

# KEY NOTES

NEWS FROM  
THE PERDIDO KEY ASSOCIATION



## March 2021

### PKA Annual Membership Meeting

The 2021 PKA Annual Membership Meeting was held Saturday, February 27, 2021 at the Eden Condominium – the first Perdido Key Association meeting with both in-person and remote Zoom attendance. The featured speaker was Escambia County District 2 Commissioner Doug Underhill who focused on results from the 2020 Perdido Key Property Owner Survey, including development, traffic, wildlife and environment, and governing concerns. He also fielded questions on various member concerns, including beachfront access and erosion issues. PKA president Charles Krupnick followed with updates on the PKA budget, past and current Association initiatives and damage to area beach parks from Hurricane Sally. Approximately 35 people participated in the meeting in-person with a similar number attending online. The Eden staff provided superior support, including COVID-19 precautions and assisting with Zoom preparations and presentation.

### Perdido Key Projects need Public Comment!!

Perdido Key could obtain two large RESTORE grants to improve its beachfront and natural habitat (RESTORE is one of the Deepwater Horizon penalty funds). Please review and consider commenting on the proposed projects prior to **March 29, 2021**, the end of the comment period.

1. The first is designed to protect the environment and wildlife at the Perdido Key Area of Gulf Islands National Seashore and is called “Johnson Beach Access Management and Habitat Protection”; at \$3,200,000, among other changes it will alter parking arrangements from roadside to new parking areas off the beach road.
2. The second is called “Perdido Key Sediment Placement;” at \$6,773,000, it would help fund the Pensacola Pass Inlet Management Plan for placing sand dredged

from Pensacola Pass onto Johnson Beach where the east to west sand movement will help replenish sand eroded from all Perdido Key beaches.

To review the proposals, go to the Florida Trustee Implementation Group's Draft Restoration Plan 2 and Environmental Assessment document. The PDF text has 452 pages; the two Perdido Key proposals are on pages 41 through 44 (2-13 through 2-16 as numbered in the document).

Comments on the proposals can be made online, by mail, or at the public webinar.

Online: <https://parkplanning.nps.gov/FLTIGRP2>

By mail:

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

P.O. Box 29649 Atlanta, GA 30345

A webinar on the plan will be held Thursday, March 11, 2021 at 4:00 PM Central Time. To register, go to <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/4537956480105991181>. After registering, you will receive a confirmation email with instructions for joining the webinar. (Information drawn from Escambia County Media and Community Relations February 23, 2021 message "NRDA Trustee Implementation Group Releases Proposed \$62MF Florida Restoration Plan for Public Comment")

### **What's happening at Perdido Key Beach Parks?**

Perdido Key State Park and Johnson Beach (the Perdido Key Area of Gulf Islands National Seashore) were heavily damaged by Hurricane Sally in September 2020. Demolition of damaged infrastructure at Perdido Key State Park has begun, but significant reconstruction is needed before the park is ready for visitor use. At Gulf Islands National Seashore, the Johnson Beach main parking lot and pavilion area are open to visitors but travel beyond the pavilion area is closed to vehicular traffic until sand is removed from the roadway by Park personnel; pedestrians and cyclist, however, may use the road. National Seashore officials expect to reopen the roadway to vehicles within a few weeks but parking may be restricted because of sand along the shoulders. Permanent repair of the dune crossovers and other damage from Sally will begin in late-summer 2021. Losing access to these large sections of Perdido Key's public beaches is a significant concern going into tourist season.

### **Perdido Precinct Sheriff's Office Reopening**

A good crowd was on hand for the February 6, 2021 reopening of the "Perdido Precinct" substation of the Escambia County Sheriff's Office at 12950 Gulf Beach Highway, with another substation opening in Moleno on February 20, 2021. Sheriff Chip Simmons presided at the ceremony and has stated: "We want to make sure that the people of Perdido and the people of the Molino area have access to a substation in the precinct and a lieutenant who knows their areas..." "We are going to have the same deputies work the same areas on a permanent basis [Lt. Tony Tampary will supervise the Perdido Precinct]..." The Perdido Precinct substation will be a base of operations for deputies but is not expected to be permanently manned. For more on the reopening,

see the February 8, 2021 *Pensacola News Journal* article “ECSO reopens substation in Perdido Key, station in Molino to follow soon” by Colin Warren-Hicks at <https://www.pnj.com/story/news/crime/2021/02/08/ecso-reopens-substation-perdido-key-molino-station-opening-soon/4435112001/>.

