

KEY NOTES

NEWS FROM
THE PERDIDO KEY ASSOCIATION



September 2020

Hurricane Season 2020 Continues in High Gear

Hurricane Laura was a late-August monster that caused catastrophic damage to Lake Charles and other towns in Louisiana and Texas. Storm surge, high winds and heavy rains plus portable generators caused multiple deaths, large scale damage to a huge number of structures, over a half million power outages and localized damage far inland. The Perdido Key Area was spared most of Laura's effects, except for dangerous surf. Preceding storm Hurricane Marco ended up mostly a rain event with Pensacola receiving a record rainfall of 2.44" for August 24, 2020. Hurricane Season 2020 is unfortunately living up to its very active expectations. For more on Hurricane Laura, see August 28, 2020 *ABC Eyewitness News/AP* article "Death Toll from Hurricane Laura Climbs to 11" at

<https://abc7ny.com/weather/death-toll-from-hurricane-laura-climbs-to-11/6393635/>; for more on Hurricane Marco, see the August 25, 2020 *Pensacola News Journal* article "Tropical Storm Marco broke Pensacola rainfall record, storms churn up high surf" by Jim Little at https://www.pnj.com/story/weather/2020/08/25/northwest-florida-got-bulk-rain-tropical-storm-marco-setting-record-rainfall-aug-24-pensacola-despit/3431669001/?for-guid=dde30dac-0679-44b4-ab87-83c4a5aaf803&utm_source=pnj-Daily%20Briefing&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=daily_briefing&utm_term=hero.

National Seashore Reopening

Gulf Islands National Seashore was effectively closed because of recent tropical storm activity with some areas closed earlier because of the COVID-19 crisis. The park beach areas, including Perdido Key (Johnson Beach), were reopened on August 27,

2020 and Fort Pickens campgrounds are expected to be open at 50% capacity by August 31, 2020. For more on this issue, see the August 26, 2020 *Pensacola News Journal* article “Gulf Islands Seashore ready to reopen areas after Marco” at <https://www.pnj.com/story/news/2020/08/26/gulf-islands-national-seashore-reopening-after-tropical-storm-marco/5636197002/>

Big Lagoon Boat Landing

Although contractors still have work remaining, the upgrade to the Big Lagoon Boat Ramp is substantially completed and being enjoyed by area boaters. Among the improvements are an additional lane to the boat ramp, more boat trailer parking, improved traffic circulation, and a new restroom facility. Drawn from Escambia County document “Big Lagoon Boat Ramp” at https://myescambia.com/docs/default-source/sharepoint-natural-resources-management/RESTORE/Projects/big-lagoon-boat-ramp.pdf?sfvrsn=b57e86bb_9.

Pensacola Bay Bridge Multi-Use Path Opens

The long awaited multi-use path for pedestrians and cyclists on the new Pensacola Bay Bridge has opened. Delays in completion included railing redesign and vibration testing. For more on the issue, see the August 15, 2020 *Pensacola News Journal* article “After several delays, Pensacola Bay Bridge multi-use path finally set to open Monday” by Madison Arnold at <https://www.pnj.com/story/news/2020/08/15/pensacola-bay-bridge-multi-use-path-set-open-monday-after-delays/5583434002/>.

Orange Beach High and Middle School Opens

Orange Beach and Baldwin County leaders officially opened the new Orange Beach High and Middle School on August 10, 2020, with the first students arriving on August 12. The school is located on Canal Road and has high school on the first floor and middle school on the second. A Performing Arts Center is under construction adjacent to the school. For more on this, see the Aug 26-Sept 9, 2020 *Mullet Wrapper* article “Having its own high school is watershed moment in Orange Beach history” by Marc D. Anderson at <https://mulletwrapper.net/having-its-own-high-school-is-watershed-moment-in-orange-beach-history/#:~:text=While%20the%20high%20and%20middle,for%20the%20Orange%20Beach%20community.&text=The%20middle%20school%2C%20which%20utilizes,stand%20ard%20classrooms%2C%20two%20collaborative%20rooms>.

