

KEY NOTES

NEWS FROM
THE PERDIDO KEY ASSOCIATION



February 2020

PKA Annual Membership Meeting February 29

A reminder that the PKA Annual Membership Meeting will be from 10 AM until Noon on Saturday, February 29, 2020 at the Eden Condominium. You should receive the meeting announcement and membership renewal forms shortly if not already. Dr. Alissa Deming, the Staff Veterinarian with the Alabama Marine Mammal Stranding Network, will be the featured speaker. Her research focuses on the long-term impact of the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill on coastal bottlenose dolphin populations and the ongoing bottlenose dolphin Unusual Mortality Event. The 2019 Annual Meeting minutes are available on the PKA website Archive page at <https://perdidokeyassociation.org/> for review and will be voted on for approval at the 2020 annual meeting.

Perdido Key Recognized by Oprah Magazine

Oprah Magazine named Perdido Key 13th among 60 small American towns worth visiting. "In this town, you can skip the touristy parts of the state and relax by the (much less crowded) beach. With fishing, boating, snorkeling, multiple golf courses, and more, there is a little something for everyone." Drawn from January 24, 2020 *Pensacola News Journal* article "Oprah Magazine names Perdido Key one of America's 60 most charming small towns to visit" by Jake Newby at <https://www.pnj.com/story/news/2020/01/24/o-magazine-ranks-perdido-key-inside-top-60-small-towns-visit-list/4564059002/>.

Perdido Key Resident at Super Bowl

Perdido Key resident Mark Lombardo will be attending the Sunday, February 2, 2020 Super Bowl for a very special reason. His 102 year old father Samuel (Sam) Lombardo, a Ft. Walton Beach resident, will be doing the "coin toss" in the pre-game ceremony to

determine initial offense and defense assignments. Sam is a World War II veteran who saw action at the Battle of the Bulge and the Bridge at Remagen.

PKA's 2020 Perdido Key Property Owner Survey

The PKA Board of Directors is completing the questions for the 2020 Perdido Key Property Owner Survey to be mailed to all Perdido Key property owners within the next month or two. The 2015 survey made local officials and others aware of Perdido Key owner preferences, such as favoring a Perdido Key Master Plan and Multi-Use Path – initiatives that have since been moving forward. When received, please complete and return the survey as soon as possible and encourage others to do so as well – the results can make a difference.

February 4 Public Meeting on Proposed I-10 Modifications

The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) will be holding a public meeting on proposed changes to Interstate 10 (I-10) on February 4, 2020 from 5:30 PM to 6:30 PM at the Pine Forest United Methodist Church, 2800 Wilde Lake Boulevard, Pensacola. Changes anticipated include increasing I-10 lanes from four to six from the Alabama border to the Rt. 29 interchange and reconstructing the interchanges at Nine Mile Road and Pine Forest Drive to “Diverging Diamond Interchanges.” Information drawn from the January 23, 2020 *NorthEscambia.com* article “FDOT to Study Widening of I-10 to Six Lanes; Reconstructing Nine Mile, Pine Forest Interchanges” at <http://www.northescambia.com/2020/01/fdot-to-study-widening-part-of-i-10-to-six-lanes-reconstruct-nine-mile-pine-forest-interchanges>.

February 6 Public Meeting on Watershed Management Plan

The general public will have an opportunity to express their concerns about the Perdido Bay/Mobile Bay watersheds beginning at 6 PM on February 06, 2020 at the Gulf State Park Learning Campus, 20249 Highway 135 in Gulf Shores. The meeting is an important part of the “Gulf Frontal Watershed Management Plan” to address water quality issues in the two watersheds. The initiative hopes to bring diverse stakeholders together to address ongoing environmental concerns such as storm water runoff, wetlands restoration, and land use planning and practices. More information on the program is available from the Mobile Bay National Estuary Program website at [http://www.mobilebaynep.com/what we do](http://www.mobilebaynep.com/what_we_do).

