

KEY NOTES

NEWS FROM
THE PERDIDO KEY ASSOCIATION



January 2024

Have a Wonderful New Year!

The PKA Board of Directors wishes you and yours the very best of New Years! 2023 was an interesting year for Perdido Key and we look forward to 2024 being an outstanding one.

Become a PKA Director Candidate!

There is still time to become a PKA Director candidate. All PKA members are eligible even if part-time Perdido Key residents since our meetings are held in-person and by teleconference. If interested, please contact Charles Krupnick (charles.krupnick@gmail.com) or any other PKA Director by January 12, 2024. Being a Director is a great opportunity to help make a difference in the future of our beautiful island.

Perdido Key State Park East Area Reopened!

Access has been restored to the Perdido Key State Park East Area following completion of repairs after damage from Hurricane Sally in September 2020. The access across from the Perdido Key Visitors Center has also been reopened for public use. The previously open Perdido Key State Park West Area, however, is now closed for repairs.

Construction at the National Seashore

The Perdido Key Area of Gulf Islands National Seashore (Johnson Beach) is undergoing major renovation following damage from 2020's Hurricane Sally. Construction began in September 2023 and should be completed by March 2024. It includes replacement of the current boardwalks with seven dune crossover boardwalks; a new multi-use path; three new parking areas with 110 spaces replacing roadside parking on Johnson Beach Road; and, installation of erosion control measures and beach safety signs. The \$2.6 million project is funded under the Gulf Restoration (RESTORE) program associated with the Deepwater Horizon oil spill settlement in partnership with the Florida Trustee Implementation Group (TIG). Residents, visitors, and frequent patrons are requested to observed posted restrictions and remain clear of Johnson Beach Road during construction. For additional information, go to [Perdido Key Area visitor use improvement project to begin early September - Gulf Islands National Seashore \(U.S. National Park Service\) \(nps.gov\)](#).

Sand for Perdido Key

Sand dredged from Pensacola Pass is being distributed on the Perdido Key Area of Gulf Islands National Seashore (Johnson Beach) rather than dumped at sea following agreement between the National Park Service and Army Corps of Engineers. The beaches on the Perdido Key portion of the National Seashore are considered “eroded” while those on the populated area of Perdido Key immediately west of the National Seashore are considered “critically eroded.” Sand placed on the National Seashore should benefit both areas because of the generally westward movement of beach sand along our portion of the Northwest Gulf Coast. This effort precedes the hoped-for Pensacola Pass Inlet Management Plan for similar action that is moving through the State of Florida approval system.

Griffin on Perdido Incorporation

Ann Griffin, a former president of the Perdido Key Association and associate of the “We Are Perdido” organization working toward incorporation the Perdido Key area, wrote a substantial piece on the incorporation issue published on December 17, 2023 by the *Pensacola News Journal*. Titled “Why this effort to incorporate Perdido? To save it,” it follows the decision by local area Florida Representative Alex Andrade not to support putting the Perdido incorporation issue on the November 2024 ballot. The piece can be accessed at https://www.pnj.com/story/opinion/contributors/2023/12/17/why-this-effort-to-incorporate-perdido-to-save-it-guestview/71906710007/?utm_source=ppe-DailyBriefing&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=daily-briefing&utm_term=Content%20List%20-%20Stacking%20-%20optimized&utm_content=1063NJ-E-NLETTER65.

River Road Bench Repairs

A Perdido Key thanks to Escambia County’s Parks and Recreation personnel for repairs recently completed to park benches along the pedestrian/bicycle path on River Road. The repaired benches look great and are a welcome resource for area residents and visitors.

More on County Redistricting Communication

Responding to “several concerns and allegations that there was improper communication,” Florida State Attorney Ginger Bowden Madden announced her office was “conducting a review of communications between Escambia County Commissioners,” apparently regarding the 2020 County redistricting that resulted in Perdido Key and Innerarity shifting from District 2 to District 1. For more on this issue, see the December 11, 2023 *Pensacola News Journal* article “State Attorney reviewing Escambia commissioners’ texts for possible Sunshine Law violation” by Jim Little at <https://www.pnj.com/story/news/local/escambia-county/2023/12/11/state-attorney-reviewing-escambia-county-for-possible-sunshine-breach-over-jeff-bergosh-texts/71882404007/>.

E-Cycle and Shred at Gulf State Park on January 13

The Coastal Alabama Business Chamber is sponsoring its “Annual E-Cycling & Shred Day” at Alabama’s Gulf State Park Beach Pavilion from 8 AM until Noon on January 13, 2024. You can “safely dispose of your personal documents or electronic items” without leaving your vehicle. According the event announcement: “Each vehicle is limited to 50 pounds of shred items.

Small paper clips do not need to be removed, please do not tape or tie bags or boxes. No batteries, please.”

