



September 2022

September 17 Coastal Cleanup at Perdido Key State Park!

The Perdido Key Association and Florida State Parks are sponsoring a beach cleanup on Saturday, September 17, 2022 from 8 AM to Noon at the West Use Area of Perdido Key State Park as part of International Coastal Cleanup Day. Commemorative t-shirts will be provided to the first 50 participants. Drinking water will be available but please bring your own containers – this year’s event will be “plastic free.”

Forms will be available to record type and quantity of litter collected but instead consider downloading the free “Clean Swell” app on your phones from “The App Store” or “Google Play.” The app allows you to record trash removal information “as you go” and be entered into a worldwide database of volunteer cleanup efforts. For more information on Clean Swell, go to <https://oceanconservancy.org/trash-free-seas/international-coastal-cleanup/cleanswell/>.

International Coastal Cleanup Day began in Texas more than 35 years ago when Linda Maraniss and Kathy O’Hara gained support from government, businesses, and local citizens for Ocean Conservancy’s first cleanup. The event now spans over 150 countries with thousands of volunteers. For more on International Coastal Cleanup Day, go to <https://oceanconservancy.org/trash-free-seas/international-coastal-cleanup/>.

Infrastructure Updates

Sorrento Road – At its August 8, 2022 meeting the Florida-Alabama Transportation Planning Organization (TPO) raised the priority for widening Sorrento Road from 19 to 8, meaning it “will be eligible to receive state funding more quickly from FDOT in the next budget cycle.” District 1 Commissioner Jeff Bergosh told TPO members “the Sorrento project is a critical public safety issue.” Mike Kohler who will replace Doug Underhill as District 2 Commissioner has stated he would prioritize the expansion of Gulf Beach Highway and Sorrento Road. Work is continuing to resurface Sorrento Road south of the Bauer Road intersection. For more on the issue, see the August 10, 2022 13, 2022 *Pensacola News Journal* article “Sorrento Road widening now a top priority; Milton U.S. 90 widening stays the course” by Jim Little at

<https://www.pnj.com/story/news/local/santa-rosa/2022/08/10/sorrento-road-widening-moves-up-tpo-state-road-project-priority-list/10285418002> and the August 23, 2022 *Pensacola News Journal* article “Mike Kohler takes Escambia County District 2 Commission seat with Primary Win” by Benjamin Johnson at <https://www.pnj.com/story/news/politics/elections/2022/08/23/mike-kohler-wins-escambia-county-commission-district-2-seat-primary-election-doug-underhill-seat/10349149002/>.

Perdido Key Drive/Johnson Beach Road Roundabout – The Escambia County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) committed \$1.35 million to construct the Perdido Key Drive/Johnson Beach Road roundabout. Construction will begin in early-September 2022.

Perdido Key Multi-Use Path – At its August 4, 2022 BOCC meeting, the BOCC approved an easement at the Johnson Beach Road/Perdido Key Drive intersection needed to connect the Johnson Beach Road path to a road crossover to join the Perdido Key Multi-Use Path. The easement was required because of the roundabout to be constructed at the intersection. Design and engineering for the Path from the west end of Perdido Key State Park to the Theo Baars Bridge is completed and \$4.5 million of RESTORE funding has been received to complete the project. Construction will begin in November 2022.

Innerarity Development

Information has not been found on plans Escambia County may have to improve the Perdido Key Drive/Canal Rd intersection at the north end of the Theo Baars Bridge. Change may be needed to accommodate traffic increase from construction of the large apartment complex taking shape nearby. For more on the development, go to the August 24, 2022 *Mullet Wrapper* article “325 dwellings approved for Innerarity Point” at <https://mulletwrapper.net/325-dwellings-approved-for-innerarity-point/>.

Perdido Key State Park – Reconstruction of the Park’s East and West Use Areas from Hurricane Sally damage is unlikely before 2023 in part because of delays related to excessive sand accretion at dune crossover locations. Until then, emergency repairs allow access to the West Use Area and Sharps Reef beach access locations.

