

# KEY NOTES

NEWS FROM  
THE PERDIDO KEY ASSOCIATION



## June 2019

### **Perdido Key World Oceans Day Event 10 AM to 2 PM, Friday June 7!**

Bring family and friends to the Perdido Key World Oceans Day Event at the Perdido Key State Park West Use Area. This PKA co-sponsored event has many ocean-themed exhibits and activities that should appeal to all ages. World Oceans Day has been celebrated worldwide since 1992 to draw attention to the benefits and wonders of the oceans, but also to the threats to ocean health from plastic waste, industry and agriculture pollution, overfishing and other human activities.

### **Hurricane Season Begins**

With our neighbors to the east in Panama City, Mexico Beach and elsewhere still recovering from Hurricane Michael, it is a good time to take stock of preparations for this year's hurricane season. The latest NOAA predictions call for a near normal hurricane season (June 1–November 30) with 9 to 15 named storms and 4 to 8 becoming hurricanes. As last year's experience with Michael demonstrated, hurricanes off the Gulf Coast can strengthen rapidly and leave little time for preparation. To get ready, consider reviewing the May 17, 2019 "Panhandle Outdoors" article "Preparing for Hurricane Seasons – Ten Tips to protect your home and family" by Carrie Stevenson at <https://nwdistrict.ifas.ufl.edu/nat/category/hurricanes/>. The State of Florida is providing an incentive for preparation with a tax holiday from May 31 to June 06 on items useful in any disaster. Details are available in the May 29, 2019 *Pensacola News Journal* article by Tom Urban and Jim Turner "Hurricane tax holiday starts in two days" at <https://www.pnj.com/story/news/2019/05/29/florida-hurricane-tax-holiday-starts-two-days/1270060001/>. For more on the hurricane season, see the May 23, 2019 *Associated Press/KSL.com* article by Seth Borenstein "US Forecasters: Expect near normal hurricane season" at <https://www.ksl.com/article/46558375/us-forecasters-expect-near-normal-atlantic-hurricane-season>.

### **Flight Student Injured on Perdido Key Drive Recovering**

Two years ago Jordan Lo, a naval aviator student at NAS Pensacola, was struck by a drunken driver on Perdido Key Drive and almost lost his life. He was one of eight

pedestrians hit that night by the drunken driver. The massive wounds created doubts “he would ever independently walk, talk or even eat on his own.” His recent visit to Pensacola, in part to thank the medical staff at Baptist Hospital for saving his life, showed he was making remarkable progress in recovering from his injuries. “His goal is to pass the Navy’s medical board exam, a prerequisite needed to reapply to flight school.” For more on the story, see the May 22, 2019 *Pensacola News Journal* article by Colin Warren-Hicks “Flight Student injured by drunk driver determined to return to the Navy” at <https://www.pnj.com/story/news/crime/2019/05/22/nas-flight-student-injured-drunken-driver-determined-return-navy/3740728002/>.

### **Death of Growth Management?**

A developing issue is the financial consequences of taking local Florida governments to task for violating their comprehensive plans. According to non-profit organization “1000 Friends of Florida,” if HB 7102 as amended becomes law, challengers to government decisions could face enormous legal fees – perhaps effectively halting such challenges. As written by 1000 Friends (selected portions for brevity):

“Florida’s Community Planning Act requires every local government to adopt and maintain a comprehensive plan – a blueprint for growth – that meets minimum standards. Local comprehensive plans provide some of the most important and locally-appropriate provisions for flood protection, fiscally responsible infrastructure, neighborhood stability, and property investment protection. Once a comprehensive plan is in place, a local government’s development decisions must be consistent with the plan. ... Currently, the only tools that require local governments to abide by the law are review in administrative hearings and judicial enforcement, initiative through citizen’s legal challenges. But if HB 7103 and this amendment stand, there will be essentially no enforcement mechanism left for local planning decisions. ... Supporters of the amendment to HB 7103 said it would deter frivolous lawsuits. But Florida law already gives judges the discretion to order challengers to pay legal fees when they file nuisance challenges to development decisions.”

For more on this issue, see the article “VETO HB 7103 on Growth Management” on the 1000 Friends of Florida website at <https://www.1000friendsofflorida.org/veto-hb-7103/>.

### **I-10 Mobile Bay Bridge Toll**

To help deal with increasing I-10 traffic on the approaches to Mobile, plans are developing for a bridge to supplement the Wallace Tunnel on the west side of Mobile Bay. Construction of the bridge should begin in 2020 with completion in 2025. While the bridge may be necessary, plans for a toll of between \$3 and \$6 to use it and the Wallace Tunnel are more controversial. For more on the issue, see the May 18, 2019 *AL.com* article by John Sharp “Toll opposition dominates I-10 Mobile River bridge project hearing” at <https://www.al.com/news/mobile/2019/05/toll-opposition-dominates-i-10-mobile-river-bridge-project-hearing.html>.

