

KEY NOTES

NEWS FROM
THE PERDIDO KEY ASSOCIATION



January 2021

Welcome 2021!

2020 is going, going, gone and 2021 brings an expectation of better times! New vaccines will save lives and push back the COVID-19 pandemic, allowing us to begin returning to normal life or at least a reasonable new normal. Perdido Key continues to recover from Hurricane Sally but with many homes, rental properties, and commercial establishments still being repaired or reconstructed. Yet our island is resilient and will remain a wonderful place to live and visit. The PKA Board of Directors wishes all a most Happy New Year!

2021 PKA Annual Membership Meeting and Director Selection

A reminder to place the PKA Annual Membership Meeting on your calendars. It 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 or watch remotely on Zoom. You should receive the meeting Agenda, voting proxy, and other relevant documents by the end of January 2021. Additional information will be passed on by e-mail closer to the meeting.

Perdido Key Property Owner Survey on the Way!

The 2020 Perdido Key Property Owner Survey results will be printed and mailed shortly. Be on the lookout for your copy to arrive later in January 2021. And thanks and congratulations on your participation – over three-quarters of PKA members completed and returned the survey form!

Gulf Islands National Seashore Superintendent Dan Brown to Retire

Dan Brown has been Superintendent of Gulf Islands National Seashore since 2010 but will retire effective January 2, 2021. He is a native of Colorado and has had assignments across the United States in his more than 43 years in the National Park

Service. During his term as Superintendent, he combated the Deepwater Horizon oil spill, established ferry service from Pensacola to Pensacola Beach and the National Seashore, and began recovery operations from Hurricane Sally. The Perdido Key Association was privileged to have Superintendent Brown as a featured speaker at its 2017 Annual Membership Meeting. For more on Superintendent Brown, see the December 10, 2020 National Park Service news release “National Seashore Superintendent Dan Brown to Retire After Remarkable Career” at <https://www.nps.gov/guis/learn/news/national-seashore-superintendent-dan-brown-to-retire-after-remarkable-career.htm>.

Superintendent Brown’s retirement will take place just before the 50th anniversary of the founding of Gulf Islands National Seashore on January 8, 1971. For details on the journey toward creation of the Park, see the December 30, 2020 *Pensacola News Journal* article “Land trades, a newspaper editor and an elephant: How Gulf Islands came to be 50 years ago” by Madison Arnold at <https://www.pnj.com/story/news/local/2020/12/29/gulf-islands-national-seashore-celebrating-50th-anniversary/4040896001/>.

Shred Documents and Drop-off Electronics at Gulf State Park

The Coastal Alabama Business Chamber is sponsoring the Annual Coastal Alabama E-Cycle and Shred Day at the Gulf State Park Pavilion on Saturday, January 9, 2021. It is a good opportunity to get rid of personal paperwork that needs shredding and properly dispose of broken or outmoded electronics. The event is free and runs from 8 AM until Noon. Each vehicle is limited to 50 pounds and, to avoid personal contact, you won’t have to leave your vehicle. For more information, go to <https://business.mygulfcoastchamber.com/events/details/coastal-alabama-annual-e-cycling-and-shred-day-46538>.

Jaco’s Coming to Perdido Key Area

The owner of Jaco’s Bayfront Bar & Grill in downtown Pensacola near the Palafox Pier Marina is purchasing the former Triggers Restaurant and Wolf Bay Lounge on Gulf Beach Highway. The new restaurant will “adopt much of the downtown location’s food and drink menu, but plans to add a few more seafood dishes to cater to tourist-friendly Perdido Key.” For more on the issue, see the December 30, 2020 *Pensacola News Journal* article Jaco’s Bayfront Bar & Grill plans to open second location in Perdido Key in 2021” by Jake Newby at <https://www.pnj.com/story/news/2020/12/30/jacos-bayfront-bar-grille-open-new-perdido-key-location-2021/4072763001/>.

First Mini-Grants Awarded in Estuary Program

Nine mini-grants were awarded a total of \$200,000 from the Pensacola and Perdido Bay Estuary Programs, the first to take advantage of \$500,000 in Florida state funds made available “to improve water quality and raise public awareness about the two bays and their watersheds.” For more on the grants, see the December 03, 2020 *Pensacola*

News Journal article “Pensacola and Perdido Bays Estuary Program awards \$200,000 to improve water quality” by Jim Little at <https://www.pnj.com/story/news/2020/12/03/pensacola-and-perdido-bays-estuary-program-awards-200-000-grants/3812071001/>.

Triumph Gulf Coast Grants

The Triumph Gulf Coast board voted in favor of granting \$18 million in new grants for projects in Escambia, Santa Rosa, Bay and Walton counties. Triumph is one of several funds established as a result of penalties from the 2010 Deepwater Horizon oil spill disaster and is focused on economic development and providing new jobs for the region. In Escambia County, Triumph staff will begin negotiations for a possible \$6,078,795 grant to the Institute for Human and Machine Cognition while Santa Rosa County was awarded a grant for infrastructure improvements at Santa Rosa Industrial Park East. For more on this issue, see the December 18, 2020 *Northwest Florida Daily News* article “Triumph Gulf Coast doles out nearly \$18M ahead of holiday season” by Tom McLaughlin at <https://www.nwfdailynews.com/story/news/2020/12/18/triumph-gulf-coast-board-approves-18-million-northwest-florida/3954770001/>.