Continuing Gulf Beach Hwy Dollar General Dispute

Possible construction of a Dollar General on Gulf Beach Highway in an area of mostly single family homes has been contentious for many months. The land in question is zoned commercial but requires “confirmation of compatibility for its future land use,” leading to various Escambia County administrative decisions and some legal actions. For a recent update on the dispute, see the January 23, 2020 *Pensacola News Journal* article “Judge vacates contempt ruling for Escambia County in Dollar General case” by

Madison Arnold at <https://www.pnj.com/story/news/2020/01/23/judge-ruling-vacated-escambia-county-contempt-dollar-general-case/4552175002/>.

Legislature Debates Short-Term Rental Homes

Short-term home rentals can be disruptive to residential neighborhoods, with local governments sometimes restricting them. In 2011, however, the Florida legislature banned cities and counties from adopting any new vacation rental rules. This was rolled back in 2014 following public protest and “allowed communities to regulate rentals, so long as they did not ban them outright or limit their frequency or duration.” Some lawmakers are now pushing to return to essentially the 2011 standard. For more on this issue, see the January 14, 2020 *Tallahassee Democrat* article “Florida’s battle over short-term rentals resumes” by Zac Anderson at <https://www.tallahassee.com/story/news/local/state/2020/01/14/florida-lawmakers-tackle-short-term-vacation-rentals-airbnb-again/4464032002/>.

Gulf Coast Health after Deepwater Horizon

A number of scholars and officials discussed the effects of the 2010 BP oil spill at the “Shining Light on Deepwater Horizon” seminar held at the downtown Pensacola library on December 4, 2019. An important conclusion for Perdido Key was that its beaches were relatively oil-free within a relatively short time (a year or two after the spill) because the pure quartz sand of the Key provided substantial coating area for bacteria to break down the oil rapidly. In coastal areas with different compositions, such as the bayous of Louisiana, oil from the spill probably remained for a longer time. Much of the marine life in the affected areas of the Gulf of Mexico seems to have made a good recovery, but the population and long-term health of dolphins is not well understood and the “magnitude of sea turtle loss due to the DWH [Deepwater Horizon] spill will make recovery of these populations challenging.” Some aspects of the spill, such as long-term effects of toxic fumes on cleanup personnel, were not covered in the seminar. More information on the aftermath of the spill can be found from fact sheets available at <https://gulfseagrant.org/oilspilloutreach/publications/>.

More Florida Representatives to Congress

The number of Florida members of the House of Representatives is expected to grow from 27 to 29 following completion of the 2020 Census. With an estimated population of about 21.48 million in mid-2019, Florida gains over 600 people every day – only Texas is growing faster. For more on this issue, see the January 2, 2020 *News Service of Florida* article “Population count signals more FL congressional seats” by Jim Turner at <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/2020/01/02/population-count-signals-more-florida-congressional-seats/2796802001/>.

Amendment to Escambia County Comprehensive Plan “Not in Compliance”

Jacqueline Rogers has championed the need to maintain the development direction established by the Escambia County Comprehensive Plan and particularly the Midwest

Sector Plan that helps prevent urban sprawl into northern Escambia County. She and her group won a small battle in the management of development after a Florida Department of Administrative Hearings decision that an amendment to the County's Comprehensive Plan did not meet all the criteria for change and was consequently recommended as "not in compliance." The amendment apparently would have made agricultural land available for subdivision development. For more on this issue, see the January 14, 2020 *Pensacola News Journal* article "Judge finds Escambia County's comprehensive plan 'not in compliance' with state law" by Jim Little at <https://www.pnj.com/story/news/2020/01/14/judge-escambia-county-comprehensive-plan-not-compliance-law/4456415002/>.

Mobi-Mat at the National Seashore

Mobi Mats are polyester mats placed over sand to allow people in wheelchairs, personnel with strollers, and those with difficulty walking on sand make their way to the shore. A Mobi-Mat is now in place at the Perdido Key Area of the National Seashore in a beach access area near the main parking lot pavilions.

