



**Friends of Perdido Bay**

38 S. Blue Angel Parkway  
PMB 350  
Pensacola, FL 32506  
850-377-4264

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

**Tidings** The Newsletter of the Friends of Perdido Bay

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**[www.friendsofperdidobay.com](http://www.friendsofperdidobay.com)**

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**Thank you again**

You, our members are the ones keeping us in operation. We are not a government sponsored operation. This is good. If we were sponsored by our government, we probably would have lost our funding years ago. I realize now our government is supporting and hiding the pollution from the papermill. It seems like any old polluting industry is protected by our government. This is a huge mistake because the environment of Perdido Bay supports much more than just a few local fishermen, but a huge commercial shrimping industry. That is – it used to. No more; the commercial shrimp industry has been killed off by discharges from a papermill. Thank you for your persistence and support.

**AI – Hiding the Truth**

You have been hearing about how important the future is going to be with AI. It is going to be the new salvation of our country. For the past several years, I have been asking Goggle questions. Goggle uses AI to answer these questions. So I thought I would put AI to the test. I would ask Goggle questions which I knew the answer to. How would Goggle answer these questions. Could we use AI to clean-up Perdido Bay?

The first question I asked Goggle was: Does International Paper have an operating permit for Perdido Bay. Goggle's answer – Yes, *International Paper*

*has a permit with a Consent Order which was issued in 2010. This answer was partially correct. However, Goggle did not tell me that environmental agencies only issue permits for five years and since it is now 2026, you would have expected that permit issued in 2010 to have expired in 2015. The official word from the environmental agencies is that the 2010 permit has been administratively continued. The Consent Order issued in 2010 expired in 2019. That 2010 Consent Order required IP to be **completely in compliance** with all Florida environmental rules by 2019. Of course, IP was not. So a new Consent Order was issued in 2020 which required IP to correct their problems with a toxic effluent. IP had reported a toxic effluent 19 times between 2017 and 2017 and 2020. Supposedly IP has corrected the problem. IP has said that the problem with toxicity was caused by IP using the partially reclaimed water from ECUA and other things. Do you believe that? EPA and DEP did. Just how they have corrected this problem is unknown, but IP is no longer reporting a toxic effluent. IP did submit a report to DEP. IP was also supposed to pay a fine of \$191,000 to DEP. This 2020 Consent Order was supposed to expired in 2022 but there were no requirements that IP attain compliance with state standards. The 2020 Consent Order gave IP less stringent conditions which they had to meet. Folks, it is apparent that our environmental agencies are not going to hold IP accountable for the damages which they are causing.*

The second question I asked Goggle and their AI generator was “How can Perdido Bay get cleaned up?” Goggle’s answer – *“Perdido Bay cleanup efforts focus on reducing nutrient runoff, restoring seagrass and wetlands, and managing industrial effluent. Key actions include restoring habits on Robinson and Walker Islands, reducing septic system pollution, installing seagrass, and implementing “living shoreline” projects. The Pensacola and Perdido Bays Estuary program facilitates these efforts.”*

Key Cleanup Initiatives:

- *Habitat Restoration: A \$13 million project restored sand dunes, seagrass bed, and marshland on islands to improve water quality and protect against erosion*
- *Water Quality Management: The Pensacola and Perdido Bays Estuary program (PPBEP) is working to reduce nutrients from agricultural and stormwater runoff and improve septic systems to decrease phosphorus and bacteria levels,*
- *Industrial Mitigation: Monitoring industrial effluent, especially addressing concerns regarding chlorine dioxide and chlorophyll from industrial sources.*

- *Shoreline Protection: The Living Shoreline Assistance Program helps property owners use nature-based solutions, such as marsh plantings, to stabilize shorelines.*
- *Marine Debris Removal: Grants are being used to remove abandoned vessels and hazardous debris from the bay.*

This was the answer AI (Goggle) gave to the question “How can Perdido Bay get cleaned up”. It was a politically correct answer. The answer was not exactly wrong, but it didn’t give the real problem – Industrial pollution. The last answer “Marine Debris Removal” was given as one which Friends of Perdido Bay had mentioned.