Starflyer Thrill Ride May Come to Gulf Shores

The Hangout restaurant in Gulf Shores is reportedly planning to apply for a conditional use permit to construct a 213-foot Starflyer swing attraction at the current Hangout location. Starflyer rides include a 450-foot attraction in Orlando. For more on this issue, see the November 18, 2020 *Mullet Wrapper* article “Hangout delays request for 213 ft. Starflyer until at least Jan.” by John Mullen at <https://mulletwrapper.net/hangout-delays-request-for-213-ft-starflyer-until-at-least-jan/>.

Pensacola Beach Development Cap Affirmed

The dwelling cap of 4,128 units for Pensacola Beach was adopted in 1993 and is allocated by subdivisions. A request to increase the number of homes in Santa Rosa Villas was denied in a recent First Circuit Court of Florida decision, though other challenges are expected. For more on the issue, see the December 9, 2020 *Pensacola News Journal* article “Cap that limits Pensacola Beach to 4,128 wins legal challenge; another coming” by Madison Arnold at <https://www.pnj.com/story/news/2020/12/09/cap-pensacola-beach-homes-wins-legal-challenge-another-coming/3862982001/>.

Pensacola Beach Renourishment by 2026

The Santa Rosa Island Authority (SRIA) anticipates Pensacola Beach will need beach renourishment in about 5 years, having most recently been renourished in 2016 at a cost of \$16 million. Beach erosion has continued through normal processes but also recent storms, including September 2020’s Hurricane Sally. \$500,000 is set aside each year by SRIA for renourishment which is anticipated every 10 to 12 years, but additional funding will likely be required for the project. For more on the issue, see the December 11, 2020 *Pensacola News Journal* article “Pensacola Beach will need a \$20 million

renourishment by 2026. SRIA can't do it alone" by Madison Arnold at https://www.pnj.com/story/news/2020/12/11/pensacola-beach-need-20-million-nourishment-2026/3879355001/?itm_medium=recirc&itm_source=taboola&itm_campaign=internal&itm_content=BelowArticleFeed-FeedRedesign.

Sperm Whale in Mobile Bay

A sperm whale was stranded in Mobile Bay but had to be euthanized. According to Dr. Ruth Carmichael of the Dauphin Island Sea Alabama Marine Mammal Stranding Network, "This animal who was suffering and unable to swim and survive any longer in the wild." It was "the first documented case of a stranded sperm whale in Alabama waters." For more on the issue, see December 2-16, 2020 *Mullet Wrapper* article "Sperm whale stranded in Mobile Bay near Montrose" at <https://mulletwrapper.net/sperm-whale-stranded-in-mobile-bay-near-montrose/>.

Florida Panthers "at Risk"

Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission officials announced that at least 20 Florida panthers died in 2020, all but one because of interaction with people and mostly from vehicle collisions. This is a lower count than recent years but probably not good news since it suggests there are fewer panthers left. An estimated 120 to 230 adult panthers may remain in the wild with the species survival threatened largely by development. For more on this issues, see the December 28, 2020 *Association Press* article "Wildlife Officials: 20 Florida Panthers Killed This Year" at <https://apnews.com/article/wildlife-florida-coronavirus-pandemic-environment-st-petersburg-e1eb45baf6ce9ff13b6e9f5f6a32dca5>.

Threats to Seagrass but also Success

Seagrass is "grass" that has migrated from land to the sea over time; it is different from seaweed which is "algae." A healthy bed of seagrass is part of the long chain of life from small creatures clinging to the blades to swarms of small fish providing nutrition for more predatory fish and seabirds, making a classic seaside habitat. Measurements of seagrass health have been ongoing the last few years in the Pensacola area as part of a University of West Florida study. To learn more about seagrass, see the December 2020 *Smithsonian Magazine* article "Prairies of the Sea" by Katherine Harmon Courage at <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/science-nature/seagrass-ocean-secret-weapon-climate-change-180976235/> and the October 13, 2020 University of Virginia *UVA Today* article "Some Good News: Seagrass Restored to Eastern Shore Bays is Flourishing" by Fariss Samarra at https://news.virginia.edu/content/some-good-news-seagrass-restored-eastern-shore-bays-flourishing?utm_source=UVAResearchDigest&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=UVAResearchDigest_12-20.

January Calendar

Jan 01 – Polar Bear events Pensacola Beach, Gulf Shores Public Beach, Flora-Bama
Jan 01-03 – Magic Christmas in Lights at Bellingrath Gardens
Jan 01-18 – Ice Skating at The Wharf
Jan 01-16 – First City Lights Festival in Downtown Pensacola
Jan 02 – Small Dog Night and Pensacola Ice Flyers at Pensacola Bay Center
Jan 02 – Waterboyz Winter Classic Surf Contest at Navarre Beach
Jan 08 – Mardi Gras Kickoff Event at Roger Scott Athletic Complex Pensacola
Jan 08,15,29,30 – Pensacola Ice Flyers at Pensacola Bay Center
Jan 09 – Coastal Alabama E-Cycle and Shred Day at Gulf State Park Pavilion
Jan 14,21,28 – Murder at Mama’s Dinner Theatre at Luna’s in Orange Beach
Jan 28 – Winter Guest Fest in Fort Walton Beach
Jan 30 – Reese’s Senior Bowl at Hancock-Whitney Stadium in Mobile
Jan 30 – OWA Arts & Crafts Festival in Foley
Jan 31 – Big Beach Marathon and Half Marathon in Gulf Shores

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