

KEY NOTES

NEWS FROM
THE PERDIDO KEY ASSOCIATION



September 2021

IDA and the 2021 Hurricane Season

Named storms Claudette, Fred, Henri and most recently Ida have already struck the United States in 2021, but fortunately not greatly affecting Perdido Key though other parts of Escambia County have been threatened with dangerous flooding. Our profound concern goes to those in Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama and elsewhere who were hit very hard by Hurricane Ida. With tremendous property damage and more than a million homes without power in the Southern summer, the next few weeks will be extremely difficult for many.

FYI, Escambia County hurricane preparation guidance is available at <https://myescambia.com/stormcenter#:~:text=Hurricane%20Preparedness%20Week%20is%20May,is%20June%201%20through%20Nov.> With hurricane season with us until November 30, Escambia County Emergency Manager Eric Gilmore offers the following advice:

Last year we learned firsthand with Hurricane Sally that hurricanes change course quickly and without much warning. It is extremely important to plan ahead now: know your evacuation zone, know your home and know your plan. COVID-19 is still around so we really want to stress that residents have a plan rather than go to a shelter. The county will provide shelters and will do everything possible to sanitize them, but we know that the likelihood of COVID-19 spreading increases when people are in close living conditions. A shelter should be a last resort. Please get your home ready now if it is rated for hurricane strength activity or reach out to family and friends now to develop a plan to stay somewhere safe if you need to evacuate."

International Coastal Cleanup at Perdido Key State Park

Help celebrate International Coastal Cleanup and keep Perdido Key beaches beautiful! Join the Perdido Key Association, Friends of Pensacola State Parks and Florida State

Park Rangers for a beach cleanup at the Perdido Key State Park West Use Area on Saturday, September 18, 2021 from 8 AM until Noon. Gloves, trash bags, and water for the cleanup will be provided. The event flyer is available on the PKA website.

Gulf Coast COVID-19 Hot Spot

Public media has highlighted the recent upsurge in COVID-19 cases along the Panhandle portion of the Gulf coast. For commentary on the pandemic and local tourist season, go to the August 19, 2021 *Associated Press* article “Gulf Coast's Beloved 'Redneck Riviera' Now a Virus Hotspot” by Jan Reeves at <https://www.usnews.com/news/health-news/articles/2021-08-19/gulf-coasts-beloved-redneck-riviera-now-a-virus-hotspot>.

Transportation Engineer Brief

At the August 6 Perdido Key Area Chamber of Commerce “Breakfast Brief” at Hub Stacey’s, Escambia County Transportation Engineer Christine Fanci provided updates on several road projects in the Perdido Key Area. She noted construction at the Sorrento Road/ Gulf Beach Highway intersection (near Publix) will continue into next year and that construction will begin soon at the Perdido Key Drive/ Canal Road intersection just south of the closed Circle K gas station; access to the intersection will be reduce to one lane while construction is in progress. She also discussed plans for the Perdido Key Drive/ Johnson Beach Road roundabout, a possible crosswalk near the Sea Spray and Eden Condominiums, Perdido Key Multi-Use Path access issues and speed limits on Perdido Key Drive.

River Road Bridge Repaired

Hurricane Sally lifted the wooden bridge on the River Road pedestrian/ bicycle path six to eight inches above its proper resting place, making it impassable for cyclists and handicap mobility devices. Located about a half mile from Perdido Key Drive, the bridge was recently repaired by the Escambia County Parks and Recreation Department.

Beach Access Changes in Orange Beach

Orange Beach has moved forward with several initiatives affecting public beach access. In partnership with two co-owners of the Flora-Bama, the city is purchasing over eight acres of beachfront across Perdido Beach Blvd from The Shoppes at Palm Point (where Publix is located) for \$13 million. The site had been previously slated for two 30-plus story condominiums but will now have public beach access, green space, and a restaurant/bar complex. Since beach access parking in Orange Beach is now pay-to-park, the city is creating a system of permits to allow residents to use the parking areas at no charge. For more on these issues, see the June 26, 2021 *Mobile Real-Time News* article “Orange Beach buys land for new public beach access, restaurant, bar, green space” by Dennis Pillion at <https://www.al.com/news/mobile/2021/06/orange-beach-buys-land-for-new-public-beach-access-restaurant-bar-green-space.html> and the April 20, 2021 *OBA Community Website* article “Parking passes approved for Orange

Beach residents at state park accesses in city” by John Mullen at <https://www.obawebsite.com/parking-passes-approved-for-orange-beach-residents-at-state-park-accesses-in-the-city>.

Florida State Park Junior Ranger Program

“The Florida State Parks Junior Ranger program enables young people to learn, serve, and share Florida’s natural and cultural resources.” Those interested can contact local State Park Rangers for more information. Events such as a recent Junior Ranger Jamboree at Maclay Gardens State Park in Tallahassee provide opportunities to become a Junior Ranger, meet local recreational and environmental organizations and participate in a variety of fun activities.