Sharks and Cobia

There were 64 shark attacks worldwide in 2019, down from the average of 82, with 41 attacks in the United States. Two people died from the attacks, one near Reunion Island and the other in the Bahamas. About 100 million sharks and rays are killed each year, mostly by commercial fishermen. For more on sharks, see the January 21, 2020 *USA Today* article "Good news for beachgoers: The number of shark attacks decreasing" by Doyle Rice at <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2020/01/21/shark-attacks-were-down-again-2019-only-2-deaths-worldwide/4502604002/>.

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission and NOAA Fisheries are updating the cobia stock assessment. If you are a cobia fisherman, you can help by sharing your observations at the following website:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScJ1nxwt6E7xV_KOCdehSVv_BaSMqBqV_QbJOBGhcDGKv5cyew/viewform. Information provided by Rick O'Connor, Florida Sea Grant Escambia County.

Fewer Florida Panthers?

The number of Florida panthers, Florida's official state animal, may have decreased as estimated by a decline in road kills – a rough guide to changes in the panther population. 23 kills occurred in 2019 compared to 26 in 2018, 24 in 2017, and 34 in 2016. An estimated 120 to 230 individual panthers live in Florida, primarily "south of Lake Okeechobee and in or near Collier County." "The Florida panther is the only population of cougars living east of the Mississippi River, and it's protected by federal and state laws." For more on the panther, see the January 6, 2020 *Dayton Beach News-Journal* article "Florida panther road kills, overall deaths down in 2019" by Chad

Gillis at <https://www.news-journalonline.com/news/20200106/florida-panther-road-kills-overall-deaths-down-in-2019>.

Blue Angels 2020 and 2021 Schedules

The updated 2020 and preliminary 2021 Blue Angels performance schedules are available at <https://www.pnj.com/story/news/2019/12/16/blue-angel-2020-air-show-schedule-updated-preliminary-2021-schedule-released/2642763001/>. The 2020 Pensacola Beach show will be on July 11 and NAS Pensacola homecoming show on October 16-17. The December 16, 2019 *Pensacola News Journal* article on the schedule ("Blue Angels 2020 air shows updated and preliminary 2021 schedule released") noted the Blue Angels are expected to fly the F-18 Super Hornets in 2021, the team's 75th anniversary season.

February Calendar

Feb 1 – Pensacola Double Bridge Run Presented by Publix at Wahoos Stadium
Feb 4 – Glenn Miller Orchestra 2020 at National Naval Aviation Museum on NAS
Feb 7,8,9,14,15 – Pensacola Ice Flyers at Pensacola Bay Center
Feb 8 – Mardi Gras Flotilla on the Intracoastal Waterway Perdido Key
Feb 14 – Various Valentine's Day restaurant offerings
Feb 15 – Last British Occupation Mobile Point Demonstrations at Ft. Morgan
Feb 15 – Sweetheart 5K and Sea Turtle Half Marathon at The Hangout Gulf Shores
Feb 15,16 – "Cats" at the Saenger Theater in downtown Pensacola
Feb 17 – Sea Turtle Presentation at Visit Pensacola, Wayside Park Pensacola
Feb 21 – Mardi Gras Masquerade at Destin Commons in Destin
Feb 22 – Pensacola Grand Mardi Gras Parade in downtown Pensacola
Feb 22,23 – Gala of The Royal Horses at Escambia County Equestrian Center
Feb 25 – Alabama Mardi Gras Parades in Orange Beach and Gulf Shores
Feb 29 – Orange Beach Seafood Festival & Car Show at The Wharf

The following websites provide additional information about Gulf Coast events

<https://www.visitpensacola.com/>
<https://myescambia.com/>
<http://mygulfcoastchamber.com/>
<http://www.visitperdido.com/>
<http://mulletwrapper.net/>
<http://www.emeraldcoastfl.com/>
<http://alabama.travel/festivals-and-events>

Perdido Key Association Board of Directors