

# Coastal Recovery Update

MAY 21, 2010

A WEEKLY UPDATE FROM YOUR FRIENDS ON PERDIDO KEY

PERDIDO BAY UMC • PERDIDO KEY ASSOCIATION • PERDIDO KEY CHAMBER • PERDIDO KEY RESIDENTS' FORUM

## Positive lessons being learned by pulling agencies together

By Dan Head, PK Residents' Forum

When the oil spill in the Gulf began on April 20, the civic groups on Perdido Key (Perdido Key Chamber of Commerce, Perdido Key Association, and the Perdido Resident's Forum) were going about their individual businesses of developing commerce, ensuring that development on the island was consistent with the desired quality of life, and representing absentee property owner's interests with local government.

The potential of oil contamination from the spill on our beautiful beaches and

damage to our delicate inland waterways galvanized these diverse groups and brought focus directly to our community as a whole. A coalition was formed with the three groups above and also including the Perdido Bay United Methodist Church. Joint meetings were held to discuss strategies and how best to bring a

*(Continued on Page 2)*



Meetings with local agencies and BP are scheduled each Thursday at 5:30 p.m. at the PB Community Center. The public is invited.

## Perdido Key Chamber asks State and BP for marketing money

By Fred Garth, President PKCOC

The past few weeks have been intense at the Chamber of Commerce and Visitor's Information Center. News media and politicians have descended like sea gulls on a bag of old French fries. Lawyers are circling and waiting to pounce.

What was shaping up to be a summer of banner tourism has degenerated into a kind of hysteria and depression. Not to mention the heartbreaking irony that visitors are cancelling their vacations even though no oil has come ashore here and no significant oil may ever arrive.

From a local business perspective, the forecast is fair to gloomy. However, if we're spared from environmental catastrophe, we should all celebrate our good fortune. Sure, we'll have to weather the financial hit but at least we won't have to recover from a disfigured ecosystem.

To try and mitigate the economic impact, the PK Chamber has asked BP and the state of Florida for \$500,000 to market Perdido Key specifically. We are imploring every politician we know to demand immediate money. We have created a massive

*(Continued on Page 2)*

## Watching the wind and the weather

By Annie Griffin, PKA

How many times have you heard "Go with the flow?" I guess we have to. A few weeks into the BP Horizon disaster we now understand that whether the oil reaches the Florida coast depends on the weather and ocean currents. Invisible things that visibly affect lives. The damage being done to the marshlands in Louisiana is tragic. We do not yet know the long term effects of all of the submerged oil out in the Gulf. It won't be good. We are watching...

I keep hearing media reports of the significance of the "Loop Current" and that it may sweep the spill around to the Atlantic Ocean. In an effort to better understand the big picture and the current's relationship to the Key, I did some research and came up with the following facts:

*(Continued on Page 2)*

### **Watching the wind and weather. . . continued**

The Gulf of Mexico covers a surface area of 579,153 sq. miles, and is measured 994 miles west to east, and 559 miles north to south. It plunges to an (estimated) maximum depth of over 13,123 ft. in a portion in the southwestern Gulf.

Sea water from the Caribbean enters the Gulf through the Yucatan Strait; it then circulates (rather quickly) in a clockwise loop current before exiting the gulf through the Florida

Straits into the Atlantic Ocean, forming the Gulf Stream, one of the most powerful water currents on the planet.

Twenty major fresh-water river systems drain into the Gulf, and almost 65% of all river volume flows into this massive body of water through the Mississippi River Delta, approximately 160 miles west of Perdido Key. In a nutshell, if the weather cooperates, a lot of water and strong current may continue sweeping the

nasty stuff away from the Perdido Key area.

Mike Sole, Secretary of the FL Dept. of Environmental Protection recently stated there is a good chance the state coastlines will dodge the worst of the Gulf oil spill and may only sustain minor damage. We sure hope he is right.

**Note of interest:**

*The May Coastal Living magazine called Perdido Key State Park one of the Top 31 Beach Vacation spots in the US for swimming.*

### **Positive lessons. . . continued**

message to local politicians and oil company officials that Perdido Key must be adequately protected from the potential disaster and compensated for any damage or loss. It was decided that the coalition must present a much needed, unified voice to the officials and continue the focused pressure throughout our exposure to the threat.

These joint meetings have been extremely beneficial in bringing these groups closer together, allowing us to gain insight into issues affecting others and to recognize that the best interest of Perdido Key is what all of us desire. It is safe to say, the unified voice has been heard and I am encouraged that lessons learned will prevail. As we move forward, and address future issues, we will all work closely together to ensure this wonderful island maintains its pristine integrity.

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### **Perdido Key Chamber asks for funds. . . continued**

marketing plan and are ready to launch it, when and if we get funding. But we're not holding our breaths. We are firing off multiple e-mail blasts daily. We shoot a new video of our beautiful beach every day and upload it to our web site ([www.visitperdido.com](http://www.visitperdido.com)). We have teamed with more than a dozen other chambers along the coast from Mississippi to Panama City to get the message out. Our staff is working practically non-stop and I'm very proud of their tireless efforts. As with many of our local business people, the chamber staff is stressed to the max but forging ahead with every resource we can muster.

Let's hope and pray that our beaches stay pristine. If so, perhaps our collective efforts will pay off and, as in the *Field of Dreams*, they will come.

#### **YOUR COMMENTS**

*Coastal Recovery Update* is published each Friday. Please send your comments or questions regarding articles to: [CoastalRecoveryUpdate@gmail.com](mailto:CoastalRecoveryUpdate@gmail.com)

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