### **Regional Roundup March 20 at Bailey Middle School**

Escambia County conducts periodic “Regional Roundups” so residents can conveniently dispose of “electronics, household hazardous waste and up to four tires per vehicle, free of charge.” The next one will be on March 20, 2021 at the Jim C. Bailey Middle School on Bauer Road – a great opportunity for Perdido Key Area residents to properly dispose of these items. For more on the event, go to <https://myescambia.com/county-events/event-details/2021/03/20/default-calendar/regional-roundup>.

### **Solar Windmill coming to Perdido Key**

The Escambia County Board of County Commissioner’s (BOCC) agreed to purchase a unique wind and solar powered bench centerpiece for the expected “Heritage Park” on the east side of the Perdido Key Visitors Center at 1550 Perdido Key Drive. As stated in the February 4, 2021 BOCC meeting agenda:

The EnergiPlant Solar Windmill is an entirely free-standing nano-grid structure that draws on solar and wind energy to produce power capable of charging usb-enabled devices, with seating and space for advertisements and/or other messaging. Installation of the solar windmill will provide a demonstration of alternative energy sources at the Perdido Key Community Center, consistent with the future use of the Community Center as an environmental learning center. The installation will also accommodate cyclists and pedestrians traveling along existing infrastructure and the future Perdido Key Multi-Use Path, providing a rest area and amenity access at the existing Perdido Key Visitor Center. This location also supports pedestrian/cyclist access to Perdido Key State Park.

For more information on the project, go to BOCC meeting Agenda 2021-1524 at <https://civicclerk.blob.core.windows.net/stream/ESCAMBIACOFL/aebf4747-e07d-40da-94b0-d0c88709c210.pdf?sv=2015-12-11&sr=b&sig=aP1yV%2FGnnLcA7QLSo5HYMIY2S3ZR7b5bEowKzZLTWLE%3D&st=2021-02-12T20%3A28%3A16Z&se=2022-02-12T20%3A33%3A16Z&sp=r>; for more on the Solar Windmill including photos, go to the June 02, 2017 University of California San Diego Center for Energy Research (CER) article “New EnergiPlant Wind Turbine Provides Power and Public Space” at <https://cer.ucsd.edu/news-events-articles/2017/news-ESW-wind-turbine-dedication.html>.

### **Proposal for Drilling Ban Extension**

Florida Senators Rick Scott and Marco Rubio have reintroduced the “Florida Shores Protection and Fairness Act” to Congress. “The bill would extend the moratorium on oil and gas drilling in the eastern Gulf of Mexico for 10 years beyond its currently scheduled expiration date of June 30, 2022.” For more on the issue, see the January

22, 2021 *Pensacola News Journal* article “Rubio, Scott renew push to extend Gulf drilling ban” at <https://www.pnj.com/story/news/2021/01/22/rubio-scott-push-extend-oil-and-gas-drilling-ban-gulf-mexico/6680857002/>.

### **Kudos for Pensacola**

Pensacola, the surrounding area, and some of its businesses made a number of “best of” lists in 2020. These included Mr. Pollo Pensacola (9<sup>th</sup> Street) on Yelp’s top 100 restaurants to try, Pensacola Beach as 4<sup>th</sup> on Tripadvisor’s “Top 25 beaches in the United States,” Pensacola as a “top 25 US city to retire to,” Restaurant Iron on OpenTable’s “100 most romantic” list, and Pensacola as 31<sup>st</sup> “Best Small City” in America. For more on local recognition, see the December 29, 2020 *Pensacola News Journal* article “Pensacola love: Here are the national ‘best of lists’ Pensacola cracked in 2020” by Jake Newby <https://www.pnj.com/story/news/2020/12/29/pensacola-love-pensacola-makes-multiple-national-best-of-lists-2020/4061535001/>.

### **Big Lagoon State Park Activities**

With better weather and cleanup efforts after Hurricane Sally well along, Big Lagoon State Park is hosting a number of activities this spring. These include Saturday “Birding Guided Walks” beginning at 8:30 AM and “Yoga & Meditation” beginning at 10 AM. The activities meet at the Boat Ramp area and are free, but require regular park admission or camping. The Escambia Amateur Astronomers Association will host stargazing at sunset, also at the Boat Ramp parking lot, on March 6 and 20, April 3 and 17, May 1 and 15 – with a reminder that May 15 is International Astronomy Day. Please observe COVID-19 protocols for masks and social distancing for all activities.

### **Fishing Anyone?**

Escambia County Sea Grant Rep Rick O’Connor reminds local fishermen that gray trigger fish and spotted seatrout (speckled trout) seasons open on March 1 and that new flounder regulations will be implemented on March 1.

