

KEY NOTES

NEWS FROM
THE PERDIDO KEY ASSOCIATION



December 2020

No PKA Holiday Party this Year

PKA regrettably will not be hosting a Holiday Party this December because of the COVID-19 pandemic. PKA Holiday Parties held at the Seafarer Condominium in recent years have been memorable for the friendships strengthened and the great food and beverages brought by members. Who can forget Alan Dennis' terrific holiday meatballs! Despite skipping the party and because of 2020's challenges, the PKA Board of Directors wishes you a particularly wonderful and safe Holiday Season!

2021 PKA Annual Membership Meeting and Director Selection

The 2021 PKA Annual Membership Meeting will be held Saturday, February 27, 2021 from 10 AM until Noon at the Eden Condominium. The Eden is equipping its Conference Rooms so personnel can attend in-person and others can watch remotely on Zoom. More information on the meeting procedures and itinerary will follow.

The Perdido Key Association's 2021 election cycle is approaching and the PKA Board of Directors is searching for interested members to become Director Candidates. If you are interested in becoming a PKA Director candidate, please contact any current PKA Director. New faces on the Board would be most welcome! A ballot listing the candidates will be sent to PKA members approximately 30 days prior to the February 27, 2021 Annual Membership Meeting where voting will take place.

Gulf Islands National Seashore Damage

Gulf Islands National Seashore including its Perdido Key Area suffered \$4.5 million in damage from Hurricane Sally, but will not be getting any additional funds to make needed repairs. Park Superintendent Dan Brown stated "We have this very, very long list of storm recovery projects and we're having to prioritize them." \$2 million will be required for road repairs and \$1.2 million for repair of the ferry pier. While the main

parking areas at Perdido Key, Naval Live Oaks, and the Okaloosa portion of the park have opened, the Ft. Pickens area and campgrounds remain closed – primarily because of road damage. For more on National Seashore recovery from Sally, see the November 21, 2020 *Pensacola News Journal Article* “Gulf Islands estimates \$4.5 million in damage from Sally in Florida” by Madison Arnold at <https://www.pnj.com/story/news/2020/11/20/gulf-islands-estimates-4-5-million-damage-sally-florida/3777695001/>.

November Hurricanes

Central America was devastated by two major hurricanes in November 2020, Category 4 Hurricane Eta and Category 5 Hurricane Iota. These were unique and tragic events that have led to speculation on whether late season and powerful storms will be a new norm. As with Eta and Iota, powerful storms formed late in the year are likely to be in the Caribbean because the water is very warm and atmospheric conditions favorable. Other items being studied following this active hurricane season are the rapid intensification of recent storms and their slow progress, leading to enormous rainfall totals. For more on late-season storms, see the November 21, 2020 *Palm Beach Post* article “Scary trend: Major hurricanes in October and November – why is it happening?” by Kimberly Miller at <https://www.newschief.com/story/weather/hurricane/2020/11/21/hurricane-iota-extraordinary-horror-horrible-year/6354794002/>.

Natural Gas on Perdido Key

Pensacola Energy has been installing natural gas lines on Perdido Key since 2015. Service does not go to all streets so to find out if gas service is available for a particular location, contact the Pensacola Energy Marketing Desk at 850 436-5050.

Florida Tourism and Visit Pensacola

Tourist dollars help fund the Florida state budget and support up to 1.5 million jobs, but third quarter tourism in Florida was almost 32% below the same period last year – which is not surprising given the COVID-19 pandemic. Visit Florida officials are nonetheless optimistic because of marketing initiatives and improvement in tourism from earlier in 2020. According to Visit Pensacola [the Destination Marketing Organization (DMO) for Pensacola, Pensacola Beach, and Perdido Key], visitors typically spend about \$938 million a year and support 19,000 jobs in the Pensacola area. Visit Pensacola has endured a budget reduction of 26% and expects additional cuts, but new president and CEO Darien Schaefer remains optimistic and is looking forward to “investing in the people working in hospitality, telling more locals about what Visit Pensacola does and how it's spending tax money and getting ‘creative’ with the budget it does have.” On a bright note, the Perdido Key Visitors Center has reopened with normal hours of operation. For more on these issues, go to the November 20, 2020 article “Florida’s tourism sees nearly 32% drop in visitors during Q3 as business restrictions lift” at <https://www.pnj.com/story/news/2020/11/20/floridas-tourism-sees-nearly-32-drop->

[visitors-during-q-3/6348569002/](#) and the November 10, 2020 article “This year will forever have an asterisk on it: Visit Pensacola talks 2020, ideas for recovery” by Madison Arnold at <https://www.pnj.com/story/news/local/2020/11/10/visit-pensacola-reflects-2020-tourism-difficulties-2021-recovery/6225327002/>, both in the *Pensacola News Journal*.