Tons of Microplastics in Atlantic Ocean

A new study points to much larger quantities of microplastics in the Atlantic Ocean than previous estimates. Microplastics are any plastic particles less than 5mm and may come from specific use in clothing, cosmetics or industry or from the breakdown of larger plastic items, such as packaging material. The UK National Oceanographic Centre study estimates 12-21 million tons of microplastics in the Atlantic Ocean,

“enough to fully load almost 1,000 container ships;” some measurements were as high as “7,000 particles per cubic meter of seawater.” As an interesting aside, according to Susannah Bleakley who helps coordinate UK beach cleanups: “We now find more disposable masks than plastic bags.” For more on the issue, see the August 18, 2020 *BBC.com* article “Microplastic in Atlantic Ocean ‘could weigh 21 million tones’” by Victoria Gill at <https://www.bbc.com/news/science-environment-53786555>.

International Coastal Cleanup 2020

International Coastal Cleanup Day for 2020 has a different tone than previous years because of COVID-19. Event sponsor Ocean Conservancy has emphasized the need to stay safe and healthy and provided guidance on solo or small group cleanups (available at <https://oceanconservancy.org/trash-free-seas/international-coastal-cleanup/clean-icc-2020/>). The Perdido Key Association, Friends of Pensacola State Parks and local Florida State Park officials have organized beach cleanups on International Coastal Cleanup Day the third Saturday in September for several years. For 2020, they plan to provide an opportunity to cleanup Perdido Key beaches by staging trash bags and gloves at the West Use Area of the Perdido Key State Park from 8 AM until noon on September 19 so beach goers can help clean-up Perdido Key beaches during their stay at the beach, with social distancing and personal safety emphasized. Other beach cleanup opportunities can be found at Pensacola’s Ocean Hour FL website at <https://www.oceanhourfl.com/> and for Alabama beaches at <https://alabamacoastalcleanup.com/>.

Beach Vitex Going to Seed

Escambia County Sea Grant representative Rick O’Connor reminds us that beach vitex is a Category 1 invasive plant and a state noxious weed. It will soon be going from flower to profuse and hardy black seeds that can propagate by land and sea. If beach vitex is on your property, consider removing and destroying the seeds; if you would like the plant removed, contact Rick O’Connor at roc1@ufl.edu. Drawn from August 28 2020 “Sea Grant Notes” at <http://blogs.ifas.ufl.edu/escambiaco/2020/08/28/sea-grant-notes-aug-28-2020/>.

PKA Website Changes

On September 1, 2020 the Perdido Key Association is changing its web host and design firm to DigitalEffex and its host platform to WordPress, one of the industry standards. The website will have the same page categories and links as the previous version but with slightly modified formats. The new platform will be easier to update.

PKA Adopt-A-Highway Participation

The Perdido Key Association has participated in the Florida Department of Transportation’s (FDOT) Adopt-A-Highway program since June 2015. Every three months since then volunteers have picked up litter along a two mile portion of Rt. 98

from Dog Track Road to Trout Road. But new leadership for the clean-up program is needed for PKA to keep up its Adopt-A-Highway responsibilities. If interested, please contact PKA president Charles Krupnick at 334 482-2843.

September Calendar

Sep 1,5: Coastal Alabama Farmers and Fishermans Market every Tuesday and Saturday in Foley during September

Sep 05: Labor Day Car Show at OWA

Sep 05: Wildcat 100 Ultra-Marathon at 7750 Mobile Hwy

Sep 06: Light Up Labor Day at The Wharf

Sep 07: Labor Day

Sep 10: Cher Here We Go Again Tour 2020 at Pensacola Bay Center

Sep 11: Annual Golf Challenge for Education at Peninsula Golf and Racquet Club

Sep 12: Pensacola Beach Food Truck Events Sep 12-Nov 1, 2020

Sep 12,13: Annual Massacre Island's Pirate Siege on Dauphin Island

Sep 13: Navy Federal 5K – All Virtual Event

Sep 19: Take Stock in Children Golf Tournament at Perdido Bay Golf Resort

Sep 26: Jubilee Festival Daphne

Sep 26,27: PBR's Unleash the Beast bull riding at Pensacola Bay Center

Sep 26,27: Northwest FL Quarter Horse Association Horse Show at 7750 Mobile Hwy

Sep 30: Beach Boys at the Saenger Theater downtown Pensacola

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>

Perdido Key Association Board of Directors