### **Gulf State Park Pier Reopened**

Good news! 725 feet of the Gulf State Park Pier near the Orange Beach/Gulf Shores border has reopened for fishermen and sightseers. A large section near the end of pier octagon has yet to be replaced, but concessions and comfort stations are in operation. Normal pier fees apply with hours of operation are 6 AM until 9 PM; an occupancy limit of 200 is in place as a COVID-19 precaution. For more on the issue, go to the January 29, 2021 Gulf State Park Press Release “Iconic Landmark, Gulf State Park Pier, Ready to Reopen” at <https://www.alapark.com/sites/default/files/2021-01/Press%20Release%20Gulf%20State%20Park%20Pier%20Reopening.V2.pdf>.

### **Beach Mouse Film well Received**

As reported by the Perdido Key Area Chamber of Commerce, the film “Little Beach Mouse from the South” about the Perdido Key beach mouse was named “Best Education” film at the Wildlife Conservation Film Festival in October and was a finalist

for best documentary short at the Central Florida Film Festival. To watch the film go to <https://www.intonaturefilms.org/project/little-beach-mouse-from-the-south/>.

### **Last OLF-8 Virtual Town Hall**

OLF-8 is the 640 acre former Navy Outlying Field 8 adjacent to the Navy Federal Credit Union complex in the Beulah area of western Escambia County purchased by the County in January 2019. After months of proposals from architectural firm DPZ, public forums and surveys, and discussions by the Escambia County Board of County Commissioners a decision on the future of the property may be near. The final scheduled DPZ “Virtual Town Hall” meeting will be held on March 02, 2021 and will focus on the current “Hybrid Plan” for OLF-8. To sign-up for the meeting and opportunity to make your views known, go to <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/olf-8-virtual-town-hall-tickets-142760954859>.

### **Gulf Power Bills after Hurricane Sally?**

Panhandle electric power distribution had major damage from Hurricane Sally inflating costs for Gulf Power, but credits earned from early retirement of coal generation could keep costs down. For more on this issue, see the February 22, 2021 *Pensacola News Journal* article “Gulf Power customers could be impacted by Hurricane Sally costs, Plant Christ closing” by the News Service of Florida at <https://www.pnj.com/story/news/2021/02/22/gulf-power-customers-could-foot-206-million-bill-hurricane-sally-costs/4548251001/>.

### **Sunday Alcohol Sales**

On February 18, 2021, the Escambia County Board of County Commissioners decided to lift the 2:30 AM to 1 PM ban on Sunday alcohol sales though alcohol sales will remain restricted every day from 2:30 AM until 6 AM. For more on the issue, go to the February 18, 2021 *Pensacola News Journal* article “Escambia County Commission votes to end Sunday alcohol sales ban” by Jim Little at <https://www.pnj.com/story/news/2021/02/18/escambia-county-commission-votes-end-sunday-alcohol-sales-ban/4489011001/>.

### **10 Digit Dialing on the way**

The 850 area code is running out of available numbers so at some point in the near future, additional lines may be assigned a 448 area code. Once this begins, users will need to begin local calls with the 850 or 448 area codes. For more on this issue, see the February 19, 2021 *Tallahassee Democrat* article “Mandatory 10-digit dialing in Florida’s 850 area code postponed to May” at <https://www.tallahassee.com/story/news/2021/02/19/mandatory-10-digit-dialing-north-florida-850-area-code-begins-may-phone-calls-448-overlay/4501433001/>.

### **March Calendar**

Mar 01-31 – Spring Bird Migration Dauphin Island

Mar 01-31 – Warrior Challenge walk/run for American Autism & Rehabilitation Center

Mar 02 – OLF-8 Virtual Town Hall

Mar 02-31 – Azalea Bloom Out at Bellingrath Gardens and Home  
Mar 05-08 – Sun Belt Men’s/Women’s Basketball Tournament Pensacola Bay Center  
Mar 07 – Mac & Cheese Festival in Niceville  
Mar 11 – Webinar on Perdido Key RESTORE project proposals  
Mar 13 – Perdido Key Litter Rodeo, meet at north end of Theo Baars Bridge  
Mar 13 – Foley BBQ & Blues Cook-Off  
Mar 13-14 – Orange Beach Festival of Art at the Coastal Arts Center  
Mar 13,14,26,27 – Pensacola Ice Flyers at Pensacola Bay Center  
Mar 14 – Save Underdogs Perdido Plant Sale at Perdido Key Sports Bar  
Mar 20 – Regional Roundup at Jim C. Bailey Middle School on Bauer Road  
Mar 20 – Flora-Bama Half-Marathon & 5K for American Warriors  
Mar 27,29,30,31 – Spring Fling at OWA

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