events

<https://www.visitpensacola.com/>
<http://mygulfcoastchamber.com/>
<http://www.visitperdido.com/>
<http://mulletwrapper.net/>
<http://www.emeraldcoastfl.com//>
<http://alabama.travel/festivals-and-events>
<http://www.cityofmobile.org/calendar/>

Perdido Key Association Board of Directors