## **Gulf Power Storm Charge**

In July 2019, Gulf Power will implement a five year \$8 per 1000 kilowatt hour increase in residential electric utility bills “to collect hurricane-related costs and maintain a storm reserve fund.” Gulf Power spokesperson Kimberly Blair noted, however, that “over the past year, Gulf Power has ‘reduced the typical bill by more than \$15, so many customer’s power bills would still be less than they were in January 2018.’” For more on the issue, see the May 14, 2019 *Pensacola News Journal* article by Kevin Robinson “Gulf Power will add ‘storm charge’ for Hurricane Michael recovery costs” at <https://www.pnj.com/story/news/2019/05/14/gulf-power-add-storm-charge-hurricane-michael-recovery/1190651001/>.

## **Destin Lionfish Festival**

With good crowds, plentiful vendors along Harbor Walk, and thousands of caught lionfish, the 2019 Destin Lionfish Removal and Awareness Day Festival and Tournament held May 18-19 seemed a considerable success. Previous lionfish festivals have been held in the Pensacola area, such as last year’s at the Flora-Bama. For more on the recent festival, go to the May 19, 2019 *nwfDailynews.com* article by Heather Osbourne, “New lionfish festival in Destin a success” at <https://www.nwfdailynews.com/news/20190519/new-lionfish-festival-in-destin-success> .

## **Funding Visit Florida**

Visit Florida is a state-wide tourism marketing organization that receives state funding, but funds could be greatly reduced or eliminated depending on current budget negotiations. According to Steve Hays of Visit Pensacola, no or low funding of Visit Florida would “have a big impact on tourism marketing in Pensacola.” District 2 Commissioner Doug Underhill, however, “supports Visit Pensacola but thinks it is time for Visit Florida to go.” For more on the issue, see the April 30, 2019 *Pensacola News Journal* article by Melissa Nelson Gabriel “Promoting Pensacola to Tourists – what happens if Visit Florida goes away?” at <https://www.pnj.com/story/news/local/pensacola/beaches/2019/04/30/what-visit-floridas-demise-could-mean-visit-pensacola/3617916002/>.

## **PKA Board Meeting June 24**

Because of summer events, holidays and vacations, the June PKA Board of Directors meeting will be held on June 24, 2019 instead of June 10 (the 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday of the month); a PKA Board meeting will not be held in July 2019.

## **June Calendar**

June 01-02: Flora-Bama Fishing Rodeo

June 01-02: Pirates Cove Autism FUNraiser, Elberta

June 01-06, 12-16, 25-30: Blue Wahoos at Blue Wahoo Stadium

June 01-10: Everblue Arts Festival at Pt. Clear, Alabama

June 01-30: Florida’s Fauna – Nature Tour of Arcadia Mill, Milton

June 06: Hootie & The Blowfish at The Wharf Amphitheater

June 06, 13, 20, 27: Circus on the Main at The Wharf

June 07: World Oceans Day Event at Perdido Blue Key State Park West Use Area

June 08: Ping Pong on Palafox Tournament downtown Pensacola  
June 08: Fuse Project Dragon Boat Festival at USS Alabama Battleship Memorial Park  
June 11: Bay Bridge Naming Committee at Escambia County Central Office Complex  
June 12: Bay Bridge Naming Committee at Gulf Breeze Community Center  
June 13: Science Hour "Aquatic Preserve and Restoration Program" Escambia County Central Office Complex  
June 13-16: Bill Hargreaves Fishing Rodeo at Grande Lagoon Yacht Club, Pensacola  
June 15: Ride Yellow Charity Bike Ride in Bay Minette, Alabama  
June 16: Father's Day Specials  
June 21-24: Bud Light Fishing Rodeo at Flounders on Pensacola Beach  
June 26-29: Pensacola International Billfish Tournament, Pensacola Yacht Club  
June 29: Ronald McDonald Firecracker 5K Race at Seville Square Park, Pensacola  
June 21: Flicks on the Field by Perdido Key Chamber at Pensacola Greyhound Track

Blue Angels practice on Tuesdays and Wednesdays at NAS Pensacola  
Bands on the Beach Tuesdays at Gulfside Pavilion Pensacola Beach

The following websites provide additional information about events taking place in our great Gulf Coast region:

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

Perdido Key Association Board of Directors