Underground Utilities for Gulf Breeze

Gulf Breeze plans to underground its power lines using \$9.7 million of a \$12 million Regions Bank loan. The city will use the rest of the loan along with \$6 million of general reserve funds for construction of US 98 overpasses and the West the Basin Stormwater Project. The loans will be paid for by ad valorem taxes assigned to the city’s Community Redevelopment Agency. For more on the issue, see the August 2, 2021 *Pensacola News Journal* article “Gulf Breeze will spend \$18 million to put power lines underground, build overpass” by Annie Blanks at <https://www.pnj.com/story/news/2021/07/02/gulf-breeze-spend-18-million-bury-power-lines-build-overpasses/7823707002/>.

OLF-8 Plans Sent to the State for Approval

At its August 5, 2021 meeting, the Escambia County Board of County Commissioners agreed 5 to 0 on a “Land Use Plan” to develop OLF-8. The plan now goes to the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity as the next step in the process of developing the Beulah land adjacent to the Navy Federal Credit Union campus. The agreement marked an apparent compromise in the division of land among residential, retail and commercial uses. For more on the decision, go to the August 6, 2021 *Pensacola News Journal* article “‘This is a compromise’: OLF-8 design heads to state for land use approval” by Emma Kennedy at <https://www.pnj.com/story/news/local/escambia-county/2021/08/06/beulah-olf-8-plans-go-state-land-use-approval/5502170001/>.

Watch Your Step!

Late summer is when some newborn snakes are most likely to make an appearance and indeed a baby copperhead was recently sighted along the River Road bicycle path. The encounter is a good reminder to be careful when walking in or near Perdido Key’s marshy areas.

A Terrible Year for Manatees

At least 890 manatees have perished this year due primarily to starvation – more than double the five year average of 396. Poor water quality from stormwater runoff leading to algae blooms and loss of sea grass may be responsible, while injuries can also come from boat strikes. Authorities are worried the coming winter season will lead to another horrific die-off of these remarkable creatures. Several measures are in progress or

being studied to reduce deaths, but remediation is complicated by factors such as the care needed by the large number of manatee calves surviving after their mothers died. For more on the issue, see the August 6, 2021 *Florida Today* article “Wildlife experts: Winter could be even more deadly for an already starving manatee population” by Jim Waymer and Chad Gillis at

<https://www.floridatoday.com/story/news/local/environment/lagoon/2021/08/06/starving-florida-manatees-face-repeat-winter-collapse/5497037001/>.

Community outreach volunteers have been spreading the word “Go Slow Where Seagrasses Grow Manatees Below” at the Big Lagoon State Park boat launch to ensure boaters and jet ski users are aware of the increased number of manatees in our area. The volunteers have been handing out brochures and items such as polarized manatee logo sunglasses and floatable key chains to boat owners and manatee magnets to jet ski users. For information on reporting manatee sightings and becoming a volunteer to help their survival, go to <https://www.ppbec.org/get-involved/panhandlemanatees>.

Perdido Key Beach Issues 2021

Perdido Key Association president Charles Krupnick has drafted a paper discussing current and future Perdido Key beach parking and access issues. The paper is posted on the Archive page of the PKA website at www.perdidokeyassociation.org – comments are welcome.

September Calendar

Sept 03 – Perdido Key Chamber Breakfast Brief with Sheriff Simmons at Hub Stacey’s

Sept 03-05 – Wildcat Ultramarathon beginning at 7750 Mobile Hwy

Sept 04-05 – Labor Day Concert Celebration in Destin

Sept 04 – Labor Day Car Show and fireworks at OWA

Sept 04 – Gulf Coast Summer Fest-Jazz Edition at Community Maritime Park

Sept 06 – Light Up Labor Day at The Wharf

Sept 06 – Bayou Hills Run 5K and 10K at Bayview Park

Sept 07-12 – Blue Wahoos at Blue Wahoo Stadium

Sept 09-11 – Flora-Bama Bulls on the Beach

Sept 11 – Regional Roundup for hazardous waste at Washington High School

Sept 18 – Coastal Cleanup at Perdido Key State Park West Use Area

Sept 18 – Vette’s on the Beach in Pensacola Beach

Sept 18-19,25-26 – Horse Shows at Escambia County Equestrian Center

Sept 24-26 – Pensacola Seafood Festival downtown Pensacola

Sept 30 – Little River Band at the Saenger Theatre in Pensacola

Blue Angels practice at NAS Pensacola Sept 08,14,15,21

Bands on the Beach every Tuesday evening at Gulfside Pavilion, 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](#)