

# KEY NOTES

NEWS FROM  
THE PERDIDO KEY ASSOCIATION



## October 2020

### **Hurricane Sally Strikes Severe Blow to Perdido Key**

It was supposed to be a Category 1 storm with a lot of rain, but Hurricane Sally turned into a dangerous and multimillion dollar disaster for Perdido Key and its neighbors. The storm pummeled our area beginning on Tuesday September 15 and did not end until late afternoon on Wednesday September 16. Those who rode it out will remember its howling winds and brutal rainfall for a good long time. Almost every residence and business on Perdido Key was affected in some way by the storm as the debris lining Perdido Key Drive, River Road, and other island streets attest. Driving around Escambia County one quickly recognizes that Perdido Key was not alone in having significant damage; the loss of life from the storm was particularly tragic. Looking forward, many roads were re-opened quickly as downed trees and other debris were pushed aside; water service followed relatively soon for most and the great number of power company vehicles in the County attested to the enormous efforts made at power restoration. We thank our first responders and local and supporting utilities for their concern and work to keep Perdido Key residents, guests and our neighbors safe and moving forward as quickly as possible to some sort of normalcy.

### **Johnson Beach Breaches and Oil**

The Perdido Key Area of Gulf Islands National Seashore was particularly affected by Hurricane Sally. Closed after the storm, the park reopened on Saturday, October 3, 2020. Sally tore four breaches in the remote eastern portion of the park south of Robertson Island leaving three islands in its wake. According to Park Superintendent Dan Brown, similar breaches have happened before because of the narrowness and low level of the park in that area. Because Pensacola Pass traps much of the east-west flow of sand along the Northwest Florida Coast, Superintendent Brown does not expect

natural process to heal the breaches. Sally also destroyed the Discovery Trail not far from the park entrance. For more on the park see the September 22, 2020 *Pensacola News Journal* article “A Florida Island has turned into multiple islands after Hurricane Sally slices through” by Kevin Robinson at <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2020/09/22/hurricane-sally-forms-three-breaches-floridas-east-perdido-key/5863650002/> and the October 2, 2020 *Pensacola News Journal* article “Some Gulf Islands National Seashore areas begin reopening on Saturday” at <https://www.pnj.com/story/news/2020/10/02/gulf-islands-national-seashore-areas-begin-reopening-saturday/3596193001/>.

Hurricane Sally was also undoubtedly responsible for five miles of oil covered beaches on the National Seashore. The source of the oil has not yet been determined, but oil remaining from the 2010 BP oil spill and churned up by the storm comes to mind. According to environmental specialist Sava Varazo, however, the oil on the Seashore does not have the “right consistency or color.” “When you have a storm of this magnitude that lasts as long as it did, you have a lot of devastation. Due to all the vessels that sunk, you’re going to find more of these oil slicks coming to the surface and being reported.” For more on this issue, see the September 29, 2020 *WEAR* report “More oil washes up along 5 miles of Johnson Beach on Perdido Key” by Rebekah Castor at <https://weartv.com/news/local/more-oil-washes-up-along-5-miles-of-johnson-beach-on-perdido-key>.

### **Getting Help after Sally**

With a major disaster declaration for Florida from Hurricane Sally, federal assistance will be available to local governments. After a flurry of action by local government leaders and thousands of submitted photos and testimony about the effects of Hurricane Sally, on October 2, 2020 Escambia County announced that FEMA Individual Disaster Assistance would also be available. Aid can be requests in three ways:

- Call 1-800-621-3362 (TTY# 1-800-462-7585)
- Register online at [disasterassistance.gov](https://www.fema.gov/disasterassistance)
- Download the FEMA app on your mobile device and register using the app.

For more on aid, see the October 2, 2020 *Pensacola News Journal* article “FEMA individual assistance approved for Escambia, Santa Rosa, Okaloosa, Walton and Bay” by Kevin Robinson at <https://www.pnj.com/story/news/2020/10/02/fema-individual-assistance-approved-hurricane-sally-escambia-santa-rosa-okaloosa-walton-bay/5895110002/>.