Pensacola Beach Fishing Pier Closure

The Casino Beach Fishing Pier on Pensacola Beach is closed, probably until March 2024, to repair damage from Hurricane Sally. Repairs will include lighting, entrance gate, and deck panels; construction costs are expected to exceed \$4 million. For more on the issue, see the November 30, 2023 *Pensacola News Journal* article “Casino Beach Fishing Pier closing for repairs through May” at <https://www.pnj.com/story/news/local/2023/11/30/casino-beach-fishing-pier-on-pensacola-beach-closing-for-repairs/71758460007/#:~:text=The%20Casino%20Beach%20Fishing%20Pier,for%20the%20duration%20of%20construction.>

Wildlife Corridor

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) is working toward creating a “Florida Wildlife Corridor that will help animals like the endangered Florida panther disperse and spread back into lands it once occupied.” The corridor could contain 18 million acres where nearly 700 imperiled species would benefit. For more on this issue, see the November 27, 2023 *Ft. Myers News-Press* article “State looks to secure 18 million acres of Florida for wildlife, conservation” by Chad Gillis at [https://www.news-press.com/story/news/environment/2023/11/27/what-is-the-florida-wildlife-corridor-state-will-take-up-issue-dec-5/71654637007/.](https://www.news-press.com/story/news/environment/2023/11/27/what-is-the-florida-wildlife-corridor-state-will-take-up-issue-dec-5/71654637007/)

Water Quality

Escambia County Sea Grant Representative Rick O’Connor’s 2023 report on area water quality seems generally positive. For example, excessive bacteria in Bayou Chico have often been reported in over 50% of samplings in the past, but in 2023 the number of advisories never exceeded 30% for any of the area locations sampled. Also significant was no algae blooms or fish kills in the Pensacola Bay area in 2023. For more on the report, go to *The Panhandle Outdoors* paper “The 2023 Year in Review – Water Quality” by Rick O’Connor at [https://nwdistrict.ifas.ufl.edu/nat/2023/12/01/the-2023-year-in-review-water-quality/#:~:text=However%2C%20in%202023%20\(in%20the,since%20I%20began%20monitoring%20them.](https://nwdistrict.ifas.ufl.edu/nat/2023/12/01/the-2023-year-in-review-water-quality/#:~:text=However%2C%20in%202023%20(in%20the,since%20I%20began%20monitoring%20them.)

What Kind of Cottonmouths are on Perdido Key?

Who knew there may be three types of cottonmouth snakes: the western, eastern, and Florida subspecies? All enjoy fresh water but the Florida cottonmouth may be more adapted to salt water. Researchers are planning a 2024 project to determine if “Florida cottonmouths” are common to our area. While difficult to tell apart, the Florida cottonmouth has “two distinct stripes running vertically” on its snout and the eastern and western subspecies do not. Obviously, do not try to check a live one or even one that seems dead – these are very dangerous animals – and if interested further in the project please read the *UF/IFAS Blog* article “Cottonmouths on our Barrier Islands” by Rick O’Connor at [https://blogs.ifas.ufl.edu/escambiaco/2023/12/07/cottonmouths-of-our-barrier-islands/.](https://blogs.ifas.ufl.edu/escambiaco/2023/12/07/cottonmouths-of-our-barrier-islands/)

January 2024 Calendar

Jan 01 – Polar Bear Dips and Plunges at Flora-Bama, The Hangout, and Pensacola Beach
Jan 01,4-16 – Ice Skating at The Wharf
Jan 01-16 – First City Lights Festival downtown Pensacola
Jan 04,12,13,19,20 – Pensacola Ice Flyers at Pensacola Bay Center downtown Pensacola
Jan 06 – Pensacola Mardi Gras Kickoff downtown Pensacola
Jan 07 – Coastal Weddings Expo downtown Pensacola
Jan 10 – Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs Ballet at the Pensacola Saenger Theatre
Jan 11,25 – Snowbird Hootenanny at Flora-Bama
Jan 13 – E-Cycling and Shred Day at Alabama State Park Pavilion, 8AM-Noon
Jan 13-14 – Gold Coast Coin and Currency Show in Foley
Jan 15 – Gulf Islands National Seashore Free Fee Day
Jan 16 – Perdido Key Chamber Annual Meeting and Awards at Grand Lagoon Yacht Club
Jan 18 – Lost Key Lighted Market at Villagio shopping area on Perdido Key
Jan 20 – Cordova Mall Ball in Pensacola
Jan 26 – Begin Mobile Mardi Gras festivities
Jan 27 – Winter Bird Walk at Ft. Pickens on Pensacola Beach
Jan 27 – OWA Arts & Crafts Festival
Jan 28 – Big Beach Marathon & Half Marathon at The Hangout in Gulf Shores

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