### **Nutrient Pollution?**

Water quality problems with too many nutrients have been mentioned many times as something which must be corrected in many bays. Excessive nutrients are no doubt a problem in many bays. But is it a problem in Perdido Bay? The water coming from the Perdido River has been tested many times and found to be clean. There is very little development along the Perdido River and very few leaky septic tanks. In the Upper Bay, there are two dischargers - a papermill which discharges to a wetland and a domestic wastewater treatment plant which discharges to wetlands. In March 2026, we tested the water in the Upper bay for nutrients, chlorophyll and coliform bacteria. The results showed that nutrients are not a problem in the Upper bay. Nitrate and phosphate are below detection limits of the lab we use (Eurofins). There was some chlorophyll a (4.53 ug/l) however this level is pretty low and well within the chlorophyll limit for upper Perdido Bay (11.0 ug/l). The coliform bacteria were a little high (820 colonies/l) but coliform bacteria do not necessarily represent human waste contamination.

Other water quality parameters which Escambia County and other entities measure, all look pretty good. Dissolved oxygen is good. The only measurement which looks weird is pH. I am finding very high pH levels (>8) at my dock in Upper Perdido Bay. These levels are way too high for a bay which gets its water from a river which has a pH level of 7 or below. However, a pH of over 8 is not a violation of the water quality standard according to the rules (I do not agree with the pH standard). So why is our bay so DEAD?

There are two main reasons and both involve the discharges from the paper mill. As we saw when the papermill blew up in 2017 and the discharges ceased for about three weeks, without papermill effluent our bay would thrive. The first problem is the alkaline discharges and resulting toxicity coming off IP’s smokestacks. The second problem coming from the

papermill, involves their bleaching agent chlorine dioxide. Running the alkaline combustion products into the bay is horrible. Discharges of barium in Perdido Bay have been going up. But I can understand why people living around the mill do not want to breath this contaminated air. Acetaldehyde, chloroform and formaldehyde are just a few of the products discharged into the air by the papermill. As subdivisions are built north of the mill, the air discharges will impact these people. DEP has the mistaken viewpoint that by discharging these smokestack wastes into the wastewater treatment system that they will get “treated”. Heavy metals do not really change much. What is happening is that the “wetland” into which the papermill discharges and then Perdido Bay, are becoming hazardous wastes sites.

The other problem coming from the papermill is caused by their bleaching chemical, chlorine dioxide. Under alkaline conditions, chlorine dioxide breaks down into free dissolved oxygen, chlorine and chlorate. Chlorate is a potent herbicide and inhibits normal primary production in the bay. It is so obvious as I look at the concrete blocks and dock pilings at my beach. There is NO algae growing on them. This is not normal. Friends of Perdido Bay have been sampling the type of phytoplankton which is blooming in the Upper and Mid bay. Most of the algae are types of blue-green algae which are very poor sources of food for fish. Some of the blue-green algae might even be considered toxic, although we haven’t seen any fish kills. This type of phytoplankton will not sustain a healthy ecosystem in Perdido Bay. The herbivorous fish, and then the fish that eat those fish, and the birds which eat those fish and the shrimp which eat the phytoplankton are all going to suffer. This is what is happening in Perdido Bay. Friends of Perdido Bay will keep working on our problem. And if you happen to go down to Robinson Island and drink beer in the summer, tell the people sitting in the bay this story.

I give Goggle AI a C- or maybe a D.

<b>Membership and Renewals</b>		
<p>Tidings is published six times a year by Friends of Perdido Bay and is mailed to members. To keep up with the latest news of happenings on Perdido Bay, become a member or renew your membership. For present members, your date for renewal is printed on your mailing label.</p> <p>Membership is \$30.00 per <b>year per voting member</b>. To join or renew, fill out the coupon to the right and mail with your check to the address on the front.</p> <p>Friends is a not-for-profit corporation, and all contributions are tax-deductible. Funds received are all used for projects to improve Perdido Bay. No money is paid to the Board of Directors, all of whom volunteer their time and effort.</p>	New	
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