



Bulk Rate
U.S. Postage Paid
Permit No.1013
Foley, AL 36535

Friends of Perdido Bay
10738 Lillian Highway
Pensacola, FL 32506
850-453-5488

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Tidings

The Newsletter of the Friends of Perdido Bay

March 2014

Volume 27 Number 2

Jackie Lane -Editor

www.friendsofperdidobay.com

Expecting the Worse

At several recent environmental meetings, I noticed a distinct change in public policy concerning global climate change. For many years, it seems, environmental mangers and policy makers were hoping that some progress could be made to globally reduce the levels of CO2 in the air. But it appears that this effort has been replaced with an attitude "We had better get ready". True, in the U.S. we are doing better at reducing CO2 emissions. Power companies are burning more natural gas and less coal. Cars are getting better gas milage. The slower economic growth in the U.S. has also helped. But globally, things are still getting worse. I recently read where China is imposing new environmental rules to try and make their industries less polluting. But a recent trip to Asia showed me that, they have a long way to go. The Asian countries have 6 and 7%, GDP's. This has come at a cost to their air quality and health. Some days you don't see the sky - it is just smog. The sun certainly is less bright in the urban areas. Diseases caused by air pollution are up. But of course, who wants to give up the economic prosperity for better air quality? Not many. Even here in this country, industries keep fighting stricter air pollution standards. Recently, the supreme court is hearing a case where industries, which generate power, are fighting new air standards the EPA is trying to impose. At our own peril!

Because it looks like controlling global CO2 will be very slow, if it happens at all, policy makers are now looking at risks involved with climate change. Definitely, more dramatic climate events are going to occur. Different areas of the world will experience different risks. Areas which are going to be significantly drier will have fire risks. Our area will have more severe storms and flooding. Right now flood maps are being developed using modeling and historical data which will be used to determine the degree of risks. Both wind and water are the two risks to be considered in this area.

Residents on Perdido Bay are going to be affected; pay attention. We have already had rising bay levels. This is especially noticeable in the summer when south west winds push water into the bay. Viewing old photos from the 1960's, you can see that we all had wider beaches. Since 1930, a tide gage at the pier in downtown Pensacola has recorded an average sea level rise of about 7" to the present day. This rise in sea level is going to continue. Those of us who live on the water are going to experience beach erosion and severe beach erosion if a hurricane

passes. Recently a neighbor to the east has dumped tons of rock to protect his bank. There is no beach. There are many web sites to help you find solutions to protecting your waterfront property. One is - - <http://coastalresilience.org>. The Nature Conservancy has set this one up.

Insurance companies have definitely become more aggressive at protecting their assets. Anyone out there who has not had an increase in an insurance premium lately? Many people who live on the water carry both flood and wind/other perils insurance. We have discussed the dilemma of the national flood insurance. Federally-backed flood insurance is broke. To alleviate the problem, Congress passed the Biggert-Waters Flood Insurance Reform Act of 2012. Flood insurance rates were supposed to increase 25% a year until the true risk premium was reached (See Oct 2013 Newsletter for more detail). Many people in flood prone areas (like Pinellas County, Florida) were taken by surprise as their federal flood insurance premiums became unaffordable. (You are only required to carry flood insurance, if you have a mortgage). The value of water front homes plummeted, and real estate sales were stagnant. So Congress saw the dilemma, and just recently passed a new law which slowed down the premium increase to about 18% a year. But it is important to note that flood insurance is going to go UP, but at a slower rate.

Hurricane (wind) and other perils insurance is also going UP. Insurance companies are trying to get people to make their existing houses more resistant to wind damage (water damage is covered by flood insurance). To do this, insurance companies increase your rates, and then give you discounts for fortifying your home. The roof is very important in protecting the interior of your home, so having the proper roof construction is necessary for getting your discount. Baldwin County has recently adopted a Coastal Code Supplement which requires a permit to do re-roofing. This Coastal Code Supplement has been adopted in 10 of the 12 Baldwin County municipalities. Besides the roof, many other structural improvements can be made to fortify your home. Several web sites which address making your home stronger are: www.smarthomeamerica.org, www.coastalalabama.org, and www.diastersafety.org. If you want to get a more complete understanding of hurricane insurance, attend one of the workshops being put on by the Baldwin County Leadership Insurance Committee. The next workshop is March 25 in the Loxley Civic Center, and April 22 in the Baldwin EMC training Facility. All the workshops start at 6:00 PM and run until 7:30 PM.

The Big Flush

Just as our experts predicted at the administrative hearing in 2009, rains flush organic and plant material off the International Paper wetlands and into the bay. Recently we have had heavy rains, and guess what - Heavy windrows of a small green plant, called duckweed, were seen floating around in the bay. We ended up with piles of this plant at our beach. You can see this duckweed in pictures on our web site. This duckweed is growing in the flooded areas behind the four IP berms. When you apply 30 million gallons a day of effluent onto a wetland and then add an inch of rainwater, yes, of course, you are going to have flushing. Without rain, calculations of runoff showed that once the effluent left the pipe, it would take less than a day to reach the bay. It is so frustrating. This duckweed comes into the bay, dies, and eventually the nutrients and organic material are recycled back into the bay. No wonder the paper mill loved the idea of a wetland, or rather (lets call it what it really is) an overland flow to Perdido Bay. International Paper took out all but one of their settling ponds and hoped (they knew) that everything was going to be O.K. Allowing this stuff to just flush off into the bay, is saving IP millions. They don't have to clean out any settling ponds. This is considered good business - saving your shareholders money. Forbes just recently named International Paper the most admired company in the pulp and paper industry. Admired- not by me.