Florida Governor Ron DeSantis was activating the “small business emergency loan program to provide short-term, interest free loans to business that were hurt by Hurricane Sally.” For additional information on post-Sally assistance issues, see the September 23, 2020 article “Escambia County officials ask for photos of Hurricane Sally damage to unlock FEMA help” at

<https://www.pnj.com/story/news/2020/09/23/escambia-county-asks-photos-hurricane-sally-damage-unlock-fema-help/3507220001/> and the September 24, 2020 article “Hurricane Sally a ‘major disaster’ but no individual assistance coming without public’s help” at <https://www.pnj.com/story/news/2020/09/24/trump-declares-disaster-in-florida-escambia-county-from-hurricane-sally/3515463001/>, both by Jim Little in the *Pensacola News Journal*.

### **Helping after Sally**

Financial contributions to support Hurricane Sally recovery efforts can be made to the American Red Cross at <https://www.redcross.org/donate/hurricanes-sally-and-laura-donations.html/> and to United Way of West Florida by donating to UWWF’s Hurricane Sally Relief Fund – text 850RELIEF to 41444 or visit [www.uwwf.org/850RELIEF](http://www.uwwf.org/850RELIEF). To volunteer for restoration projects, “create a profile through UWWF’s online volunteer portal GET CONNECTED, by visiting [uwwf.galaxydigital.com](http://uwwf.galaxydigital.com). BRACE will recruit volunteers by using this platform.” Information drawn from September 24, 2020 *Pensacola News Journal* article “How to help support Hurricane Sally Recovery.”

Big Lagoon State Park needs a great deal of cleanup before it is fully recovered from the storm and welcomes volunteers to help from 7 AM until 3 PM, Monday through Friday.

### **Careful!**

- Snakes may be under those piles of debris along the roads and rusty nails are everywhere
- Waterways are not safe because of debris
- Bacteria may be in local waters and oil in coastal waters – for Escambia County Food Safety Guidelines go to <https://www.myescambia.com/our-services/natural-resources-management/marine-resources/seafood-safety>
- Some information drawn from September 25, 2020 *Sea Grant Notes* at <http://blogs.ifas.ufl.edu/escambiaco/2020/09/25/sea-grant-notes-sep-25-2020/>

### **Post-Sally Quick Notes**

- Local recycling is closed while ECUA’s facility undergoes repairs
- For Escambia County road closures go to [www.myescambia.com/roadissuesmap](http://www.myescambia.com/roadissuesmap)
- A section of recently renovated Gulf State Park Pier was taken out
- Perdido Key Visitor Information Centers is closed until further notice
- Pensacola Bay Bridge will be closed for months after being struck by some of the 22 Skanska construction barges that broke free during the storm; Garcon Point Bridge tolls are suspended until 6 AM on October 23; Bob Sikes Bridge to Pensacola Beach was damaged but remains open with restrictions
- Some information drawn from Visit Pensacola website at <https://www.visitpensacola.com/>

## **Riding Out Sally**

Many have stories about Hurricane Sally blasting through our area. Here is one from Rick O'Connor, Escambia County's Sea Grant Representative, at <https://blogs.ifas.ufl.edu/escambiaco/2020/09/25/oh-what-a-night-sally-storms-into-the-panhandle/>.

## **October Calendar**

Oct 01-31 – Destin Fishing Rodeo  
Oct 03 – Free Pensacola Opera Al Fresco Concert at Bayview Park  
Oct 03,04 – Southeast Stock Horse Show at 7750 Mobile Highway  
Oct 03-31 – OWA Park after Dark  
October 04,11,18 – Pensacola Beach Art Walk on the Boardwalk  
Oct 07-10 – Alabama Coastal Birdfest 2020 in Spanish Fort  
October 11 – Flora-Bama's Annual Oktoberfest  
Oct 15 – Deadline for early sign-up Red, White & Birdies Golf Classic, PBGC  
Oct 17 – Free Pensacola Opera Al Fresco Concert at Bryan Park  
Oct 17 – Pumpkin Patch at Blue Wahoo Stadium (handmade glass and ceramic)  
Oct 24 – Spooky Movie on the Lawn at The Wharf  
Oct 24 – Free Pensacola Opera Al Fresco Concert at Magee Field  
Oct 25 – Ghoulish Movie on the Lawn at The Wharf  
Oct 30 – Flicks on the Field at Pensacola Greyhound Park Halloween Edition  
Oct 31 – Elberta German Sausage Festival

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