



# The Peninsula Courier

## The Newsletter of The Peninsula of Mobile

Summer 2021

### FROM THE BOARD CHAIRMAN

Esteemed Neighbors,

I hope that all of you are making it through these trying times with your health and happiness. We've had many developments in the last year (from bridges to parks and many things in between) and we're excited to share them with you in this Newsletter.

The Perch Creek bridge will be ready for crossing in October of 2021! There are community events scheduled so be sure to check out the last page for "Upcoming Events" and join us in exploring our neighborhood!

John Cutts  
Board Chairman

### ANNUAL ALABAMA COASTAL BIRDFEST TO FEATURE PERCH CREEK TOUR

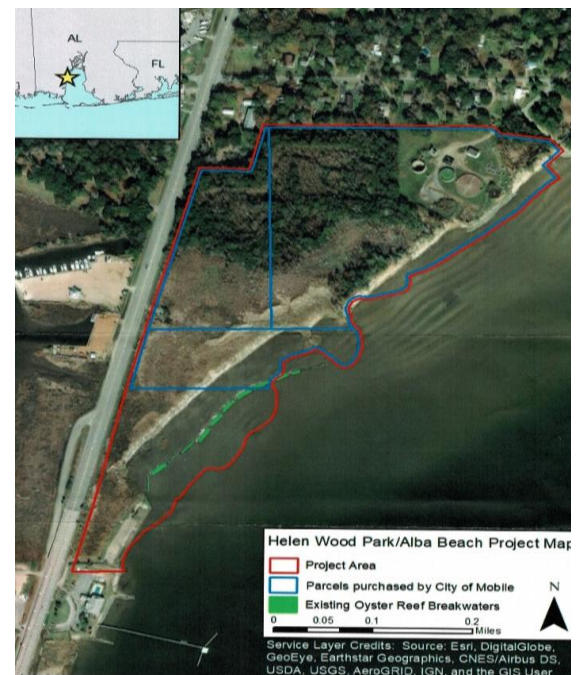
For the first time, a Perch Creek/Mobile Blueway kayak tour is being offered as part of the annual John L. Borom Alabama Coastal BirdFest, Thursday, Oct. 7 from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m.

The tour will depart from inside McNally Park. Thanks to our rivers, swamps, bayous and beaches, South Alabama is filled with maritime wetland and our coastlines are outlined with maritime wetlands and forests. This rich collection of wild areas attracts hundreds of species of birds, so it's no surprise one of the largest festivals for birders

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### PERCH CREEK NATURE TRAIL PRESERVE UPDATE

Following years of negotiations, the City of Mobile purchased 32 acres of bayfront property known as the Ziebach Plant — the last piece needed for the Perch Creek Preserve, which included Helen Wood and McNally Parks and nearly 100 acres of wetlands already purchased on the west side of Dauphin Island Parkway.



### PERCH CREEK BRIDGE PROJECT ON SCHEDULE

According to the Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT), the project to replace and slightly raise the Dauphin Island Parkway Bridge over Perch Creek is on schedule.

Weather permitting, ALDOT plans to have the roadway open to vehicular traffic by the first week in October. Finishing work, including stripping and signage will not be complete until Spring 2022.

What began in 2013 as a way to preserve a sensitive habitat while reducing neighborhood flooding, the Perch Creek Preserve provided both land and water-based passive recreation activities such as bike paths, hiking trails, kayaking, and canoeing. Using federal funds, the Nature Conservancy is leading a shoreline stabilization project involving the installation of breakwaters from this property south to Helen Wood Park to help preserve this sensitive ecological area of our city. The project is large with many facets, and will take many years to complete.

*A 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to the development of a clean and vibrant community that sustains the sensitive environment found only on the Peninsula part of Dauphin Island Parkway.*

# Annual Alabama Coastal BirdFest to feature Perch Creek Tour

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in the state is held right here on the Gulf Coast.

Reservations opened on Aug. 9<sup>th</sup> to paddle the City of Mobile’s new birding trail, the Perch Creek Nature Trail Preserve in the lower Dog River Watershed. Join other nature lovers as we depart from the Perch Creek launch of the Dog River Scenic Blueway inside McNally Park off Dauphin Island Parkway in Mobile. Meander through serene waters of the quiet, natural resource-rich complex. Watch for bald eagle, osprey, various songbirds and shore-

birds, and maybe a glimpse of the resident Pileated Woodpecker. Local guides will also be on hand to discuss the unique flora and fauna found in this urban estuarine system. Note: Moderate paddle. For more information and to register, visit <https://southalabamalandtrust.org/birdfest/>



Kayakers will have an opportunity to check out various wildlife during the Oct. 7 Perch Creek/Mobile Blueway Kayak Tour as part of the John L. Borom Alabama Coastal BirdFest.