Some of you called to report these big masses of duckweed. Thank you. I asked you to send your pictures to the environmental agencies. I sent a video and pictures to DEP in Pensacola. Remarkably, a DEP representative e-mailed me to tell me DEP is having a meeting with IP to discuss the duckweed problem. Very good. Of course, no one is going to shut IP down. We have learned that you can discuss environmental problems for years and years, but it is a start. It is very important to let the environmental managers know about our environmental problems. Otherwise how are they going to know? Florida DEP is no longer testing our bay.

No Oyster Gardening For Perdido Bay

Several people called about setting up an oyster gardening project in Perdido Bay. It would certainly be nice to get a little more natural filtering of the bay water. Many years ago when the bottom of Perdido Bay was covered by the small clam, *Rangia*, we calculated that the entire upper bay could be filtered in several days. *Rangia* has since died off and left us with no natural filterers. I believe *Rangia* should have resettled, because there is a population in the lower Perdido River. Occasionally, in the Spring, I will see a settlement of tiny little clams in the bay bottom. But the small clams never survive.

We contacted Chris Blankenship at Alabama Marine Resources Division about setting up an oyster growing project in Perdido Bay. Here is his reply.

“The Auburn University Extension Service has an oyster gardening program. PJ Waters is the coordinator. He is copied on this email. Currently the Alabama Department of Public Health only allows the oysters gardening in approved or conditionally approved waters. This is supported by the Marine Resources Division. Unfortunately, the waters of Perdido Bay are unclassified. Unclassified waters are required to be managed just like prohibited waters so no oyster gardening is allowed in Perdido Bay.”

It is better not to know, than to measure and find out that Perdido Bay has too many bacteria to support shellfishing. Friends of Perdido Bay test the water in the upper bay. Lots of fecal bacteria grow in the bay, but not human fecal bacteria. This is an important distinction. When the environmental agencies test for fecal coliforms, they incubate the bacterial plates at human body temperature and the results obtained are for **human fecal coliforms**. Perdido Bay usually does not have a high population of **human** fecal coliforms, but a very high population of wild fecal coliforms. Among these coliforms is a bacteria called *Klebsiella pneumoniae*, which can cause various types of infections. The environmental agencies have know for years that this bacteria is associated with paper mill effluent. So swim in Perdido Bay at your own risk.

Crab Watch

Several years ago a commercial crabber had set his traps in Upper Perdido Bay near our beach. We could hear his boat in the morning when he came to check his traps. He did not put his traps out last year. We have not seen him this year either. Are there few crabs? We would see small crabs in early spring each year at our beaches. We have not seen any crabs yet this year. Is another alarm going off telling us that life in the bay is further deteriorating? It may be.

Blue crabs spawn in the fall in the Gulf of Mexico. I am sure you have seen the female crabs with their big “sponge” of eggs tucked under their abdominal fold in the Gulf in late summer. The females usually die after releasing the eggs which had already been fertilized. The larval crabs then begin their development and migration back into the estuaries. The crabs spend the spring and summer growing up in the estuaries. Once the female crab mates and reaches sexual maturity, she will then migrate back out into the Gulf or higher saline waters to spawn. The crabs we catch in our crab traps in the bay are usually less than two years old. Males tend to go into fresher waters than females and will not migrate back into the Gulf. But where are those

little crabs (usually with a brown shell) which we see every Spring at our beach? I have yet to see any small crabs.

We are going to begin a crab watch program. If you volunteer, you will first note the presence of small crabs at your beach and approximately how many. Then you will check your crab trap/traps on a regular schedule like weekly, and count the crabs in your trap. You will know how many crabs you are catching each week. We will provide data sheets. You will then send the data sheets to us at the end of the summer. If you need a crab trap we will provide it. If you want to participate in this program, please give us a call at 850-453-5488. We are looking for people in both the lower and upper bay. To have actual data, is a very powerful tool.

A Good Example of Corruption or the Power of Money and Influence

Perdido Bay citizens have been complaining about pollution on our bay since the early 1970's and maybe longer. Old timers remember Perdido Bay when you would walk out and see your toes in six feet of water. When crabs and shrimp were plentiful. Most of those old-timers are no longer with us, and the memory of a better bay has faded. All the meetings and citizen complaints have gone for not. The Gambles, JoAnn Allen, Paul Scherek have all gone on and the paper mill in Cantonment Florida has continued to pollute. Florida and EPA continue to issue permits to the paper mill (permits to pollute, as JoAnn Allen used to say). How can this happen? When we first got involved in the mid-1980's, the Florida DER (DEP now) was just about issue another permit. They said the paper mill (then owned by Champion), which then discharged to Eleven Mile Creek, met all state and federal standards. It didn't. For years, the biologists at DEP in Pensacola produced memos and reports detailing how the paper mill was violating state standards. Those reports were ignored. The permit issued to the paper mill in 1988 was issued with a Consent Order. The paper mill had to come into compliance with ALL state standards by 1994. Today in 2014, twenty years later, the paper mill now owned by IP, is still not meeting standards. How has this happened? Simple. Powerful (and rich) landowners which grow trees for paper mills and chemical companies which produce chemicals for paper making have manipulated the political process to allow this travesty to continue. We are little people who are being trampled by the rich and powerful.

<p>Membership and Renewals</p> <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 \$10.00 per year per voting member. 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>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> New</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Renewal</p> <p>Amt. Enclosed\$ _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Name</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Address</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Phone (_____) _____</p> <p>e-mail _____</p>
---	---