Alabama’s Gulf State Park Upgrade and Fort Morgan Boat Ramp Repairs

The Lake Shelby area of Gulf State Park is closed for a number of upgrades including playgrounds, dog parks, restrooms, and parking areas. Other work at the Park will improve parking at the fishing pier and add amenities for volunteers and events. Elsewhere in Baldwin County, the public boat ramps at Fort Morgan basin and near Mile 7 on Fort Morgan Road were damaged by Hurricane’s Sally and Zeta and will remain closed until January 2021. Information drawn from the November 4-8, 2020 *Mullet Wrapper* articles “Enlargement project begins around Lake Shelby at Gulf State Park” and “Two Fort Morgan public boat ramps will remain closed ‘til January.”

Latest on Possible Wolf Bay Bridge

Perdido Key residents and visitors have an interest in discussions on a possible bridge from Hwy 161 in Orange Beach (near Doc’s Seafood) across Wolf Bay to Elberta (probably near Barber’s Marina); a “Wolf Bay Bridge” could reduce traffic on Perdido Key Drive. The Orange Beach City Council is considering spending \$212,000 to complete a permit application to the US Army Corps of Engineers. Even with the permit, challenges will remain before a bridge can be built such as funding the project and coming to agreement with landowners on the north side of Wolf Bay. For more on the issue, go to the November 4-8, 2020 *Mullet Wrapper* article “City considers spending \$212K to finish permit application for Hwy. 161 bridge” by John Mullen.

Record Lionfish

An 18.19” lionfish was speared by a Destin diver, the largest ever caught in the Gulf of Mexico. The Atlantic record is 18.78” caught in the Florida Keys. Elsewhere, small lionfish have again been identified near the Ft. Pickens jetty, indicating their likely penetration into area estuaries. For more on these issues, see the November 06, 2020 and November 13, 2020 *Sea Grant Notes* at <https://blogs.ifas.ufl.edu/escambiaco/2020/11/06/sea-grant-notes-nov-6-2020/> and <https://blogs.ifas.ufl.edu/escambiaco/2020/11/13/sea-grant-notes-nov-13-2020/>.

Sharks around Pensacola

How many shark attacks have there been in the vicinity of Pensacola Beach since Tristán de Luna y Arellano landed in the region in 1559? Only Seven! During the same period, all of Florida had a total of 851 reported shark attacks – not very many when you consider the much great losses from other causes such as auto accidents. For more information on sharks in our area, see the November 13, 2020 UF/IFAS blog “Fish of

the Florida Panhandle – Sharks” by Rick O’Connor at <https://blogs.ifas.ufl.edu/escambiaco/2020/11/13/fish-of-the-florida-panhandle-sharks/>.

What in the World is a Hammerhead Flatworm?

Most of us rarely see earthworms here on Perdido Key, but they are certainly around the Pensacola area and unfortunately have to content with an aggressive invasive species from Southeast Asia, the “hammerhead flatworm.” The unwelcome arrival resembles a hammerhead shark with its wide and flattened head. If found, they should be destroyed but not chopped into pieces because – like other worms – the pieces can regenerate into more hammerhead flatworms! For more on the issue, see the UF/IFAS blog “Weekly What is it?: Hammerhead Flatworm” posted on November 16, 2020 by Carrie Stevenson at <https://blogs.ifas.ufl.edu/escambiaco/2020/11/16/weekly-what-is-it-hammerhead-flatworm/>.

December Calendar

Dec 01-31 – First City Lights Festival in downtown Pensacola
Dec 01-31 – Magic Christmas in Lights at Bellingrath Gardens
Dec 01-24 – Winterfest in downtown Pensacola
Dec 4,5,6,11,12,13,18,19,20 – Jolly Jubilee at Destin Commons
Dec 05 – Lighted Boat Parade at Pensacola Beach
Dec 05 – Perdido Key Area Craft and Vendor Fair at Pensacola Greyhound Track
Dec 05 – Flicks on the Field at Pensacola Greyhound Track
Dec 05,06 – Merry Market Unique Gifts & Crafts Expo at The Wharf
Dec 09 – Perdido Key Chamber Annual Meeting & Awards Business Brunch at Flora-Bama Yacht Club
Dec 11 – Christmas on the Coast at the Saenger Theater Pensacola
Dec 12 – Winter Art Market at First City Art Center Pensacola
Dec 12 – Lighted Christmas Boat Parade along Gulf Shores and Orange Beach
Dec 12,13,19,20 – Christmas Zoobilee at Gulf Breeze Zoo
Dec 31 – New Years Eve Fireworks Display at Pensacola Beach

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