Big Lagoon State Park – The main road on Big Lagoon State Park has been repaved removing the many potholes of recent experience, though additional work is required to complete the project. The governor’s pavilion, amphitheater and other areas beyond the boat ramp remain closed pending repairs from Hurricane Sally with construction hopefully to begin within a few months. Volunteers are helping repaint picnic pavilions in the boat launch area.

Local Water Quality

For current information on water quality in local bays and estuaries such as Big Lagoon and Lower Perdido Bay, see Rick O’Connor’s article “Come on in...the Waters is Fine! Well...It’s Better” available at <https://blogs.ifas.ufl.edu/escambiaco/2022/08/17/come-on-in-the-water-is-fine-well-its-better/>. For much more information on local waterways, see the draft “Comprehensive Conservation & Management Plan” of the Pensacola and Perdido Bays Estuary Program at <https://www.ppbeop.org/the-plan/ccmp>.

Hammerhead Shark off Orange Beach

A large hammerhead shark hunting stingrays near the shore in Orange Beach was recently video recorded by a tourist from Texas. For more information, go to the August 24, 2022 *Mullet Wrapper* article “Hammerhead shark swims near shore in Orange Beach” at <https://mulletwrapper.net/hammerhead-shark-swims-near-shore-in-orange-beach/>.

Whale Shark Day

August 30 was International Whale Shark Day. Whale sharks are the world’s largest fish and sometimes visit our area. As filter feeders they harvest plankton, fish eggs and small marine creatures but unfortunately can also ingest plastic particles, just another reason to help prevent plastics and other pollutants from contaminating our wonderful oceans. Drawn from an August 29, 2022 *Ocean Conservancy* e-mail by Nick Mallos.

Walking the Beach

For the first time in a good while, a threatened Wilson Plover successfully nested at Perdido Key State Park. Several sea turtle nests were also identified but one showed signs of human tampering. Escambia County had its first successful sea turtle hatching on August 8, but many were lost from artificial light disorientation. Sea Grant representative Rick O’Connor wrote of a walk he recently took with his grandson in a Panhandle beach area. His observations on plant and wildlife help us better appreciate our natural habitat. Find his *UF/IFAS* August 2, 2022 article “Wildlife on Our Barrier Islands in August” at <https://nwdistrict.ifas.ufl.edu/nat/2022/08/04/wildlife-on-our-barrier-islands-in-august/>. For turtle hatches, see the August 9, 2022 *The Pulse Pensacola* article “Perdido Key Celebrates First Sea Turtle Hatches Of The Season” at <https://thepulsepensacola.com/2022/08/perdido-key-celebrates-first-sea-turtle-hatch-of-the-season/>.

September Calendar

Sep 02 – Kites on the Beach at Pensacola Beach
Sep 03 – Gulf Coast Summer Fest downtown Pensacola
Sep 03-04 – Labor Day Concert Celebration at 10 Harbor Blvd in Destin
Sep 05 – Labor Day
Sep 04 – Wildcat Ultra-Marathon at 7750 Mobile Hwy
Sep 08-10 – Flora-Bama’s Bulls on the Beach
Sep 10 – Gulf Coast Stampede Cross Country Race
Sep 13-18 – Pensacola Blue Wahoos at Blue Wahoo Stadium
Sep 16-18 – Pensacola Hunter Jumper Association horse show at 7750 Mobile Hwy
Sep 17 – Vettes on the Beach Car Show at Pensacola Beach
Sep 17 – International Coastal Cleanup Day Perdido Key State Park West Use Area
Sep 17 – Choctawhatchee Bay Family FUN-FEST in Ft Walton Beach
Sep 17-18 – Massacre Island reenactment and treasure hunts on Dauphin Island
Sep 23-25 – Pensacola Seafood Festival at Seville Square downtown Pensacola
Sep 24-25 – NW Florida Quarter Horse Association horse show at 7750 Mobile Hwy
Sep 24 – Steps for Autism at Pensacola State College
Sep 28-30 – Alabama Coastal BirdFest in Spanish Fort

Blue Angels practice at NAS Pensacola September 07,13,14, and 20
Bands on the Beach at Pensacola Beach every Tuesday, 7-9 PM from April to October

The following websites provide additional information about events 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