

KEY NOTES

NEWS FROM
THE PERDIDO KEY ASSOCIATION



November 2020

Hurricane Zeta Grazes Perdido Key

Still recovering from the damage done by Hurricane Sally, Perdido Key and nearby area residents could breathe a sigh of relief as Hurricane Zeta zoomed by on October 28-29 with significant winds and surf, but not much rain. It hit the Louisiana coast with over 100 MPH winds, but the highest recorded locally were in the 50-55 MPH range. More than 50,000 people lost power in Escambia and Santa Rosa Counties though most had it back within a short time. Zeta's effects were not limited to the Gulf Coast, however, with six deaths and millions losing power across a broad swath of the eastern United States. For more on Hurricane Zeta, see the October 29, 2020 *Pensacola News Journal* article "Zeta: 50,000 people lost power in Escambia, Santa Rosa; Panhandle spared serious damage" by Annie Banks at <https://www.pnj.com/story/news/2020/10/29/hurricane-zeta-7-000-people-without-power-escambia-county-thursday/6067397002/> and the October 29, 2020 *USA Today* article "6 dead, millions powerless as Zeta roars across Southern, Eastern US" by Doyle Rice at <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2020/10/29/zeta-damage-deaths-power-outages-south/6072425002/>.

Perdido Skye Fire

An October 29, 2020 fire on the 5th floor of the Perdido Skye Condominium was probably caused by a faulty air conditioning unit. The building was unoccupied because of ongoing repairs from Hurricane Sally and the fire was quickly extinguished by responding firefighters. For more on the fire, see the October 29, 2020 *Pensacola News Journal* article "Firefighters extinguish fire at 8-story Perdido Key complex" by Colin Warren-Hicks" at <https://www.pnj.com/story/news/2020/10/29/perdido-skye-condo-complex-caught-fire-thursday-perdido-key/6075003002/>.

Grants Available for Perdido Bay Watershed

There is still time to apply for grants under the Pensacola & Perdido Bays Estuary Program (PPBEP) – applications are due November 6, 2020. The program is looking for “shovel-ready” projects ranging from \$5,000 to \$50,000. Possible projects are organized into eight categories: water quality, habitat restoration, fish and wildlife conservation, watershed awareness and education, resilience, invasive species, citizen science, and aquatic trash/marine debris. If you have ideas about projects that may qualify for a grant, please contact PKA Board president Charles Krupnick at charles.krupnick@gmail.com so the PKA Board can consider the proposal. For more information on the program, go to <https://ppbep.org/mini-grant-program>.

Home Pick-up Recycling Again Available

Recycling pickup services in Escambia County have begun following ECUA facility repairs after Hurricane Sally, but recycling drop-off locations remain closed. For more on recycling, see the October 11, 2020 *NorthEscambia.com* article “ECUA Is Getting Back To Recycling, Normal Collections This Week” at <http://www.northescambia.com/2020/10/ecua-is-getting-back-to-recycling-normal-collections-this-week>.

High Lumber Costs and Probably Electric Power too!

Area residents recovering from Hurricane Sally are facing high lumber costs for repairs. According to a *Pensacola News Journal* article, prices are currently about \$607 per thousand board feet – up from \$260 in April 2020. Hurricane Michael destroyed some of the area’s lumber while COVID 19 sent many millworkers home. For more on building material costs, see the September 27, 2020 *Pensacola News Journal* article “Hurricane Sally victims face near record prices for building materials in COVID fallout” by Madison Arnold at <https://www.pnj.com/story/news/2020/09/27/pensacola-high-demand-high-prices-building-materials-after-hurricane-sally-and-covid/3550155001/>.

Gulf Power costs for restoring power after Hurricane Sally is estimated at \$200 million, which will likely be recouped from consumers. For more on electric power costs, see the October 21, 2020 *Pensacola News Journal* article “Hurricane Sally estimated to have cost Gulf Power \$200 million to restore electricity” by Jim Saunders at <https://www.pnj.com/story/news/2020/10/21/hurricane-sally-estimated-have-cost-gulf-power-200-million-restore-electricity/3717578001/>.

Local State Park Status

Perdido Key State Park is closed until further notice because of damaged infrastructure from Hurricane Sally. Volunteers are welcome to help clean-up the park on Wednesday November 4, 2020 beginning at 9 AM and meeting in the East Use Area parking lot. Bayou Tarkiln State Park trails are open on the west side of Bauer Road. Big Lagoon State Park campgrounds and boat launch are open, but pavilions and trails remain closed for post-Sally cleanup and rebuilding.

