

**Friends of Perdido Bay**

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Tidings The Newsletter of the Friends of Perdido Bay

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Thank you for your support and HAPPY Holidays

I know we start every newsletter with this. Thank you. But it is genuine. Our entire funding comes from you, our supporters. We receive no government grants or help from other groups. It is not that we haven't tried to get grants, but none have come our way. When we were first founded in 1988, we did get a big grant from the EPA to start a citizen monitoring program and do several other things. But we are still strong after all these years, thanks to you. We will see you in the new year with more information on our testing and other information.

Who Are We?

Just normal people who would like to see our bay cleaned up. That's who Friends of Perdido Bay are. We are not rabid environmentalists. I am sure there are many different political viewpoints in the membership. There are some full-time residents and some who only come part-time. But we have one common theme – we want our bay back. We are not misled by fake science or data that would show our bay is getting better. It is not. People can see when there are fish. Fishermen know when there are fish. So for those who wonder why we are complaining. Look no further than a dead bay.

I often wonder why the shrimping industry hasn't complained. At one time, Perdido Bay was one of the most productive shrimping locations in the

Northern Gulf. Shrimping has disappeared with a real loss in income for this area.

One long time Perdido Bay resident and supporter is John Schleich. When we needed people to monitor Perdido Bay in the late 1980's, John stepped up. He had just retired from the Navy and was an avid fisherman, who saw what was happening to the bay. John is a true patriot who is always willing to help. He lives in the part of the bay which is impacted more than other places. He said he is getting old (84), but he will live to see our bay finally free of the terrible pollution from the paper mill. Thank you, John.

Eight Thousand Pounds of What?

Eight thousand pounds per day is the amount of biosolids which International Paper (IP) is allowed to discharge every day (per most recent, expired permit) into the wetlands and then Perdido Bay. When IP first proposed going to a wetland discharge, we assumed that much of these biosolids would settle out in the wetlands. But that was when IP's flow through the wetlands was going to take 5 days to reach the bay. As built in 2012, IP's flow through the wetlands only takes 12 hours to reach the bay. That was just a little slower than the trip down Elevenmile Creek. And much of the stuff which does settle in the wetlands, probably washes back into the bay with heavy rains.

This eight thousand pounds per day is called Total Suspended Solids (TSS) and we assume that most of it is organic and made up of fine tree fibers which are not caught on the screens in the paper making process. During the many trials we went to fighting the papermill, we asked the papermill consultants what the components of TSS were. They never answered. Most of them said they weren't sure or didn't know. Can you imagine the environmental agencies allowing eight thousand (8,000 pounds) of *something* to be dumped in the water? Friends of Perdido Bay know what some of the components of TSS are. TSS is for the most part, organic and probably are small tree fibers or material resuspended from their treatment ponds. But certain heavy metals, like arsenic, and dioxins are also associated with the TSS. The high amounts of TSS are one reason our bay is more turbid than other bays. My main point is that TSS is biodegradable and will use up oxygen as it biodegrades.

The paper industry has always denied that TSS is harmful to the environment. And on Perdido Bay, papermill consultants will always testify that TSS causes no problems. Of course, this is ridiculous. In the mid-1980's, the then Secretary of Florida's DEP. Carole Browner, agreed with the

Livingston Study which blamed the low dissolved oxygen levels found on the bottom waters of Perdido Bay on the Gulf of Mexico water. What really happens is the heavier salt water from the Gulf tends to flow in on the bottom of the bay. The accumulated paper mill sludge pulls the dissolved oxygen out of the water as it flows up the bay.

Historically, the paper industry is the obvious source of these organic sludges. The IP paper mill on Lake Ticonderoga has its place in pollution history. This old paper mill was founded in the late 1880's before there was any pollution control. The mill located in Ticonderoga, New York dumped into Lake Ticonderoga which fed into Lake Champlain. The bottom of Lake Ticonderoga had a layer of sludge 2 to 18" thick on the bottom. Vermont's attorney general sued New York for the pollution, and the case went all the way to the Supreme Court. IP was made to clean up. The old mill moved to a new site, made improvements, and supposedly everything is okay. I doubt it.

The problem is the EPA allows this level of dumping. The level of TSS allowed by the EPA permits is part of the technical based limits. These levels of dumping are based on the best performing paper mills in the country and are called "best available technology" or BAT. BAT limits in turn are based on the level of production. Every time the papermill in Cantonment added improvements to their treatment ponds, they increased production. So the levels of TSS never seemed to improve much. Production at the papermill in Cantonment increased as follows: in 1941 production was 25,000 tons of bleached pulp/year; in 1946 production was 450 tons of pulp/day; in 1980 production was 900 tons/day; in 1996 production was 1400 tons of bleached pulp/day, and in 2023 production was 2500 tons of pulp/day. In 2007, the IP mill converted from making 1600 tons of bleached pulp/day to making 2300 tons/day of both bleached and unbleached pulp. About a third of the 2300 tons per day or 800 tons/day is bleached. Local and IP officials heralded this as a move away from bleached paper to a safer product using less bleach (but more TSS). Today, IP is saying they have closed their bleaching operation. But I don't think so. I still see a white foam.

The year (2007) IP converted from making 100% bleached paper to making both bleached and unbleached pulp was the year in which the second-class action lawsuit was settled. Perdido Bay Property owners lost. The reason Perdido Bay property owners lost was because attorneys from both sides stipulated that there was no class action. The stipulation was dated 2006 ; you can read it on our website. In the stipulation, attorneys for both sides claimed that IP only discharged 2,000 to 3,000 pounds per day of these biosolids and that none of these dioxin laden sludges contaminated our

properties after Hurricane Ivan. This was a real lie, but the class representatives were forced to accept this lie because they were threatened with lawsuits by IP (according to the release filed in 2008).

The job of IP's consultants was always to deny that the TSS caused any environmental damage, especially low dissolved oxygen. IP's modeling of dissolved oxygen in Perdido Bay was always interesting. In most modeling exercises, those 8,000 pounds/day of biosolids just disappeared. Once they came down Elevenmile Creek, the solids just evaporated. Never to be seen again. Scientists who studied the sediments, like Wayne Isphording, couldn't find any evidence of papermill contaminated when they worked for the paper mill, but once he worked for the Levin Law Firm, the contamination from the mill was obvious. Likewise, EPA scientists who studied the sediments in Perdido Bay said there was no direct link between sludge sediments on the bottom and the mill. The only problem was they sampled sediments at the Lillian Bridge where currents and springs coming from the bottom, wash most deposits away. It is important to pick your sampling spots.

Unfortunately, the technical limits for papermills which allow these solids to be discharged into environments will probably not be changed any time soon. There has been a real effort to hide the damages from these biosolids. Both political parties are pushing the narrative that the Clean Water Act and Clean Air Act were a success and our environments are much better. If you look out on Perdido Bay, it looks OK. Occasionally you see a little foam and scum, but no algae blooms. Why? OUR BAY IS BEING MANIPULATED. But you will have to wait until the next newsletter to find out how.

See you next year! Happy Holidays!

Membership and Renewals

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.

Membership is \$30.00 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.

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.

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