## HELEN WOOD PARK UPDATE

The City of Mobile is awaiting recommendations from their engineers as to what the next steps should be to reopen Helen Wood Park at the south end of our community.

The Peninsula of Mobile continues to follow and request input into the development of the plans for the popular fishing spot, which continues to be damaged during tropical events. Located east of the mouth of Dog River, the park offers great fishing and beautiful views but is subjected to continual boat wakes and storm surge.



Helen Wood Park is a popular fishing site, but is always endangered by events such as boat wakes and storm surges.

## HISTORY OF THE TREES ALONG DAUPHIN ISLAND PARKWAY By SUE WINTER

Once upon a time, a group of residents of the south Dauphin Island Parkway (DIP) community called Parkway Pride recognized the five-lane state highway that now dominated their community was very unattractive and unhealthy to nearby waters.

They came up with the idea to plant over 4,000 trees along the DIP right-of-way from Interstate 10 to the Dog River Bridge to divert storm water and create beauty that would last for years to come.

The year was 1995, and after getting the support from the Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT) and Keep Mobile Beautiful, and with guidance from the Mobile County Master Gardeners, the Mobile Urban Forester and Plauche Landscape Design, the plan was developed, vetted and

Soon, the two City Council members representing our community at the time, Clinton Johnson (District 3) and Mabin Hicks (District 4) donated discretionary funding to Parkway Pride to help make the project a reality.

It took three years and hundreds of volunteers to implement the largest public-private tree planting project ever undertaken in the State of Alabama. The first tree was planted in 1997 and the last one in 2000. For the first five years, Parkway Pride volunteers coordinated the donation and spreading of mulch and tended the newly planted Crepe and Wax Myrtle varieties as well as Live Oak where ALDOT restrictions allowed. The Luce family, then owners of Pinecrest Cemetery, offered space on their grounds to house the huge amounts of mulch required.

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## HISTORY OF THE TREES

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The trees were intentionally spaced closely together to speed the creation of the upper canopy and connected root system and in anticipation of losing some to various causes. Surprisingly, almost all of them survived!

As we approach the 25th anniversary of this project, we've been encouraged by DIP residents and others, to "tell the story". These trees, with their summertime color-filled canopy, continue to fulfill their purpose – to beautify the Parkway, to soften the harshness of the highway itself, absorb polluting stormwater and provide welcome shade for pedestrians. The City of Mobile is now re-energizing its efforts toward the proper maintenance, trimming and mulching of this tree trail and under the guidance of Peter Toler, City Urban Forester, you've likely seen evidence of this renewed attention.

The Peninsula of Mobile welcomes your interest in the past history of the trees as well as your interest in becoming a current volunteer to be a guardian of this beautiful feature of our unique coastal community. Please email John Cutts, President, at [thepeninsulaofmobile@gmail.com](mailto:thepeninsulaofmobile@gmail.com).



Workmen trim trees on the Dauphin Island Parkway corridor. The trees were planted by dedicated volunteers beginning in 1997 and ending in 2000.

As a reminder, the trees are located in the city's right-of-way and are owned by the City of Mobile. The penalty for removing or altering by trimming of any tree is as follows:

"Any person found guilty of violating any of the provisions of this Chapter shall be

punished as prescribed in Chapter 1, Article II, Division 2, Mobile City Code, with a fine not to exceed five hundred dollars (\$500) per violation, plus court costs and restitution as may be ordered by the Court, and/or by imprisonment for a period not exceeding six (6) months, and/or by community service for a period not exceeding six (6) months, or by a combination of any of the foregoing, all at the discretion of the judge."

Any penalty will be at the Judge's discretion.

Anyone who has trees in front of their home or business should contact Peter Toler, City Urban Forester at [peter.toler@cityofmobile.org](mailto:peter.toler@cityofmobile.org) before doing anything to one of the trees. Removal of a tree is not permitted but supervised trimming by a licensed arborist may be permitted with prior approval by Mr. Toler.

**DON'T FORGET ABOUT THE PERCH CREEK/MOBILE BLUEWAY KAYAK TOUR ON OCTOBER 7 FROM 1-4 P.M.**

# "UPCOMING EVENTS"

- **Annual West Bay Cleanup**, part of the Alabama Coastal Cleanup, **Saturday, September 18, 2021**. Meet under the pavilion at McNally Park beginning at **8 am – 12 pm** to receive instructions and supplies then be dispersed to rid our shorelines of trash. The event ends at noon with all volunteers having received a commemorative T-shirt.

- **Perch Creek/Mobile Blueway kayak tour** is being offered as part of the annual John L. Borom Alabama Coastal BirdFest, **Thursday, Oct. 7, 2021 from 1 pm - 4 pm** The tour will depart from inside McNally Park and will travel under the newly constructed Perch Creek Bridge!

Watch our Facebook page for updates. <https://www.facebook.com/ThePeninsulaOfMobile>