Public Input on Beach Access for Disabled

Escambia County is requesting “public input on universal access to Pensacola and Perdido Key beaches.” To participate in a survey on improving beach access for people with disabilities (the survey runs until November 6, 2020), go to <https://myescambia.com/open-government/projects/surveys/universal-access-perdido-key-survey>.

Public Input on Sorrento Road Upgrades

The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) is designing a project to resurface and improve Sorrento Road from the Theo Baars Bridge to Bauer Road. This may include adding or extending shoulders that could improve safety for pedestrians and cyclists. The very technical FDOT draft document for the project is available at ftp://ftp.ecrc.org/FDOT_DESIGN_PLANS/2020/Escambia/Sorrento/; for questions about the project contact Kimberly Stephens at kistephens@hntb.com by November 17, 2020; the Florida TPO contact is Gary Kramer at gary.kramer@ecrc.org.

Alabama Weekend Red Snapper Fishing

Because fishing days were lost due to Hurricanes Sally and Delta, the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources opened red snapper fishing on weekends beginning October 17, 2020. For more, go to *Outdoor Alabama* October 13, 2020 press release “Alabama Announces Weekend Fishing for Private Anglers” at <https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0?ik=8961032f5a&view=pt&search=all&permthid=thread-f%3A1680469107302309173&simpl=msg-f%3A1680469107302309173>.

More Manatees but a Tough Year for Sea Turtles

Despite the advancing cooler seasons, manatees continue to be sighted in the area with a total of 64 sightings in 2020. For more on the issue see October 30, 2020 “Sea Grant Notes” at <http://blogs.ifas.ufl.edu/escambiaco/2020/10/30/sea-grant-notes-oct-30-2020/>.

But Escambia County sea turtles had a “dismal season” where, according to Escambia County’s marine resources manager Robert Turpin, only one of 28 sea turtle nests in the County could be deemed a success. Santa Rosa County had better luck with five of eight nests hatch at Navarre Beach. In addition, four juvenile green sea turtles were recently released to the Gulf after being rehabilitated at the Gulfarium’s C.A.R.E. Center. For more on these issues, go to the October 1, 2020 *Pensacola News Journal* article “Sea turtles laid 28 nests in Escambia County. Only one full nest survived” by Colin Warren-Hicks at <https://www.pnj.com/story/news/2020/10/01/escambia-county-had-28-sea-turtle-nests-2020-one-nest-survived/3587454001/> and the October 28, 2020 *Northwest Florida Daily News* article “Sea turtles rehabilitated by Gulfarium’s C.A.R.E. Center released at Topsail Hill” by Devon Ravine at <https://www.nwfdailynews.com/story/news/2020/10/28/gulfarium-releases-four-rehabilitated-sea-turtles-into-gulf-tuesday/3747124001/>.

Good and Bad Plants

PKA Key Notes has frequently mentioned the threat of **beach vitex** to Perdido Key and surrounding regions. The invasive species was recently listed as a Florida “noxious weed” which, according to a 2016 Fact Sheet by the Weed Science Society of America, means it can be “injurious to public health, agriculture, recreation, wildlife or property.” For more on beach vitex see the October 30, 2020 “Sea Grant Notes” at <http://blogs.ifas.ufl.edu/escambiaco/2020/10/30/sea-grant-notes-oct-30-2020/>.

But some plants are good! A UF/IFAS article by Carrie Stevenson lauds the merits of **muhly grass** as an “extremely versatile plant in the wild and in a home landscape.” It is a local plant and grows in 2-3 foot clumps with “pinkish purple” blossoms. Muhly grass is both flood and drought resistant and can provide “nesting material and shelter for birds and small animals.” For more, go to the article “Weekly ‘What is it’: Muhly grass” at <http://blogs.ifas.ufl.edu/escambiaco/2020/10/28/weekly-what-is-it-muhly-grass/>.

November Calendar

Nov 01– Pensacola Interstate Fair, 6655 Mobile Highway
Nov 01, 07-08 – Town of Terror Fear Fest at OWA
Nov 06-08 – Pensacola Seafood Festival at Seville Square
Nov 06-08 – Alabama Pecan Festival in Mobile
Nov 06-15 – National Peanut Festival in Dothan
Nov 11 – Veterans Day Breakfast and Parade at Bay Minette
Nov 11 – Veterans Day Celebration at USS Alabama Battleship Park
Nov 11-15 – Frank Brown International Songwriter’s Festival in various locations
Nov 13-30 – Ice Skating at The Wharf
Nov 19-26 – Pensacola Beach Turkey Trot 5K (virtual)
Nov 21 – Mobile International Festival at Mobile Fairgrounds
Nov 27-30 – First City Lights Festival begins in downtown Pensacola
Nov 27-30 – Magic Christmas in Lights begins at Bellingrath Gardens
Nov 28-30 – Winterfest begins in 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